

INSIDE THIS EDITION

- President's Message** 3
- Upcoming Events** 4
- Meet the Board** 5
- Symposium Recap** 9
- Section Meetings** 11
- YMC Update** 12
- MnDOT District Safety Plan Updates** 17
- Holistic Transportation Analysis** 20
- Technical Committee Update** 22
- Advertisers** 23
- Member Updates** 25

Fergus Falls Rest Area Study

Caitlin Andress, PE, PTOE, RSP1 | TKDA
Samantha McKinney, PLA, AICP | TKDA

In each issue, the INCITER features articles coordinated by NCITE's advertisers. This article is a contribution from **TKDA**.

The Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) recently undertook the Fergus Falls Vicinity Rest Area Site Selection Study, which addresses pressing safety and service challenges along the busy Interstate 94 corridor near Fergus Falls, MN. With the closure of the Lake Iverson Rest Area in 2010 due to flooding and the anticipated closure of the aging Hansel Lake Rest Area, MnDOT faced an urgent need to fill significant gaps in rest area coverage for both eastbound and westbound traffic. The study, completed in April 2025, utilized a multi-phase planning process, stakeholder engagement, and technical analysis, culminating in recommendations that balance transportation needs with environmental stewardship and community priorities.

Rest areas are not simply conveniences; they are vital safety features on interstate highways. MnDOT's Safety Rest Area (SRA) Program recommends a spacing of 50 to 60 miles between rest facilities, aligning with national guidelines to reduce hazardous shoulder stops, combat driver fatigue, and support commercial truck operations. The closure of the Lake Iverson Rest Area created a 98-mile gap for eastbound traffic, while Hansel Lake's poor condition points to a looming 173-mile gap for westbound travelers.

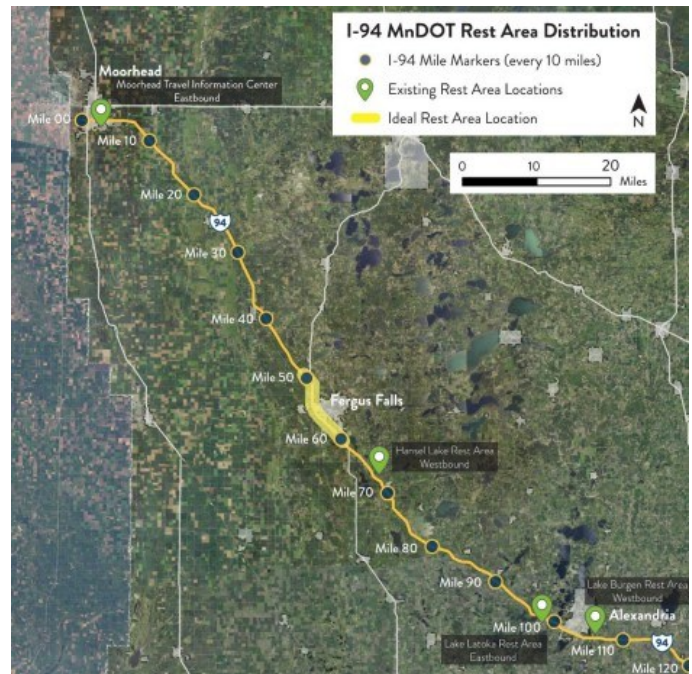


Image Courtesy of TKDA

(Continued on page 14)

JOB OPENINGS

Visit the NCITE website for current job openings | nc-ite.org

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President	Joe Devore , KLJ Engineering joseph.devore@kljeng.com
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GREAT LAKES ITE

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Great Lakes ITE District NCITE Officer	Tyler Krage , Dakota County tyler.krage@co.dakota.mn.us

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hello ITE North Central Section Members,

It has not been an easy start to 2026 for our ITE North Central Section (NCITE) Membership and the communities we serve. I've had conversations with several NCITE members whose last month has been vastly different from anything we've encountered before. Between fear around even the simplest trips, community upheaval after shootings and protests, and city resources being strained as they respond, January 2026 was a turning point for the Twin Cities metro. It has also made our community stronger. Neighbors helping neighbors, some of the largest food drives and community networks formed, and tens of thousands of people coming together to create one of the largest in-person queues I've ever witnessed through downtown Minneapolis. Me being the traffic engineer I am; all I could think about was a microsimulation pedestrian model and what the jam density was along the corridor.

I'm excited to be NCITE's section president in 2026 and would like to thank our past president **Nik Costello** for his leadership and initiatives in 2025. While I build on many of the initiatives that Nik started in 2025, NCITE always needs additional volunteers to deliver on these goals. Two key positions we are looking to fill in 2026 are the InCI TER Coordinator and Social Media Coordinator in addition to opportunities to be a co-chair of one of our five newly condensed technical committees. To those who raised their hands metaphorically via Mentimeter at our last section meeting, there is no better time than now to get more involved with NCITE.



Joe DeVore
2026 NCITE President

NCITE extends across Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota, covering a wide spectrum of roadway priorities. What I've found working in each of these states is while design standards may vary, we all share the same goal of making our communities safer and better places to live. NCITE has been an important part of me discovering that over my career and I'm sure it has helped many of our members take the successes and replicate them in their own communities. I encourage everyone in our section to take advantage of these learning opportunities through our section meetings, committee meetings, PE ethics training, and South Dakota roadshow this year as part of the ITS Northern Lights conference in May. And it's never too early to make our plans for the joint Great Lakes District and ITE Annual Meeting held in Detroit on July 19-22, 2026.

Our first section meeting of 2026 was kicked off at Jax Café again in Minneapolis where **Jason Staebell** from Hennepin County, **Alicia Valenti** from Metro Transit, and **JoNette Kuhnau** from Kimley Horn presented on the Metro B-Line. The METRO B Line is a 13-mile arterial BRT project connecting Uptown Minneapolis to downtown St. Paul, created to address major safety, mobility, and transit-speed challenges along Lake Street, which was a designated High Injury Street in the Minneapolis Vision Zero Action Plan. The presentation and the project as a whole were a great example of a community of transportation professionals coming together to plan, engineer, fund, and construct a complete street for this key South Minneapolis minor arterial road.

I'm grateful to have such a strong 2026 Executive Board supporting me this year. If you have ideas for section meeting topics, suggestions for improving the organization, or ways we can better serve our members, please reach out to us!

- Vice President: **Justin Sebens**
- Secretary: **Sarah Peterson**
- Treasurer: **Jack Olsson**
- Director: **Justin Cyr**
- Director: **Olivia Polinsky-Rose**
- Past President: **Nik Costello**
- ITE Great Lakes Rep: **Tyler Krage**

Looking forward to a great year ahead!

Joe DeVore, 2026 NCITE President

UPCOMING EVENTS

ite Calendar

ITE Calendar for District, Section, & Chapter Meetings

Stay Connected with NCITE & ITE Events
Online & In Person | Dates Vary



NCITE Calendar

Online & In Person | Dates Vary



MINNESOTA TRANSPORTATION CONFERENCE & EXPO

MN Transportation Conference & Expo 2026

St. Paul, MN | March 18-10, 2026

Attend an Upcoming NCITE Technical Committee Meeting!
Check out upcoming topics here.

