Minnesota’s Growing Pedestrian and Bicycle Needs

Safety and health...
Better pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure will help to improve safety and health in Minnesota’s communities. In 2013, 11% of traffic fatalities in Minnesota involved people who were walking or bicycling and more than 1,680 pedestrians and bicyclists were injured. In 2013, 26% of Minnesota adults were obese and 36% were overweight. In addition, 27 percent of Minnesota’s youth between the ages of 10 and 17 are overweight or obese, due in large part to a lack of physical activity such as walking and bicycling.

Economic development...
Walking and biking routes have become an economic development engine and a means of attracting and retaining a strong workforce. Lanesboro, Bemidji and Duluth have seen these benefits. Red Wing, Rochester, Moorhead and other communities are seeking them through new comprehensive transportation plans. Several of Minnesota’s internationally known brands have been recognized nationally as Bicycle Friendly Businesses—such as 3M, General Mills, and Target—along with 55 other businesses, including 22 in Greater Minnesota.

Public demand...
Eighty-three percent of Minnesotans believe that future transportation projects should accommodate not only motorized vehicles, but also walkers and people on bicycles. Likewise, 70 percent of respondents say that if they were deciding where to live today, sidewalks and places to take walks would be important features to them. More than half say the same about being able to bike or walk to other places and activities in their community.

Funding shortfalls...
City and county leaders in Minnesota have reported a backlog of $1.3 billion in projects for sidewalks, curb ramps, safer intersections, and bike routes. MnDOT currently estimates it will have only half the revenue needed for pedestrian and bicycle investments in the state’s trunk highway corridors. In addition, Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) funding also cannot meet demand—during the last round of funding, Minnesota applicants sought $21 million to construct pedestrian and bicycle projects but only $6 million was available.

1 Crash Facts 2013, Minnesota Department of Public Safety
2 MnDOT
5 TLC analysis of city and county existing ped and bike transportation requests
6 MnDOT Minnesota Go State Highway Investment Plan, pp. 58-61
7 MnDOT, in response to query about 2013-14 solicitation