

Action Transmittal

Transportation Advisory Board



Committee Meeting Date: April 3, 2024

Date: March 27, 2024

Action Transmittal: 2024-15

Adoption of Federally Required Greenhouse Gas Emission Performance Measure Target

To: Technical Advisory Committee
From: TAC Planning Committee
Prepared By: David Burns, Planning Analyst, 651-602-1887

Requested Action

Council adoption of the initial MnDOT-adopted greenhouse gas reduction target.

Recommended Motion

That the Technical Advisory Committee recommend adoption of a federally required greenhouse gas reduction target on the National Highway System for the MPO Planning Area.

Background and Purpose

Pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 150(c)(3), all states and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) must establish and adopt performance measure targets that can be used to assess greenhouse gas emissions on the Interstate and non-Interstate National Highway System (NHS). These are assessed at the state level by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and state and MPOs are only required to set declining greenhouse gas emissions targets on the NHS. There are no penalties for failing to achieve the targets; the process is intended to help state DOTs and MPOs monitor system performance and plan transportation projects in a manner that protects the long-term performance of the NHS by reducing emissions.

The greenhouse gas performance measure was originally part of the larger FHWA performance-based planning and programming National Highway Performance Program (NHPP) performance measure targets, but was initially repealed from the final rule. Since that time, the Sixth Assessment Report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change confirmed that human activities are increasing greenhouse gas concentrations that have warmed the atmosphere at a rate unprecedented in at least the last 2000 years. These changes increase the occurrence and severity of extreme events and threaten the reliability and safety of the transportation system. USDOT determined that the performance measure target thus directly affects system performance and will be included as part of the NHPP moving forward.

The greenhouse gas targets are intended to be four-year targets, with a performance period from January 1, 2022, to December 31, 2025. Data for 2022 was used as the baseline. MPOs are required to either agree to plan and program projects that contribute to the declining targets set by MnDOT or establish a quantifiable declining target for the metropolitan planning area. MnDOT adopted a statewide greenhouse gas target on February 1, 2024. The Council, as the region's MPO, must adopt either its own declining target or the statewide target by July 30, 2024.

Council staff met with MnDOT and Greater Minnesota MPO staff in early 2024 to discuss and establish statewide targets. All parties agreed that the target should be consistent with the greenhouse gas emission policy articulated in the Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan

(SMTP), which is based off Minnesota Statute 216H.02 and aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions across all sectors. The SMTP target is a 30% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from 2005 levels by 2025, with a goal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050. The proportional reduction in greenhouse gas emissions required between 2022 and 2025 to meet the 2050 target is 22%. The table below outlines the established MnDOT target and proposed Council target:

Table 1: Proposed Greenhouse Gas Performance Measure Target

Measure	Two-Year 2023 Target	Four-Year 2025 Target
Percent change in tailpipe CO2 emissions on the National Highway System (NHS), compared to reference year (calendar year 2022)	N/A	-22%

MnDOT anticipates continuing work on this performance measure target to better estimate the expected outcome for emissions. Should this effort prove to be successful, there is a possibility that the target may be revised for the state by October of 2024. The Council would then have the opportunity to revise its target.

Relationship to Regional Policy

The current 2040 Transportation Policy Plan includes a listing of performance measures used to monitor and assess system performance. The greenhouse gas reduction measure supports the Healthy and Equitable Communities goal as it aims to reduce harmful emissions, which have a negative effect on human health. This goal contains specific strategies aimed at reducing harmful greenhouse gas emissions.

Staff Analysis

The recommended targets are aspirational in nature and align with an aggressive statewide target. The targets align with the 2050 SMTP goal of net zero emissions and represent a proportional decline from the base year to the horizon year. Upcoming data analysis will inform a more data-driven, realistic target in the future that is more consistent with the way other federal performance targets are set.

Committee Comments and Action

At its March 14, 2024, meeting, the TAC Planning Committee voted to recommend adoption of a federally required greenhouse gas reduction target on the National Highway System for the MPO Planning Area.

Routing

To	Action Requested	Date Completed (Scheduled)
TAC Planning	Review & Recommend	March 14, 2024
Technical Advisory Committee	Review & Recommend	April 3, 2024
Transportation Advisory Board	Review & Recommend	April 17, 2024
Metropolitan Council Transportation Committee	Review & Recommend	May 13, 2024
Metropolitan Council	Review & Adopt	May 22, 2024