For more information on the committees and how you can get involved:

https://nc-ite.org/Committee_Listing

For professional development opportunities:

http://nc-ite.org/content.php?page=Professional_Development_Meetings

MEET THE 2026 EXECUTIVE BOARD

Joe DeVore, 2026 NCITE President

Job Title and Employer: Traffic Supervisor/Project Manager at KLJ Engineering

Education: University of Minnesota Civil Engineering

Where You Live: Lino Lakes, MN

Family: Laura (Wife)

Pets: Coffee (Rabbit)

Hometown: Hugo, MN

Hobbies: Baseball, Softball, Volleyball, Golf, and Snowshoeing if it ever snowed enough.

Interesting Facts:

- I was the bullpen catcher for the University of Minnesota Baseball Team.
- I like to help out with my wife Laura's art fair events (I have no artistic talent myself).
- I have only owned one model of vehicle my whole life. Currently a 2011 Ford Ranger but also a 1988 and 2001 Ranger.
- I have worked on corridor studies in every MnDOT district in the past 5 years where I really enjoy getting to see all corners of the state.
- My two favorite places to visit while traveling for work have been Grand Junction, CO and Kalspell, MT

Favorite TV Show: Outer Banks or Found lately

Favorite Podcast: The New York Times Daily and Bellied Up

Favorite Music: Black Keys

Favorite Food: Member of the Twin Cities (Pizza) Pie Chasers – If you haven't had a Sicilian Pizza, go to Mario's Pizza in St Paul

Favorite Book: Currently Reading the Edge of Darkness Series

Favorite Car: Old Ford Rangers and new Mavericks

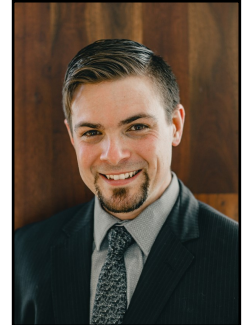
Desired Superpower: Able to clone myself. AI is getting closer....

Best Vacation: New England (NYC; Mystic, CT; Newport, RI; Cape Cod, MS; Rockport/Salem, MS; and Boothbay Harbor, ME)

Do you collect anything? Still have a bunch of 90s MLB and NHL cards. Also an MLB Ballpark Chaser now.

What is the strangest food combination you enjoy? Optimal Pizza toppings are bacon, pineapple, and jalapeno. I will die on that hill.

What is something on your bucket list? Travel to Japan and Germany.



Joe DeVore
President

Justin Sebens, 2026 NCITE Vice President

Job Title and Employer: Senior Project Manager, SRF Consulting Group

Education: BA (Physics) Carthage College, MS (Civil) UW Madison

Where You Live: Rogers

Family: Wife and 2 Kids (Boy – 10 and Girl – 8)

Pets: One Lab/Pitbull mix

Hometown: Seymour, IL

Hobbies: Golfing, Fishing, Playing with the kids and attending their activities

Interesting Facts:

- I jumped 6' 7" in high jump in High School.
- I have been to Disney World three times (once as a kid, twice as an adult).
- My hometown has less than 200 people in it.

Favorite TV Show: Currently it is Suits

Favorite Music: Country

Favorite Food: Sushi

Favorite Restaurant: Any place there is an NCITE Meeting

Favorite Book: Ready Player One

Favorite Car: Yamaha R-6 Sportbike

Desired Superpower: Ability to be in two places at once (Kids activities are crazy)

Biggest Accomplishment: My family

Best Vacation: Disney World

Do you collect anything? Pokémon cards

Strangest food combination you enjoy: Mayo on hotdogs



Justin Sebens
Vice President

MEET THE 2026 EXECUTIVE BOARD

Sarah Peterson, 2026 NCITE Secretary

Job Title and Employer: Traffic Engineer at HDR

Past Work: Student internships at The City of Fargo and HRI Inc. in PA

Education: Bachelor's in civil engineering from NDSU

Where You Live: Alexandria, MN

Family: Husband, Chad

Pets: Chocolate Lab named Hinckley

Hometown: Fargo, ND

Hobbies: Traveling, board games, paddle boarding/kayaking, Volleyball

Interesting Facts:

- I grew up in a big NDSU household. As a kid, I cheered on the Green Bay Packers because I thought it was NDSU, and it stuck. Go Pack Go!
- I feared dogs growing up, especially big ones, and now I can't imagine life without them, especially Hinckley, my 95lb chocolate lab.
- I believed fish could hear me talk until my early twenties. My husband informed me that is a wives tale parents tell there kids to get them to stop talking while fishing.
- In the summer I enjoy exploring new lakes via paddle board.

Best Vacation: 5 weeks in Germany after high school graduation

What is the strangest food combination you enjoy? Wavy potato chips and ketchup. I don't think it's weird, but my husband sure thinks it is.

What is something on your bucket list? Visit (Stay overnight) all 50 states. 17 left to go



Sarah Peterson
Secretary

Jack Olsson, 2026 NCITE Treasurer

Job Title and Employer: Transportation Engineer at Kimley-Horn

Education: Undergrad at Kansas State University / grad school at University of Minnesota (both degrees in civil engineering)

Where You Live: Saint Paul

Family: partner Kelsie, Miles (3)

Pets: Rio (Maltese shih-tzu / 10lb fluff ball dog)

Hometown: Lincoln, Nebraska

Hobbies: Racquet/paddle sports, volleyball, breweries, crosswords

Interesting Facts:

- I started dating my now spouse in high school, and we lived in different states doing long-distance for 5 years
- I can (could? It's been a bit) speak proficiently in Spanish and Portuguese
- I bought a cabin in the Brainerd-area last year
- I have a list of brewery ratings that I try to do for each brewery I go to - it has 5 different categories and a strict scoring system
- I've been a Pittsburgh Steelers fan since I was a kid, though I have no specific connection to Pittsburgh (but tbh I probably started liking them after they won the Super Bowl in 2006)

Favorite TV Show: Big Brother

Favorite Restaurant: I will never get tired of Chipotle

Favorite Book: forever a major Harry Potter nerd (Slytherin, if you're wondering)

What is the strangest food combination you enjoy? chili + cinnamon rolls

What is something on your bucket list? Visiting Brazil (namesake of my dog Rio), which I am finally accomplishing this winter!



Jack Olsson
Treasurer

MEET THE 2026 EXECUTIVE BOARD

Justin Cyr, 2026 NCITE Director

Job Title and Employer: Senior Transportation Engineer | Alliant Engineering, Inc.

Education: Michigan Tech (B.S. 2017), Iowa State (M.S. 2018)

Where You Live: Blaine, MN

Family: Jenny (wife), Lauren (daughter 19-months)

Pets: 1 cat named Kitsy

Hometown: Duluth, MN

Hobbies: trying new restaurants, parks, and mini-golf locations

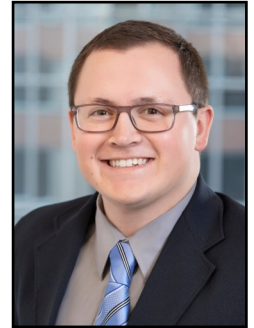
Interesting Facts:

- I am an Eagle Scout
- I can bowl both right- and left-handed
- I am a 2x chili cookoff champion
- I have hiked over 200 miles of the Rocky Mountains
- I carry a 50-cent piece with me

Favorite Podcast: 99% Invisible

Favorite Music: Owl City

Do you collect anything? Coins and trading cards



Justin Cyr
Director

Olivia Polinsky-Rose, 2026 NCITE Director

Job Title and Employer: Traffic Engineer, HDR

Past Work: 2 summers on construction survey team with city of Minneapolis, 1 year internship with MnDOT final design team

