

# MnDOT Sustainable Transportation Advisory Council Meeting Minutes

Date: 03/05/2020  
Time: 9:00 A.M. – 11:00 PM  
Location: MnDOT Central Office, 395 John Ireland Blvd, St. Paul MN  
Meeting materials will be available on the [MnDOT Sustainability Website](#)

Attachments: Meeting #1 slides, DRAFT charter (3/11/2020)

Action Items: MnDOT will do the following:

1. Poll members for the date of the next full STAC meeting, expected in May.
2. Send notes to STAC members for review and comment before posting on MnDOT website.
3. Solicit input on work groups focus areas and structure via email or online survey.
4. Coordinate with volunteers for the Clean Transportation Funding Pilot Program and work with the chair: Micheal Noble to schedule the first meeting before the end of March 2020.

## Attendees

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### Council Members Present

1. Margaret Anderson Kelliher (Co-chair)
2. Chris Clark (Co-chair)
3. Katie Bell
4. Sen. Scott Dibble
5. Katie Frye
6. Dorian Grilley
7. Rep. Frank Hornstein
8. Jon Hunter (for Lisa Thurstin)
9. Greg Ilkka
10. Katie Jones
11. Ashwat Narayanan
12. Michael Noble
13. Rolf Nordstrom
14. Sam Sanders (for Sen. Scott Newman)
15. Daniel Schellhammer
16. Patrick Seeb

17. La Shella Sims
18. Russ Stark
19. Emma Struss
20. Vishnu Laalitha Surapaneni
21. Nick Thompson
22. Peter Wagenius
23. Tara Wetzel

### Council Members Absent

[none]

### MnDOT Staff

Sethey Ben  
David Elvin  
Ben Lowndes (facilitator)  
Tim Sexton  
Siri Simons

# Meeting Notes

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## Welcome

Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) Commissioner Margaret Anderson Kelliher and co-chair Chris Clark, President of Xcel Energy, welcomed council members and attendees.

## Council Overview

Tim Sexton, Assistant Commissioner and Director, Office of Sustainability and Public Health, summarized the background, purpose, and goals for the council, including [MN statute 174.01](#), the [Next Generation Energy Act](#), the MnDOT [Annual Sustainability Report](#), and the 2019 [Pathways to Decarbonizing Transportation](#) . (Presentation slides 1 to 10.)

Tim clarified that all meetings will be open to the public and meeting information will be shared online. There will also be opportunity for public comment at the end of each STAC meeting.

## Member Self-introductions

Council members introduced themselves, described the organizations and entities they represent, and shared their interest/motivations for participating.

## Member Survey Results

Tim Sexton presented members' responses to the pre-meeting online survey on the following topics (Presentation slides 13-18):

- What are the top opportunities for transitioning Minnesota to a low-carbon transportation system?
- What are the desired focus topics for the working groups?
- What will be key measures of success for the council's work?

Commissioner Anderson Kelliher noted that while the primary focus of the STAC and interest from members was on GHG mitigation, climate change and extreme weather are already impacting the transportation systems (e.g., more frequent flooding damaging roads/bridges forcing closures) and the state needs to prepare and adapt. While MnDOT is already beginning to incorporate resilience in planning and project development, additional input from this group could also be helpful and suggested members consider forming a work group focused on resilience.

The Commissioner also emphasized the importance of understanding how clean transportation efforts could affect transportation revenue and recommended a work group address transportation funding and the potential impacts from alternative fuels and other efforts to reduce transportation carbon pollution.

No vote was taken but a number of members verbally supported both of these suggestions.

Additional resources: [MnDOT Resilience Report](#)

## Working Group Model and Discussion

Ben Lowndes, MnDOT Operations Division Liaison, gave an overview of the work group model. Work groups will have a STAC member lead/co-leads and include non-STAC stakeholders and technical experts. Total participants per working group were suggested to not exceed 10 people. MnDOT can staff up to four work groups. More work groups may be possible in the future but MnDOT staffing constraints limit support to 4 groups in the near-term. (presentation slides 19- 22.)

The subsequent work group discussion focused on the “level” of the work groups and how to incorporate certain underlying principles into all the work groups.

