Annual Report

I-80 west of Lincoln

NEBRASKA
Good Life. Great Journey.
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

2024

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Vicki Kramer

The Nebraska Department of Transportation's (NDOT) Annual Report provides a glimpse into our accomplishments and efforts towards providing the best possible statewide transportation system for the movement of people and goods. For 2024, three essential priorities emerged: increase safety, maximize investments and modernize business practices.

This last year, 251 fatalities occurred on Nebraska's roadways, making 2024 the deadliest year in nearly two decades while the Nebraska State Patrol also reported a record number of speeding citations. The State of Nebraska is committed to addressing these trends through collaboration with local officials, law enforcement and emergency services while employing engineering strategies and influencing driver behavior. One example of an effective engineering strategy is the installation of cable median barriers along Interstate 80 (p. 2). Where barriers were installed, fatalities were reduced by 100 percent and serious injury crashes were reduced by 83 percent. Additionally, NDOT leveraged the national Safe Systems Approach safety advocacy program and implementation of Variable Advisory Speed Signs to improve safety and improve driver expectation.

In 2024, 92 percent of the state highway system was rated at least "good" by the Nebraska Service-ability Index (NSI). Nebraska has a long history of recognizing the importance of quality infrastructure, thanks to support of the Pillen Administration and the 2024 State Legislature, NDOT was able to further invest in the system with a one-time, $70 million allocation from the state Jobs and Economic Development Initiative Act and federal American Rescue Plan Act funds. This investment increased the number of highway miles preserved by 250, helping offset the impacts of inflation and financial risks to preserving, modernizing and expanding the state-managed transportation system.

To meet Governor Pillen's vision of increasing the state's competitiveness for federal discretionary funding, NDOT created the Nebraska Infrastructure Hub (p. 18) in 2024. In its first year this partnership resulted in 37 funding awards totaling over $56 million in grants and $98 million in congressional delegated awards. The NDOT continues to work with local public agencies, stakeholders, Nebraska's congressional delegation, contractors and engineering groups to find ways to maximize transportation system investments and meet our project delivery goals (p. 10).

The NDOT has also made it a priority to modernize business practices. A series of three business evolutions resulted in expedited project timelines. The Nebraska State Highway Commission approved the state's first bond issuance for a state highway project (p. 6), which will condense the completion of a key segment in the US-275 expressway corridor. The passage of LB 1335 exempted some transportation projects from state regulations that were more stringent than the federal requirements (pg. 9). And finally, the NDOT signed a new memorandum of understanding with the Federal Highway Administration that extended assignment of over 95 percent of our projects under the National Environmental Policy Act for five years and expanded authority to include Emergency Relief repairs.

Additionally, the Aeronautics Division developed and implemented a tool (p. 21) that increased transparency and efficiency in grant funding selection. This process improvement will ensure that resources are distributed in a way that will maximize economic impact across the state.

The pages of NDOT's Annual Report are filled with metrics, data, graphs and charts, but the takeaway is simple: The Nebraska Department of Transportation is working hard to improve safety, remain fiscally responsible, and continuously improve, all for the benefit of our state's traveling public.

SAFETY

Improve Safety on Nebraska's Transportation System

"Toward Zero Deaths" and **"Buckle Up Phone Down"** are two key phrases that guide the Nebraska Department of Transportation's overall safety goal, reducing deaths and injuries on Nebraska roadways. In recent years, fatalities and serious injuries have risen across the state, with 2024 resulting in a 17-year high for fatalities.

To address some of these issues, the NDOT is implementing safety strategies into its system. The strategies include Restricted Crossing U-Turns (RCUTS), Roundabouts, Cable Median Barriers, Variable Speed Advisory (VAS) Signs and upgrading pedestrian crossings with Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFB). Each strategy is designed to reduce collision points, reduce speed for drivers or advise drivers to adjust their speed.

Additionally, the NDOT is focusing on educating the public about the importance of changing driver behavior, especially in work zones. Simple steps such as wearing a seat belt, driving the posted speed limit, putting down phones and avoiding any distractions are all ways the public can do their part to reduce fatalities and crashes.

Year	Nebraska Fatalities
2015	246
2016	218
2017	228
2018	230
2019	248
2020	233
2021	221
2022	244
2023	227
2024	251

Fatalities on Nebraska Roadways

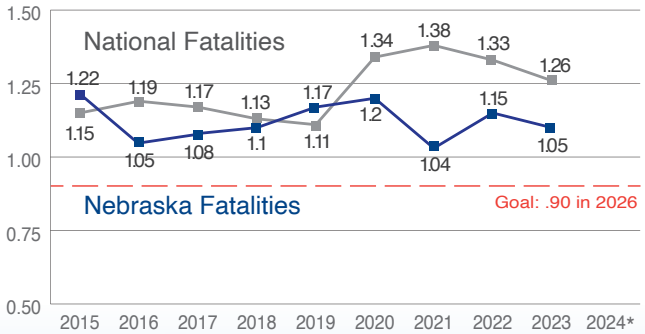
Description: Measurement of fatalities on Nebraska roadways: interstates, state highways and local roads and streets.

Purpose: To heighten the awareness of safety and driving responsibility on Nebraska roadways. A consistent decline in fatalities reflects improved safety management practices, greater public awareness of safe driving practices and will reduce statewide societal costs.

Goal: To reduce fatalities, their number, and the rate to a ratio of 0.9 fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles traveled by 2026.

Outcome: Nebraska's rate of fatalities per hundred million miles traveled in 2023 was 1.05. There were 251 fatalities in 2024, an increase of 24.

Nebraska Fatalities and National Data
(Ratio Per 100 Million Vehicle Miles Traveled)



**Vehicle miles traveled (VMT) was not available for calculating crash rates at the time of publishing.*

Serious Injury Crashes on Nebraska Roadways

Description: Measurement of serious injury crashes on Nebraska roadways; interstates, state highways and local roads and streets.

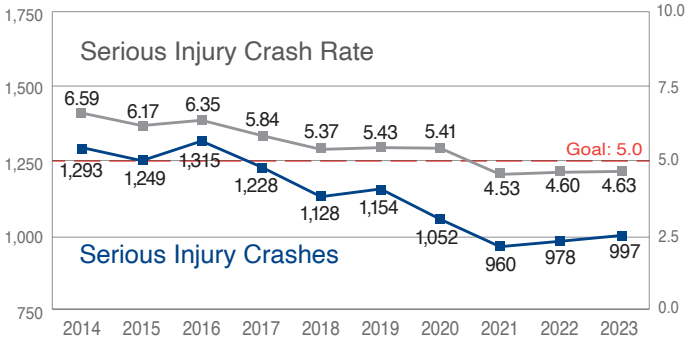
Purpose: To heighten the awareness of safety and driving responsibility on Nebraska roadways. Improved safety management practices and greater public awareness of safe driving practices contributed to a consistent decline in serious injury crashes. Continuation of these practices will reduce statewide societal costs.