Education: University of Minnesota, Twin Cities (2020)

Where You Live: South Minneapolis

Family: Wife (Eleanor), Two sisters (Natalie and Isabel)

Pets: Cat (Harry) and Dog (Hank)

Hometown: Hopkins, MN

Hobbies: Reading, daily walks, golfing

Interesting Facts:

- I'm a born and raised Minnesotan and have been allergic to the cold (Cold Urticaria – it's real, google it!) almost my whole life
- I keep a running list of all the live music I've seen – I'm up to 60 shows, 75+ if you include individual sets at music festivals
- My wife and I have the same birthday on the same year – she was born ~12 hours before me
- I've run one half marathon and the Twin Cities 10 mile run twice
- I have the rarest hair/eye color combination (red hair/blue eyes) – and two of my friends from high school have the same combo

Favorite TV Show: Survivor

Favorite Podcast: This Might Get Weird

Favorite Music: Brandi Carlile

Favorite Food: Any breakfast food

Favorite Restaurant: Martina

Favorite Book: The Women (favorite read in 2025)

Favorite Car: Vintage Ford Bronco

Desired Superpower: Teleporting

What is your useless talent? The Loon Call



Olivia Polinsky-Rose
Director

MEET THE 2026 EXECUTIVE BOARD

Tyler Krage, 2026 Great Lakes ITE District NCITE Officer

Job Title and Employer: Dakota County Traffic Engineer

Past Work: Alliant Engineering, Chicago DOT

Education: U of M

Where You Live: Minneapolis

Family: Wife (Meredith)

Pets: Pepper (Netherland Dwarf Rabbit)

Hometown: Houston, MN

Hobbies: Rock-climbing, live music, biking, travel, cooking, reading

Interesting Facts:

- I do lightshows for local bands using liquids and dyes shined through overhead projectors (think lava lamp visuals). Shameless plug - my insta is @soop_lightshow.
- I'm coaching the MN Traffic Bowl team in Detroit this year
- We have way too many plants at our house, let me know if you want a free plant
- I was born on St Patrick's Day and my wife was born on Easter a month later.
- I've started a yearly tradition where I have a gumbo party around Fat Tuesday. I collect and freeze bones all year round then boil them down to make bone broth for the base and we have a big party with hurricanes and NOLA jams while it cooks.

Favorite TV Show: The Good Place

Favorite Podcast: This American Life

Favorite Restaurant: Creekside Supper Club

Favorite Book: The Sun Also Rises - Hemingway

Favorite Car: '91 Geo Prizm

Most Embarrassing Moment: Butt dialing someone while belting out tunes in the car

Instruments Played: trombone and drums

Best Vacation: Road trip from San Francisco to San Diego

Do you collect anything? Vinyl



Tyler Krage
GLITE District NCITE
Officer

Nic Costello, 2026 NCITE Past President

Job Title and Employer: Engineer III, Washington County Public Works Department

Past Work: Assistant Traffic Engineer, Washington County Public Works Department

Education: University of Minnesota

Where You Live: St Paul

Family: wife Kelly, daughters Ruth (6) and Nora (3)

Pets: dog Karl

Hometown: Stillwater, MN

Hobbies: Golfing, fishing, camping, skiing, curling, traveling

Interesting Facts:

- My wife and I met in kindergarten, but didn't end up dating till after college.
- I was a varsity cheerleader in high school.
- I've never broken a bone.
- I've attended at least one session of the MN High School State Hockey Tournament for 37 years in a row.
- I once caught a 50lb sturgeon while walleye fishing on the Rainy River.

Favorite TV Show: Twin Peaks (TV show), Rushmore (movie)

Favorite Music: Everybody Wants to Rule the World by Tears for Fears is the greatest song ever recorded

Favorite Restaurant: Sea Salt

Favorite Book: The Hat Trilogy by Jon Klassen

Biggest Accomplishment: Raising my daughters (#GirlDad)



Nik Costello
Past President

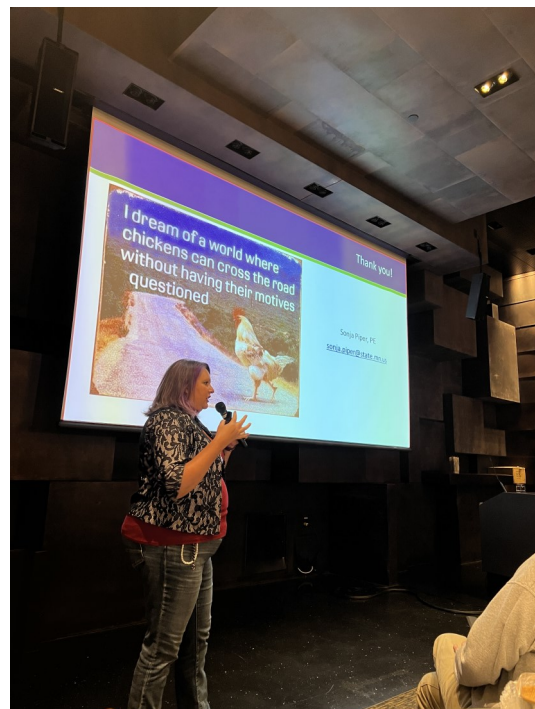
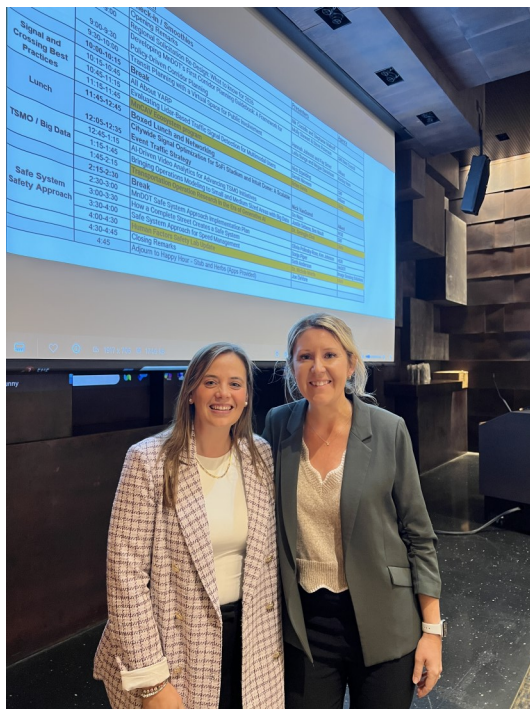
2025 TRANSPORTATION SYMPOSIUM

The 2025 NCITE/CTS Transportation Symposium was held on October 9th 2025 at the Macnamara Alumni Center on the University of Minnesota Twin Cities Campus. The symposium included presentations on engineering projects in Minnesota and the Greater Midwest Area.

