

Spring 2026 Public Comment Summary: Transit and Transportation

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Introduction

This report shares findings from the spring 2026 public comment period on the draft Olmstead Plan. The public comment period sought feedback about proposed Olmstead Plan goals.

Draft Olmstead Plan background

The first Minnesota Olmstead Plan was adopted in 2015. In 2023, the Olmstead Subcabinet decided it was time for a more comprehensive update. For the plan update, OIO worked with a contractor called the Dendros Group. The Dendros Group brought on people with lived experience of disability as Inclusion Consultants. Inclusion Consultants worked with state agency staff to write goals and strategies for the draft plan.

The draft plan included both measurable goals and data collection goals. Measurable goals are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART). Measurable goals are the foundation of an effective Olmstead Plan. Data collection goals represent issues that agencies want to write goals about, but don't have the data to create a measurable goal yet. The draft plan grouped goals into seven topics:

- Crisis services
- Education
- Employment
- Health and safety
- Housing
- Transportation
- Transition

For more information about Olmstead, the 2026 plan drafting process, and to read the draft plan, please visit the OIO website: [MN.gov/olmstead](https://mn.gov/olmstead)

Public comment period background

The Olmstead Implementation Office (OIO) held the public comment period in partnership with the Dendros Group, Inclusion Consultants, and state staff. The public comment period took place in April and May 2026. It included:

- An online survey
- Virtual meetings and individual interviews
- Email comments and submissions from organizations

Online survey

The online survey was available in English, Spanish, Hmong, Somali, and American Sign Language (ASL).

Survey participants could choose which goal topics to share feedback about. They could also choose to give general feedback about topic areas overall, specific feedback about individual goals, or both. The survey was anonymous, and all questions were optional.

Survey questions

The survey asked the following questions about each topic area:

- Do you think reaching these goals will improve the lives of Minnesotans with disabilities? (multiple choice question)
- Are there any topics or issues you feel are missing from these goals? (comment box question)
- Do you have any general feedback about these goals? (comment box question)

The survey asked the following questions about each individual measurable goal:

- Do you think this is an important question for the lead state agency to address? (multiple choice question)
- This measurable goal is... (multiple choice question)
- Do you have any ideas of other strategies and action steps to reach this goal? (comment box question)
- Do you think reaching this goal will improve the lives of Minnesotans with disabilities? (multiple choice question)

For data collection goals, the survey asked, “Do you have any feedback about this goal?” with a comment box.

The survey also included optional demographic questions.

Virtual meetings and individual interviews

Dendros Group planned and implemented virtual meetings as part of the public comment period. Inclusion Consultants facilitated the meetings. Dendros held seven meetings, one for each topic in the plan. The meetings were intended to be an accessible alternative to the online survey. Registration was open to the public, and the meetings took place on Zoom.

Facilitators asked the following questions during virtual meetings:

- What would make these goals more effective to improve the lives of Minnesotans with disabilities?

- What would make these goals more effective to better integrate Minnesotans with disabilities in community life?
- What’s missing from these goals?

Dendros Group also offered individual interviews. The interviews were intended to be an accessible alternative to the survey and virtual meetings. Inclusion Consultants conducted the interviews.

Email comments and submissions from organizations

OIO also received public comments through email. These comments came from individuals and organizations.

Goals included in this report

- Transportation Goal 1: Public transit will run on time.
- Transportation Goal 2: People with disabilities will use fixed route public transit more often.
- Transportation Goal 3: More people with disabilities will have flexible transportation funding.
- Transportation Goal 4: People with disabilities will have better access to transit services and information.

Total number of community input submissions and comments

This table shows the number of submissions and comments about transportation.

Source	Number of submissions	Number of comments
Survey	30	70
Virtual meeting	20	Not available
Emails and letters	4	9

Notes:

- Submissions from organizations are counted as one respondent.
- The number of comments from virtual meetings is not available.
- Interviews are included in the survey totals.

General feedback

This section summarizes feedback about the topic overall. Feedback about specific goals is included later in this document.

Survey question: Do you think reaching these goals will improve the lives of Minnesotans with disabilities?

Response	Count	Percentage
Yes, good improvement	6	20%
Yes, some improvement	12	40%
No improvement	6	20%
Unsure	6	20%
Total	30	100%

Themes from all input

Greater Minnesota needs more transportation options.

