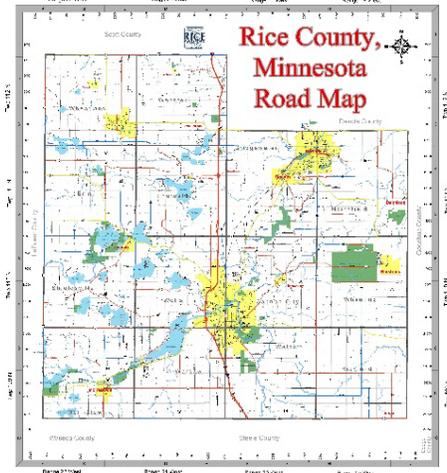


# 4.0 Transportation

## 4.1 Introduction

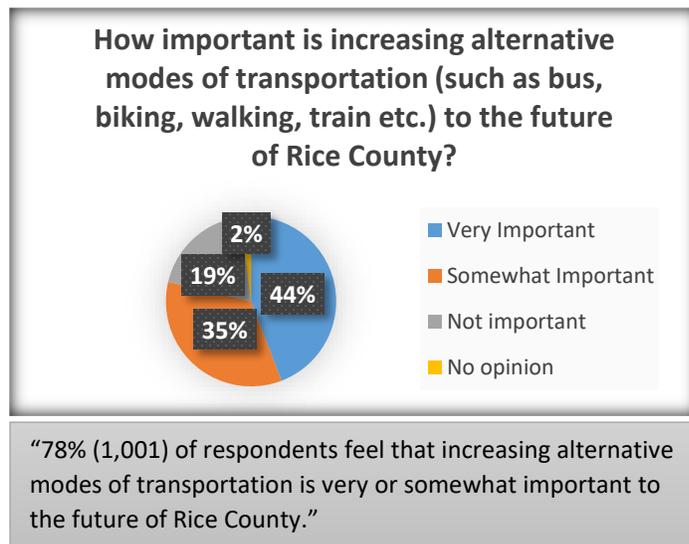
The transportation system in Rice County is the backbone for commerce and assists in establishing development patterns. The system is comprised of roadways, railroads, airports, waterways, transit, technology and trails for pedestrians and non-motorized bikeways. The transportation system is a critical element in the quality of life for county residents. Transportation systems, both highway and multi-modal, must safely, efficiently and effectively allow citizens to travel to work, recreate and conduct their personal lives. Transportation systems must further provide for efficient movement of goods and services to markets to support the county’s economic vitality. Improvements to the transportation systems are necessary to keep up with the changing needs of the citizens and businesses of Rice County.



Rice County will continue to experience demands with limited resources to meet the transportation needs of the county. The significant investment that the county has made in the transportation system requires that this infrastructure be maintained and properly managed to protect these investments. Continued economic development and growth will also create demand for improvements of the existing roadway system such as turn lanes, bypass lanes, intersection improvements and traffic control changes. Other non-automobile modes for people and freight that maximize transportation system efficiently will also need to be explored. It will be important for collaborations and partnerships to be formed in order to carry out future projects and improvements. Financial plans with various funding options will need

to be developed for implementing the selected projects and strategies.

To be efficient and fair a transportation system must serve diverse demands. Rice County will not only see an increase in the aging population, but also an even more diverse population in the next 10-20 years. Therefore, Rice County as whole will need to look for alternative forms of transportation utilizing a variety of multi-modal options. It will be critical for economics of various businesses in the county for their workforce to have



access to multi-modal forms of transportation.

Not only do employment clusters need to have adequate transportation options for their work force, ensuring that essential services like grocery stores, medical facilities, schools or government buildings can be reached are important active living and livability considerations.

This transportation chapter is an abridged version of the County's full Transportation Plan which is a separate and much more detailed plan document. The 2025 Rice County Transportation Plan was adopted in 2006 and can be found in Appendix D. It is highly recommended that the full Transportation Plan be updated in the near future.