Goal: To reduce serious injury crashes in Nebraska to a ratio of 5.0 per 100 million vehicle miles traveled by 2026.

Outcome: Nebraska's serious injury crashes and serious injury crash rate have been steadily decreasing since 2000. There have been fewer than 1,000 serious injury crashes each year since 2021. Nebraska's serious injury crash rate in 2023 was 4.63, which met the goal of 5.0.

Year	Annual Vehicle Miles Traveled (AVMT)
2014	19,612,000,000
2015	20,230,000,000
2016	20,709,000,000
2017	21,011,000,000
2018	20,995,826,000
2019	21,261,959,000
2020	19,379,946,000
2021	21,533,243,000
2022	21,288,024,000
2023	21,540,000,000

Serious Injury Crashes on Nebraska Roadways
(Ratio Per 100 Million Vehicle Miles Traveled)



Enhancing Highway Safety with Cable Barriers

To reduce the incidence and impact of vehicle lane departures and crossover crashes, the NDOT has historically improved roadway safety by installing rumble strips, the beveled edge and paved shoulders. More recently, many DOTs have demonstrated success in reducing fatal and serious injury crossover crashes by installing cable median barriers. Iowa, Missouri, Texas and Oklahoma DOTs reported 82-97% reduction in fatal cross-median crashes using cable median barriers.

In 2022, the NDOT constructed the first 20-mile installation of interstate cable median barriers on I-80 just west of Lincoln. The strategy costs around $400,000 per mile and is eligible for federal highway safety funds allocated to Nebraska annually. In the five years before installation, more than 30 vehicles crossed the median in this corridor, resulting in multiple injuries and five fatalities. Since the barriers were installed, the NDOT observed a significant reduction in the severity of crossover collisions. Fatal crossover crashes have been eliminated, and serious injury crossover crashes have decreased by 83%.

The demonstrated safety improvements prompted the NDOT to expand the installation of cable median barrier to locations where they could make the most impact. NDOT engineers studied the transportation network to determine which locations would be most improved by installing the barriers. To date, the NDOT has completed about 50 miles of cable median barrier installations along I-80 corridor, with another 15 miles under construction in 2025. In the next 10 years, the NDOT will continue installations on portions of Hwys. 75 and 275 in the Omaha area and over 100 more miles along I-80.

Motor Vehicle Crashes on Nebraska Roadways

Description: Measurement of motor vehicle crashes on Nebraska roadways, interstates, state highways and local roads and streets.

Purpose: To heighten the awareness of safety and driving responsibility on Nebraska roadways. A consistent decline in crashes reflects improved safety management practices, greater public awareness of safe driving practices and will reduce statewide societal costs.

Goal: To reduce motor vehicle crashes in Nebraska to a ratio of 1.5 per million vehicle miles traveled by 2026.

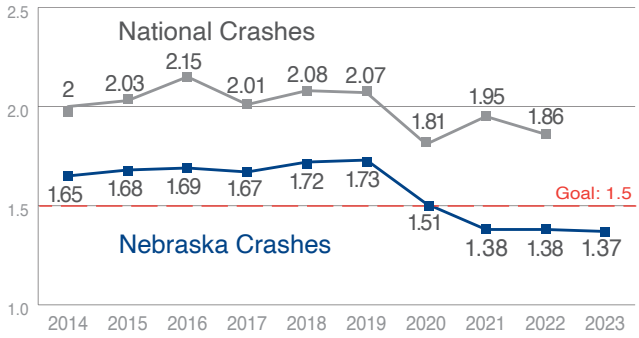
Outcome: Nebraska's crash rate has been below the national rate since 2004. From 2013 to 2019, the number of crashes had increased steadily. Both national and Nebraska crash rates dropped significantly in 2020 due to temporary changes in travel patterns. In 2021, the Nebraska Legislature increased the minimum damage amount for reporting a crash, which has decreased the number of reported crashes and the crash rate.

Year	Nebraska Crashes
2014	32,318
2015	33,988
2016	34,890
2017	34,999
2018	36,117
2019	36,706
2020	29,418
2021	29,298
2022	29,318
2023	29,565

TOWARD ZERO DEATHS — NEBRASKA

BUCKLE UP
PHONE DOWN

Nebraska Crashes and National Data
(Ratio Per Million Vehicle Miles Traveled)



*National crash data for 2023 not available at time of publishing.

NDOT Implements Variable Advisory Speed Signs Along I-80

Variable Advisory Speed (VAS) signs are safety devices newly implemented by the NDOT to help drivers adjust their behavior for rapidly changing roadway conditions, such as adverse weather, reduced visibility or traffic congestion. The signs were installed along I-80 from the Wyoming border to Overton.

This past winter, the NDOT activated the VAS boards on its system to advise drivers to reduce their speed during winter weather storms where wind, snow and ice made travel conditions at the normal posted speed limit challenging. By implementing VAS signs, the NDOT aims to inform drivers to adapt their speeds proactively, enhancing a driver's ability to avoid high-speed crashes and their associated risks, such as fatalities, serious injuries and traffic congestion.

According to the U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), variable speed signs can reduce fatal and injury crashes by up to 51%. VAS signs also help lessen the chances of secondary crashes by preparing drivers for slower traffic ahead. The VAS board is powered by real-time data on weather and road conditions and the NDOT will continuously monitor conditions and determine when reduced speeds should be displayed.

FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

Use Financial Resources Wisely and Make Financial Decisions in an Open and Transparent Way

Fiscal responsibility is defined as living within our means, using financial resources wisely and making financial decisions in an open and transparent way. The goal is to optimize the use of available funds to build and maintain the state's transportation system. These measures have been established to reflect the progress toward meeting this goal.

Overhead as a Percentage of Annual Expenditures

Description: Measurement of the NDOT's costs for construction, maintenance,and overhead.

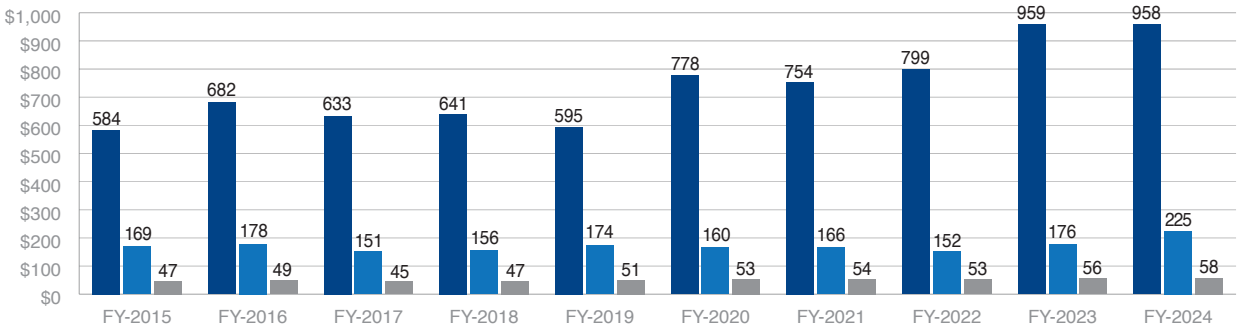
Purpose: To maximize funding for transportation purposes by minimizing overhead costs.

