

TransAction II

North Dakota's Statewide Strategic Transportation Plan

Prepared by

NORTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

BISMARCK, NORTH DAKOTA

www.dot.nd.gov

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North Dakota Department of Transportation

Francis G. Ziegler, P.E.
Director

John Hoeven
Governor

February 2007

Dear North Dakotans:

In 2002, we published our statewide strategic transportation plan called, *TransAction*. *TransAction* identified North Dakota's transportation mission, vision, goals, and 16 initiatives that provided broad direction for the development of North Dakota's transportation system. Over the past four years we have made significant progress toward achieving *TransAction* initiatives. However, it is important that we continue to improve our transportation system and how it interfaces with the regional, national, and global transportation systems so that our economy can grow, diversify, and offer more choices and an improved quality of life.

Peter Drucker, the management theorist, once said, "The best way to predict the future is to create it." By building on the successes of *TransAction* and the broad direction provided by *TransAction II*, we are creating a safer, more secure, more efficient transportation system that offers optimum personal mobility and effective movement of freight.

It is important to acknowledge that it would have been impossible to develop *TransAction II* without the input and participation of many individuals and businesses. We pledge to continue providing opportunities for meaningful input and participation in planning the future of our transportation system. As *TransAction* represented the beginning of a journey to improve our transportation system, *TransAction II* represents a continuation of the journey. Please continue to share your thoughts and express your suggestions; working together we can make a difference.

Sincerely,


John Hoeven
Governor


Francis G. Ziegler, Director
Department of Transportation

Preface

North Dakota's location in the center of North America represents both challenges and opportunities. Our distance to both national and international markets; high volume of agricultural production, growing tourism and manufacturing sectors; and an emerging role as a preeminent producer of energy all require a safe, secure and efficient transportation system.

Many of the trends effecting transportation that were considered in the development of *TransAction* continue to exert an influence on the development of *TransAction II*.¹ Our population remains relatively stable; while becoming more diverse, older and urban. The demand for greater levels of personal and freight mobility continues to grow. Traditional funding sources for transportation, primarily gas taxes, are being affected by a growing number of alternate fuel vehicles and improved fuel efficiency. Fluctuating energy costs, fuel surcharges and disruptions to energy supplies are affecting the reliability of freight movements and the price of products. Shuttle trains and the emergence of intermodal and transload service foretell the future of rail freight service. Trucking continues to grow, meeting the increasing demand for door-to-door reliability. Although small in comparison to other modes, air passenger and freight movements are growing and provide an important alternative for some

travelers and freight. There is an ever increasing demand for transit service in both urban and rural areas. Non-motorized transportation (bicycling and walking) is becoming more popular while offering both a healthy and cost effective alternative. And finally, safety and security will remain foremost in the minds of transportation providers and users. The effect of these trends will be that the transportation system (both infrastructure and services) will continue to change and evolve.

Like *TransAction* before it, *TransAction II* has been developed to help us focus the use of our resources and meet the ever-changing and growing transportation needs and demands of the state's residents, visitors, and businesses.



¹ Throughout this document, *TransAction* refers to the plan published in 2002, *TransAction II* refers to the statewide strategic transportation policy plan published in 2007.

North Dakota's Transportation Initiative

At the direction of Governor John Hoeven, the North Dakota Department of Transportation (NDDOT) continues to lead the development of a statewide strategic transportation policy plan. The plan, called *TransAction*, first published in December of 2002, was the product of a partnership between government, transportation stakeholders, and the state's citizens.

TransAction identified the state's transportation mission, vision, goals and 16 initiatives. Although considerable progress has been made toward achieving the initiatives identified in *TransAction*, transportation planning is an on-going process. The development of *TransAction II* represents the next step in this process.²

Purpose, Scope, and Use of *TransAction II*

Purpose

- Promote North Dakota's shared transportation vision.
- Provide broad strategic direction for collaborative transportation efforts.
- Promote improvements to our transportation system by expanding the constituency created through the planning process.
- Continue the inclusive and ongoing statewide strategic transportation planning process.

Scope

The scope of *TransAction II* is broad and long range (20-year horizon). It engages public- and private-sector providers and users, all levels of government, and all modes of transportation. It identifies broad trends and statewide strategic transportation issues. It examines strategic transportation roles and responsibilities across all levels of government (federal, tribal, state, county, city, township,

and MPO) and the private sector. It recognizes and respects the functions of the private sector and the prerogative of local governmental units to develop their own transportation plans, programs, and projects. It also explores and identifies opportunities for public and private-sector intermodal collaborative efforts and identifies strategic goals and multidisciplinary initiatives.

Use

- Promote understanding of transportation's importance in our daily lives.
- Increase awareness of how North Dakota's transportation system is tied to transportation systems in other states and provinces, the nation, and the world.
- Improve communication between transportation providers and consumers.
- Promote cooperation and collaboration between modes, jurisdictions, and the public and private sectors.
- Enable North Dakota to achieve its shared transportation vision.

² See "*TransAction in Review*" [www.dot.nd.gov (select TransAction, TransAction Progress Brochure)] for progress achieved on the 16 initiatives identified in *TransAction*.

North Dakota's Transportation Mission

“North Dakota will provide a safe and secure transportation system that considers personal choices, enhances business opportunities, and supports economic competitiveness; and promotes the wise use of all resources.”

North Dakota's Transportation Vision

“North Dakota's transportation system is an important part of regional, national, and global systems, developed strategically to help grow and diversify our economy and enhance the state's quality of life.”

