

## Next Steps

Regional meetings are being held July 13 through July 19 across the state. After those meetings, NDOR will review the input received and begin selecting the next round of capital improvement projects.

While this new project prioritization process is important in helping the Department select projects, it isn't the deciding factor. In addition to looking at how a project scores based on engineering performance, economic performance, and stakeholder input, NDOR has to balance many other important considerations, such as geographic inclusion, corridor completion, and the availability of supplemental funding.

Having some measure of flexibility is important to maximize transportation investments. Recognizing transportation needs and technology change over time and many factors like the state's economic condition, material costs, inflation rates and revenue also change over time, NDOR plans to announce an initial set of selected projects this fall. It is likely that less than \$1 billion in projects will be selected so that some funds will be available in future years to address evolving capital improvement project needs. This allows NDOR to create an ongoing evaluation process to identify sets of projects that are best suited to address Nebraska's needs.



**MORE INFORMATION AT:**  
[www.roads.nebraska.gov/projects/grow-ne](http://www.roads.nebraska.gov/projects/grow-ne)

**BUILD NEBRASKA ACT**  
THE NEXT 10 YEARS

**NEBRASKA**  
Good Life. Great Journey.  
DEPARTMENT OF ROADS

**TRANSPORTATION**  
INNOVATION ACT

**BUILD NEBRASKA ACT**  
THE NEXT 10 YEARS

**NEBRASKA**  
Good Life. Great Journey.  
DEPARTMENT OF ROADS

**TRANSPORTATION**  
INNOVATION ACT

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM

**You.**

## Growing Nebraska: Prioritizing Capital Improvement Projects

Welcome, and thank you for being here. The focus of today's meeting is to provide an update on our project prioritization process, share information on the analysis of the candidate project list and, most importantly, hear from you about your priorities for transportation investments in the region.

### Today's Agenda

Welcome & Overview (5 min)

Overview (3 min)

Project Prioritization Process (10 min)

Candidate Projects, Investment Ranges, and Performance (10 min)

Exercise Overview (10 min)

Facilitated Discussion in Breakout Groups (40 min)

Report Out (40 min)

Next Steps (5 min)

### Expanded Candidate Project List Reflects Input and Choices

NDOR is continuing to use engineering performance in its project prioritization process for capital improvement projects and is expanding the process to better reflect the connection between transportation investments and the economy and to include more stakeholder input. Capital improvement projects are those projects that most impact our economy and allow us to grow Nebraska. Examples include adding new lanes, building new interchanges or viaducts, and improving the expressway system or federally designated high priority corridors.

In January, NDOR conducted meetings across the state and heard clearly that stakeholders support including economic impact analysis and more stakeholder input in the prioritization process. Stakeholders also supported keeping engineering performance as a part of the prioritization process. We also discussed candidate improvement projects:

- NDOR presented a list of about 60 candidate capital improvement projects, totaling more than \$3 billion.
- As a result of public input, that list grew to more than 100 projects, totaling more than \$8 billion.
- Recognizing it's more important to build a great highway system for the state rather than a few great projects, NDOR Director Kyle Schneweis instructed the Department staff to develop project scope options (or choices) so that improvements could be better targeted to specific needs and more improvements could be delivered across the state. By creating new options and breaking corridor projects into constructible segments rather than only evaluating long corridors, more than 160 project options are ready to be discussed. For more information on scope options, see the next page.

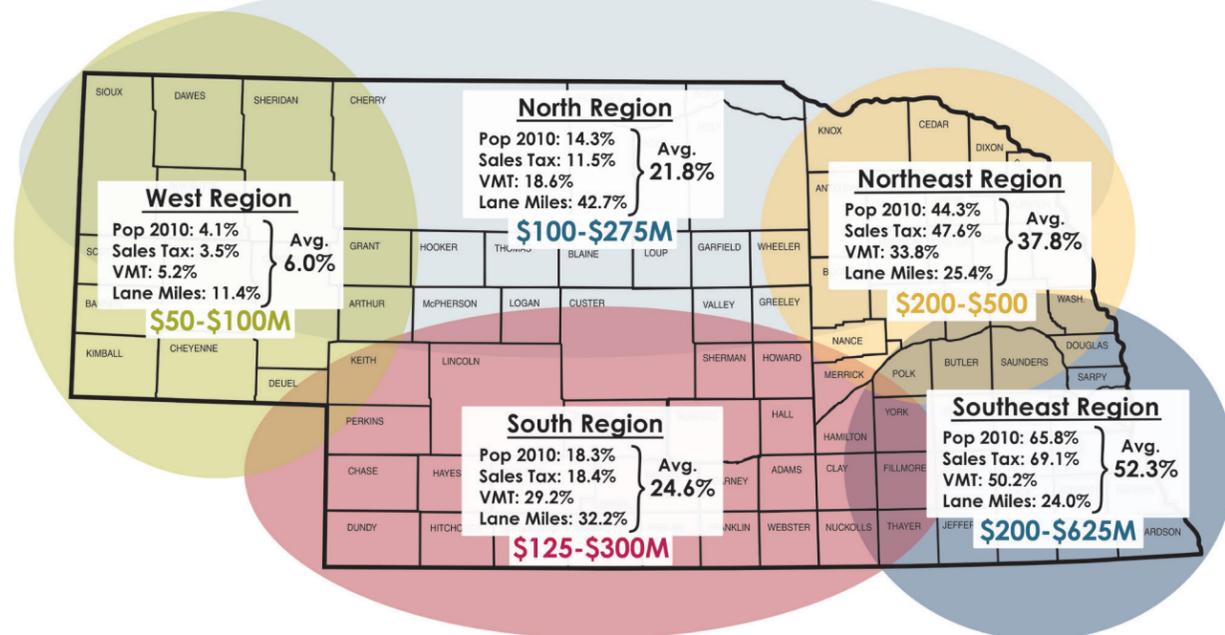
## Regional Approach and Investment Ranges Help Discussions Be More Real