Goal: To have overhead costs less than 10% of annual expenditures.

Outcome: The NDOT maintained overhead at less than 10% of annual expenditures. The overhead for 2024 was 5%.

Transportation and Administrative Expenditures

(Dollar amounts represented in millions)



	FY-2015		FY-2016		FY-2017		FY-2018		FY-2019		FY-2020		FY-2021		FY-2022		FY-2023		FY-2024	
Construction	584	73%	682	75%	633	76%	641	76%	595	73%	778	79%	754	77%	799	80%	959	81%	958	77%
Maintenance	169	21%	178	20%	151	18%	156	19%	174	21%	160	16%	166	17%	152	15%	176	15%	225	18%
Subtotal	$753	94%	$860	95%	$784	95%	$797	94%	$769	94%	$938	95%	$920	95%	$951	95%	$1,135	95%	$1,184	95%
Overhead	47	6%	49	5%	45	5%	47	6%	51	6%	53	5%	54	6%	53	5%	56	5%	58	5%
Total Costs	$800		$909		$829		$844		$820		$991		$974		$1,004		$1,191		$1,242	

Accuracy of Project Estimates Contained in the 1-Year Program

Description: Measure the difference between projected construction project estimates and actual awarded contract amounts.

Purpose: Accurately projecting annual construction expenses helps the NDOT forecast when future construction projects can be built. The NDOT values the important role that reliable project estimating plays in supporting local communities by keeping the highway system in a state of good repair.

Goal: To be within 5% of the total estimated cost of the published program as reported in the 1-Year Program.

Outcome: The NDOT met its goal in FY2024 with an estimate of 2.6% over the total cost which is consistent with national trend NHCCI data.

Actual and Estimated 1-Year Program Project Cost

Fiscal Year	Projects in 1-Year Program	1-Year Program Estimate	Fiscal Year-End Total Project Cost	Over/Under Program Estimate	Over/ Under
2012	142	$333,466,000	$342,528,000	$9,062,000	3%
2013	135	$380,732,000	$376,220,000	($4,512,000)	-1%
2014	152	$466,460,000	$446,529,000	($19,931,000)	-4%
2015	153	$447,786,000	$501,012,000	$53,226,000	12%
2016	110	$453,412,000	$467,351,000	$13,939,000	3%
2017	95	$506,168,000	$498,937,000	($7,231,000)	-1%
2018	100	$483,240,000	$482,144,000	($1,096,000)	-.2%
2019	110	$512,666,000	$519,813,000	$7,147,000	1%
2020*	93	$793,503,000	$896,697,000	$103,194,000	13%
2021	90	$702,656,000	$741,966,000	$39,310,000	5.6%
2022	103	$549,643,000	$642,764,000	$93,121,000	16.9%
2023	107	$578,969,000	$708,891,000	$129,922,000	22.4%
2024	81	$681,006,000	$698,847,000	$17,841,000	2.6%

**FY 2020 construction program list was adjusted throughout the year to accommodate expenses for the repairs after the Historic 2019 Floods. The Program Delivery data does not include contracted flood repair projects or expenses.*

Construction Competitiveness

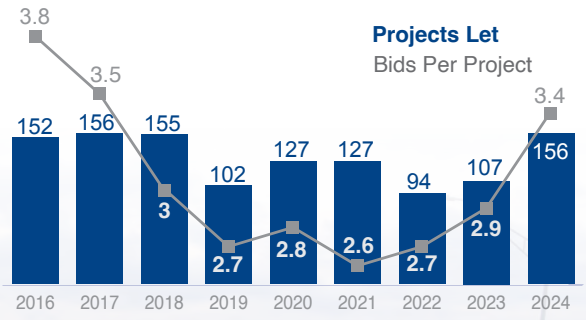
Description: Measurement of the number of projects let in a calendar year and the average number of bids that the NDOT receives on those projects.

Purpose: Measure the number of projects let to construction in a calendar year and measure the average competition among the industry players for that calendar year's projects.

Goal: Maintain a minimum average of three bidders over a calendar year.

Outcome: The NDOT met its goal of three bids per project in 2024. The goal was last met in 2018.

Number of Projects Let Per Year and Average Number of Bids Per Project



State and Federal Funding

The availability of funding at the state and federal level impacts the NDOT's ability to maintain, modernize and expand the transportation system. Increased reliability and diversification of revenue sources supports strategic investment and life-cycle based asset management. Statewide industry leadership is working together to explore common sense options for Nebraska. This is the message delivered by Director Kramer to members of the Legislature regarding LR 417 (2024), a legislative resolution proposing an interim study to identify strategies to fund highway maintenance and construction and on LB 558 (2025)*, a bill proposing to establish a task force to study Nebraska's transportation infrastructure and its needs.

Through the leadership of the Pillen Administration, NDOT has received approval for increased state appropriation to ensure the ability to fully match available federal formula funding allocated to Nebraska and make needed investments to the state's transportation network. At the state level, the NDOT receives funding through a mix of highway user fees, including the various portions of the motor fuel tax, sales tax on motor vehicles and vehicle registrations. However, relying on a gas tax, last raised in 2015, for a revenue source, causes ongoing funding sustainability issues given increasing fuel efficiency.

Additionally, the NDOT receives revenue equivalent to one-quarter of one percent of the general state sales tax rate for the Build Nebraska Act (BNA), which diversified the state's transportation revenue beyond highway user revenues. It has allowed the NDOT to support the economic vitality of the state by reconstructing and expanding the highest transportation priorities such as the expressway system and national high-priority corridors. The Legislature has also linked the Build Nebraska Act with NDOT's recently expanded authority to use bond financing under the Nebraska Highway Bond Act to condense the amount of time it takes to complete construction projects. The Build Nebraska Act, and the revenues it provides to facilitate expanded bonding authority, sunset in June 2042.

However, since the BNA revenue was made available in 2013, construction cost inflation and added sales tax exemptions, has reduced the NDOT's buying power. Using data from the National Highway Construction Cost Index (NHCCI) as a comparison, the NDOT's rise in construction costs mirrors national trends and has more than doubled since 2011.

NDOT transportation is also funded using federal revenues. The federal highway trust fund also faces stagnant revenue as vehicles become more fuel efficient. The fund is sourced from motor fuel taxes and heavy vehicle use taxes, which have not increased since 1993.

The current five-year federal highway authorization bill, known as the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (2021-2026), did increase formula revenue to the states. It was only able to do this with advance appropriations, or deficit spending from the U.S. Treasury's General Fund, as the federal highway trust fund does not have sufficient annual revenues to support the needed federal investment.

In conclusion, without robust, predictable federal funding and consistent, diversified sources of revenue at the state level, the NDOT's ability to maintain, modernize and expand the transportation system will be impacted.