North Dakota's Transportation Goals

1. Safe and secure transportation for residents, visitors, and freight.
2. A transportation system that allows optimum personal mobility.
3. A transportation system that allows the efficient and effective movement of freight.
4. A transportation system that supports economic diversity, growth, and competitiveness with consideration of environmental and social impacts.
5. Funding sufficient to protect and enhance North Dakota's transportation infrastructure and address future transportation needs.
6. A transportation environment where communication, cooperation, and collaboration exists.

TransAction II: Initiatives and Strategies

In 2002, *TransAction* identified 16 strategic initiatives which provided direction for improving our transportation system. Since *TransAction* was published, various factors have

changed. The public involvement process used to develop *TransAction II*, resulted in the following 12 strategic initiatives.

Initiative 1

Strategically prioritize the use of transportation resources, and define levels of service to be provided and maintained.

- Strategy 1** Periodically review and appropriately modify transportation priorities and defined levels of service to guide investment decisions.
- Strategy 2** Continue to research and develop options including innovative funding techniques to protect, enhance and improve the transportation system.
- Strategy 3** Prioritize the use of resources and define the levels of bicycle and pedestrian service transportation to be provided and maintained.
- Strategy 4** Promote an integrated transportation system.



This initiative is a combination of TransAction Initiatives 1 and 2. These initiatives were combined in TransAction II to reflect the natural link between prioritizing the use of resources and defining levels of service to be provided and maintained. Although much has been done to prioritize the use of resources and define the level of service that will be provided and

maintained for highways, rail and aeronautics, the same level of effort must be extended to non-motorized transportation modes (i.e. bicycling and walking). It is also important to regularly review our priorities, altering them if necessary, to keep them current as conditions change.

Initiative 2

Enhance communication and facilitate cooperation and collaboration between and within governmental units, tribal authorities, modes of transportation, and the public and private sectors.

- Strategy 1** Facilitate and promote interaction between members of North Dakota's transportation community.
- Utilize multiple techniques to enhance public involvement.
 - Utilize advisory groups to assist in developing major plans, programs and projects.
 - Promote frequent communication between agencies, units of government and transportation stakeholders.
- Strategy 2** Continuously review transportation planning and programming process for opportunities to improve communication, cooperation, and collaboration.
- Strategy 3** Promote transportation plans, programs and projects that are compatible with economic growth and diversification, land use management, natural resources, environmental protection, conservation, and historic preservation.



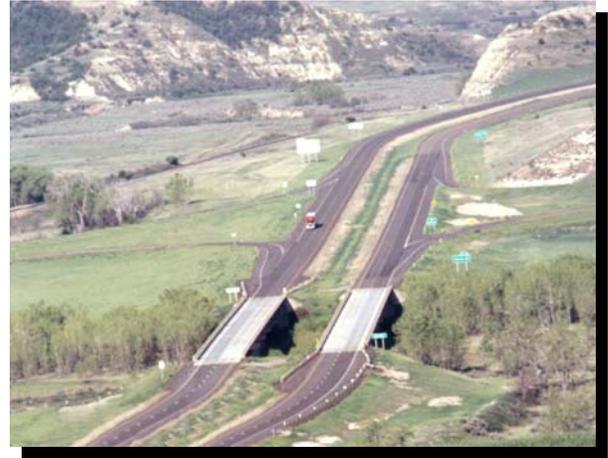
This initiative was formerly TransAction Initiative 3. The public involvement process used to develop TransAction revealed that although communication, cooperation, and collaboration between members of North Dakota's

transportation community are generally good, all of these areas can be improved. These findings were again confirmed during the development of TransAction II.

Initiative 3

Improve the performance of priority transportation corridors and facilities.

- Strategy 1** Conduct a statewide freight origin and destination study and identify priority transportation corridors and facilities.
- Strategy 2** Develop management plans for priority corridors and facilities.
- Establish corridor planning teams
 - Identify factors considered in corridor and facility plans
 - Explore multimodal strategies and opportunities
- Strategy 3** Periodically review and evaluate the performance of existing corridors and facilities, and identify emerging transportation priorities.
- Strategy 4** Develop and implement a roadway access management plan to complement the Highway Performance Classification System.



This initiative is a combination of TransAction Initiatives 4 and 10. These initiatives were combined in TransAction II since it was felt appropriate to first identify priority transportation corridors and facilities and then improve their performance. Priority transportation corridors generally span a wide geographic band

affecting several governmental jurisdictions and multiple modes of transportation. The successful development of priority transportation corridors and facilities requires consistent standards, long-term planning, continuity, and partnering.

Initiative 4

Consider economic viability when developing projects, programs, and statewide plans.

- Strategy 1** Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of transportation programs to support the state's economy.
- Strategy 2** Examine, plan and program development processes to ensure that economic competitiveness is considered.
- Strategy 3** Support the development and implementation of projects and programs that have a positive impact on the state's economy.
- Strategy 4** Evaluate and explore new opportunities to enhance transportation infrastructure and technical assistance programs to promote economic viability.



This initiative is a combination of TransAction Initiatives 5 and 11. These initiatives were combined in TransAction II since the purpose of each initiative was to improve North Dakota's economic competitiveness. Considering

economic viability in the development of transportation plans, programs, and projects is necessary to improving our state's economic competitiveness.

Initiative 5

Develop a statewide freight mobility strategy.

- Strategy 1** Conduct a strategic freight study that will: (1) gather information about freight movements flowing through, leaving, entering, and circulating within the state, and (2) provide an assessment of North Dakota’s freight system.
- Strategy 2** Develop a freight mobility plan.
- Strategy 3** Present the findings of the *Strategic Freight Study on Motor Carrier Issues – 2005* and determine support for a statewide program to coordinate the administration of truck size and weight permitting.
- Strategy 4** Implement the North Dakota Rail Freight Strategy for intermodal co-service and transload facilities.
- Strategy 5** Pursue regional uniformity of truck size, weight regulations, and permitting.
- Strategy 6** Implement the adopted recommendations of the state rail plan.
- Strategy 7** Work with adjacent provinces to improve the safe, secure and efficient flow of people and freight through ports of entry.