Recognizing that transportation investments and benefits don't stop at a line on the map, NDOR is taking a regional investment approach. An illustration of those regions is shown on the map below. You'll notice overlap between regions, which underscores the system or network approach NDOR is taking.

As part of this regional approach, and to help guide discussions about project priorities, NDOR created a spending or investment range for each region. These ranges are based on an average of the region's population, sales tax generated, vehicle miles traveled, and lane miles. The averages exceed 100 percent because some counties are included in more than one region.

Although the upper limit of the combined investment spending ranges exceeds the current investment budget of roughly \$1 billion in Build Nebraska Act and Transportation Innovation Act funds – that should not become a distraction. The purpose of the ranges is to add realism and encourage the next step in stakeholder discussions: prioritizing candidate projects.

### Investment Ranges for Creating Conversation



*About the spending ranges:* Spending ranges have been developed for discussion purposes only. These ranges are not intended to indicate program levels for specific regions. Instead, these spending ranges will help NDOR better understand regional priorities.

### Scope Options

The estimated cost of candidate projects far exceeds the budget available. To expand our ability to provide more transportation improvements, NDOR staff developed scope options for projects where choices could be made available. For example, several long corridors are included on the list, so we've broken those long corridors into smaller segments for analysis. There are also a lot of 4-lane highway improvements on the list, so we're looking at alternatives, like Super 2 highways and 2 + 2 options that provide improvements without having to build a more expensive standard 4-lane highway. That's not to say we aren't looking at building longer corridors or 4-lane highways; rather, it means we're expanding options for engineers and communities to consider. Options include:

- **4-lane divided highway** - A 4-lane highway where access is controlled. Intersections may be at-grade or have on- and off-ramps.
- **4-lane expressway** - Same as the 4-lane divided highway, but on Nebraska's designated expressway system.
- **Bypass** - A highway that goes around a populated area, allowing traffic to maintain highway speeds.
- **Super 2** - A 2-lane roadway with better paved shoulders and additional passing lanes.
- **2 + 2** - A highway that uses the existing two lanes of highway and adds two more lanes to make a 4-lane divided highway.

## Project Prioritization Process

The updated project prioritization process includes three primary components:

**1. Engineering Performance** – The updated process continues to use the same engineering factors as the previous prioritization process, including: safety, the amount of traffic, percent of cars and trucks, congestion, travel time savings, vehicle operating costs, cost of improvement, and maintenance and operation costs of the roadway.

**2. Economic Performance** – NDOR is analyzing the economic performance of proposed projects for three important reasons:

- To make sure transportation investments support the state's goal to grow Nebraska
- To help differentiate between seemingly similar projects
- To better understand how transportation investments are experienced in the wider economy

NDOR is using TREDIS, a nationally recognized economic model for transportation planning, to analyze the economic performance of candidate projects. Performance is measured by growth in jobs, income and gross state product.

**3. Stakeholder Input** – Stakeholder involvement leads to better and more informed decisions. NDOR is actively engaging stakeholders across the state in discussions about project prioritization and how projects support communities' visions for growth and safety. The new process follows NDOR's model for increased public input.

### Overall Performance Better Informs Investment Decisions

As you'll see on the candidate project list, overall performance reflects engineering performance and economic performance. NDOR will consider performance and stakeholder input, as well as other factors outlined on the back page when selecting capital improvement projects.

### Accounting for Urban and Rural Differences

NDOR knows there is a difference in economic growth in urban and rural areas, and we're taking differences into account in the prioritization process in several ways. First, we look at data specific to each county, such as what industries are located in each county and how those industries respond to transportation investments. We are also applying urban growth patterns to urban areas and rural economic growth patterns to rural areas. Cass, Douglas, Lancaster, Sarpy, Saunders, Seward, and Washington counties are considered urban areas, and the remaining counties are considered rural. Most importantly, because we recognize the differences in urban and rural areas – engineering and economic performance scores were developed separately for urban and rural projects, based on where the project is located.