***** *At the time of this writing, LB 558 was awaiting advancement out of the Revenue Committee.*

NDOT Utilizes Bonding

In December 2024, the Nebraska State Highway Commission approved the first bond issuance for a state highway project. The NDOT strategically issued bonds in early 2025 to finance the completion of the US-275 expressway corridor following the historic decision.

Bonding—enabled with the passage of LB 727 (2023) and support from the Pillen administration—allows the NDOT to expedite critical infrastructure projects, like those prioritized under the 2011 Build Nebraska Act. With a bond financing strategy and the accelerated access to resources it provides, NDOT is able to condense the time it takes to proceed to project construction compared to a traditional pay-as-you-go strategy. This allows the NDOT a fiscally conservative method to secure resources. LB 727 included safeguards to ensure a balanced approach to use of bonding. For example, the principal of all bonds cannot exceed $450 million, principal and interest payments must not exceed $35 million annually, no bonds can be issued after June 2029, and bonds must be repaid in full no later than June 2042, which corresponds with the sunset of the Build Nebraska Act funding.

The US-275 corridor is vital to the northeast Nebraska region and a key segment of the expressway system. The project underscores the state's commitment to advancing infrastructure to improve quality of life and drive economic competitiveness, making it a prime candidate for bond financing. While bond issuance plays a key role, it is essential to recognize that bonding is not a revenue source but rather a financing tool to accelerate project completion.

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

Integrate Environmental Considerations into Planning/Design, Construction and Operational Activities of Nebraska's Transportation System

Environmental Stewardship is the integration of environmental considerations into the planning, design, construction and operational activities associated with the Nebraska transportation system. These environmental considerations include cultural, natural and human elements. The NDOT is committed to its role as an environmental steward and to preserving and protecting the environmental features and resources of the state. This goal emphasizes that transportation decisions and investments must be balanced with environmental considerations. The performance measures linked to this strategic goal illustrate our promise to carry environmental commitments forward into construction, take swift corrective action to benefit the environment, when necessary, and to encourage an environmentally sustainable transportation system.

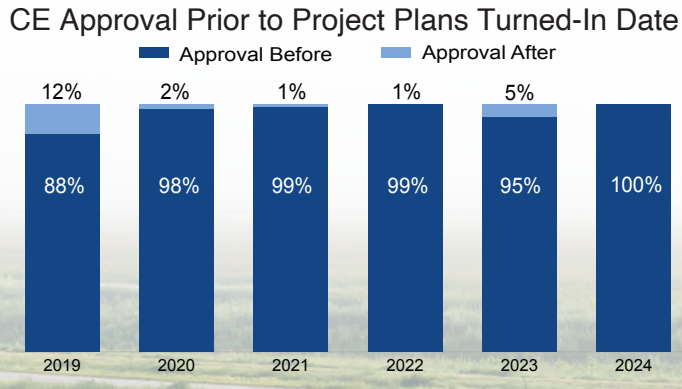
Commitments in Compliance

Description: A key component of the NDOT's environmental stewardship goal is to demonstrate that we are managing and tracking National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review process commitments in compliance with FHWA's implementing regulations (23 CFR 771 et al). More specifically, as a partial NEPA Assignment state with compliance responsibility for certain projects reviewed as Categorical Exclusions, the NDOT must ensure that we are meeting expectations outlined in our Second Renewed Memorandum Of Understanding with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for State Assumption of Responsibility for Categorical Exclusions (23 U.S.C. 326) as approved Sept. 12, 2024. This renewal included restored CE review and approval responsibilities for emergency and permanent repair projects processed via the Federal Emergency Relief program. Meeting CE Assignment processing goals ensures the NDOT will retain the streamlining and efficiency benefits afforded by the federal NEPA Assignment program, setting a solid compliance foundation for a full NEPA assignment application in the future per 23 U.S.C. 327 regulations.

Purpose: Ensure approval of Categorical Exclusion documentation is approved prior to Final Project Plans turn-in date. Failure to comply with CE Assignment MOU stipulations could lead to disciplinary action or revocation of CE Assignment privileges as granted by FHWA.

Goal: 100% of CE documentation approved prior to Final Design turned-in date.

Outcome: The NDOT met CE Assumption process goal in 2024.



Problem-Solving Swiftly

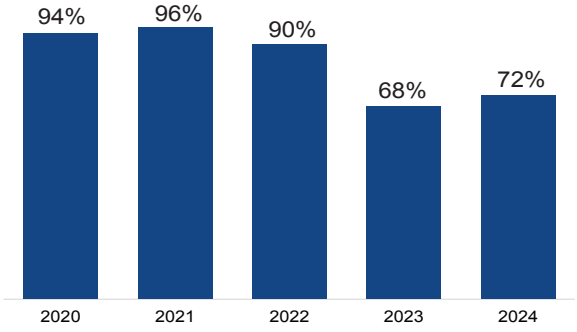
Description: This important component of the NDOT's environmental stewardship goal is to ensure that corrective actions related to environmental commitments for construction projects are resolved within a seven-day window. Speed of resolution is key to maintaining compliance.

Purpose: To ensure the NDOT is performing timely corrective actions and tracking the compliance information necessary to deliver appropriate environmental training for staff and contractors.

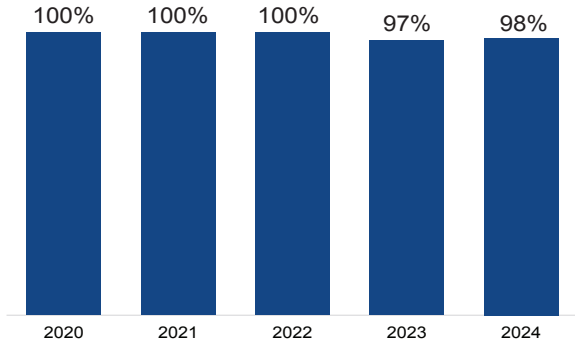
Goal: 100% of corrective actions completed within seven days.

Outcome: In 2023 and 2024, the percentage of corrective actions completed within seven days dropped significantly. This can be due to several factors including complexity of construction phasing operations or frequency of weather events, but indicates an emphasis area for continued training and monitoring to make necessary compliance program adjustments to achieve our compliance goals.

Corrective Actions Completed in 7 Days



Corrective Actions Completed in 30 Days



Paving It Forward

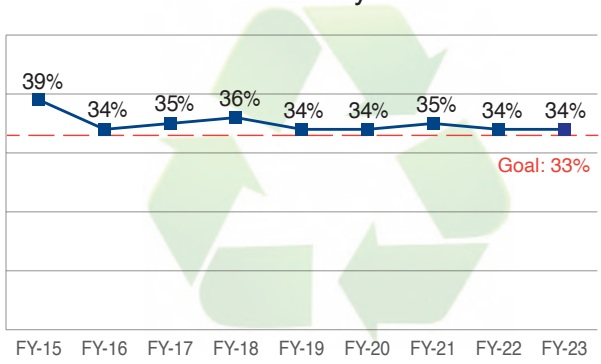
Description: Measurement of material removed during highway construction or maintenance work that is recycled into new roadway pavement.