This initiative is a combination of TransAction Initiatives 6, 7, and 8. These initiatives were



combined in TransAction II to form a comprehensive statewide freight mobility strategy.

Initiative 6

Appropriately use technologies to enhance North Dakota's transportation system by improving service, performance, mobility, safety, and security.

- Strategy 1** Review current, seek out new, and deploy appropriate Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) applications that enhance passenger and freight mobility and improve safety and security.
- Strategy 2** Continue and broaden technology partnerships between governmental entities, universities, and the private sector.
- Strategy 3** Coordinate technology programs with metropolitan planning organizations, tribal entities, state and federal agencies, local governments, and universities.
- Strategy 4** Publicize current technology plans and initiatives.



This initiative was formerly TransAction Initiative 9. As the cost of ITS technology continues to drop and is more readily available it is

important that ITS applications are compatible, warranted and appropriate.

Initiative 7

Promote public/private sector partnerships that bring about selected transportation initiatives.

Strategy 1 Define conditions, criteria and types of transportation initiatives that warrant promotion of public-private partnerships.

Strategy 2 Continue to promote and participate in public-private partnerships.

This initiative was formerly TransAction Initiative 12. As the magnitude of transportation projects continue to escalate both in cost and

complexity, the importance and benefits of public/private sector partnerships will grow.

Initiative 8

Promote and actively participate in regional and national transportation initiatives, programs, studies, and projects.

Strategy 1 Participate in regional and national initiatives, programs, studies, and projects that strengthen the development of North Dakota’s Transportation system and economic competitiveness.



This initiative was formerly TransAction Initiative 13. As North Dakota businesses continue to become more active members of the global

economy, it is vitally important to participate in transportation initiatives beyond our borders that improve our economic competitiveness.

Initiative 9

Emphasize safety and security in planning, developing, and maintaining the transportation system.

- Strategy 1** Review and evaluate transportation plan, program, project development and maintenance processes (motorized and non-motorized) to ensure that safety and security considerations are incorporated at all major decision points.
- Strategy 2** Identify, prioritize, and improve safety and security sensitive components of the transportation system.
- Strategy 3** Identify safety and security related legislation for appropriate additions, omissions, and modifications.
- Strategy 4** Implement the Strategic Highway Safety Plan.
- Strategy 5** Integrate state and local transportation security initiatives with the Department of Homeland Security, Transportation Security Administration, North Dakota Department of Emergency Services, and the Rural Transportation Safety and Security Center.



This initiative was formerly TransAction Initiative 14. Safety and security continue to be very important considerations in the development, maintenance and operation of the transportation system. Even though statistics

and public perception indicate that North Dakota's transportation system is relatively safe, we must continue to identify opportunities to make our system safer and more secure.

Initiative 10

Assess and plan for personal mobility options, both motorized and non-motorized.

- Strategy 1** Expand the scope of the “Personal Mobility in North Dakota” study to include non-motorized options and pursue implementation of the study recommendations.
- Strategy 2** Update and expand the scope of bicycle transportation plans to include pedestrians.
- Strategy 3** Develop a statewide trails plan integrating local, state, and national trail systems.
- Strategy 4** Consider non-motorized transportation and the needs of mobility challenged individuals in plans, programs, projects, and operations.
- Strategy 5** Explore funding and partnership opportunities to enhance non-motorized transportation.



Photo taken by David Borlaug, Washburn

This initiative was formerly TransAction Initiative 15. Improving personal mobility continues to be a priority. Even though 85 percent of North Dakota's population lives within one mile of a state highway, many people (senior

citizens, low income, disabled, minorities, immigrants, youth and people in need of medical services or seeking educational opportunities) face personal mobility challenges.

Initiative 11

Monitor key issues affecting personal and freight mobility.

Strategy 1 Periodically identify and assess key issues and trends affecting personal and freight mobility.



This initiative was formerly TransAction Initiative 16. Trends can be significant, forcing us to take new directions. To make effective transportation decisions, we must monitor a broad range of trends and understand their

implications. Some trends are favorable while others are unfavorable. Some trends present opportunities while other trends present challenges.

Initiative 12

Consider environmental and social impacts when developing transportation plans, programs, and projects.

- Strategy 1** Consult with federal, state, and tribal wildlife, land management, and regulatory agencies, and the public as appropriate, in developing plans, programs, and projects.
- Strategy 2** Compare transportation plans to available inventories of natural and historic resources to identify environmental and social issues, and discuss potential environmental and social mitigation measures available.
- Strategy 3** Consider state, local, and tribal agency planned growth and economic development patterns to promote consistency with transportation improvements.



This new initiative has been developed to reflect NDDOT's emphasis and commitment to additional consideration of the environmental

and social impacts of plans, programs and projects.