Participants shared that draft goals do not adequately address the lack of transit and transportation options for people with disabilities in Greater Minnesota.

Quotes:

- “Recognize that transportation issues in Greater Minnesota are very different than those in the metro. This impacts everything- employment, housing and socialization.”
- “This might be doable in the Twin Cities area, but it is not a realistic option for people who live in rural areas. How will people in rural areas be supported?”
- “Huge disconnect between rural and metro areas - most communities outside the metro area don't have public transport available - so what is being done to assist/help people who are disabled outside the metro area have access to transit?”

Transit, and other transportation options need to be accessible.

This includes access in many aspects of life including physical access and communications access. Communication access for people who are Deaf, DeafBlind, and hard of hearing specifically came up in transportation related comments.

Quotes:

- “Mandatory Sidewalk/Stop Accessibility Enforcement: Transit is useless if a person cannot physically reach the bus stop or light rail station. The plan is missing any mention of Municipal Accountability for Snow and Ice Removal. The state should tie municipal transit funding to the physical accessibility of the sidewalks leading to those transit hubs.”

- “Key gaps include a lack of enforceable accessibility standards tied to consequences for noncompliance, [...] limited emphasis on communication access in functional terms (especially real-time, direct access for Deaf users, and no strong statewide equity requirement ensuring consistent access across metro and Greater Minnesota.”
- From the Transportation Public Comment Meeting: “Participants noted that service animals create unique barriers, especially for longer regional travel. Drivers of para-transit, Uber, and Lyft are not always trained or understanding of the needs of service animals. Additionally, certain set ups are required in the vehicles so animals and clients can travel comfortably for longer trips.”

People with disabilities need reliable transit and transportation options.

People shared there are unreliable pick-up times and locations, and that they can’t always rely on the transit or paratransit. This is especially disruptive for important things like jobs, other commitments, medical appointments, etc.

Quotes:

- “People with disabilities should have access to information on services and access to transport which allow them to have the flexibility to use the transit system that MEETS their needs to get from point a to point b in a safe, timely and cost efficient way.”
- “Need to schedule transportation a week ahead of time. Sometimes drivers will drop people off at the wrong location or they will show up to the wrong location, or they arrive at the wrong door to a building and completely miss them.”
- From the Transportation Public Comment Meeting: “A participant shared a lived experience of waiting over an hour for a ride home from an appointment while their child experienced pain. When the ride finally came, the pain had triggered a seizure in the child. The participant stated they stopped using Metro Mobility.”
- From the Transportation Public Comment Meeting: A participant explained issues that veterans seeking medical services face. “My uncle is a VA veteran and he has to travel long distances for his healthcare...once they get brought to the VA, there’s only bus routes twice a day...so they’re stuck at a mall with no place to eat, no place to go... and there’s no transportation for 5 or 6 more hours.”

Transit and transportation are critical for accessing employment, health care and community life.

Members of the public shared that transit and transportation are vital for having employment and social connections. People shared comments about service hours, transit safety concerns, and the connection between limited housing options with good transit opportunities.

Quotes:

- “The state subsidized transportation does not offer transportation during non-weekday hours for employment, i.e. nights and weekends.”
- “Transit and transportation should include the client needs. It should accommodate their ability to get to work, some social outings, and even visits with family or friends.”
- “Public transportation in metro areas is unsafe. Public transportation options for rural outstate areas is limited and does not meet the needs of the adults to maintain employment during non-traditional hours.”
- “Many [of my] friends with severe disabilities are dumped in suburban group homes with NO access to transit to get them to a job. Without a robust transit system people with disabilities will remain underemployed.”
- From the Somali Parents Autism Network (SPAN) Public Comment Meeting: "In transportation, limited and unreliable options continue to restrict access to education, employment and healthcare. Transportation must be flexible and responsive to real-life schedules and needs."

Missing topics

People shared which topics they thought were missing from the transportation goals.