Presentations included:

- Regional Solicitation Re-Design: What to know for 2026 with Molly Stewart & Steve Peterson from SRF and Met Council
- Developing MnDOT's First Corridor Planning Guidebook: A Framework for Policy-Driven Corridor Planning with Hannah Johnson & Fay Simer from Alliant
- Transit Planning with a Virtual Space for Public Involvement with Morgan Nelson & Leila Bunge from Kimley Horn
- All About YARP with Nick Erpelding from SRF
- Evaluating Lidar-Based Traffic Signal Detection for Multimodal Users with Derek Nieveen from Alliant
- MnCAV Ecosystem program with Brian Davis from UMN
- Citywide Signal Optimization for SoFi Stadium and Intuit Dome: A Scalable Event Traffic Strategy with Nick VanGunst from Alliant
- AI-Driven Video Analytics for Advancing TSMO Initiatives with Do Nam from WSB
- Bringing Operations Modeling to Small and Medium Sized Areas with Big Data with Justin Sebens & Ben Nault from SRF
- Transportation Operation Research in the Era of Generative AI with Dr. Seongjin Choi from UMN
- How a Complete Street Creates a Safe System with Sonja Piper from MnDOT
- MnDOT Safe System Approach Implementation Plan with Olivia Polinsky-Rose, Ken Johnson from HDR
- Safe System Approach for Speed Management with Seth Anderson from Image Sensing Solutions
- Human Factors Safety Lab Update with Dr. Nichole Morris from UMN

View the 2025 Symposium presentations [here!](#)



2025 TRANSPORTATION SYMPOSIUM



SECTION MEETING UPDATE

The November Section Meeting held on November 4th 2025 at **Surly Brewing Co** in Minneapolis Minnesota was sponsored by **Alliant Engineering**. **Maurice Roers** is the Director for Planning & Policy within MnDOT's Office of Sustainability & Public Health presented on Assessing Transportation's Emissions Impacts. **Paul Morris** SRF's Director of System and Policy Studies presented on Envisioning a Statewide Travel Demand Model for Minnesota.

You can watch the November Section Meeting Presentations [here!](#)



YMC UPDATE

The Younger Members Committee (YMC) had a fun fall outing to Top Golf on October 20th. We enjoyed food, drinks, conversation, and of course, lots of fun Top Golf games. Some favorites included the classic Angry Birds game and the seasonal Field Goal challenge. Our last event this year will be a pre-Annual Meeting happy hour on November 14th from 4-5pm at **High Pines Brewing Company**, just a few minutes away from the annual meeting at Smash Park.

The Younger Member Committee is excited for another year of events connecting and supporting young professionals in transportation! Blake Andert (bandert@sehinc.com) is returning as chair, and Hannah DeBruin (Hannah.DeBruin@hdrinc.com) has replaced Olivia Polinsky-Rose as co-chair for 2026.

Our first YMC meeting this year was an ice-skating night at Centennial Lakes in Edina! We met at Hughes Pavilion, where skate rentals and concessions were available.

Location: [Hughes Pavilion](#)



Additionally, if you are planning on attending the **2026 Joint ITE International and Great Lakes District Annual Meeting** in Detroit this July, consider applying for an [Endowment fund award](#)! This fund is available for young members (not just students), and award amounts can be anywhere from \$500 to \$3,000. The deadline to apply is February 13th. Contact Tyler Krage (Tyler.Krage@CO.DAKOTA.MN.US) with any questions.

Do you have a fun event idea or want to help plan a YMC outing? Reach out to Blake (bandert@sehinc.com) or Hannah (Hannah.DeBruin@hdrinc.com) to join the YMC planning committee! We meet a few times a year, usually at a brewery or restaurant, to coordinate on any upcoming events, and we would love to see you there!

If you or a co-worker are interested in joining the Young Member Committee please visit the YMC Page on the NCITE Website [here](#). If you are not receiving the YMC StarChapter emails, please reach out to Blake (bandert@sehinc.com) or Hannah (Hannah.DeBruin@hdrinc.com) to get on the mailing list.

MEET THE 2026 YMC CO-CHAIRS

Name: Blake Andert

Job Title and Employer: Traffic Engineer at SEH

Education: Bachelor's degree from University of Minnesota-Twin Cities

Where You Live: Saint Paul

Hometown: Burnsville, MN

Hobbies: Travelling, reading, playing bar trivia, and being active in rec sports leagues.

Three Interesting Facts:

- I biked across Iowa.
- I am a Minnesota sports fan.
- I visited Hoover Dam last year.



Name: Hannah DeBruin

Job Title and Employer: Traffic EIT at HDR

Education: B.S. from University of Iowa and M.S. from University of Minnesota-Twin Cities

Where You Live: St Louis Park, MN

Hometown: Des Moines, IA

Hobbies: Traveling, going to concerts and plays, movies, book club, and rec league volleyball!

Three Interesting Facts :

- I studied abroad in Italy.
- I worked in the Transit Lab at UMN and published research about bikeshare optimization.
- I met Hozier in the Electric Fetus record store.



If you or a co-worker are interested in joining the Young Member Committee please visit the YMC Page on the NCITE Website [here](#). If you are not receiving the YMC StarChapter emails, please reach out to Blake (bandert@sehinc.com) or Hannah (Hannah.DeBruin@hdrinc.com) to get on the mailing list.

These gaps not only increase risks for drowsy driving, which implicated in over 5,000 crashes and 30 fatalities in Minnesota from 2014 to 2018, but also reduce opportunities for safe breaks, staging of commercial deliveries, and access to necessary traveler amenities.

Study Process:

The Fergus Falls Vicinity Rest Area Site Selection Study unfolded over 21 months, from April 2023 to December 2024, in five distinct phases:

1. Stakeholder Engagement: The first phase of community engagement centered around developing a deeper understanding of user behavior and site issues. The project team created a public engagement plan, launched a project website as a central resource hub, and hosted several small group and on-site engagement events. Engagement was focused on the commercial trucking community and general travelers of the corridor, who provided an important perspective on the function of rest areas. In the end, 456 total survey responses were collected, and TKDA found that traffic concerns, safety, physical accessibility, and ease of access were the top priorities of the respondents.

2. Data Collection: Phase 2 developed the basis of understanding for the four sites. The research phase produced five documents: Traffic Analysis and Research Report, Land Use and Developmental Regulations Review, Access Review, Matrix Evaluation, and Site Analysis Graphics.

3. Site Investigation / Analysis: The project team investigated and analyzed each site further using the collected data. Site analysis graphics were developed for each site, along with a detailed matrix outlining the key issues discovered. Additionally, a Purpose and Need Statement and Benefit-Cost Analysis were developed.

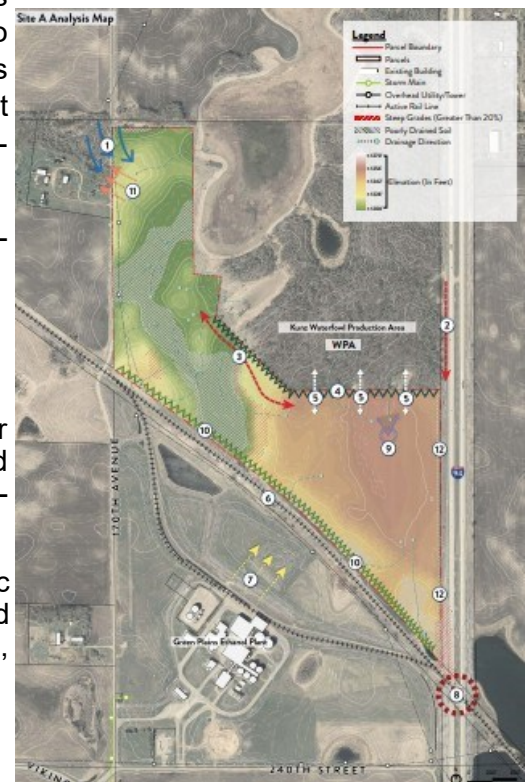
4. Stakeholder Engagement: The second stakeholder engagement phase focused on presenting the findings of the study and discovering how the new rest area would impact traveling experiences along I-94. The project website was updated to include all findings and documents produced during the first three phases. An online survey was used to collect feedback on the findings, a second small-group meeting was convened, and the team facilitated on-site engagement events at rest areas along I-94. In the end, it was determined that 89% of respondents felt the rest area would positively impact their travel experience.

