



Office of Sustainability & Public Health

2025-2030

STRATEGIC PLAN

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Office of Sustainability & Public Health
Amber Dallman
amber.dallman@state.mn.us

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Executive Summary

OSPH Strategic Plan Alignment and Implementation

The Office of Sustainability & Public Health (OSPH) has developed a comprehensive strategic plan for 2025-2030 that aligns with [MnDOT's 2023-2027 Strategic Plan](#), the [Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan \(SMTP\) 2022](#), and the [Minnesota State Highway Investment Plan \(MNSHIP\)](#), as well as broader state and federal transportation policies. This plan aims to enhance OSPH's performance and impact by expanding sustainability and public health priorities in transportation.

Key Strategic Directions

OSPH identified three key strategic directions to advance the focus areas of climate action, critical connections, and healthy, equitable and thriving communities. These key directions will take time and require OSPH staff to identify and create more detailed action plans.

1. Office Reorganization for the Integration of Public Health and Sustainability

By early 2025, *OSPH* will reorganize staff, adding three supervisory roles to create units focused on policy integration and expanded technical assistance to internal customers. In 2025, the “Integration” team will establish (4) regionally focused “Sustainability & Public Health Liaison” roles to work directly with districts. These roles will collaborate with MnDOT districts to implement OSPH policy priorities, integrate SMTP priorities of climate action, critical connections and healthy, equitable and thriving communities and ensure alignment with existing project development processes.

2. Annual Work Plans and Progress Reporting (2025 Onward):

The newly formed teams will document core activities and develop annual work plans outlining specific actions and projects aligned with OSPH’s strategic priorities. OSPH will conduct a needs assessment to understand district processes and projects. Regular feedback mechanisms from internal partners will be integrated into these annual team work plans. OSPH will share progress through the OSPH monthly webinar series.

3. Strategic Priorities for 2025-2030:



PRIORITY 1: POLICY INTEGRATION

Embed sustainability and public health policies across MnDOT’s operations, from project development to district-level processes.



PRIORITY 2: TOOLS AND RESOURCES

Build capacity through shared tools, data analytics, technical assistance, and grant management systems to support expanded performance.



PRIORITY 3: STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS

Invest in storytelling, public engagement, and communication strategies that aid implementation, education, and outreach.



PRIORITY 4: WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Build a sustainable and diverse workforce, emphasizing public health and sustainability expertise across MnDOT.



PRIORITY 5: PARTNER COLLABORATION

In partnership with districts, collaborate with local governments and stakeholders to advance statewide climate action and public health initiatives.

Background and Strategic Purpose

OSPH was established in response to Minnesota’s growing need for a sustainability and public health focus in transportation, particularly to address climate change and public health disparities. Since its inception, OSPH has driven initiatives such as carbon reduction, resilience planning, and public health integration. Federal investments from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) and state funding have allowed OSPH to increase capacity and take bold actions in the transportation sector to meet emissions reduction targets and improve community health. The 2025-2030 strategic plan reflects feedback from stakeholders, emphasizing the need for stronger collaboration with MnDOT districts and specialty offices, greater efficiencies, and deeper integration of OSPH priorities into district processes and project development.

By reorganizing its structure and aligning with key state and federal transportation policies, OSPH is positioned to enhance its impact on sustainability and public health outcomes across Minnesota. The 2025-2030 Strategic Plan will drive MnDOT’s efforts in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, promoting healthier communities, and advancing equitable transportation solutions through collaboration, innovation, and capacity building.

Office of Sustainability & Public Health Focus Areas



5 Strategic Priority Areas



Policy Integration

Integrate OSPH priorities into MnDOT policies, projects, programs, District processes, and project guidance.

Tools and Resources

Build shared resources, tools, and systems for expanded performance including trainings, technical assistance, grant management, GIS, data analytics, and operations functions.

Strategic Communications

Invest in strategic communications, storytelling and mechanisms for two-way internal and external engagement.

