Community Engagement Plan

Mankato/North Mankato Area Planning Organization
2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) Update

Last Updated: May 6, 2024
Prepared by TC2 and Bolton and Menk

Project Summary

Project item	Item description
Public project name	MAPO 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) Update
Project area	MAPO Boundary
Schedule	April 2024 – December 2025
Branding	MAPO
Website	Greater Mankato area/MAPO Planning Area
Project Contact	April 2024 – Dec. 2025
Objective	**Inform:** Provide the public with clear, consistent project information to aid in project understanding. **Consult**: Obtain meaningful public feedback and share how they influenced the outcome. **Involve**: Work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.

Project Description

The Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) was developed in 2015 to identify long-range transportation needs and opportunities, which helped establish a framework to guide future projects and policies. Since then, the greater Mankato area has seen a lot of change and growth. This project aims to update the plan with these changes in mind, to provide a transportation framework for the next 25 years.

The following transportation planning factor themes will be considered during this process:

1. Accessibility and mobility
2. Economic vitality
3. Environment
4. Integration and connectivity
5. Preservation
6. Resiliency and reliability
7. Safety
8. Security
9. System management and operation
10. Travel and tourism

Project Goals

1. Consistently, effectively and meaningfully engage with the community and relevant agency partners to develop a collaborative plan.
2. Identify and develop areas of emphasis for the plan.
3. Incorporate multimodal recommendations and strategies.
4. Complete and submit all work to the MAPO prior to October 2, 2025 to allow for MAPO Policy Board adoption by November 6, 2025.

Engagement Goals

1. Generate and maintain a comprehensive stakeholder list that accounts for all interested groups, specifically historically underrepresented/marginalized groups.
2. Cultivate a deeper understanding of stakeholder needs, interests, and how best to engage with them.
3. Develop new relationships with stakeholder groups; maintain and strengthen existing stakeholder relationships.
4. Ensure all project information and materials are written in plain language and made accessible to all in a clear and timely manner, no matter their background, language, interest, or ability.
5. Utilize a wide range of in-person and digital communication tools to connect with stakeholders when and where it's convenient for them.
6. Ensure stakeholder questions and concerns are heard and promptly addressed.
7. Gather meaningful feedback and elevate and empower the voices and perspectives of underrepresented stakeholders to develop a community-supported design and implementation.
8. At project milestones, share what feedback was collected and how it will be used to inform the development of the design and implementation of the improvements.

Documentation

This document will be updated periodically as the planning process unfolds. A spreadsheet will be used to track engagement tactics, performance, feedback collected, and project inquiries. This spreadsheet will be shared with the client upon request and at project completion. Development of this communication plan was based on the insights from the EPA's EJscreen Report.

Key Stakeholders

A spreadsheet will be maintained throughout the project to build a comprehensive list of stakeholders and their contact information. Key stakeholder groups identified in the EPA's EJscreen Report include:

- MAPO
  - Policy Board
  - Technical Advisory Committee
- City of Mankato
- City of North Mankato
- City of Eagle Lake
- City of Skyline
- Blue Earth County
- Nicollet County
- Belgrade Township
- Lime Township
- South Bend Township
- LeRay Township

- Mankato Township
- MnDOT District 7
- Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
- Federal Transit Administration
- Property and business owners
- Motorists, transit users, bicyclists and pedestrians
- Education institutions
- Medical facilities
- Religious institutions
- Freight and rail
- Emergency services
- Utilities and service

Historically Underrepresented Stakeholders

Source: EPA EJscreen Community Report – U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey (2017-2021).