5. Final Site Selection: This study process concluded with the development of a report summarizing the findings.

Site Analysis:

The study evaluated four potential sites using eight core criteria for evaluation: environmental impact, site quality, size and spacing, land acquisition, cost, utilities, traffic access, and bi-directional accessibility. Each site presented unique opportunities and constraints:

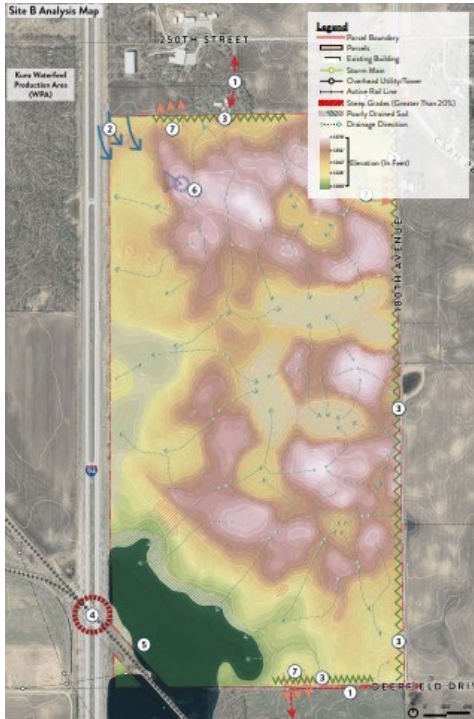
- Site A: Adjacent to a Waterfowl Production Area, offering aesthetic value and green space but impacted by proximity to a railway and ethanol plant. Moderately favorable for bi-directional access, though within the I-94 Snow Closure Zone.



Site A Analysis Maps

Fergus Falls Rest Area Study (continued from page 14)

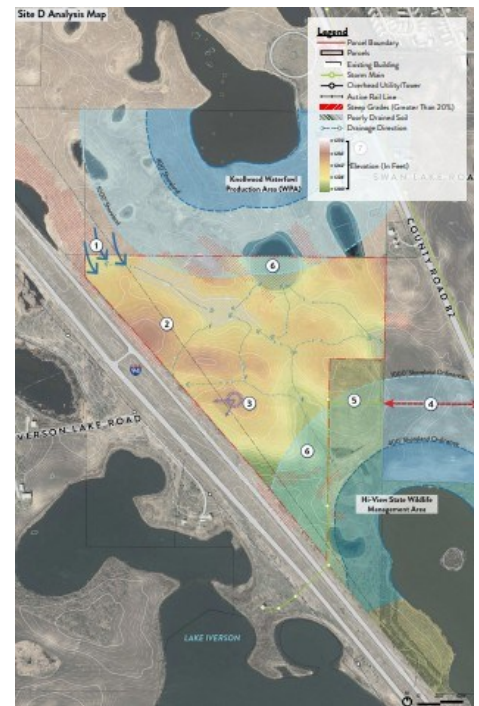
- Site B: The largest parcel, with minimal wetland impact but little natural buffer and potential acquisition barriers. Also within the Snow Closure Zone.
- Site C: Contains a central wetland requiring extensive permitting and offers limited green space; bi-directional access was not feasible.
- Site D: Surrounded by conservation areas, outside the Snow Closure Zone, and adjacent to existing utilities. Presents challenges due to nearby lakes and underground utilities but scored highest for single-direction access.



Site B Analysis Maps



Site C Analysis Maps



Site D Analysis Maps

Fergus Falls Rest Area Study (continued from page 15)

Traffic and Safety Analysis:

Technical analysis revealed that recreational traffic peaks during summer weekends, with heavy vehicle counts comprising roughly 24% of corridor traffic. Crash rates northwest of Lincoln Avenue exceeded statewide averages, reinforcing the need for improved facilities. Benefit-cost analysis demonstrated that new rest areas would yield a ratio of nearly 3:1 in crash reduction benefits versus construction costs over a 50-year period, primarily due to decreased drowsy driving and safer parking options for commercial vehicles.

Project Challenges:

The most significant challenges faced in the Fergus Falls project included:

- Environmental Protection: Avoiding impacts on sensitive wetlands, shorelands, and wildlife habitats while meeting regulatory requirements.
- Land Acquisition: Navigating unknown barriers and costs, especially at larger sites.
- Community Concerns: Addressing issues of noise, safety, and property values for nearby residents, as well as potential impacts on local businesses.
- Design Complexity: Ensuring access for oversized vehicles, hazardous materials, and winter conditions, and providing bidirectional accessibility with minimal disruption.
- Financial Constraints: Estimating construction and long-term maintenance costs amid fluctuating demand and changing traffic patterns.

Key Outcomes:

The Fergus Falls project serves as a valuable model for infrastructure planning, demonstrating the importance of balancing environmental protection, community interests, and financial realities. By carefully evaluating each potential site and considering both technical and social factors, planners were able to recommend solutions that meet diverse needs while minimizing negative impacts. These lessons can be applied to future projects, ensuring that thoughtful, inclusive decision-making leads to sustainable and successful outcomes for communities and the environment alike.



MnDOT District Safety Plan (DSP) Update

Zachary Einck, PE, RSP1 | HDR
Richard Storm, PE, PTOE | HDR

In each issue, the INCITER features articles coordinated by NCITE's advertisers.
This article is a contribution from HDR.

Road safety plans were updated for MnDOT districts in which every state-owned highway segment, curve, and intersection was analyzed. The purpose of these plans is to prioritize locations with the greatest safety risks and then identify projects that can prevent fatal and serious injury crashes. This update to the district safety plans was the first since 2016. HDR helped to update the plans for MnDOT Districts 3, 6, and Metro.

MnDOT places high priority on preventing fatal and serious injury crashes, as those severe crashes have the highest impacts in terms of loss of life, loss of quality of life, and costs associated with the crash. This follows the Safe System Approach principle that transportation deaths and serious injuries are unacceptable. Because severe crashes are spread across a large network, a reactive approach to assign countermeasures only at locations with a severe crash history wouldn't address the risk of future severe crashes. Therefore, this project used a proactive systemic approach to identify risks associated with severe crashes and treat locations with the greatest risk for a future severe crash.