Workforce Development

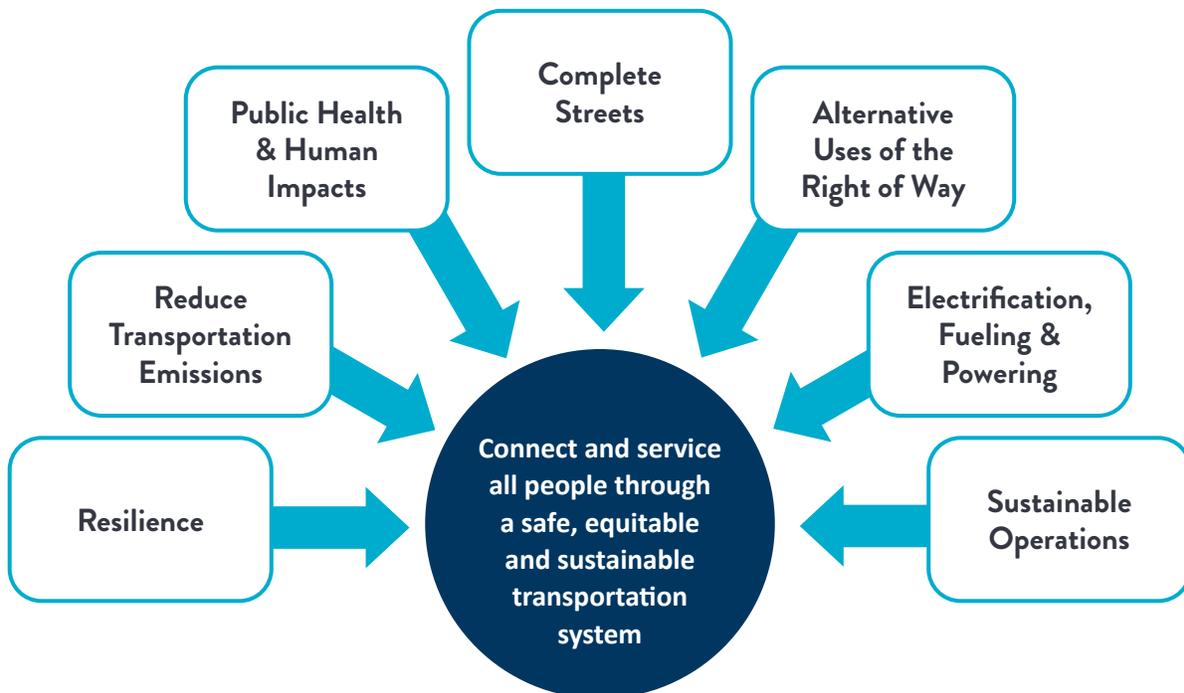
Support a sustainable, diverse, and thriving workforce in the Office of Sustainability & Public Health.

Partner Collaboration

Engage local governments and partners to achieve statewide goals in climate action; healthy, equitable and thriving communities; and critical connections.



Office Functions



Office of Sustainability & Public Health Background & History

Minnesota has a long history of working to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by supporting clean energy generation and improve energy efficiency. The Next Generation Energy Act of 2007 was a bipartisan law signed by Minnesota Governor Tim Pawlenty that aimed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase renewable energy in the state. Transportation is the largest source of carbon emissions in Minnesota, and MnDOT invested in additional capacity to work on these issues that disproportionately impact air quality and health of our most vulnerable residents. In late 2018, MnDOT established a Chief Sustainability Officer and two sustainability coordinator positions in an Office of Sustainability. Their roles were to work with key partners and stakeholders to champion long-term, cost-effective investments that improve energy efficiency, renewable energy, transportation electrification, and resource conservation. In April of 2019, the Governor of Minnesota issued [Executive Order \(EO\)19-27](#) directing state agencies to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions 50% from 2005 levels by 2030 and reduce energy in state offices and facilities by 30% from 2017 levels by 2030. To elevate these priorities, in 2019, MnDOT created an assistant commissioner role to lead a Sustainability and Public Health Division to address the climate crisis and improve public health.

In 2020, MnDOT convened the Sustainable Transportation Advisory Council (STAC), following recommendations outlined in the agency's 2019 [Pathways to Decarbonizing Transportation in Minnesota](#) report. The STAC was charged with helping Minnesota transition to a low-carbon transportation future. This same year, MnDOT added a f

1. Reduce carbon pollution from the transportation sector in all modes.
2. Increase operational efficiencies that support Executive Orders, including efforts to reduce fuel consumption and energy use, and investments in solar projects.
3. Improve resilience of the transportation system to climate change and other natural and human disruptions.
4. Promote and embed public health in transportation decision making.
5. Develop creative strategic partnerships with nontraditional partners to improve the lives of people and communities in Minnesota.

Past work to reduce carbon pollution has been directed by the Minnesota Legislature and through internal MnDOT leadership in related plans, goals, and performance measures. MnDOT is charged with reducing carbon emissions for the transportation sector, and Minnesota is not currently on track to meet emission reduction goals under Minnesota's Next Generation Energy Act. The need to take bold action is urgent.