Quotes:

- “Intersectionality: Community members said the state must address disparities based on other identities held by people with disabilities. These identities can include race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, socioeconomic status, language, and more.”
- “The draft also has some notable omissions. In our 2025 Legislative Priorities Survey, for example, we heard feedback about disability services from 800 Minnesotans across the state. Per this survey, Minnesotans with disabilities consistently highlighted transportation as a cross-cutting barrier affecting access to health care, employment, and community life. These respondents frequently described challenges finding reliable transportation, particularly in rural areas, highlighting missed appointments, limited provider access, and increased isolation. We therefore believe it is critically important that our Olmstead Plan puts forward goals and strategies to improve access to reliable, accessible transportation, particularly in Greater Minnesota.”
- “Across all four [goals], there is a pattern of emphasizing system adjustments (training, studies, platform development, pilots) instead of requiring measurable, enforceable accessibility and reliability outcomes. Key gaps include:
 - Lack of enforceable accessibility standards tied to consequences for noncompliance
 - Insufficient focus on real-time, independent usability of transit systems and information
 - Overreliance on coordination and planning rather than operational accountability

- Limited emphasis on communication access in functional terms (especially real-time, direct access for Deaf users)
- No strong statewide equity requirement ensuring consistent access across metro and Greater Minnesota
- Stronger goals would shift from process-based improvements to enforceable performance requirements that guarantee transit is independently usable, reliable, and accessible in practice-not just improved in design.”
- “Missing integration of modern mobility options (including emerging on-demand and autonomous services) under accessibility rules.”
- “No requirement that transit systems be independently usable without assistance or intermediaries.”
- “If DHS is looking at overhauling NEMT [Non-emergency medical transportation], I would ask that you require MCOs to have a way to schedule NEMT rides without having to make a phone call. Please.”
- From the Transportation Public Comment Meeting: “Choice is a missing element in our discussion but choice has to be viable. It’s great to talk about taxis and cabs, but if there are no taxis or cabs that are accessible, it’s hard to call that a choice. And the choice has to be affordable. Most folks cannot afford a \$100 ride to work every day.”

Feedback about individual goals

Transportation Goal 1: Public transit will run on time.

Lead agency: Metropolitan Council (MetC)

Survey questions about Transportation Goal 1

The following tables show results of multiple-choice survey questions.

Do you think this is an important issue for the Metropolitan Council to address?

Response	Count	Percentage
Very important	9	75%
Important	2	16.7%
Not important	0	0%
Not at all	1	8.3%
Unsure	0	0%
Total	12	100%

This measurable goal is...

Response	Count	Percentage
Too high	1	9%
Just right	2	18.2%
Too low	5	45.4%
Not sure	3	27.3%
Total	11	100%

Do you think reaching Transportation Goal 1 will improve the lives of Minnesotans with disabilities?

Response	Count	Percentage
Yes, good improvement	3	25%
Yes, some improvement	6	50%
No improvement	3	25%
Not sure	0	0%
Total	12	100%

Feedback from all input about Transportation Goal 1

Public feedback included comments about transit fare, reliability, and community engagement.

Quotes:

- “This goal mirrors existing minimum federal requirements; incorporating them does not add additional value to the plan. [...] Meeting existing minimum standards does not improve the status quo for Minnesotans with disabilities. However, in this goal, we appreciate the addition of standards for on-time performance for services beyond Metro Mobility. For the Metro Move (on-time pickups), we question establishing a goal that is less than the current on-time performance baseline, specifically the move from 12 months to at least eight months of the year.”
- “More than ‘public transit will run on time’ (which, to be clear, is incredibly important), I want better ways to track when the bus (or Metro Mobility ride) is. The tools on the Met Council website kinda work? Not well. Sometimes they'll say a bus is 5 minutes away for 10 minutes and then oops! the bus has just disappeared.”
- “[Conduct] qualitative interviews with people [about] what works/does not work and needs to change and then implement those changes.”

- “Good effort but needs improvement. Needs to have more people, more funding, more resources for transportation to improve public transit as a whole, not just running on time. More options for paying on the bus.”
- “Transportation is a very high need and high priority in Greater Minnesota. We received feedback that the goals are too low. It was also difficult to understand why the goals were written as tables rather than following the standard format.”

Strategy ideas for Transportation Goal 1

Respondents shared many strategy ideas to consider for Transportation Goal 1. These suggestions from survey respondents most focus on reliability of services. These suggestions have not been vetted for scope or funding and are submitted as written.