Plan Development

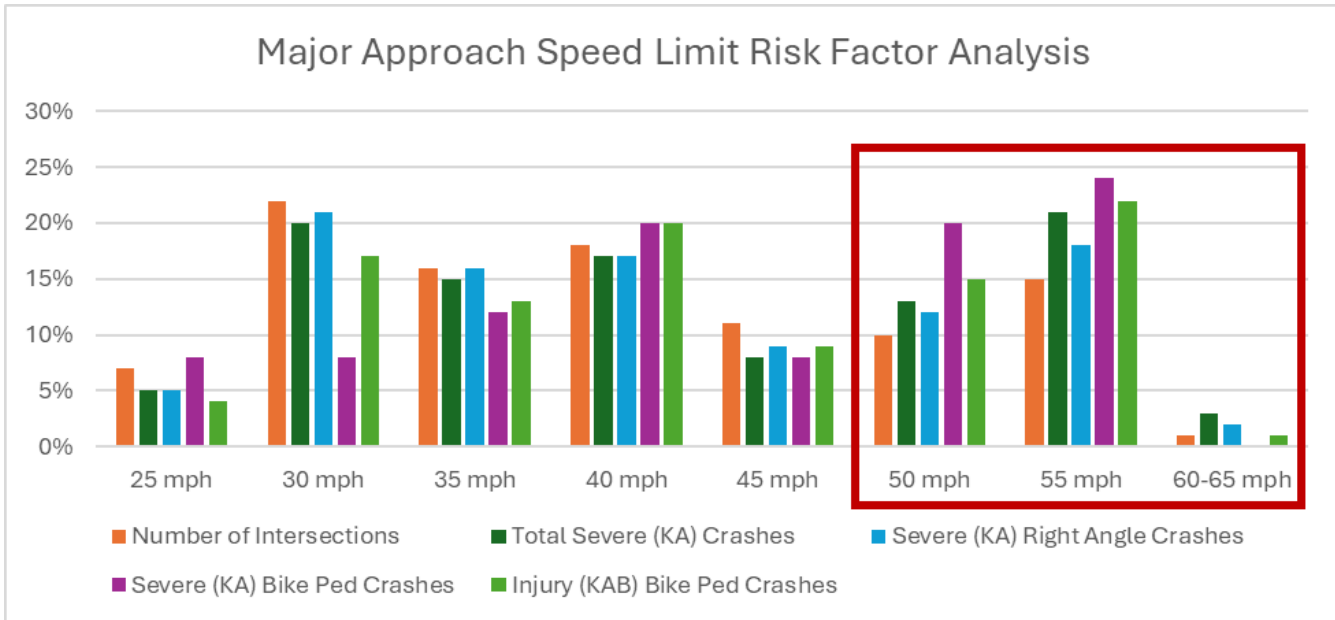
The development of the district safety plans started with identification of the MnDOT highway network, including Minnesota trunk highways, US trunk highways, and interstates. With MnDOT district staff input, highways were segmented into homogeneous sections based on their number of lanes, functional class, urban/rural designation, and similar AADTs. All MnDOT intersections were added, including where the trunk highway intersects with county, municipal, and other local roads. All curves along MnDOT highways in rural areas were included as well. Statewide, this amounts to over 2,800 segments, 6,000 curves, and 21,000 intersections in the DSP database.

A large data collection effort gathered two-dozen different fields for every segment, intersection, and curve. For both the network development and data collection, quality control was a major factor in making the database accurate and uniform throughout the entire state. The DSP update had a wide range of tasks, but this article focuses on the development of risk factors and their ability to predict future severe crash locations.

Risk Factor Identification

A systemic crash analysis was conducted to identify risk factors. Road characteristics (such as traffic volumes, land use, number of lanes, intersection control type, curve radii, etc.) were analyzed to determine which characteristics were overrepresented in fatal and serious injury crashes and were therefore considered as risk factors. This process was accomplished for the road characteristics for over 20 roadway types (such as rural two-lane segments, urban signalized intersections, etc.). To complete the analysis in a timely manner, the project team used a risk factor tool to automate the process and validate results. Final risk factors were chosen based on their overrepresentation of severe crashes, if the overrepresentation was statistically significant, and with input from MnDOT OTE and district staff.

An example of the risk factor selection process is shown in the accompanying bar chart, in which speed limits at signalized intersections within the Metro District were analyzed as a potential risk factor. For intersections with a major approach speed limit of 50 mph or greater, the proportion of target severe crashes at high-speed intersections is greater than the proportion of the high-speed intersections within the network. Therefore, a major approach speed limit of 50 mph or greater was selected as a risk factor.



Two sets of risk factors were identified for most road facility types: severe crashes involving only vehicles and severe ped/bike crashes. Examples of the risk factor sets are shown here.

Metro Urban Signal Control

Road Characteristic	Final Risk Factor
Cross Product ADT	100,000,000 and greater
Major Approach Speed Limit	50 mph and greater
Minor Approach Speed Limit	35 mph
Minor Max Thru Lanes by Approach	2 lanes
Major Median	Curb and depressed
Primary Land Use	Urban Commercial
SPACE	68 and greater
Severe Right Angle Crashes	At least one KA Right Angle Crash

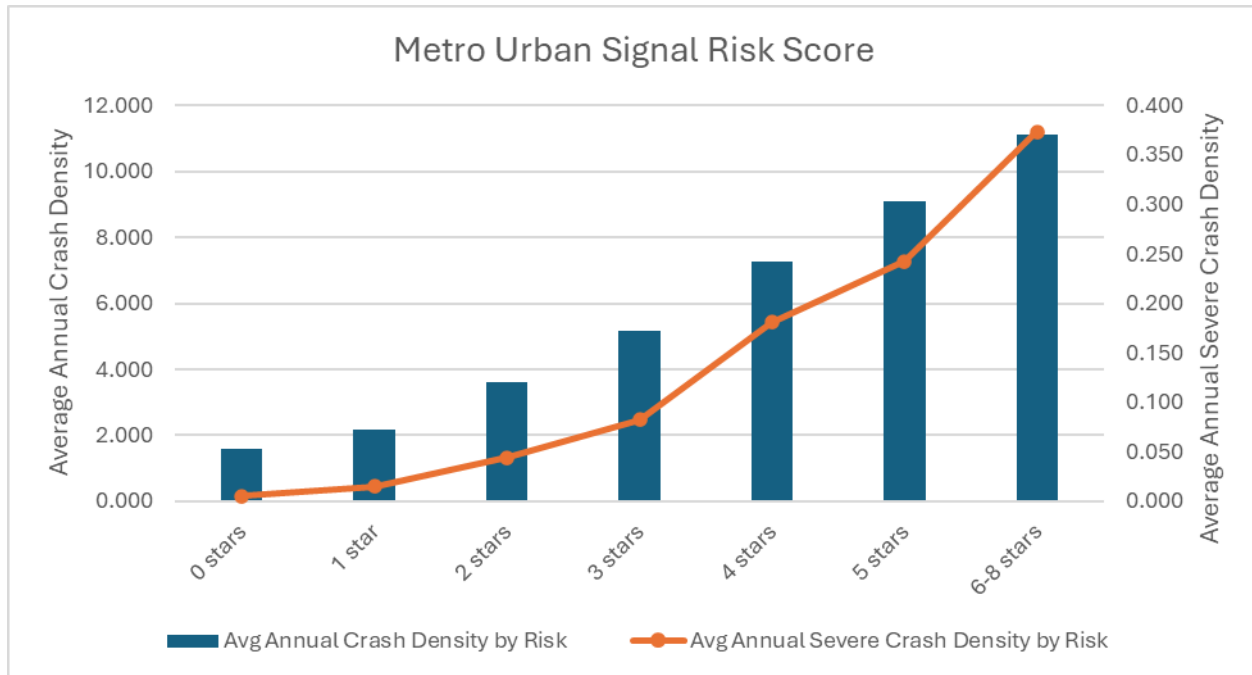
Metro Urban Signal Control Ped/Bike

Road Characteristic	Final Risk Factor
Cross Product ADT	60,000,000 and greater
Major Approach Speed Limit	50 mph and greater
Minor Approach Speed Limit	35-40 mph
Minor Max Thru Lanes by Approach	2 lanes
Major or Minor Median Type	Curb and Depressed
SPACE	68 and greater
Bus Stop	Present
Major Left Turn Type	Dual
Development	Present
Right Turn on Red	Yield/Channelized right turn present
Ped/Bike Crashes	At least one KAB Ped/Bike Crash

The number of risk factors were added together for each segment, intersection, and curve to assign risk scores. Risk scores were the primary means for prioritization; locations with the highest risk scores were selected as high-priority for safety project recommendations. Districts refined the list of high-priority locations based on their knowledge of the network and future construction projects. Safety projects were chosen based on the risks present in addition to site characteristics, crash history, and further input from the districts. Additional implementation details were tied to the recommendations to improve their efficacy, including planning-level costs, potential funding sources, and future adjacent MnDOT projects that the recommendations could be tied with.