OSPH Strategic Plan Purpose

MnDOT's Office of Sustainability & Public Health (OSPH) launched a process in January 2024 to develop a comprehensive strategic plan in 2024 that will guide the office's performance and impact in 2025-2030. The goal is twofold. The first would help align and allocate resources (financial, human, technological) for greater performance and efficiencies around our critical sustainability and public health policy priorities. The second is to create priorities that align with [MnDOT's Strategic Plan](#), the [Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan](#) and [Minnesota State Highway Investment Plan](#).

MnDOT has experienced a significant injection of state and federal resources to reduce GHG emissions, improve resiliency and expand a focus on public health. In the past few years, the OSPH team has added implementation oversight of \$270 million in new IIJA grant funding. In the 2023 legislative session, the state has made important investments in expanding our office's capacity to develop these new programs. Questions have emerged about team structures, integration, programmatic maturity, and key questions around prioritizing federal and state goals and policy priorities within project development.

OSPH partnered with Minnesota Management and Budget's (MMB) Management and Analysis and Development (MAD) unit to hire DeYoung Consulting to initiate an environmental scan using interviews and focus groups to provide feedback on OSPH strategic priorities and office structure with members of OSPH staff, internal partners and customers, and external state DOT partners that do similar work in California, Colorado, Oregon, and Washington. A major component of the strategic planning process was developing an office structure for improved collaboration with MnDOT districts and specialty offices, and increased efficiency and effectiveness. The overarching purpose of the strategic plan is to guide how the work of OSPH fits into MnDOT's goals.

Questions asked included:

- How is the OSPH team structured to perform its tasks and functions?
 - How is OSPH connected to its internal MnDOT partners?
 - How should OSPH be structured to create and maintain positive relationships with its partners and drive performance?
- How can OSPH be better aligned to serve district and specialty office partners?

Stakeholder Engagement Feedback

A scan of external feedback was conducted in spring 2024 through three focus groups with representatives from Districts, Operations, Engineering Services, and sister offices in Sustainability, Planning and Program Management. Interviews were also conducted with DOT sustainability offices in California, Colorado, Washington, and Oregon to understand staffing structures, strategic priorities and resource allocation.

“I think defining their role would be helpful if they view themselves as the statewide voice of policy at the 100,000-foot level, but that the implementation of it still lies with the districts to a certain extent.”

“I feel that their role is to set policy guidance and expectations as well as provide training, resources, and technical assistance.”

“I’d probably add that they have some resources in their office and expertise that we don’t have in the districts. So, they also serve a role in providing public health and sustainability perspectives about the policies, programs, and projects that we implement. Hopefully, they can take a look from the top and ensure that the things we are trying to implement are stated from the public health and sustainability perspective. I also hope that they have some measures that they can look back at to be able to determine whether we’re getting there or not.”

“I think strategic communications is an area that we need to invest in. We’ve started some of those conversations. To me, this piece is pretty critical to our future. We’re not always singing from the same songbook, describing the work the same way, and connecting the dots between what that means within these different areas.”

“The origin of this office is work that needs to be elevated and led somewhere to be better integrated throughout the agency. At one point, it was directly reporting to the commissioner, but now it’s within a division.”

“There is a challenge in the agency that tends to have subject matter experts, which leads to silos. If they reorganize, it might solve some problems but create others.”

“I do think there is a need to focus on integration, implementation, and alignment. Despite what they decide to focus on outside of that, that topic area should be of utmost importance.”

“There is a bigger discussion about structure and relationships that goes beyond just OSPH, which would need to happen to have efficiency or alignment. There are so many overlaps, and the connections and office dividers are odd, especially when it comes to some programs like Complete Streets and the equity work that is being done. I don’t know if OSPH restructuring would make any major impact.”



Responding to Stakeholder Feedback: Reorganizing the OSPH Office to Better Serve Our Internal and External Customers

MnDOT Districts are currently grappling with an overwhelming number of policy priorities, new initiatives, and misaligned training and technical assistance, which make it challenging to implement sustainability and public health priorities. The maturity levels of OSPH work and programs vary significantly, further complicating the situation. Internal partners have identified inefficiencies at multiple levels across various programs, which hampers both central office and district productivity and effectiveness. The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) was signed in 2021, and implementation occurred primarily at the central office level to stand up new activities, integrate risk assessment with legal, and establish centralized subject matter experts. While this expedited the use of new federal funding, the long-term integration of carbon reduction and public health priorities requires a more integrated approach that respects district preferences and builds district knowledge.