Purpose: To ensure the NDOT is striving to maximize the use of removed or salvaged material. This minimizes the use of virgin materials and keeps reclaimed material out of landfills.

Goal: A minimum of 33% overall replacement content.

Outcome: The NDOT continues to meet the recycling goal. Post-consumer recycle content of roadway pavement for fiscal year 2023 was 34%.

Post-Consumer Recycle Content



Post-Consumer Recycle Content

Fiscal Year	Overall Replacement Content: Raw Materials (tons)	Overall Replacement Content: Recycle Content Raw Materials (tons)	Est. Value Recycled
2015	3,215,669	1,246,427	$45,750,906
2016	3,717,875	1,250,980	$47,568,953
2017	4,346,961	1,534,604	$60,233,179
2018	2,993,035	1,088,647	$49,670,595
2019	3,243,560	1,104,208	$61,257,110
2020	3,506,284	1,175,577	$61,617,867
2021	3,530,896	1,230,025	$77,148,114
2022	3,033,886	1,041,155	$77,974,124
2023	4,049,289	1,357,081	$88,943,399

Enhancing Efficiency Through Environmental Stewardship

Nebraska adopted a more efficient approach to creating a responsible balance between maintaining environmental stewardship and project delivery through the passage of LB 1335 in 2024. The bill aligns state law with federal regulations of the Endangered Species Act and allows a limited exemption from the Nongame and Endangered Species Conservation Act for certain transportation projects within existing rights-of-way.

Previously, all projects impacting endangered species or their habitats required comprehensive environmental reviews and potential mitigation measures, regardless of the project's location or scope. LB 1335 exempted transportation projects from some stringent requirements when designing, constructing, reconstructing, repairing, operating or maintaining transportation infrastructure—including roads, streets, and highways—within existing rights-of-way.

With the passage of LB 1335 into law:

- If the NDOT widens a highway beyond the existing right-of-way, it must continue to follow the standard consultation process with the Nebraska Games and Park Commission (NGPC), which provides guidance relating to transportation infrastructure projects' potential impact on threatened or endangered species.
- After the highway is widened and new right-of-way is acquired, the NDOT can perform routine maintenance, mowing or permit utility installations without requiring additional environmental reviews.
- Exempted parties are also required to restore areas of temporary disturbance on NGPC-owned property after construction, reconstruction, repair, operation or maintenance, as long as it's deemed practical.

Incidental Take and Critical Habitat Designation

The bill also introduced an incidental take provision, allowing NGPC to approve projects that may unintentionally impact threatened or endangered species. Allowing for "take"—the death of threatened or endangered species—from a project, as long as the species' survival is not jeopardized, makes it easier for the NDOT to manage projects that impact state-listed species, especially when take is unavoidable. Exempted parties may be required to explore alternative approaches or implement mitigation to minimize environmental impact.

Additionally, LB 1335 formalized the process for designating critical habitat by requiring transparency, public input, peer reviews, and executive oversight. NGPC must follow a formal listing process when adjusting a species' state-listed status in response to federal changes. In most cases, the commission must provide public notice and meet specific requirements before adding or removing a critical habitat designation.

Overall, LB 1335 narrowed the scope of transportation projects requiring extensive environmental oversight, already enabling the NDOT to expedite small state-funded projects. The NDOT goes above what is required by the statute and provides contractors with conservation condition reports before a project starts. This effort aides contractors in knowing what species may be at-risk for take before the project starts. As a result, the agency can now allocate resources more efficiently and focus on critical conversation efforts while advancing essential infrastructure projects.

PROJECT DELIVERY

Use Known State and Industry Best Practices, New Technologies and Creativity to Continually Improve and Deliver Well-Designed, High-Quality Projects, Products and Services

NDOT is responsible for developing plans to ensure projects are let and constructed within expected timeframes. These plans predict and aim to minimize negative impacts to the environment, costs and schedule of a project. The agency also carefully oversees the time it takes to build a project, focusing attention on how long the project was predicted to take, adjusted by days unavailable to make progress due to weather impacts.

The department strives to:

- Continuously enhance our expertise in laws and regulations that affect highway projects
- Lead efforts to streamline complex processes
- Implement creative, efficient and flexible solutions to expedite project delivery and construction

Projects Constructed Within the Adjusted Days Allowed

Description: Measurement of estimated time to construct a project.

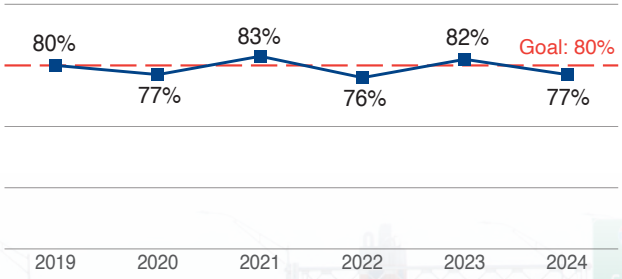
Purpose: This is a measure of the NDOT's ability to accurately estimate the amount of time necessary to complete a construction project (contract time allowance).

Goal: 80% of calendar year projects completed within the current contract time allowance.

Outcome: The NDOT last met the goal in 2023.

Year	Projects Completed
2019	120
2020	145
2021	86
2022	88
2023	111
2024	119

Percent of Projects Completed Within the Adjusted Number of Days Allowed



1-Year Program Projects Delivered to Letting

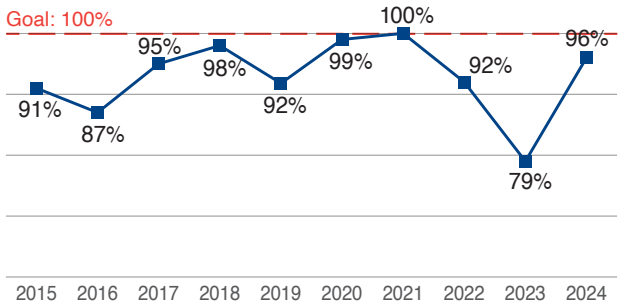
Description: Measurement of the ability to let projects which are identified in the NDOT's one-year schedule of highway improvement projects (1-Year Program).

Purpose: This measurement monitors the delivery of projects to the public. The NDOT's performance reflects how well promises are kept to the public.

Goal: To deliver 100% of projects.

Outcome: The NDOT last met the goal in 2021.

Percent of Projects
Delivered in the 1-Year Program



*In 2023, reliability was impacted by revised threatened and endangered species requirements, including the American Burying Beetle.