Risk Factor Validation

The systemic safety process is a proactive approach to prioritize locations based on the risk of a future severe crash instead of needing a severe crash to have occurred first. The project team still wanted to review the connection between crashes and risk scores to verify high-risk locations resulted in more crashes. For each facility type, average crash densities were calculated based on risk scores. This analysis found that, in general, higher crash densities and severe crash densities occur at locations with higher risk scores for 2018-2022, which are the years used to identify risk factors.



To further prove the effectiveness of the risk scores, a similar crash density / risk score comparison was done with crash data from 2023-2024. This additional analysis found a similar trend in that crash densities and severe crash densities increase at locations with higher risk scores, and that high risk scores from the DSP are an indicator of future severe crashes.

Conclusion

Systemic risk scores and safety project recommendations to prevent severe crashes were developed for MnDOT trunk highways as part of the district safety plan updates. MnDOT district staff can use the recommendation details to plan for future construction projects and, if needed, use the DSP risk scores to prioritize additional locations for safety improvements.

Holistic Transportation Analysis: A Data-Driven Framework for Safer, More Equitable Corridors

Heather Kienitz, PE | SEH

In each issue, the INCITER features articles coordinated by NCITE's advertisers. This article is a contribution from **SEH**.

Transportation corridors rarely fail because of a single issue. Safety problems emerge where land use intensifies faster than infrastructure is improved. Congestion worsens where modal demands overlap within limited right-of-way. Multimodal conflicts appear where systems were not designed to operate together.

These conditions are not isolated. They are the product of how vehicles, pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, and adjacent land uses interact every day along the same corridor.

As agencies face increasing pressure to deliver measurable safety improvements, support multimodal access, address equity goals, and compete for limited funding, understanding those interactions is no longer optional. It requires moving beyond mode-by-mode evaluation and toward a system-level view of corridor performance.

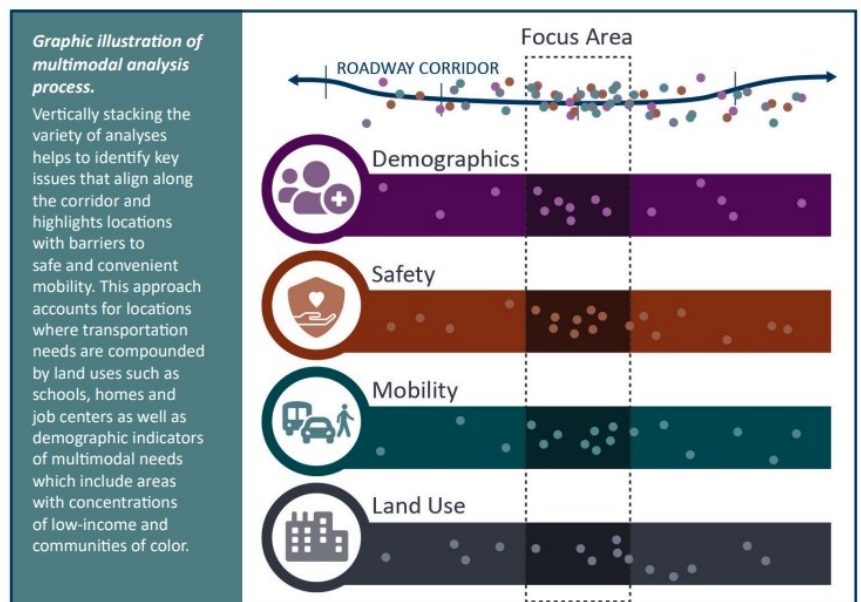
Holistic transportation analysis provides that framework. By integrating multimodal operations, safety trends, land use context, and demographic factors into a single analytical lens, agencies can better diagnose corridor issues, establish defensible priorities, and direct investments where they will produce the greatest benefit.

Limitations of Traditional Corridor Analysis

Historically, corridor studies have followed a linear, mode-by-mode structure. Motor vehicle operations were typically evaluated first, followed by separate analyses of pedestrian, bicycle, and transit conditions. Broader context such as land use, access, and equity considerations were incorporated as scope and data allowed.

This approach aligned with established tools, performance measures, and design workflows, allowing projects to advance efficiently.

However, as transportation objectives have expanded, the limitations of this structure have become more apparent. Evaluating modes and context independently can obscure relationships between safety performance, access, land use, and demographic factors such as vehicle ownership until later project phases. High-injury locations, multimodal conflicts, or equity-driven needs may not surface until design concepts are already developed, increasing project risk, cost, and stakeholder friction.



Graphical Illustration of Multimodal Analysis Process

An Integrated Approach to Corridor Understanding

Holistic multimodal analysis reorganizes the analytical process around system behavior rather than modal performance alone. Instead of asking how each mode functions independently, it examines how users interact across modes and why travel patterns occur where they do.

This approach integrates:

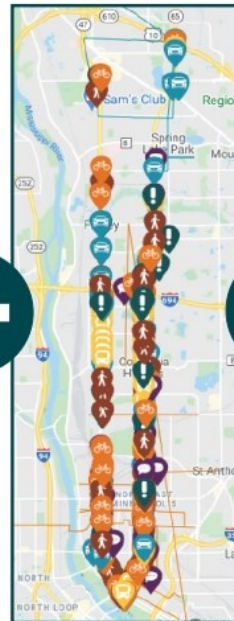
- Multimodal operational data
- Crash history and severity trends
- Land use and access patterns
- Demographic indicators of transportation reliance
- Corridor-specific constraints and opportunities (natural features, limited right-of-way, drainage issues, etc)

When analyzed together, these datasets reveal patterns that are difficult to detect in isolated evaluations. Safety issues linked to land use intensity, unmet multimodal demand near key destinations, and compounded access challenges in vulnerable communities become clearer earlier in the process.

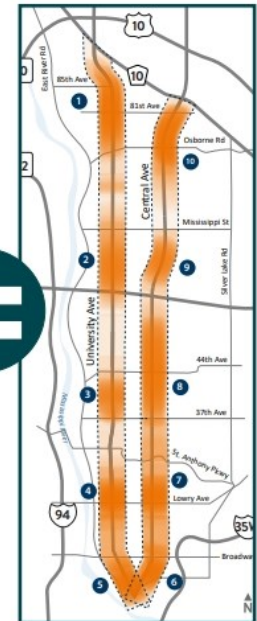
Multimodal Analysis
Preliminary Focus Areas



Feedback from
Public Engagement



Key Focus Areas
for Hwy 47/Hwy 65



Focus Area Map

SEH's methodology focuses on synthesizing complex technical analysis into actionable insights. Modal separation is reduced, equity is embedded within the analysis, and results are communicated through clear visuals and corridor narratives that support informed decision-making. This enables earlier identification of priority segments, particularly where transportation performance is influenced by factors such as adjacent schools, employment centers, housing, or populations with higher reliance on walking, biking, or transit.