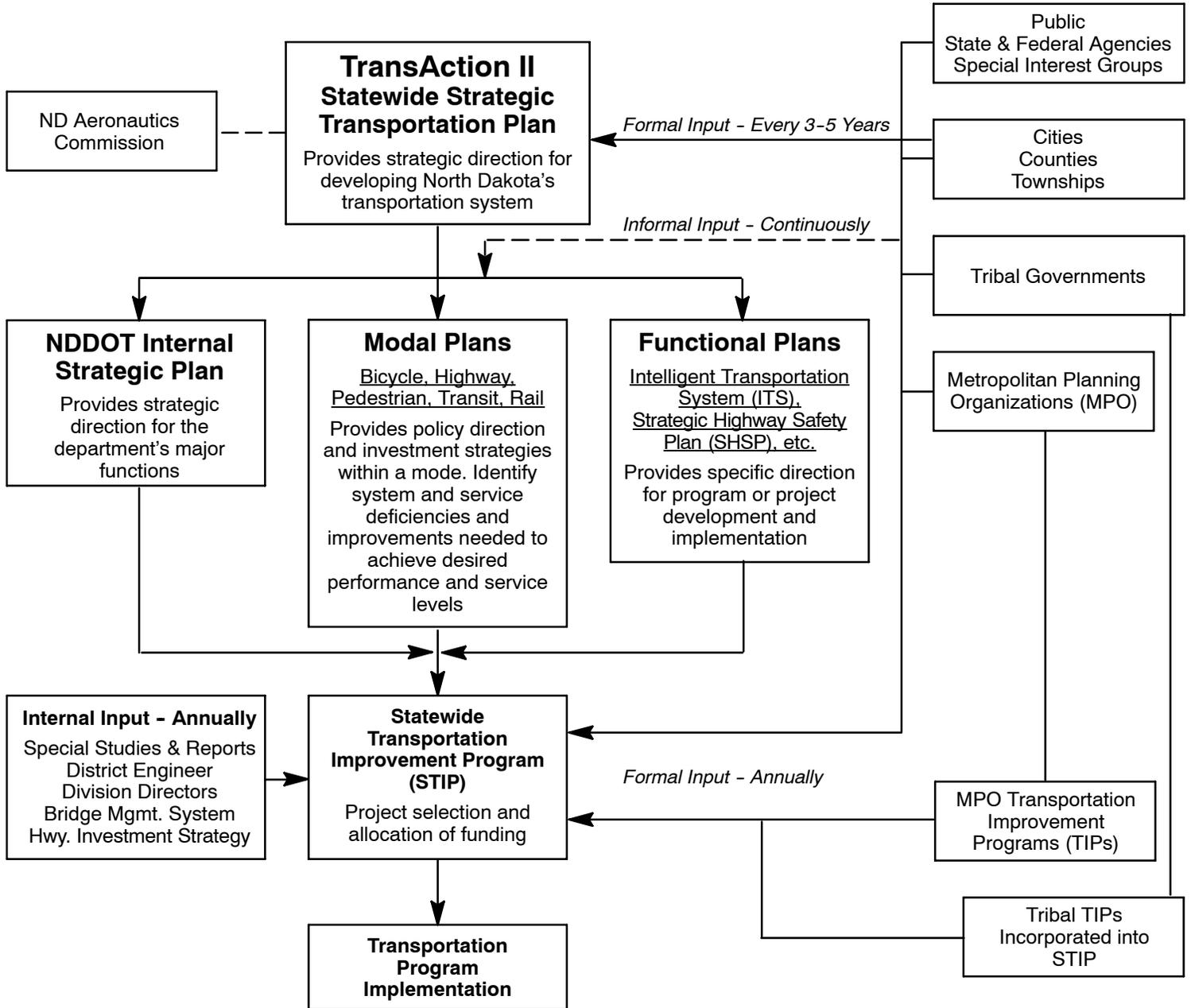
Transportation Roles and Responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities of the various members of North Dakota's transportation community have developed over many years. Some roles and responsibilities were created by ordinances, others were created by legislation (federal or state), or by congressional mandate; some by executive order or administrative rule; and some by local policy. Other roles and responsibilities have simply evolved over time.

TransAction II provides guidance, and was developed to be applicable to all governmental entities within the state. Achieving the 12 initiatives identified in *TransAction II* will only be accomplished by a partnership of NDDOT working with federal, local, and tribal governments, and members of the private sector.



Relationship of Planning and Programming Processes



Trends, Challenges, and Opportunities

Many changes will occur over the next twenty years. Some changes will signal that existing trends will continue, while other changes will signal the beginning of new trends. Trends can be significant, forcing us to take new directions. To make effective transportation decisions, we must monitor a broad range of trends and understand the implications of these trends.

Some trends are favorable while others are unfavorable. Some trends present opportunities while other trends present challenges. Finally, it is important to remember that some trends can be changed or reversed while others can not be altered. The following trends appear to have important implications for our transportation system.³

Aeronautics

North Dakota currently has 90 public airports, eight of which offer scheduled commercial passenger service. Between 1996 and 2006, passengers boarding increased by 31 percent at the state's eight air carrier airports. The eight air carrier airports offer 104 daily commercial flights to five domestic hubs. The 82 general aviation airports average 778 flights daily, many of which are seasonal in support of agriculture. General aviation airports face the challenge of maintaining infrastructure due to rapidly rising equipment and maintenance expenses. Sustained federal funding is critical for the continued operation,

maintenance, and development of the state's aviation system. Emphasis on airport and passenger safety and security, including a strong anti-terrorism component, will also continue.



Agriculture

Production agriculture is a primary component of our economy. Local, national, and global trends continue to effect agricultural production in North Dakota. World population growth continues to increase, however, the

demand for bulk food commodities is decreasing as a percentage of total food products. The global food market has significantly shifted from a market of bulk commodities to a market for food products. Globally, customers are demanding a greater level of food security and traceability.



North Dakota leads the nation in the production of the following commodities: flax seed; canola; dry edible peas; durum wheat; pinto beans; oil sunflowers; spring wheat; all sunflower; non-oil sunflowers; lentils; navy beans; all dry edible beans; barley; honey; and oats. Market demand for identity preserved, non-genetically modified organisms, and organic commodities is on the rise and

³This section is included in *TransAction II* to provide a framework for the development of the plan's goals, initiatives, and strategies.