## 4.2 Goals, Strategies, and Action Items

The following goals and strategies are general statements that focus on Rice County's Transportation plan. The goals are broadly worded, while strategies are actions that can be taken to achieve the overarching goal. The action items are related to the goals and strategies, but are more specific and detailed. It should be noted that goals, strategies, and action items are in no particular order of importance.

### 4.2.1 Transportation

**Goal 1. Enhance and maintain a transportation system that supports economic development along with existing and future land uses.**

**Strategy 1.** Update the Rice County Transportation Plan to guide future transportation improvement decisions for the County.

**Action Item 1:** Identify and collaborate with local, regional and State transportation agencies, governmental units, businesses and county residents to gather input on existing and future concerns.

**Action Item 2:** Identify and address emerging deficiencies in capacity, access, mobility, safety, transit, trail and multi-modal needs.

**Action Item 3:** Coordinate and work with cities and townships to develop long term land use and transportation plans to develop cost effective and efficient transportation systems.

**Strategy 2.** Improve and expand identified transportation corridors.

**Action Item 1:** Develop priorities, financing scenarios and funding options for improving and expanding identified transportation corridors.



*Photo: A section of Rice County Road 76. Photo taken from: SouthernMinn.com*

**Action Item 2:** Develop partnerships, collaborate and cost-share with local and state transportation agencies on traffic studies, planning and programming of future improvements.

**Action Item 3:** Identify preliminary needs for planning, design, right of way, access control and construction of transportation corridors.

**Action Item 4:** Consider multi-modal air/rail corridors that may be utilized for economic transport.

***Goal 2. Preserve and improve the transportation infrastructure in Rice County to maximize safety and efficiency.***

**Strategy 1.** Develop preservation strategies and policies to maintain the existing transportation system to ensure safe and efficient travel.

**Action Item 1:** Review and update access management and cost participation policies.

**Action Item 2:** Analyze crash data to identify potential needs while updating and utilizing adopted safety plans.

**Action Item 3:** Identify and negotiate maintenance agreements that provide more efficient delivery of services.

**Action Item 4:** Identify reconstruction and replacement projects as part of the annual Transportation Improvement Plan.

**Strategy 2.** Evaluate existing conditions and identify future needs in an effective way to maximize and protect existing investment.

**Action Item 1:** Evaluate and prioritize system wide needs, develop funding and collaboration opportunities.

**Action Item 2:** Strategically apply for funding to offset county investment needed for the transportation system.

**Action Item 3:** Build a local coalition of support for planning and funding partnerships by encouraging cities, business owners and community groups to be active participants in seeking funding at local, state, and federal levels.

***Goal 3. Develop multi-modal and integrated transportation components to enhance options for a diverse population.***

**Strategy 1.** Support the continued efforts of the County and Cities working together to support transit opportunities.

**Action Item 1:** Evaluate the option of the Park-and-Ride facilities for carpool commuters within the county.

**Action Item 2:** Increase current transit options/routes within and outside the cities of Rice County.

**Action Item 3:** Advocate for long-term investment in transit infrastructure.

**Strategy 2.** Encourage usage of the transit systems.

**Action Item 1:** Prioritize transit service and bike/walk infrastructure improvements in populated areas with low vehicle ownership and low access to needed services.

**Action Item 2:** Connect major employers with needed work forces through a variety of multi-modal programs.

**Action Item 3:** Encourage increased advertising and education of alternative transportation options and local transit providers.

**Strategy 3.** Support and incorporate active living principles in transportation plans and identified projects.

**Action Item 1:** Continue working with surrounding counties to establish long range trails that could be used for recreation and transportation.

**Action Item 2:** Work with Cities and Townships to implement safe and appropriate trail crossings and access to the roadway system.

**Action Item 3:** Identify and promote safe pedestrians crossings to promote walkable communities.

**Action Item 4:** Support and assist Cities with their Safe Routes to School Plans.



*Photo: Two bikers ride along the Sakatah Singing Hills State Trail. Photo taken from: Faribault, MN Tourism*