Quotes:

- “Stronger strategies should focus on operational accountability and system design. Enforce performance-based contracting for all transit providers. On-time performance should be tied directly to funding, with penalties for repeated failure and incentives strictly based on verified reliability metrics-not training participation.”
- “Improve dispatching and routing systems using real-time operational controls. A significant portion of late pickups in paratransit systems is caused by inefficient scheduling logic, lack of dynamic routing, and under-optimization of vehicle allocation. These are system design issues, not user behavior issues.”
- “Establish transparent, publicly reported performance dashboards at a granular level (by provider, route type, and service category). Accountability improves when performance is visible and comparable across providers.”
- “Prioritize redundancy and contingency planning for high-demand times. On-time performance often fails during peak hours, weather events, and staffing shortages. The system should require minimum service reliability standards during disruption conditions, not just average monthly performance.
- “Strengthen consequences for systemic noncompliance. If providers consistently miss targets (e.g., below 90% on-time thresholds), there should be mandatory corrective action plans, contract review, or vendor replacement.”
- “Ensure that “on-time” definitions reflect functional accessibility realities. For disability transportation, “on-time” should account for boarding assistance time, communication delays, and safe pickup execution-not just vehicle arrival.”
- “Reduce reliance on ‘accommodation after failure’ (such as allowing late arrivals to still see providers). That approach treats transit failure as acceptable rather than correcting the underlying performance issue. The focus should remain on preventing late arrivals in the first place through system accountability.”

Transportation Goal 2: People with disabilities will use fixed route public transit more often.

Lead agency: Metropolitan Council (MetC)

Survey questions about Transportation Goal 2

The following tables show results of multiple-choice survey questions.

Do you think this is an important issue for the Metropolitan Council to address?

Response	Count	Percentage
Very important	6	54.5%
Important	4	36.4%
Not important	0	0%
Not at all	0	0%
Unsure	1	9.1%
Total	11	100%

This measurable goal is...

Response	Count	Percentage
Too high	0	0%
Just right	3	27.3%
Too low	5	45.4%
Not sure	3	27.3%
Total	11	100%

Do you think reaching Transportation Goal 2 will improve the lives of Minnesotans with disabilities?

Response	Count	Percentage
Yes, good improvement	3	27.3%
Yes, some improvement	6	54.5%
No improvement	2	18.2%
Not sure	0	0%
Total	11	100%

Feedback from all input about Transportation Goal 2

Public feedback included comments about lack of timely and accessible fixed route transit services.

Quotes:

- “A real goal would be to expand the routes and frequency of public transit in Minnesota. Rural Minnesota thinks the cities have good transit, but we don't. I live in a FIRST ring suburb. I SHARE a zip code with St. Paul. I have very limited access to public transit. A bus comes every few hours, Monday through Friday, 1/2 mile away. It is a 3 hour trip to downtown St. Paul because you have to transfer at the Mall to downtown Minneapolis to catch the train to St. Paul.”
- “People don't have access to these services in the first place. Sometimes these services are not accessible for people who are blind for example. Not enough space for people using wheelchairs. Solve the underlying issues before encouraging people to use public transit.”

Strategy ideas suggested for Transportation Goal 2

Respondents shared many strategy ideas to consider for Transportation Goal 2. These suggestions from survey respondents most focus on accessibility and independent use of services. These suggestions have not been vetted for scope or funding and are submitted as written.

Quotes:

- “Enforce full ADA compliance through proactive inspections and corrective action requirements, not just installation projects. Accessibility at stops and stations should be audited regularly, with required remediation timelines for noncompliance.”
- “Shift from ‘encouraging use’ to ensuring functional independence. Fixed-route transit should be independently usable without requiring travel training as a prerequisite. If travel training is required for access, that signals a system design failure rather than a user readiness issue.”
- “Require universal design standards for transit information systems. Real-time apps, signage, and announcements should be fully accessible by default, not ‘improved over time.’ Accessibility should be a baseline requirement for all new digital infrastructure.”
- “Address last-mile accessibility barriers. Even when buses are accessible, reaching stops can be a barrier due to sidewalk conditions, snow removal, curb cuts, and distance. Coordination with local governments should include enforceable sidewalk and stop-access maintenance standards.”
- “Evaluate whether service design actually supports independence. Some users rely on Metro Mobility because fixed-route systems are not practically usable for their disability type or environment. The goal should not be to push usage, but to ensure equivalency of access between transit modes.”