Agriculture (cont.)

many of the state's farmers are looking for ways to add value to their operations are considering these options. Increasingly, North Dakota agricultural producers are exploring the possibility of exporting identity preserved grains and niche crops in small lots to meet their customers' demands. Irrigation and new varieties of crops have shifted agricultural production to non-traditional locations. Live-stock feeding operations are moving from the Corn Belt to the Great Plains. And the growing number of ethanol plants may lead to an increase in livestock and dairy production due to availability of by-products, such as, dried distilled grains.

These changes represent the potential for significant impacts to the state's transportation system. Some agricultural commodities, processed food products, and many manufactured items are time-sensitive; therefore, road and rail systems must be able to provide reliable service. The need to ensure travel reliability may require the application of new technologies, improved weather forecasting and reporting, selective application of Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) technologies, cross modal coordination (highway/rail/air) and the integration of state and local highway maintenance policies to ensure the flow of products.

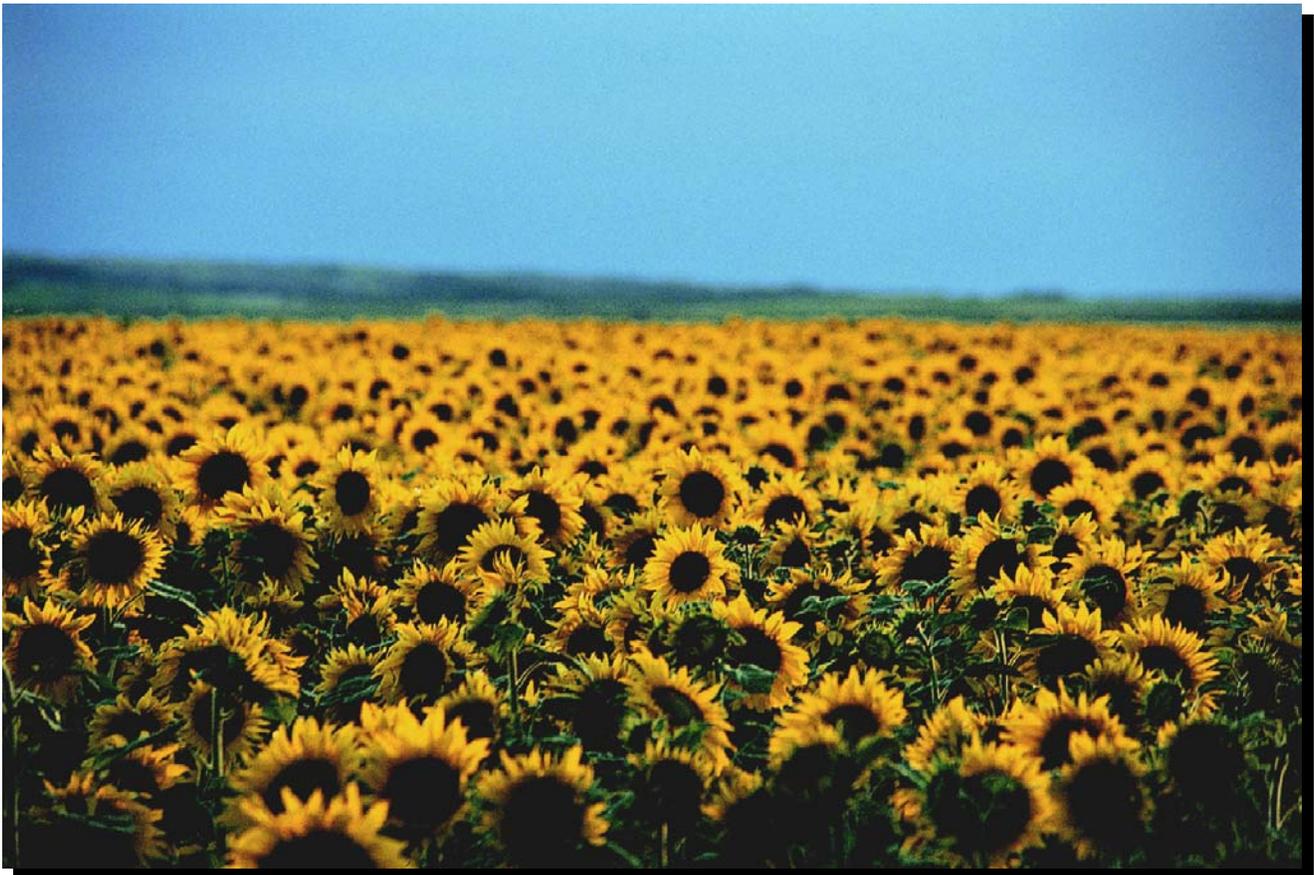


Photo taken by Dawn Charging, North Dakota Tourism

Construction Costs

As the price of oil has increased and supply become more volatile the cost of oil based products used for highway construction maintenance has also risen. The escalating price of oil based products has impacted all levels of government and the private sector. In 2005-2006 alone, construction inflation rose approximately 25 percent over the previous year's construction costs.

Rising crude oil prices are also affecting the supply of asphalt. Refiners are finding that producing lighter-grade petroleum products is more profitable than producing liquid asphalt. Along with the increased cost of asphalt products, rising fuel and labor costs have contributed to an overall increase in construction

costs resulting in project delays and a review of highway design standards.



Energy Production

North Dakota is a significant source and producer of energy. Currently, the state produces oil, natural gas, ethanol, coal, coal fired electricity, hydro-electric, and wind energy. Two biodiesel plants are also slated for construction. North Dakota is ninth in oil production, eleventh in coal, twenty-first in natural gas and fourth in per capita production of electrical energy. North Dakota ranks fifth in wind generation but ranks first in potential wind generation. Crude oil production exists in 17 counties predominately in the western portion of the state. Increased oil production and the development of bio-fuel processing facilities are creating demands on both the state and local transportation systems. Large-scale transloading of coal from rail to truck is another relatively new phenomenon that must be monitored.