Fiscal Year	1-Year Projects[1]	Projects Delivered
2015	153	139
2016	110	96
2017	95	90
2018	100	98
2019	110	101
2020	93	92
2021	90	90
2022	103	93
2023	107	85
2024	81	78

[1] *Projects from the Nebraska Surface Transportation Program not included are those counted in the previous fiscal year, projects withdrawn, and projects built by entities other than the State of Nebraska.*

5-Year Program Projects Delivered to Letting

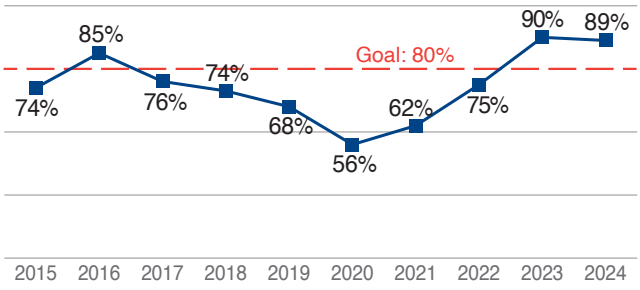
Description: Measurement for success in delivering projects displayed in the 5-Year Planning Program in 2018 and included a five-year projection for 2019-2023.

Purpose: This measurement monitors the delivery of projects to the public. In 2023, the NDOT assessed how many projects in the 5-Year Planning Program in 2018 were actually let between 2019 and 2023.

Goal: To deliver 80% of projects in the 5-Year Program on time.

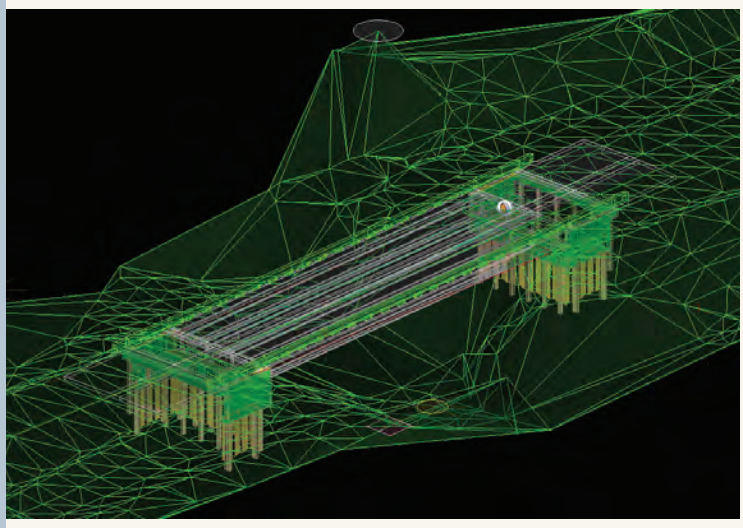
Outcome: 89% of projects identified in the five-year schedule of highway projects in 2020 were delivered to letting by 2024, meeting NDOT's goal.

Percent of Projects
Delivered in the 5-Year Program



Program Period	5-Year Projects	Projects Delivered
2011-2015	428	316
2012-2016	410	349
2013-2017	395	300
2014-2018	428	318
2015-2019	450	307
2016-2020	489	263
2017-2021	439	270
2018-2022	360	270
2019-2023	363	327
2020-2024	482	428

Digital Delivery Expands NDOT's Toolbox



As the NDOT modernizes its systems as part of a five-year business plan, it identified Digital Project Delivery (DPD) implementation as a key improvement component. For projects starting design in 2027, the NDOT's goal is to deliver construction projects using contractual digital models with limited plans, beginning with the piloting of the collection and acceptance of digital as-builts.

This effort leverages modern technologies and digital workflows that connect and streamline project delivery and construction, which are both critical to maintaining the NDOT's transportation infrastructure. To achieve this vision, the NDOT will collaborate between its departments and divisions and external partners in the construction and consulting industries.

The NDOT is poised to unlock its full potential of implementing digital workflows, which will shape the future of infrastructure planning, design, construction, operations and asset management in the state. DPD also provides key benefits to taxpayers, including improved efficiency during design and construction and lower overall project costs.

For more information on DPD, visit dot.nebraska.gov/business-center/digital-project-delivery/

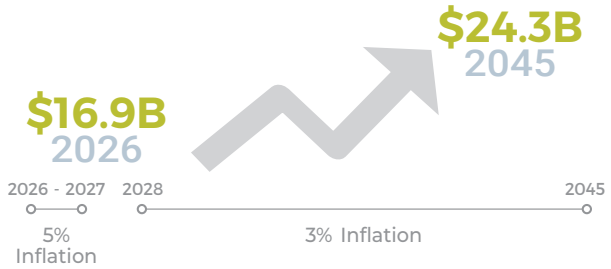
ASSET MANAGEMENT

Operate, Maintain and Replace Assets to Get the Most Value for Taxpayers

The performance measures featured in this section were developed to help monitor and manage the condition of Nebraska roadways, bridges and fleet. Highways and Bridges are the state's largest asset. Additionally, much of the NDOT fleet is critical for maintaining condition and mobility during severe weather events and traffic incidents. NDOT uses robust data drive strategies to maintain, rehabilitate and replace these assets.

Highways and Bridges

The state highway system serves as the backbone of Nebraska's transportation system carrying nearly 65 percent of the state's traffic and connecting our communities to economic hubs. Each year, the NDOT provides an annual assessment of the health of the state highway system, highlighting validated needs and its effort to preserve, modernize and improve state-managed transportation assets. The assessment provides a look into how transportation investments translate into meeting the projected 20-year needs of Nebraska's 10,000 miles of highways and 3,500 bridges. Additionally, the State Highway Needs Assessment serves as a historical record, comparing year-by-year how costs have and are anticipated to evolve. Over the next 20 years the highway system's calculated needs are $16.9 billion in today's dollars, which is an increase of 1% from the 2023 Needs Assessment. When projected inflation is factored in, the estimated cost increases to $24.3 billion by 2045.



In 2024, we saw the rates of projected inflation soften, however this does not translate to the cost of designing and construction of the highway system decreasing. The NDOT continuously evaluates our baselines and estimates to make sure they reflect market costs. Our projections show that the increases in costs of materials and labor will continue to impact the number and scope of projects the Department will be able to deliver on a yearly basis going forward.

The Nebraska Serviceability Index (NSI) and International Roughness index (IRI) performance indicators included on page 14 show an upwards trend in highway surface condition. This means a higher percent of highways are performing well. That's to be expected when preservation is the agency's top priority. However, what these two performance measures do not measure is the long-term effect of replacing and expanding highways and bridges later than anticipated.

Revenues have not increased at the same rate as inflation, impacting the scope and number of miles and bridges that can be constructed. Multiple years of lowered buying power coupled with no increase in revenue will cause the system to worsen and the damage will be more expensive to fix.

The NDOT remains committed to exploring solutions with Industry partners to get the most value for taxpayers without delaying projects and impacting safety.

Asset Preservation

Maintenance to improve and extend the life of existing assets

$10.4B

System Modernization & Operation

Safety, geometric, or mobility upgrades that do not add capacity

$2.3B

Capital Improvements

Add capacity or support economic growth

$4.2B

Pavement Condition of Nebraska Highways

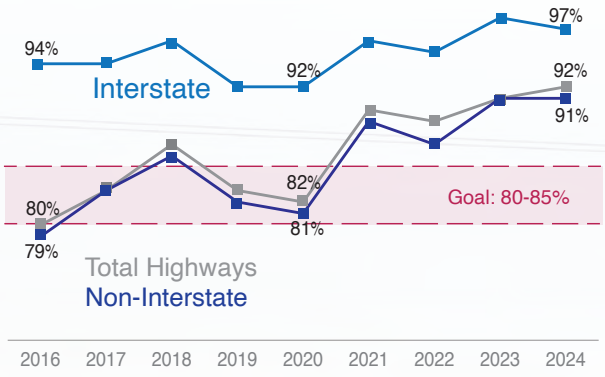
Description: Measurement of the pavement quality of the state highway surface.