Demographic	Mankato	North Mankato	Eagle Lake	MAPO Boundaries	State Average
People of Color	**16%** *7% Black* *3% Asian* *4% Hispanic* *2% 2+ races*	**11%** *2% Black* *2% Asian* *3% Hispanic* *4% 2+ races*	**13%** *2% Black* *3% Hispanic* *9% 2+ races*	**15%** *5% Black* *3% Asian* *4% Hispanic* *3% 2+ races*	20%
Low Income	42%	20%	22%	34%	23%
Limited English Households	2%	1%	0%	1%	2%
Persons with disabilities	11%	12%	11%	11%	11%

Resources

- https://www.dot.state.mn.us/civilrights/lep-data-tool.html

  Limited English Proficiency Data Tool - Nondiscrimination - Civil Rights - MnDOT
  The MnDOT Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Data Tool is intended to assist MnDOT's federal-aid subrecipients in completing their four-factor analysis.

- MAPO Title VI Transit Plan (provides demographic information)

Engagement Approach & Timeline

Phases	Overview	Timeline
Phase 1	Understand key transportation issues and areas of emphasis most valued by the community to guide the long-range plan.	April – Sept. 2024
Phase 2	Share and collect feedback on the goals, objectives, and performance measures and existing conditions and issues identification information.	Nov. 2024 – March 2025
Phase 3	Share and collect feedback on the range of alternatives, recommended future network and implementation plan.	April – July 2025
Phase 4	Share the draft plan.	Aug. – Dec. 2025

Phase 1: April – Sept. 2024

Understand key transportation issues and areas of emphasis most valued by the community to guide the long-range plan.

Engagement Tool	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT
Engagement plan	X						
Website updates			X				X
Agency one-on-ones		X					
Focus Group Meetings			X				
Pop-up 1 & 2				X			
Open house 1				X			
INPUTiD comment map				X			
Survey 1				X			
Social media ad 1			X	X			

Phase 2: Nov. 2024 – March 2025

Share and collect feedback on the goals, objectives, and performance measures and existing conditions and issues identification information.

Engagement Tool	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR
Website updates			X		X
Open house 2				X	
Social media ad 2				X	

Phase 3: April – July 2025

Share and collect feedback on the range of alternatives.

Engagement Tool	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL
Website updates		X		X
Pop-up 3 & 4			X	
Open house 3			X	
Survey 2			X	
Social media ad 3			X	

Phase 4: Aug. – Dec. 2025

Share and collect feedback on the recommended future network and implementation plan.

Engagement Tool	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Website updates	X	X			X
Open house 4		X			
Social media ad 4	X				

Engagement Tools

Targeted outreach tactics

Low Income
- Informational materials at:
    o Laundromats
    o Public libraries
    o Rec centers
    o Parks
- Signs/decals at transit stops

People of Color

Black community
- Targeted emails to community leaders/organizers
    o Need contacts

Asian community
- Targeted emails to community leaders/organizers
    o Need contacts

Hispanic community
- Targeted emails to community leaders/organizers
    o Need contacts

Limited English Households
- Embed google translate links into online materials
- Promote opportunity to request translation or interpreter services

Persons with Disabilities
- Targeted emails to community leaders/organizers
    o Need contacts
- Provide materials in plain language, leveraging visuals
- Ensure materials are ADA compliant

Youth – School District

Clarice Esslinger (Note: Can help identify other contacts)
(507) 345-5222
abe@isd77.org

Meetings

Public open houses (4)

Our team will hold 4 open houses for the public to review project information and provide their feedback. Meeting information and materials will also be shared on the project website. The open houses will be spaced to correspond with project milestones, allowing for both input and follow-up from previous engagement. Summaries of the feedback received will be developed and shared on the website following each open house.

Pop-up meetings (4)

Pop-up meetings are a great way to reach users of the transportation system who do not typically participate in traditional public meetings. We will host up to 4 pop-up meetings, spread throughout the MAPO area during the issues identification and project prioritization phases of the plan. We will work with the PMT and TAC to confirm pop-up meeting opportunities.