Already in use to supply coal to sugar beet plants, this form of transportation has been mentioned as means to supply the growing ethanol and bio-diesel industry.



International Ports of Entry

With 18, North Dakota has more ports of entry than any other state. Since the passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the Pembina and Portal ports of entry have experienced truck traffic growth rates in excess of 10 percent a year. Pembina/Emerson is now the eighth largest port of entry in terms of import/export value in North

America and the largest between Detroit, MI, and Blaine, WA. The value of trade with Canada continues to grow together with increases in congestion and travel delays related to security issues, limited hours of service, and a lack of infrastructure improvements and technology applications.



Manufacturing

North Dakota is one of only three states to recently gain in manufacturing employment. Manufacturing in the state is becoming more diverse; ranging from value-added agricultural processing to components for the aerospace industry. For the state's manufacturers to participate in this competitive environment our transportation system must be able to meet the demands of Just-in-Time (JIT) delivery. JIT delivery requires a high degree of reliability from the transportation system. As more manufacturing occurs in rural communities the availability and cost of less-than-truckload (LTL) and overnight air delivery are rising in importance. The health of the state's manufacturing sector is also heavily dependent on the availability and cost of energy used to transport products.

North Dakota's geographic location in the center of North America presents both opportunities and challenges. Transportation plays a critical role in moving goods produced in North Dakota to domestic and international



markets. One of the greatest challenges rural communities face is limited transportation options for shipping products. Locating food processing, manufacturing, energy or fuel-producing facilities in rural communities requires transportation reliability and underscores the need for maintaining or upgrading the region's rural transportation system. However, due to shortages of funding, improvements to state and local road systems must be accomplished within the framework of priorities to achieve defined levels of service.

Mobility

Demands on North Dakota's transportation system continue to grow. Nationally, the volume of freight is projected to double by 2020. Annually, vehicle miles traveled have been increasing at a steady rate since 1973, and are projected to grow into the foreseeable future. The size and weight of trucks have increased resulting in greater impacts to the road network. As a response to rising energy costs, alternative fuels and fuel efficient vehicles are becoming more prevalent. Safety continues to be an important transportation consideration and issues related to security are a growing concern in the development and operation of the transportation system. Increasingly transportation users are demanding a balanced transportation system, a system which considers multimodal, motorized and non-motorized movements.



Land use and transportation are inexorably intertwined. Land use and roadway access management decisions by cities and counties will continue to influence the performance of not only local transportation systems but also the state transportation system.

Non-Motorized Transportation

Bicycling, walking, and other forms of non-motorized transportation offer healthy and cost effective modes of transportation. However, non-motorized transportation in North Dakota is not without its challenges. Atop the cyclist and pedestrian community concerns are: the distance from homes to destinations such as, work, retail/services, and schools; lack of adequate facilities; and conflicts with motorists. According to the U.S. Census Bureau the number of North Dakotans who bicycle or walk to work decreased from approximately 15 percent in 1980, to roughly 5 percent in 2000; this compares to the national average of 3 percent in 2000.

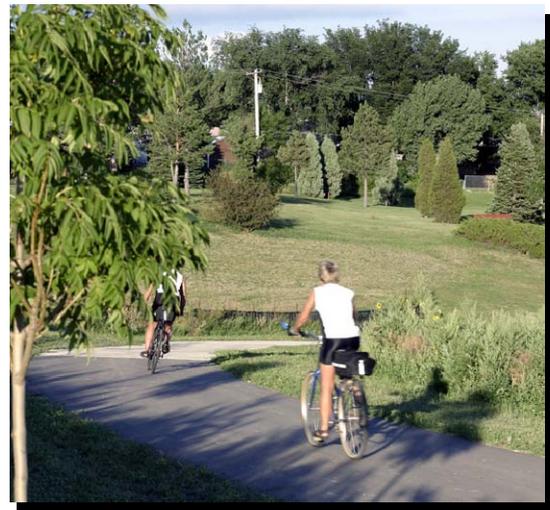


Photo taken by Tom Kary, KLJ, Bismarck

Population and Demographics

Over the past few decades North Dakota's population has remained relatively stable. From 1990 to 2000, North Dakota had the lowest population increase of all states, adding 3,400 residents or approximately .5 percent. From 1990 to 2000, only six of North Dakota's 53 counties experienced population growth.

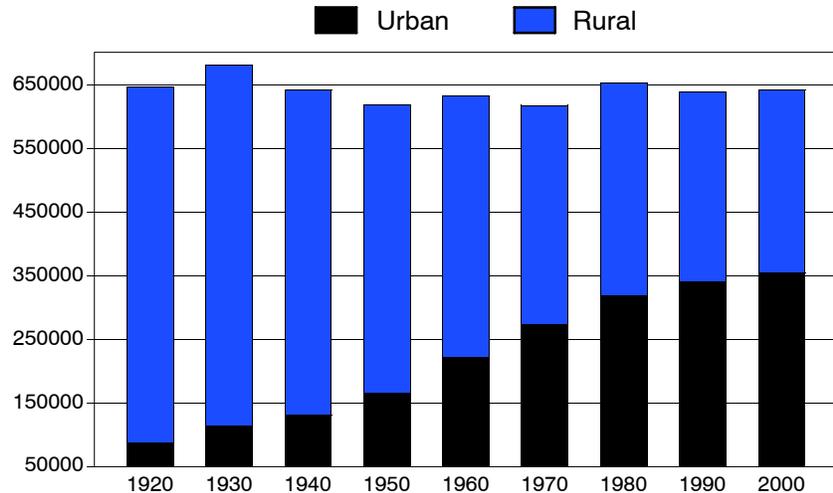
Although North Dakota's population has remained relatively stable, it is shifting within the state and becoming increasingly more urbanized. In 2000, 79 percent of the nation's population lived in urban areas compared to 56 percent in North Dakota.