- “Include performance accountability tied to accessibility outcomes-not just ridership counts. Increased rides should not be considered success unless riders report independent, reliable, and consistent access without barriers.”
- “Some ideas from other transit systems I've interacted with (mostly in the San Francisco Bay Area, which for historical reasons has very accessible fixed route transit):
 - Clinics where wheelchair users can get tie-down points installed or at least marked
 - Printable/customizable cards that explain someone's needs to the bus driver (am thinking for people with dual vision/hearing loss and/or speech disabilities) -- something like ‘I have a disability, I need to get off the bus at [fill in stop], please let me know when we get there, you can get my attention by [fill in method].’”
- “Coordinate with Google Maps and other internet map services so bus tracking in those services is accurate (I am guessing it's proximity to Google HQ but every Bay Area transit service I used had absolutely minute-precise tracking on Google Maps).”
- “Installing fare readers (at least for Go-To cards) at the rear doors on buses with two sets of doors. This makes it easier for people to board the bus faster if someone needs the ramp at the front of the bus.”
- “Fix the ‘Last-Mile’ Barrier (Snow and Ice Removal): Installing 60 boarding pads a year is a drop in the bucket. A boarding pad is useless if it is buried under three feet of plow-ice for five months of the year. Met Council must establish a strategy that mandates municipal sidewalk snow removal along all fixed-route corridors. Met Council should tie transit funding to municipal performance in keeping bus stops and curb cuts clear. A wheelchair user cannot ‘use fixed route transit more often’ if they are physically barred from reaching the stop by the city's failure to plow.”
- “Implement a ‘Fixed-Route Reliability Guarantee.’ If Met Council wants Metro Mobility users to switch to the fixed route, they must provide a safety net. Met Council should implement a ‘Guaranteed Ride Home’ policy for disabled fixed-route riders. If a regular route bus is canceled or more than 20 minutes late, the disabled rider should be able to summon a Metro Mobility or accessible rideshare vehicle immediately at no extra cost. Without this guarantee, ‘switching to fixed route’ is an unacceptable risk for someone with a job or a medical condition.”
- “Move Beyond ‘Visual and Audible Signs’ to Universal Digital Accessibility. While physical signs are great, they are often broken or poorly maintained. Met C should focus on Open Data Standards that allow for third-party, disability-specific transit apps to provide real-time, high-fidelity information (e.g., ‘Is the bus ramp currently functional?’ or ‘Is there a snowbank blocking this specific stop?’). Providing data on ‘ramp status’ and ‘stop accessibility’ in real-time is more important than a 2% increase in ridership.”
- “End the ‘Siloed Fare’ System. If the goal is to encourage more people to use both systems, the fare system must be seamless. Implement a ‘Universal Mobility Fare,’ where a Metro Mobility certification automatically grants free or deeply subsidized access to all fixed-route transit and light rail. If the state wants people to use the ‘cheaper’ system, they should make it free for

those already qualified for paratransit, removing the financial churn of managing two different fare structures.”

Transportation Goal 3: More people with disabilities will have flexible transportation funding.

Lead agency: Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT)

Supporting agencies: Department of Human Services (DHS), Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), Minnesota Department of Education (MDE)

Survey questions about Transportation Goal 3

The following tables show results of multiple-choice survey questions.

Do you think this is an important issue for the Minnesota Department of Transportation to address?

Response	Count	Percentage
Very important	9	90%
Important	1	10%
Not important	0	0%
Not at all	0	0%
Unsure	0	0%
Total	10	100%

This measurable goal is...

Response	Count	Percentage
Too high	0	0%
Just right	3	27.3%
Too low	7	63.6%
Not sure	1	9.1%
Total	11	100%

Do you think reaching Transportation Goal 3 will improve the lives of Minnesotans with disabilities?

Response	Count	Percentage
Yes, good improvement	3	25%

Response	Count	Percentage
Yes, some improvement	6	50%
No improvement	3	25%
Not sure	0	0%
Total	12	100%

Feedback from all input about Transportation Goal 3

Public feedback included comments about lack of timely and accessible fixed route transit services.