Several OSPH program areas offer models of deeper integration into district planning and project development processes – including Complete Streets policy expansion. For example, our experience with Complete Streets implementation offers insights into combining programmatic and policy expertise on Safe Systems with the Office of Traffic Engineering (OTE) and Office of Transit and Active Transportation (OTAT) to create greater alignment with technical assistance to district staff.

Moreover, there are numerous missed opportunities resulting from a lack of direct alignment and integration with key functions located in other offices and divisions. OSPH is a young office, and has prioritized building internal structure and processes, hiring subject matter experts and defining sustainability, resilience, and public health opportunities. To build for future performance, a greater emphasis on creating internal infrastructure aimed at improved processes, outcomes and impact are needed to avoid key strategic areas being treated as “one-offs.” Several areas of the office’s work are not seamlessly integrated into internal processes, creating gaps and inefficiencies. In addition, the current focus areas fail to fully represent the wide array of activities being undertaken by the office, leading to an incomplete picture of its operations and contributions.

The SMTP (Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan) includes objectives related to climate action, critical connections, and the development of healthy and equitable communities. The Minnesota State Highway Investment Plan (MnSHIP) investments target these SMTP focus areas, which guide the allocation of resources and strategic planning. Recent influxes of state and federal funding for MnDOT, including specific funds for health, equity, and climate initiatives, present new opportunities for advancement.

Despite this, external resources and opportunities for innovation with nonprofits, philanthropic organizations, private industry, and other state agencies remain under-utilized and under-leveraged. Concurrently, more industry stakeholders are forming partnerships around climate action, addressing both adaptation and mitigation together which signals a growing collaborative spirit in this crucial area. However, there remains a lack of focus and integration on health and human impacts in several areas, including health and community impact analysis within National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis, Cost Participation, and public engagement at MnDOT. Lastly, there are increasing interdependencies with critical sectors such as utilities, agriculture, health, and land use, which necessitate a more integrated and collaborative approach to address these interconnected challenges effectively.



Due to these emerging trends and needs, OPSH is reorganizing staff roles to better align and integrate OSPH sustainability and public health priorities into the everyday work of MnDOT.

- The Planning and Policy team will work to embed OSPH policy priorities into long term plans, and coordinate with other state agencies such as Health, Pollution Control, Public Utilities Commission, Commerce and Agriculture on legislative proposals and policy expansions.
- A new Program Services team will provide GIS, data analysis, grant management, training, new resources, and strategic communications support.
- Four new regionally focused “Sustainability & Public Health Liaison” roles will be created to work directly with districts and provide technical assistance on an Integration team.

New Organizational Team Structure & Activities



Planning & Policy Team

- Responsible for developing office plans and reports.
- Identify current and future policy needs.
- Coordinate and embed sustainability and public health priorities into agency family of plans.
- Facilitate innovative and emerging areas through research, partnership, and demonstration opportunities.
- Interface with modal offices on focus areas within modal plans.
- Interface with other state agencies as required for policy development.



Program Services Team

- Create shared tools, systems and processes for full office that serve all focus areas, the Planning & Policy team and the Integration & Shared Service team.
- Includes cross-functional program evaluation process, automated tools and dashboards for tracking data, relationships and resources, and established process documentation.
- Provide expertise and guidance on office and agency processes and systems (e.g., procurement, contracts, purchasing, travel, office equipment)
- Manage and coordinate contract and grant agreements
- Develop shared training and technical assistance products within OSPH work and related work areas
- Evaluate program implementation and provide data for planning and implementation teams.
- Coordinate office and agency communications and messaging including storytelling, storymaps, case studies, one pagers, shared presentation materials, web content, etc.



Integration Team

- Integrate (3) Focus Areas into all MnDOT projects, project development, programs, and guidance at the district level.
- Lead and coordinate implementation of sustainability & public health work with internal and external partners in partnership with districts.
- Directly support district staff on integration of sustainability & public health goals into projects and processes.
- Serve as point of contact for district staff for OSPH priorities, providing technical support for sustainability projects with district PM's.
- Deliver and coordinate training and technical assistance for district partners.
- Provide efficient, timely, and two-way feedback between districts and CO functions and policy areas.

Climate Action • Healthy, Equitable and Thriving Communities • Critical Connections

OSPH Strategic Plan 2025-2030

The OSPH strategic plan aligns with MnDOT’s 2023-2027 Strategic Plan, the Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan 2022, the MNSHIP Investment plan, as well as broader state and federal transportation policy and investment initiatives.