Population and Demographics (cont.)

North Dakota's population continues to age and become more diverse. North Dakota's current median age is older than that of the nation. Approximately 18 percent of North Dakotans are over 60 years of age and projections indicate that approximately 28 percent of North Dakota's population will be above the age of 60 by 2015. Also by 2015,

over 50 percent of the population more than 60 years old will be living in the greater Bismarck, Fargo, Grand Forks, and Minot areas. Native American Indian Reservations in the state are also experiencing population growth. As North Dakota's population continues to age and become more diverse, it will increasingly require special transportation needs.

North Dakota Population 1920 - 2000



Rail

Nationally, rail freight is projected to grow by 44 percent between 2000 and 2020. Traditionally, North Dakota's farmers have grown and shipped large volumes of bulk agricultural commodities and, historically, rail has been the main mode of transportation for grain and oilseeds leaving the state.

The advent of "shuttle trains" along with recent interest and demand for intermodal containers

and transload options signals an evolution of the state's rail service. Many rail-related questions remain. Will further branchline abandonment occur? What will be the effect of the state's growing ethanol and biodiesel industry on the rail system? How many shuttle facilities can the state sustain? The one certainty is that the makeup of the rail freight system will continue to change.



Rail (cont.)

Amtrak still offers passenger rail service through the "Empire Builder" route which operates in the eastern and northern portions of the state. Between 2000 and 2004, passenger volume has fluctuated in North Dakota; however, total ridership has increased.

Over the past 25 years, the number of crashes/fatalities at railway crossings has decreased due to a combination of factors such as enhanced roadway design, improved emergency services, traffic safety related legislation, and statewide traffic safety programs. Rail crossing safety will continue to be a priority.

Seven privately-owned railroads provide rail freight service within the state. Rail rehabilitation is an important factor in the continued operation of the state's regional and short line rail operators. Railroad rehabilitation benefits railroads, shippers, and taxpayers through improved safety, increased operational efficiency,

reduction in highway reconstruction and re-surfacing costs, and greater economic competitiveness. North Dakota administers two rail project rehabilitation programs: the Freight Railroad Improvement Program, which is state-funded, and the Local Rail Freight Assistance Program, which is federally-funded. Demand for North Dakota's rail project assistance programs continues to exceed available resources.



State Highways and Local Roads

North Dakota maintains more roads per capita than any other state. As population has shifted from rural to urban areas, traffic patterns on the state, county and township road systems have changed. Many counties are experiencing shrinking tax bases and there



are fewer, but larger farms and ranches. Many rail branchlines have been abandoned and there are fewer but larger grain elevators causing farmers to ship their commodities further distances.

Personal automobiles are the dominant mode of transportation in North Dakota. From 1992 to 2003, there were more private and commercial motor vehicles registered in North Dakota than people. Annual vehicle miles traveled in the state continue to increase with the largest growth on the interstate system.

Trucking is gaining a greater share of the total vehicle miles traveled, as well as a greater share of the value of freight being moved in

State Highways and Local Roads (cont.)

North Dakota. In recent years, statewide truck traffic has been growing at a rate of 3.7 percent per year. North/South freight movements have increased significantly with the passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement and are growing at a faster rate than East/West freight movements. North Dakota's geographic location in the middle of North America will undoubtedly encourage the growth of trucking through the state.

Safety on North Dakota's roadways continues to be a concern. From 2003-2005 total vehicle miles traveled in North Dakota have increased while the total number of traffic crashes has fluctuated. However, there were fewer traffic crashes per vehicle mile traveled in 2005 than in 2003. During the same time period, North Dakota's fatality rate has also fluctuated; however, there were more fatalities per vehicle mile traveled in 2005 than in 2003.

Transit and School Busing

Nationally, public transit ridership has been growing, while in North Dakota public transit ridership has remained relatively stable. However, as additional service is provided, due to increases in federal and state funding, it is anticipated that transit ridership in the state will increase. The greatest challenges to the state's public transit programs continue to be finding ways to make public transit more convenient, serving the elderly and disabled riders in rural areas, and raising local match for federal funding. Many school districts are struggling to provide busing for rural students as vehicle and fuel costs increase and student numbers decline. School district consolidation is also resulting in longer bus rides for rural students.



Tourism

Tourism, the state's fastest growing industry, surpassed energy production as North Dakota's second leading primary-sector industry. The primary mode of visitor travel is by automobile. However, convenient and adequate air transportation is important to bring visitors and business travelers into the state. Much of North Dakota's tourism "product" is in rural parts of the state. Integration of state and local transportation infrastructure is critical to providing visitor's access to destinations within the state. Tourism's greatest transportation needs are maintenance of the system, highway signing, and traveler information centers.



TransAction II: Implementation Strategies

TransAction II is a statewide strategic transportation policy plan. It provides broad strategic direction, a framework for long-range (20 year) transportation planning; a basis for a supportive relationships between state transportation plans, and those of the federal, tribal and local governmental entities. It does not dictate actions. The choice of how or whether to conduct transportation planning within the framework of this plan remains prerogative of individual agencies, local governmental units, tribal entities, and private-sector businesses.