Quotes:

- “This goal measures the number of counties, not people, benefiting from the pilot program expansion. While expanding a pilot program to Greater Minnesota counties may be promising, it would be helpful to report not just on the number of counties but also the number of people potentially positively impacted by increased access and flexibility for transportation.”
- “Transportation funding is good, but access to public transit needs to be addressed first. Bring functional transportation options to us first before considering offering funding to us.”
- “Rural Minnesota has the greatest need, also as our population ages less people can drive and maybe relying on public transit.”
- “I am not sure what ‘flexible transportation account program’ is. Is that like where you can get rideshare rides paid for by the county? I don't love the micro-ization/privatization of public transportation, but I suppose if we're talking about counties where public transit is basically non-existent, it's fair enough.”

Strategy ideas suggested for Transportation Goal 3

Respondents shared many strategy ideas to consider for Transportation Goal 3. These suggestions have not been vetted for scope or funding and are submitted as written.

Quotes:

- “Transportation funding is good, but access to public transit needs to be addressed first. Bring functional transportation options to us first before considering offering funding to us.”
- “Establish a statewide implementation framework rather than indefinitely expanding county-by-county pilots. Flexible transportation funding should not remain a fragmented pilot program; it should be standardized with clear eligibility, allowable uses, and enforcement of equitable access across all rural counties.”

- “Ensure portability and interoperability of funding. Individuals should be able to use transportation funding seamlessly across counties, providers, and modes without administrative re-approval or loss of access when crossing jurisdictional boundaries.”
- “Require provider accountability for acceptance of flexible transportation funds. A common failure point in these systems is limited provider participation. If funding is ‘flexible’ but not widely accepted, it does not function in practice.”
- “Incorporate modern mobility services as part of the transportation ecosystem. This should explicitly include regulated private mobility networks and emerging autonomous vehicle services (for example, autonomous ride-hailing systems such as Waymo-type services and other approved autonomous platforms where legally available). These should be integrated under safety, accessibility, and accountability standards rather than excluded from rural mobility planning.”
- “Ensure equity in rural deployment. Greater Minnesota should not be treated as a delayed rollout zone indefinitely. Accessibility standards and funding models should be designed for statewide parity from the beginning, not metro-first expansion followed by uncertain rural scaling.”
- “Establish clear performance metrics for flexible funding effectiveness, including trip completion rates, affordability outcomes, and access time improvements-not just pilot expansion counts.”
- “Reduce administrative barriers to use. Flexible transportation funding systems often fail because of complicated reimbursement rules, prior authorization requirements, or limited vendor networks. The system should prioritize real-time usability and minimal friction at the point of need.”
- “End the ‘Study Phase’ and move to immediate ‘Micro-Grants.’ MnDOT already knows the barriers: lack of drivers, high insurance costs, and geographic distance. We do not need a three-year study. MnDOT should immediately reallocate ‘study’ funds into Direct Transportation Micro-Grants for disabled individuals in rural counties. This would allow people to immediately pay a neighbor, a family member, or a private driver for trips to work or medical appointments, bypassing the need for a “pilot program” bureaucracy.”
- “Leverage the ‘DHS/Waiver Loophole.’ DHS already has ‘Special Transportation Services’ (STS) and waiver-funded transport, but it is bogged down in ‘Administrative Churn’ and low provider reimbursement rates. MnDOT should not just ‘collaborate’ with DHS; they should mandate a ‘Unified Rural Transportation Voucher.’ This would combine MnDOT and DHS funds into a single, flexible debit card for disabled riders, allowing them to buy gas for a friend's car or pay a private driver at a competitive market rate.”
- “Address the Insurance and Liability Barrier for Peer-to-Peer Transit. A major reason ‘flexible transportation’ fails in rural areas is that private citizens are afraid to drive their neighbors because of insurance liability. MnDOT's action step should be to establish a Statewide Excess Liability Insurance Pool for volunteer and peer-to-peer drivers.”

- "Under Transportation Goal 3: More people with disabilities will have flexible transportation funding, include people with disabilities who qualify for both waiver services and SNAP (food stamps) and/or TANF [Temporary Assistance for Needy Families], will automatically qualify for transit cards every month as a state benefit if they need it, and apply like they apply the other state benefits with their respective counties."

Transportation Goal 4: People with disabilities will have better access to transit services and information.