To begin implementation, OSPH will reorganize staff resources with the addition of three supervisors by early 2025. Each new unit will conduct further district, division and specialty office engagement and needs assessments to collaboratively create implementation plans with key internal customers and partners. The new “Integration” team, will reorganize staffing roles in 2025 into regionally focused “Sustainability & Public Health Liaison” roles that will collaborate with multiple districts on OSPH’s policy priorities, offering implementation support and technical assistance to expand funding, climate investments, and OSPH policy priorities into existing district processes and projects.

- In 2025, the three new teams will further document current core business activities and develop annual work plans with actions and projects that are supporting the strategic plan priorities.
- Each team will enumerate regular and new business activities in each function area in annual workplans, integrating internal partner feedback and preferences.
- OSPH will share progress on strategic plan priorities in the monthly OPSH webinar series.

Priority 1 - Policy Integration



Integrate Sustainability & Public Health policy priorities into MnDOT policies, plans, projects, and programs, as well as District processes and project guidance.

Strategies & Actions

- Reorganize sustainability and public health staff to support integration of OSPH policy priorities throughout the agency. Create guidance and process mapping for integrating OPSH priorities at districts based on project development lifecycle.
- Conduct and implement a needs assessment to learn district operations and project development processes with internal partners. Describe the rationale, benefits, and expected outcomes of integrating sustainability and public policy priorities into programming and project development.
- Coordinate with partner offices on translating statewide policy priorities into project-level investments for electric vehicle charging infrastructure, resilience improvements, carbon reduction strategies, travel options, and multimodal improvements.

Priority 2 - Tools and Resources



Build shared resources, tools, and systems for expanded performance including trainings, technical assistance, grant management, GIS, data analytics and operations functions.

Strategies & Actions

- Build data analytics capacity on all OPH priority areas. Coordinate with OTSM's Performance, Risk, and Investment Analysis (PRIA) unit to develop and monitor performance dashboards, key metrics and statutorily mandated reporting requirements.
- Develop and implement a Customer Management System (CMS) for grant and partner management functions of OPH.
- Evaluate training options on key OPH policy priorities to reduce training duplication, inefficiencies and redundancies with key partner offices and districts.
- Analyze data to identify where and understand why transportation inequities are prevalent. Summarize and present data visually and describe how OPH policies and programs can prioritize underserved and transportation-cost-burdened communities.

Priority 3 - Strategic Communications



Invest in strategic communications, storytelling, and mechanisms for two-way internal and external engagement.

Strategies & Actions

- Develop an OPH communication plan. Develop clear, concise, and consistent outreach materials for community and stakeholder engagement in all function areas for use by districts and partner offices. Identify and segment communications by key audiences, developing core messages, fact sheets, presentations, and local resources. All communications will be ADA compliant and will be provided- when possible- in multiple languages.
- Document innovation and policy advancements in stories, case studies, shared learning presentations and project debriefs. Ensure all new and innovative activities are documented through new debrief process.
- Increase innovation by supporting annual partnerships with arts intermediaries for public health and sustainability storytelling and creative tools for engagement with underserved populations.

Priority 4 - Workforce Development



Create and support a sustainable, diverse, and thriving workforce in the Office of Sustainability Public Health. Build sustainability and public health expertise and knowledge across MnDOT.

Strategies & Actions

- Develop an outreach strategy to increase number of candidates for OSPH positions from underrepresented backgrounds to better reflect the demographics of Minnesota.
- Promote a connected, learning, adaptable office culture that values psychological safety, the whole person and individual developmental goals. Create feedback mechanisms to monitor if objectives are being met.
- Facilitate and convene OSPH topical communities of practice to expand agency wide knowledge of OSPH policy areas and increase collaboration.
- Create and pilot annual multi-day training to create Sustainability & Public Health Ambassadors/Liaisons across the agency.

Priority 5 - Partner Collaboration



Engage local government, partners, and stakeholders in achieving statewide climate action, healthy, equitable, and thriving communities, and critical connections goals.

Strategies & Actions

- Partner with district state aid on a listening tour and needs assessment of local partners on statewide OSPH functions, assessing and documenting emerging and ongoing consultation, training, and technical assistance needs.
- Create content for use by districts in consultation on local comprehensive plan priorities that intersect with GHG reduction, VMT reduction, public health, land use and other OSPH priorities.
- Conduct and evaluate regular trainings on OSPH functions in each region for local municipal and county stakeholders.

We believe this strategic plan will position OSPH and MNDOT to carry out work efficiently and in a cost-effective way. We'll also be better prepared to address new opportunities and challenges.