Because the scope of *TransAction II* is very broad, its success depends on meaningfully engaging the public and private sectors, levels of government, and all modes of transportation. Implementation of *TransAction II* includes four components.

- Initiate an inclusive, ongoing transportation planning process based on a shared vision for the state's transportation system.
- Increase opportunities for public involvement.
- Promote public/private sector partnerships.
- Enhance communication, cooperation, and collaboration.

Many plans fail because once the plan is published people think the planning process is complete. The intent of *TransAction II* is to create a statewide strategic transportation planning process that is inclusive and ongoing. Implementation will require ongoing efforts to include a wide range of participants.

- NDDOT will continue to utilize the Director's Advisory Committee (DAC) and Director's Transportation Forum (DTF).
- NDDOT will hold a biennial statewide public forum to discuss transportation issues facing North Dakota.
- NDDOT will create statewide freight and personal mobility advisory committees and other meaningful opportunities for citizen input.

None of this will be possible without enhanced communication. NDDOT plans to:

- Use advisory committees more extensively.
- Broaden the use of electronics as a way for people to obtain transportation information and government services.
- Continue publishing the *TransAction II* newsletter.
- Host transportation seminars, forums, and workshops.

Governor Hoeven's mandate to achieve higher levels of performance from our transportation system will require *TransAction II* to be regularly updated and revised. To accomplish this, NDDOT will annually develop an implementation work program and communicate the contents of this work program to the members of the transportation community.

Publishing this *TransAction II* is just a single step toward developing a transportation system that provides the service and performance North Dakotans desire and are willing to support.

Director's Advisory Council (January 2007)

Francis Ziegler, Director, ND Department of Transportation

Jim Boyd, ND Department of Commerce

Paul Govig, ND Department of Commerce

Tim Horner, Deputy Director for Business Support, ND Department of Transportation

Cheryl Kulas, Executive Director, ND Indian Affairs Commission

Gordon LaFrance, Captain, ND Highway Patrol

Gary Lee, ND Senate Transportation Committee

Grant Levi, Deputy Director for Engineering ND Department of Transportation

Dave MacIver, President, Greater ND Association

Keith Magnusson, Deputy Director for Driver and Vehicle Services, ND Dept. of Transportation

Kevin Magstadt, Economic Developers of ND

Gary Ness, Director, ND Aeronautics Commission

Rodney Ness, ND Association of Counties

Mark Owens, ND House Transportation Committee

Doug Prchal, Director, ND Parks and Recreation

Allen Radliff, Division Administrator, Federal Highway Administration

Connie Sprynczynatyk, Executive Director, ND League of Cities

Bob Stenehjem, Senate Majority Leader ND Senate

Robin Weisz, Chairman, ND House Transportation

Ken Yantes, President, ND Township Officers Association

Director's Transportation Forum (April 2006)

Francis Ziegler, Director, ND Department of Transportation

Dean Atkinson, Bobcat

Tom Balzer, ND Parks and Recreation

Brad Bekkedahl, City of Williston

Jim Boyd, ND Department of Commerce

Bob Bright, Fargo-Moorhead Council of Governments

Mylo Candee, Senator Conrad's Office

Jesse Chalich, Northern Plains Rail Road

Sandy Clark, ND Farm Bureau

Melissa Dixon, ND Motor Carriers Association

Blayne Doty, American Crystal Sugar Company

Don Frye, Ottertail Power

Rebecca Gerhardt, Safe Communities

Shane Goettle, ND Department of Commerce

Clarence Greene, Spirit Lake Nation

Carol Grimm, Fargo/Cass Public Health

Joel Gutensohn, Transportation Security Administration

Ed Hall, Three Affiliated Tribes

Russ Hanson, AGC of North Dakota

Director's Transportation Forum (cont.)

Cherie Harms, ND Trade Office

Earle Haugen, Grand Forks–East Grand Forks MPO

Robbin Hendrickson, ND Department of Human Services, Developmental Disabilities Division

Mark Holzer, ND Aeronautics Commission

Mike Jones, ND Mill and Elevator

Bryan Klipfel, Colonel, ND Highway Patrol

Brian Kramer, ND Farm Bureau

Jeremy Laducer, Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa

Ron Luethe, ND Cycling Federation/International Mountain Biking Association

Jon Mielke, Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute

Gary Ness, ND Aeronautics Commission

Leon Osborne, UND Surface Transportation Weather Research Center

Sheryl Pfliger, ND Department of Human Services, Aging Services Division

Doug Prchal, Director, ND Parks and Recreation

Allen Radliff, Federal Highway Administration, North Dakota Division

Pete Red Tomahawk, Standing Rock Sioux Reservation

John Risch, United Transportation Union

Erling Rolfson, Highway 281 Association

Tom Rolfstad, Williston Area Economic Development Partnership

Bob Shannon, Kadrmas Lee & Jackson Inc.

Rich Short, Highway 281 Association

Connie Sprynczynatyk, Executive Director, ND League of Cities

Bob Stenehjem, Senate Majority Leader ND Senate

David Straley, Greater North Dakota Chamber of Commerce

Brian Sweeney, BNSF Railway

Thomas Trenbeath, ND Senate Transportation Committee Chairman

J.P. Wiest, Wiest Trucking Lines Inc.

Dan Zink, Red River Valley and Western Rail Road

The Director's Advisory Council (DAC) provided guidance and advice to the director of the Department of Transportation during the development of *TransAction II*. DAC members developed the mission, vision, and goal statements contained in *TransAction II*. DAC members also participated as members of the Director's Transportation Forum.

The Director's Transportation Forum developed the initiatives and strategies contained in *TransAction II*. These initiatives and strategies were presented to the public for review and comment through a series of public hearings prior to being incorporated into the final draft of *TransAction II*.