Purpose: This is a measure of the pavement condition of the state's 10,000 miles of highways. Pavement condition ratings are based upon annual automated and visual inspections and rated according to the Nebraska Serviceability Index. Highway pavement sections are rated on an NSI scale of 0-100 with any section rated 70 or above considered good. This information is used to help determine appropriate strategies for maintenance, rehabilitation or reconstruction.

Goal: 80-85% of the highway system miles shall be rated at least good (NSI rating ≥70).

Outcome: In 2024, 92% of the highway system was rated at least good, exceeding the goal. An NSI rating of 90-100% indicates pavement is in very good condition.

Percent of Miles at Least "Good" (NSI ≥ 70)



Smoother Roads

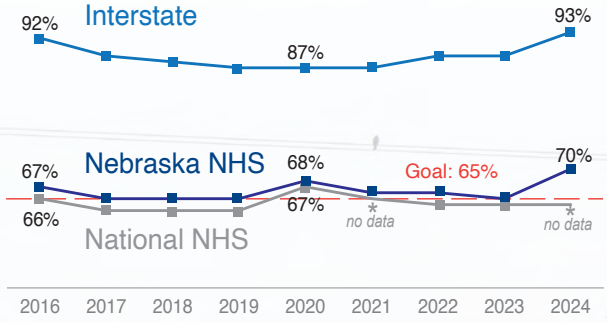
Description: Measurement of the smoothness of the roads on the National Highway System (NHS). The NHS is a subset of the highway system and includes roads that are important to the nation's economy, defense and mobility. The National Highway System is comprised of 3,655 miles of state highways and local roads.

Purpose: One measure of the smoothness of roads is the International Roughness Index. This index measures pavement roughness in terms of the number of inches per mile. The lower the IRI number, the better the ride. A smoother roadway is safer and more satisfying to the users of our highway system.

Goal: 65% of all miles on the Nebraska National Highway System shall be maintained at an acceptable ride quality of "good" (IRI ratings <95 in/mi). National data was not available for 2021 and 2024.

Outcome: In 2024, 70% of Nebraska's National Highway System miles had an IRI rating of "good," meeting the goal.

Percent of "Smooth" Miles on the NHS (IRI < 95)



*Data required from FHWA for this metric was not published for 2021 and 2024.

Nebraska Bridges in a State of Good Repair

Description: Measurement of the progress toward keeping state-owned bridges in a condition of good repair.

Purpose: All bridges in Nebraska are safety inspected every two years and the condition information is stored in the Nebraska Bridge Inventory. This condition information is used by the Bridge Management Section to determine cost-effective strategies to keep the bridges in good repair. The necessary work may include preservation, repair, maintenance, re-decking, rehabilitation or replacement.

Goal: To have 95% of Nebraska state-owned bridges in good or fair condition.*

Outcome: 96.8% of Nebraska's state-owned bridges are in good or fair condition.*

Major Bridge Components - Bridge deck, Superstructure, Substructure

Good - major bridge components are all in good condition or better

Poor - one or more major bridge components are in poor condition or worse

Fair - all other bridges

**Percent Good, Fair and Poor is calculated from bridge deck area.*

Historic Bridge Replaced to Improve Safety

The Minnechaduza Creek Bridge sits three miles east of Valentine in the Fort Niobrara Wildlife Refuge Area on Highway 12. The NDOT is replacing the existing structure with a new 175-foot by 36-foot single-span bridge over the Minnechaduza Creek.

To minimize the impact on the region's tourism which welcomes nearly 75,000 canoers, kayakers, and tubers who float the Niobrara National Scenic River, the work was scheduled during the off-season. Construction began in late summer 2024 and is scheduled to open spring 2025.

Originally built in 1958, the existing bridge had undergone multiple repairs, including resurfacing in 1985, rail and curb remodeling in 1989, and crack arresting for the steel substructure in 2014. Inspections revealed extensive structural deterioration, corrosion at the abutment ends, failing bearings and continued cracking of the steel substructure, leading to a "poor" rating and classification as structurally deficient.

This is the NDOT's first use of a newly developed concrete mixture, 47BD-R, designed through research with the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to reduce bridge deck cracking. The upgrade will also include new guardrail, curb and flume.

The new bridge will utilize some of the largest girders ever employed in Nebraska, with each measuring 176 feet in length and weighing over 165,000 pounds. This design is essential for spanning the waterway, preserving habitat connectivity and maintaining the NDOT's easement within the Fort Niobrara National Wildlife Refuge. The Refuge was a key proponent of ensuring the area beneath the bridge remains open for wildlife passage. The total cost of this project is estimated at $2.3 million and comes from state and federal funding sources.

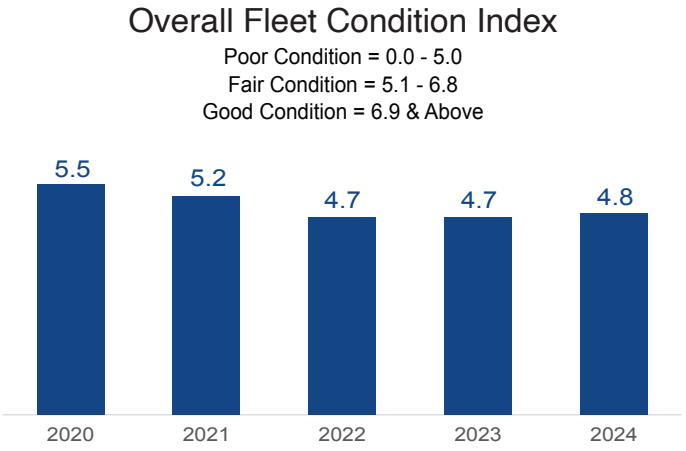
Fleet Condition Index

Description: Measurement of the current condition of the NDOT's fleet.

Purpose: This measure is used to determine appropriate strategies for proper maintenance, repair, and replacement of fleet equipment.

Goal: Achieve and maintain an overall fleet condition index of good.

Outcome: The overall Fleet Condition Index for 2024 was 4.8. The rating shows that the NDOT's fleet was rated in "Poor Condition." Fleet data also showed that over 63% of the core fleet is at or beyond its expected life-cycle age and unplanned repair costs continue to rise. Recent increases in the fleet equipment budget have resulted in the index's downward trend leveling off, however, inflation has resulted in additional funding in order to reduce the trend.