MnDOT will oversee a new Clean Transportation Funding Pilot Program (\$2M/year for 3 years, 20% local match) that was recommended in the *Pathways* process. Members discussed how to support the effort, which triggered discussion of whether a tactical issue was the right level for a work group or if work groups should have a broader/higher-level strategic focus. E.g., a member suggested the following work groups:

1. Fueling/powering transportation (Clean Transportation Pilot could be a part of this)
2. Reducing VMT and transportation options
3. Funding transportation ([distance-based fee research](#) could fit here)
4. Improving resilience of the transportation system

A number of additional suggestions were proposed by members and the group agreed to provide feedback on work groups via email with the goal to finalize the work group structure at the next STAC meeting.

Members also discussed how the themes of equity (economic, racial, and geographic), safety, and maximizing co-benefits should be incorporated into all work groups. There was general agreement with this proposal.

Members agreed to support the Clean Transportation Funding Pilot Program and Michael Noble (Fresh Energy) volunteered to chair the effort with support from members: Sen. Scott Dibble, Rep. Frank Hornstein, Katie Frye, Lisa Thurstin, Nick Thompson, Katie Jones, and Patrick Seeb. MnDOT will make the final funding decisions but the group will advise on program goals and evaluation criteria. The level of effort is expected to be less than 20 hours between now and July 1, 2020. STAC members will decide at the next meeting if this should be a work group, part of a larger work group, or whether that distinction matters...

Members said the most significant barriers to the development of successful recommendations would be:

- Difficulty in changing policies and regulations
- Adequate and effective education and outreach
- Funding

Additional resources: A member shared copies of the report: [Reducing GHG Emissions from Transportation Sources in Minnesota](#), from the U of M, with strategies for VMT reduction in MN.

[Policy Link](#): a source for equity principles and practices in transportation planning.

**Action:** Please submit your top 3 proposed work group areas by Thursday, March 26, 2020.

## Decision-Making Discussion

Members agreed that a “thumbs up” consensus model will be used for group decision making, and that unanimity is not a requirement. In cases where not all members agree, the views of those who differ from the consensus will be recorded and reported as part of the decision. It was acknowledged that there may be circumstances when a majority vote is needed. (Presentation slides 23-24)

## STAC Culture and Charter Review

Tim Sexton walked through the draft charter document circulated prior to the meeting (presentation slides 25-28). There was agreement on the “Introduction” and “Purpose of the STAC” sections on pages 1-2.

The “Need for the STAC” (pg. 2) section triggered discussion of whether NGEA GHG measures and targets are consistent with international climate planning work and should be the stated goal for the STAC. There was discussion about bringing this question to the Governor’s Climate Subcabinet since NGEA applies to all sectors. MnDOT also referenced MN statute 174.01 that connects MnDOT work to the NGEA goals.

Members agreed that additional review and discussion of the remaining sections of the charter is warranted and will provide comments to MnDOT staff (by email or phone) before the next STAC meeting. MnDOT staff committed to update the charter and send at least one week prior to the next meeting with the goal of approving the STAC charter at that time.

## Public Comments

MnDOT reserves time at the end of each meeting for public comments. No public comments were made.

## Decisions

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- **Decision-making:** done by consensus “thumbs up” model. Votes will be taken when/if needed.
- **Clean Transportation Funding Pilot Program:** volunteers identified to advise MnDOT, led by Michael Noble with support from: Sen. Scott Dibble, Rep. Frank Hornstein, Katie Frye, Lisa Thurstin, Nick Thompson, Katie Jones, and Patrick Seeb.
- **Charter:** the “Introduction” and “Purpose of the STAC” sections were approved.
- **Work Groups:** agreement that equity, safety, and maximizing co-benefits should be incorporated into all work groups

## Next Steps – Action Items

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1. MnDOT will poll members for the date of the next full STAC meeting, expected to be scheduled for May.
2. MnDOT will send notes to STAC members for review and comment before posting on MnDOT Sustainability website.
3. MnDOT will solicit input from members on work groups focus areas and structure via email or online survey.

4. MnDOT will coordinate with volunteers for the Clean Transportation Funding Pilot Program and work with the chair: Micheal Noble to schedule the first group meeting before the end of March 2020.

## **Next Meeting**

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TBD but expected in May 2020, in the Twin Cities Metro area. MnDOT will send a survey to identify time(s) that works for the most members.

STAC members agreed to try and schedule at least one future meeting in Greater MN.