



Citizens Advocating for Choice in Transportation

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Why We Should Support the Updated Transportation Master Plan

The Current System is Not Sustainable

The costs of maintaining the current transportation system, geared almost entirely to cars, are high and will only get higher if things stay the same. According to City of Omaha estimates,¹ comparing the future costs of the current system (continuing to do what we've been doing) to one envisioned by the updated transportation master plan, shows substantial savings to the public over the next 30 years:

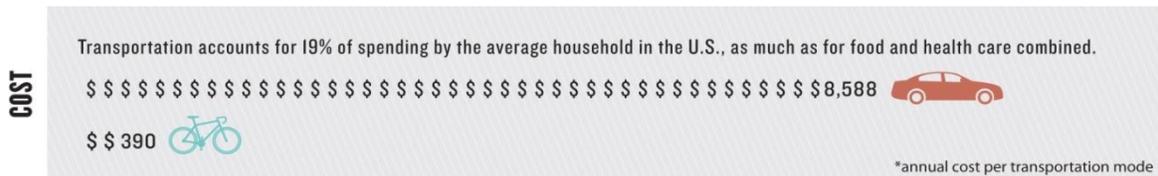
	Current	TMP
New street investment total costs	\$32.8 million	\$840,000
Annual cost for street building/maintenance & transit	\$3.1 million	\$340,000
Total public cost per year per household	\$460	\$50

We already cannot afford to maintain the current system. For example, we resurface roads in Omaha on average every 56 years although the recommended cycle is every 10 years.²

While we can't expect everyone to give up driving, every time somebody chooses to walk, bike, carpool, or take public transit instead of driving, the city saves money. The cost of road maintenance in the U.S. is averaged at 5.6 cents per mile per motor vehicle. Add the external costs of parking (10 cents), crashes (8 cents), congestion (4 cents), and land costs and that's another 28 cents per mile.³

Citizens Need and Want Options

Bicycling, walking, taking public transit, or some combination of these can cost a lot less than only driving. AAA estimated in 2011 that it cost on average \$8,588 to drive a car each year.⁴ In 2009, the estimated average cost of riding a bicycle was \$390/year.⁵ An Omaha Metro Bus pass costs \$600/year.



¹ http://cityofomaha.org/tmpln/images/stories/pdfs/Design%20Workshop%201%20Kick-off%20Presentation_Web.pdf, slides 49-52

² http://www.ci.omaha.ne.us/tmpln/images/stories/pdfs/Design%20Workshop%202%20Wrapup_low%20res.pdf, slide 55

³ <http://grist.files.wordpress.com/2010/09/whoserd.pdf>

⁴ Excluding loan payments, that's how much a person can expect to pay driving a medium sedan 15,000 miles a year.

<http://www.aaaexchange.com/main/Default.asp?CategoryID=16&SubCategoryID=76&ContentID=353>

⁵ <http://wheels.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/03/18/the-costs-of-owning-a-car/>

A December 2011 telephone phone survey of 400 Omaha registered voters showed that even though there is a strong preference for driving a car among surveyed residents, 72 percent also **favor** “increasing spending to expand and improve public transportation, sidewalks and bike lanes in Omaha.” Even more surprising is that 57 percent favor increasing such spending even if it requires a tax or fee increase.⁶ People in Omaha want choices.

Transportation choice increases opportunities for people who are economically, physically and socially disadvantaged including the elderly, and helps achieve equity objectives, such as helping physically and economically disadvantaged people access public services, education and employment opportunities. In 2000, an estimated 5% or 30,000 people in the Omaha area had no auto access.⁷

For people in Omaha that need public transit, Omaha’s per capita funding of Metro (\$29) ranks it 238th out of the 280 largest U.S. metro areas for public transit funding. By comparison, Omaha spends \$179 per capita on roads. Omaha has 1 mile of mass transit per capita compared to a national average of 1.87; 4.3 for Denver, or 4.2 for Minneapolis.

The TMP Will Make Omaha Safer, Healthier and More Livable

The goals of the updated transportation master plan are to

- provide balanced options for enhanced mobility
- attain a safe and healthy environment
- create liveable and connected neighborhoods
- promote economic returns with fiscal sustainability



Through better designed roads, injuries to walkers, bicyclers, and drivers can be reduced drastically⁸ and make streets inviting for everyone.

Trails, bike lanes and sidewalks all provide opportunities to incorporate exercise into everyday life, combating obesity while cutting air pollution.

It makes good business sense to consider issues like obesity, diabetes, safety and air quality when we make transportation decisions. The estimated cost of diabetes in Congressional District 2 in Nebraska in 2006 was \$253 million.⁹ Encouraging active transportation will improve lives and save money.

Everyone should have a choice in how they get around, no matter who they are.

⁶ <http://cityofomaha.org/ecomaha/images/stories/pdfs/Omaha%20Transportation%20Memo.pdf>

⁷ <http://modeshiftomaha.org/2012/03/28/questioning-the-auto-motives-behind-the-polling-site-closure-debate/>

⁸ http://www.ci.omaha.ne.us/tmplan/images/stories/pdfs/Design%20Workshop%20%20Wrapup_low%20res.pdf, slide 77

⁹ <http://www.douglascountyhealth.com/images/stories/stats/Community%20Report%20Card/Report Card Web C.pdf>

