INTRODUCTION

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INTRODUCTION

The Mankato/North Mankato Area Planning Organization’s (MAPO) Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) translates identified multimodal needs into specific actionable projects. The Plan prioritizes improvements to coordinate preservation needs (so as to maintain the future metropolitan transportation system in a state of good repair) with mobility, safety, freight, and congestion needs to accommodate planned growth in the area. The Plan has been financially constrained and also presents new transportation initiatives and strategies. This federally compliant plan outlines how the MAPO and its member jurisdictions will grow and manage the transportation system over the next 30 years (year 2045 horizon).

The MAPO is a new Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) designated because the Mankato/North Mankato urbanized area is now larger than 50,000 population. It is charged with carrying out the 3-C metropolitan transportation planning process (continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive). MAPO is comprised of Blue Earth and Nicollet counties; the cities of Mankato, North Mankato, Eagle Lake, and Skyline; and the townships of Belgrade, Lime, South Bend, LeRay and Mankato. All Plan elements were coordinated with the MAPO member jurisdictions, in particular the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT), Blue Earth County, Nicollet County, City of Mankato, City of North Mankato, and City of Eagle Lake.

Further, the Plan’s development was guided by two key MAPO standing committees:

Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) – the TAC is comprised of 20 individuals representing engineering, planning, transit, public institutions, township, city, county, and state interests. The TAC reviews and formulates recommendations to the Policy Board regarding technical aspects of transportation planning prepared by the MAPO.

Policy Board – the Policy Board is comprised of elected leaders from Blue Earth County, City of Mankato, City of North Mankato, Nicollet County, Mankato Township, and City of Eagle Lake. The MAPO Policy Board reviews, evaluates, comments upon, makes recommendations, and ultimately endorses the required plans and programs such that federal and state funding eligibility is maintained for the metropolitan area.

The full MAPO study area is shown in Figure 1-1.
PLAN FRAMEWORK

The Plan serves as a blueprint for making transportation decisions moving forward. It offers guidance and direction for elected leaders, citizens, economic interests, and stakeholders to achieve a shared vision for system preservation and mobility. In order to provide this guidance, the plan focused on 10 key planning elements, which include the following:

Public Engagement Process

Public participation and agency coordination was an important element in identifying issues and needs and in building support for the overall Transportation Plan. In order to build consensus and garner support for the Plan, a series of stakeholder meetings and open houses were conducted. In addition, other social media channels were used to reach the public including a Facebook page and Twitter account. MySidewalk/MindMixer were also incorporated to expand public engagement and reach community members who frequently use these outlets.

Existing System Conditions

The Existing System Conditions chapter provides a baseline to understand the current transportation system. This chapter presents information on demographics, land use, roadway jurisdiction, system classification, functional classification, system continuity and connectivity, crash history, and existing traffic volumes, along with multimodal elements including freight, rail, public transit, aviation, bicycle, and pedestrian. This data aided in the development of the Plan’s goals and objectives while providing insights on future roadway system operations and needs.

Safety and Crash Assessment

This chapter provides an overview of existing safety concerns along both corridors and intersections throughout the MAPO. Conducting this safety assessment helps set the foundation for identifying goals and objectives and future operation and project needs.

Goals, Objectives, and Performance Measures

In order to be effective, the Plan must address MAPO’s stated transportation goals, objectives, and performance measures. The goals reflect MAPO’s transportation vision, while the objectives provide direction and guidance in achieving these goals. The goals, objectives, and performance measures were developed early in the planning process based on a wide range of stakeholder input and were refined as the technical analysis progressed. In essence, the goals and objectives provided the foundation for the Plan’s development. Performance measures were developed for five of MAPO’s key performance focus areas. These were developed to function as a benchmark to assess and measure progress over time.
Future System Forecasts, Operational Needs, and Modal Opportunities
Over the next 30 years, the MAPO planning area will experience change in land use patterns and traffic growth. It is important to recognize these changes and determine their impacts on the transportation system. This section documents the MAPO area’s future traffic forecasts and resultant future system operations. It also evaluates opportunities for low-cost/high-benefit system improvements and assesses future multimodal issues given the information available at this time. Performance of the system under the 2040 future horizon was compared to the existing system conditions, from which the range of needed improvement of alternatives were developed.

Range of Alternatives
This section defines the scope and cost of needed roadway improvement projects, identifies potential environmental constraints, and analyzes anticipated future operation and maintenance activities and schedules. Previously identified projects, along with new multimodal projects, were compiled to encompass a full range of multimodal alternatives. The range of alternatives were developed recognizing that federal legislation – Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) – dictates system operation, and maintenance activities must be addressed first, before future new construction or system expansion needs are undertaken.

Financial/Revenue Forecast
As required by MAP-21, the Plan must be fiscally constrained by providing an outlook of anticipated revenue streams. This section provides an overview of the reasonably expected future transportation funds available for jurisdictions within the (MAPO) planning area. The financial/revenue forecasts provide an understanding of what partnering agencies can accomplish over the life of the plan for preservation and maintenance projects, major reconstruction/rehabilitation, corridor/intersection expansion, trails, transit, and safety projects.

Implementation Plan
This section presents the project prioritization methodology and schedule and also presents the fiscally constrained program of projects. Project fiscal constraint recommendations were developed to maintain consistency with stakeholder input and technical analysis while satisfying the identified goals. Projects were programmed into four time frames: short-(2016-2020), mid 1-(2021-2025), mid 2-(2026-2030) and long-term (2031-2045). Projects falling outside of the fiscally constrained program of projects are identified as illustrative and can be programmed when additional resources are identified.
Recommended Future Network
The future roadway system plan considered all previous analyses, public input, and the updated goals and objectives and synthesized these into a coordinated set of system recommendations regarding future functional classification and jurisdiction. These recommendations were identified to enhance mobility over the next 30 years.

System Management
The system management section provides policies and tools that can enhance and extend the utility of the current multimodal transportation facilities. These tools include access management, traffic control, right-of-way (ROW), and preservation policies. The policy recommendations and tools identified in this section should be used in coordination with the project recommendations identified in the implementation plan.

MAP-21 COMPLIANCE
This Plan addresses all planning requirements associated with MAP-21. Key features of MAP-21 are:

- MAP-21 consolidated or eliminated many programs, combining them into core programs; this provides greater flexibility to states and metropolitan areas to focus investment in their prioritized transportation needs.
- MAP-21 maintained previously established planning factors, which served as guides when developing MAPO goals and objectives and reviewing projects for implementation.
- MAP-21 included a focus on streamlining project delivery, measuring system performance, and prioritizing improvements.

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) states that “MAP-21 creates a streamlined and performance-based surface transportation program and builds on many of the highway, transit, bike, and pedestrian programs and policies established in 1991.”

The MAPO LRTP applied performance-based planning in selecting fiscally constrained projects to implement over at least the next 30 years. Additional discussion of MAP-21 components is included in Chapter 5 with respect to performance goals and planning factors.

MAP-21 Performance Requirements Summary https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/tpm/about/summary.cfm