Implications for Project Development and Funding

Federal programs such as BUILD, Safe Streets and Roads for All, and the Highway Safety Improvement Program increasingly prioritize safety outcomes, multimodal accessibility, community benefits, and cost-effective solutions. Projects that rely solely on traditional traffic performance metrics often struggle to demonstrate these benefits convincingly.

Holistic transportation analysis aligns technical evaluation with funding criteria from the outset. It strengthens the project narrative, supports data-driven justification for improvements, and reduces the need to retrofit safety or equity considerations late in project development.

For agencies and practitioners, this integrated approach improves technical rigor, reduces downstream risk, and produces corridor strategies that better reflect real-world conditions and policy expectations.

In short, holistic analysis is rooted in sound engineering and planning practice. It yields better results, clearer priorities, and a stronger path to implementation.

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE UPDATE



Geometric Design Technical Committee

Committee Chair: **Amanda Vetter** amanda.vetter@apexenggroup.com

Recent Agenda Items: No recent meetings.

Future Agenda Items: TBD

Next Meeting: TBD

More info [here!](#)



Intersection Traffic Control Technical Committee

Co-Chairs: **Tyler Krage** tyler.krage@co.dakota.mn.us **Michael Odell** michael.odell@minneapolisismn.gov

Recent Agenda Items: No recent meetings.

Future Agenda Items: Complaint Resolution and Asset Management

Next Meeting: February 17, 2026

More info [here!](#)



Emerging Technologies in Transportation Technical Committee

Co-Chairs: **Jake Eisinger** jake.eisinger@washingtoncountymn.gov, **Nathan Wade** nathan@flowlabs.ai

Recent Agenda Items: No recent meetings.

Future Agenda Items: TBD

Next Meeting: TBD

More info [here!](#)



Complete Streets and Safety Committee

Co-Chairs: **Sarah Peterson** sarah.peterson@hdrinc.com **Sri Durga Yada** SriDurga.Yada@hdrinc.com

Recent Agenda Items: No recent meetings.

Future Agenda Items: TBD

Next Meeting: TBD

More info [here!](#)



Planning Methods and Applications Technical Committee

Committee Chair: **Erik Kappelman** EKappelman@srfconsulting.com

Recent Agendas Items: No recent meetings

Future Agendas Items: TBD

Next Meeting: TBD

More info [here!](#)



Traffic Operation and Maintenance Discussion Group

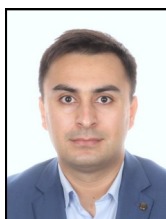
Committee Chair: **Greg Boche** greg.boche@washingtoncountymn.gov

Recent Agenda Items: What are agencies using to mark or delineate culvert ends? PTZ Camera info.

Future Agenda Items: TBD

Next Meeting: TBD

More info [here!](#)



Simulation and Capacity Analysis Technical Committee

Committee Chair: **Sajid Raza** sajid.raza@mbakerintl.com

Recent Agenda Items: No recent meetings.

Future Agenda Items: TBD

Next Meeting: TBD

More info [here!](#)



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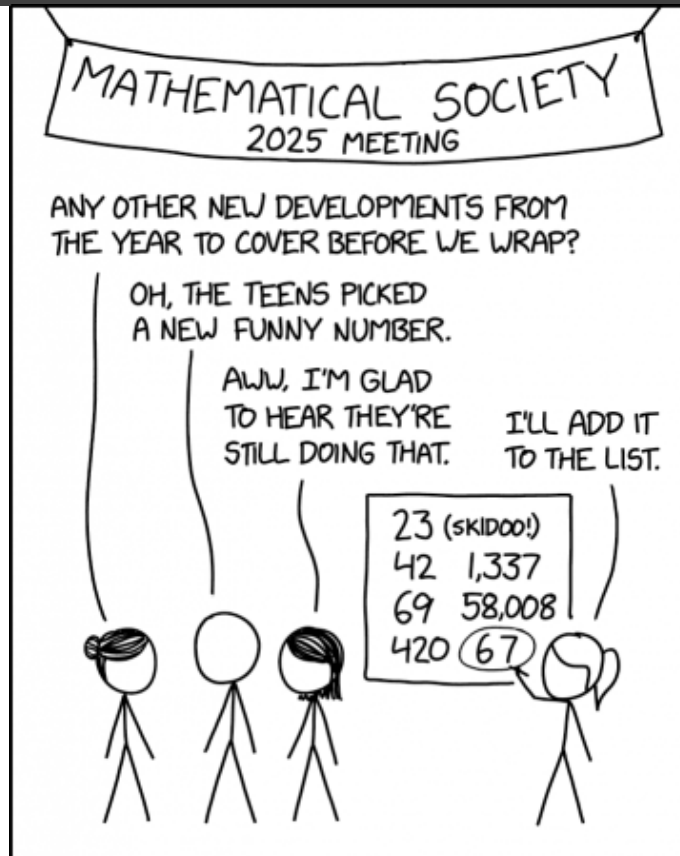


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MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

New Members

Abdulla Alishaqi, Stonebrooke Engineering

Bradley Allen, Alliant Engineering

AJ Anderson, City of Minneapolis

Timothy Arens, Ackerman-Estvold

Jody Baldock, North Dakota State University

Leah Haman

Caleb Harff, Alliant Engineering

Sheila Johnson, MnDOT

Eric Klute, MnDOT

Clint McCullough, MnDOT

Bill Meinholz, MnDOT

Musab Mohammed, MnDOT

Christopher Nobach, MnDOT

Eliezer Ramirez, MnDOT

Kyle Streicher, Alliant Engineering

Alyssa Taylor, City of Sioux Falls

Chamere Thomas, Alliant Engineering

Bryan Zhang

Noah Haussmann, University of Minnesota

Moves

Gina Heim, Dakota County, formerly SRF Consulting

Thomas Bauer, Miovision, formerly Traffic Technology Services, Inc.

New 2025 Certifications

Caitlin Address, PTOE, RSP1

Jonathan Wiegand, PTOE, RSP1

IN MEMORIAM

Sheldon J. “Shelly” Johnson of Plymouth, Minnesota, a respected leader in the transportation engineering industry, passed away on December 28, 2025. Shelly was a Fellow of the Institute of Transportation Engineers and served as President of the North Central Section in 1978. He was a member of the International Board of Direction and chaired the committee that produced the inaugural *Parking Generation* report. Shelly began his career as a traffic engineer at the City of Minneapolis, but aspired to work in major cities across the country. He fulfilled that goal through positions at consulting firms in Chicago, Dallas, and Los Angeles before finishing his career back in Minnesota at Bonestroo in Roseville. He retired in 2008 to spend more time with his family.

Throughout his decades of service, Shelly was known for his practical wisdom and mentorship. He often reminded staff of the importance of looking beyond the computer: visit your project sites, give a “gut-check” to software outputs, and remember your life outside the office.

If you or a friend has changed jobs or moved, we would like to stay in touch. Members, please update your information by visiting https://nc-ite.org/Updating_your_Information. To access this area, you will need to know your membership number. Your “username” is your membership number, and your “password” is the first 6 letters of your last name (e.g. Johnson=Johnso). Non-members please contact Michael Gille via phone (612.294.9733) or email (michael.gille@kimley-horn.com) for assistance. Please provide you name, title, employer, complete street address (including mailstop, if applicable), telephone number, fax number, and email address.



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