Lead agency: Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT)

Supporting agencies: Department of Human Services (DHS)

Survey questions about Transportation Goal 4

The following tables show results of multiple-choice survey questions.

Note: Measurable targets for Goal 4 had not been set at the time of the survey. The survey question, "This measurable target is..." is not applicable and not included here.

Do you think this is an important issue for the Minnesota Department of Transportation to address?

Response	Count	Percentage
Very important	10	91%
Important	0	0%
Not important	0	0%
Not at all	1	9%
Unsure	0	0%
Total	11	100%

Do you think reaching Transportation Goal 4 will improve the lives of Minnesotans with disabilities?

Response	Count	Percentage
Yes, good improvement	3	27.3%
Yes, some improvement	6	54.5%
No improvement	2	18.2%
Not sure	0	0%

Response	Count	Percentage
Total	11	100%

Themes from all input about Goal 4

General feedback about the Transportation Goal 4 included the need to address service issues, clarifying questions, and some positive feedback about the goal.

Quotes:

- “This is a nice goal and it matches the transit planning app for St. Cloud, but this doesn't address the underlying issues we are facing, such as delays in transportation. It is good for getting the word out, and in that way it is a good goal. Having those experts who know how to get us connected to transportation and other resources at the same time.”
- “I'm confused. The goal asks about MnDOT, but then the action steps are all about DHS. What do you mean by ‘transit services?’ Like non-emergency medical transportation? Or waived transportation services? Or paratransit? Because paratransit doesn't have anything to do with DHS, it only goes through Met Council or whatever the regional transit authority is. DHS handles eligibility for NEMT and waived transportation, but then what does MnDOT have to do with that?”
- “Once again, a very narrow goal that impacts a very small number of Minnesotans' with disabilities.”
- From the Transportation Public Comment Meeting: “One participant said the digital statewide trip navigation platform ‘excites me’ and ‘I would love to see’ it. Another participant echoed they would be ‘thrilled if my county was one of the ones they chose to pilot’ the flexible transportation account program.”

Strategy ideas suggested for Transportation Goal 4

Respondents shared many strategy ideas to consider for Transportation Goal 4. These suggestions have not been vetted for scope or funding and are submitted as written.

Quotes:

- “Establish enforceable real-time communication access standards for transit information and customer service. For Deaf and hard of hearing users, access must include direct video-based communication options (not just text relay or delayed messaging), ensuring immediate interaction with transit staff when needed.”
- “Require American Sign Language access as a primary communication channel for transit information, not an afterthought. This includes ASL video content for service updates, disruptions, eligibility instructions, and trip planning guidance. Accessibility should not rely solely on text-based alternatives.”

- “Mandate that all transit platforms (apps, websites, kiosks, and trip planning tools) meet functional accessibility standards that are independently usable without assistance. This includes usability testing with Deaf, blind, DeafBlind, and neurodivergent users-not just technical compliance.”
- “Require that service disruption communications (delays, route changes, cancellations) be delivered in real time across multiple accessible modalities, including ASL video updates where feasible.”
- “Integrate direct video communication options into customer service and trip support systems so users can resolve issues without relying on intermediaries or delayed relay systems.”
- “Ensure that eligibility and enrollment simplification includes accessibility at the front end. Simplified systems are not effective if the communication pathways to access them remain inaccessible.”
- “Establish accountability metrics tied specifically to accessibility usability-not just system deployment. Success should be measured by whether people with disabilities can independently plan, book, and complete trips without barriers.”
- “Implement ‘Categorical Eligibility’ for Transit. DHS is ‘considering’ a tiered system. This is too slow. The action step should be to mandate Categorical Eligibility: if a person is already qualified for a DHS disability waiver, SSI, or SSDI, they should be automatically enrolled in all statewide transit programs (Metro Mobility, Transit Link, etc.) without a separate application. We must stop forcing disabled people to prove their disability to every single agency in a siloed system.”
- “Link Reimbursement Rates to ‘Actual Cost of Living’ and ‘Labor Market.’ Updating reimbursement rates to ‘comply with federal requirements’ is the bare minimum. DHS must update rates to be market-competitive so that transit providers can pay drivers more than the local fast-food or retail starting wage. The ‘provider shortage’ is a direct result of the state underfunding the labor required to move people.”