(Events highlighted in yellow = events being considered for a pop-up)

Event	Audience	Date/time/location
Songs on the Lawn	Mankato residents	Every Thursday in June
Juneteenth Celebration	Region	June 19 (2p.m. to 7 p.m.) – Downtown Mankato
Mankato Farmer's Market	Mankato residents	Weekly XX-XX
Tator Days	Eagle Lake residents	Sat, July 20
River Ramble	Mankato area bicyclists	Fall – Minneopa Pavilion
Music events	Eagle Lake residents	June 20, July 18, Aug. 15; 6-9pm
North Mankato Farmers' Market	North Mankato residents	Mondays; 3-6pm; South Central College; June 3-Oct. 14
Movies in the Park	North Mankato residents	Fri, June 14; dusk; Spring Lake Park
ArtSplash	North Mankato residents	Sat, June 15; 11am-3pm; South Central College

Let's Pollinate! Event	North Mankato residents	Sat, June 22; 9am-12pm; Spring Lake Park
Fun Days	North Mankato residents	Wed, July 10 – Sun, July 14; Wheeler Park
Music in the Park	North Mankato residents	Thurs, July 18 & 25; 5:30-7:30pm; Wheeler Park
Blues on Belgrade	North Mankato residents	Saturday, July 27; 2-11pm

Focus Groups (2 - 4)

Focus groups will help facilitate more in-depth conversation with those most interested in or impacted by a project. These pinpointed gatherings will provide key stakeholders the opportunity to personally interact with project representatives and share their unique vision and goals. Our team can help select focus groups of representative stakeholders for targeted conversations and feedback.

Event	Audience	Date/time/location
Township Workshop	Representatives from all 5 townships	TBD – June 2024

Promotional Tools

Media releases

Media releases will allow us to notify local media outlets of important project information at key milestones of the project and extend the reach of our communications. We will provide content as needed to our project partners.

Social media

Project partner social media platforms will be leveraged to promote various public engagement opportunities and project progress updates. We will also utilize social media ads to promote engagement opportunities to specific audiences. This is a low-effort, cost-effective way to reach project stakeholders with a better return on investment than a generic post.

Signage and/or Sidewalk Decal

Project signage and/or sidewalk decal will be placed in common spaces such as parks, transit stops, business districts, and trails to generate interest and discussion about the project. These can contain a QR code or URL that links to the website, survey, or other important online materials.

Stakeholder Media Outlets

Media name	Content deadline and contact information
Mankato Free Press	
Southern MN News	
KEYC News	
Eagle Lake City Newsletter	
North Mankato City Newsletter	
Mankato City Newsletter	

Informational / Data Collection Tools

Project website and custom URL

Our team will host the project website which will act as the hub of all project information including layouts, public meeting materials, and feedback opportunities. All communications will encourage stakeholders to continuously check the website for up-to-date information. Additionally, this website will have a custom URL to make navigating to the site simple: [insert URL] and will be posted on the MAPO website.

Email and text subscriptions

We will host a project notification subscription on the project website. This allows the public to sign up for email and text message updates. Updates will be sent out to notify stakeholders of upcoming engagement opportunities and significant project updates as needed.

INPUTiD™ interactive comment map

We will create and maintain an interactive project map, using Bolton & Menk's INPUTiD™, a custom web-based application that allows the public to explore content and add anonymous location-specific comments directly on the map. Users can also view, like, and respond to other

comments. This tool will be utilized to gather input on transportation issues and opportunities and will be housed on the project website.

Surveys (2)

Surveys are an efficient, cost-effective way to gather information about project concerns, design options, and other key elements of the project. Our team will craft survey questions, build the survey, and create a promotion plan to increase participation. When the survey is done, our team will analyze results and summarize the key themes in a visual infographic report.

Live Polling

Poll Everywhere is a great tool for gathering feedback instantly during a meeting. This live polling software is integrated directly into your PowerPoint presentation. Users can join the conversation via smartphone or tablet and respond anonymously to a series of key questions. The results are shown in real time on your presentation slides and then saved for review following the meeting. This tool can be utilized if needed during meeting presentations.

Project handouts

Handouts such as project one-pagers or frequently asked questions will be developed on an as-need basis. The handouts will be available on the project website and at public meetings and events.