Modernizing and Improving NDOT's Fleet

The NDOT continues to make strides to modernize and improve the condition of its fleet. Currently, 62.5% of the NDOT's fleet is past its expected life of use, meaning equipment such as large trucks have been in service longer than expected. To address this, the NDOT has been phasing out older vehicles that require costly repairs and investing in more efficient models. The investment not only enhances performance but also ensures greater reliability to respond.

A key investment last year was larger snowblowers for winter operations. Snowblowers are vital for crews across the state to clear snow drifts that are too large for vehicles and trucks to clear the roadway. The replacements significantly enhance the NDOT's ability to manage winter road conditions, respond to clearing roads faster and help move resources across the state during winter weather events to ensure smoother and safer operations across the state. Prior to the recent investment, the NDOT's snowblower fleet ages ranged from 1971 to 2006.

Another significant upgrade was the acquisition of several wheel loaders. These versatile machines help move debris, gravel, soil, dirt, ice, salt and snow, further enhancing the NDOT's ability to maintain roadways efficiently and provide more efficient incident response times.

Over the past few years, Nebraska has seen more extreme storms. In winter 2024, a major snowstorm closed numerous roads across the state. The NDOT needed to ask the South Dakota Department of Transportation for assistance to clear snow and get traffic moving as soon as possible. By evaluating past weather trends, the investment in the NDOT's fleet is better positioned to handle extreme weather events.

MOBILITY

Improve Mobility on Nebraska's Transportation System Through Increased Reliability and Efficiency

The purpose of this performance measure is to assess the health of the transportation system reliability and efficiency. The NDOT's objective is to reduce the time it takes to respond and clear incidents and return traffic to normal conditions, restoring consistent mobility.

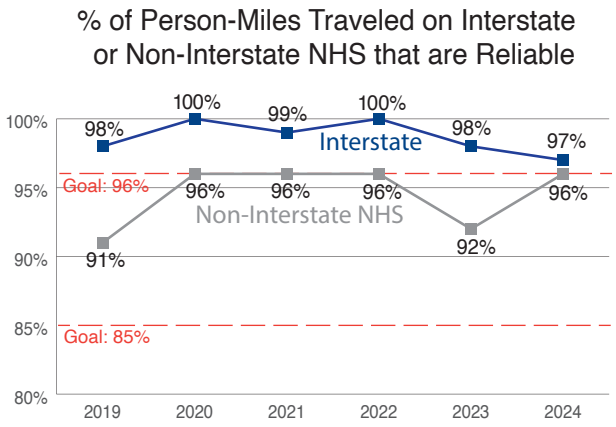
Percent of Reliable Person-Miles Traveled

Description: Measures primarily recurring congestion for the interstate system and the non-interstate National Highway System (NHS). Reports the percent of travel on roads where the worst day of the week's travel time is less than 50% longer than an average day.

Purpose: To increase awareness of reliable travel and reduce disruption from traffic congestion. Reliable travel offers travelers assurance of reaching their destination within a reasonable time. Through traffic management and operations strategies, NDOT can successfully reduce long travel times.

Goal: A reliability percentage of 96% for interstates and 85% for non-interstate NHS highways.

Outcome: The goal for both interstate and non-interstate NHS highways has been met.



Traffic Incident Management Grows Safety

Traffic Incident Management (TIM) is the planned approach to detect, quickly respond and safely clear traffic incidents. Its principles reinforce how safe, quick clearance, reliable interoperable communication, safe vehicle positioning, unified command and scene safety are key to bringing responders home safe after every call. In 2024, Nebraska's TIM program celebrated five key initiatives.

- A training module developed to summarize NDOT's role in TIM and details the resources available through the State Operations Center (SOC) that help support safe, quick clearance of roadway incidents.
- An enhanced effort to improve first responder coordination and engagement before major construction projects on state and local roads.
- In September, the Nebraska Panhandle area TIM coalition celebrated the signing of their Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The MOU is a formal handshake as all agencies agree to work together and implement TIM best practices in the name of safety.
- Nebraska DOT recognized National Crash Responder Safety Week in November. Together with the Nebraska State Patrol, the week honored emergency responders who showcase bravery, skill and dedication in performing their critical role in keeping travelers safe.
- The NDOT launched a Crash Clearance Dashboard for agencies to evaluate roadway clearance performance and elevate performance discussions using data from the Nebraska Investigator's Motor Vehicle Crash Report.

COMMUNICATION, COORDINATION, COLLABORATION, & COOPERATION (4Cs)

Infrastructure Hub Makes Immediate Impact

In July, with the support of the Pillen administration, the NDOT launched the Nebraska Infrastructure Hub. This was the state's first-ever intergovernmental entity for empowering public agencies in competing for federal discretionary funding. The Hub aims to increase Nebraska's grant competitiveness and support state and local partners in seeking similar opportunities.

With strategic guidance, training programs and networking opportunities, the Hub equips agencies across Nebraska with the necessary tools and knowledge to navigate the complex grant application process successfully. Local partners can find help through the Hub with the grant pairing portal, technical assistance with on-call consultants and full-time NDOT employees to assist with project development and monitoring and evaluation from the NDOT once a grant is awarded.

Testimonial ...

"The Nebraska Infrastructure Hub is an invaluable resource that NDOT has provided to help counties across the state access federal funding. For smaller, rural counties like ours, the cost of professional grant writing services can be a major barrier to securing infrastructure dollars. NDOT's support through the Infrastructure Hub not only helps bridge that gap, but also provides the expertise and guidance needed to navigate complex applications. This partnership ensures that even communities with limited resources have a fair shot at funding opportunities that improve roads, bridges and essential infrastructure. I was excited to be the first applicant to successfully submit a grant through this initiative, and I look forward to seeing how it continues to benefit Nebraska."

- Emily Haxby, Gage County Infrastructure Hub User

Key Achievements

- Engaged with representatives from all **93 counties**
- Traveled **2,914 miles** meeting stakeholders
- Sent **153 emails**, provided **43 hours** direct assistance and attended **38 events**

Hub-Managed Projects

16 projects

$109M+

grants and congressional delegations including:

- *City of Beatrice* - $21M+
- *Platte County* - $15M+
- *Lincoln County* - $750K

2024 Funding Awards

37 awards

18 counties

$56M+

discretionary transportation grants

$98M

congressional delegations

NEBRASKA INFRASTRUCTURE HUB

dot.nebraska.gov/business-center/nebraska-infrastructure-hub/

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Support and Facilitate the Development of a Skilled Workforce that Enhances Workplace Productivity and Increases Opportunities for Employees to Learn New Skills

NDOT Launches Leadership Development Program

In 2024, the NDOT partnered with Franklin Covey® to design a new Leadership Development Program to equip employees at all levels with the skills, confidence and tools to grow as leaders. With 24 employees enrolled across two cohorts as of March 2025, the program is well underway. The insights and relationships built in these cohorts directly support the NDOT's broader mentorship objectives, ensuring that leadership development continues beyond a single training session.

The year-long program is structured into three leadership tiers, each requiring an average of 10 hours per month, with a much more active first six months than second. Each cohort follows a structured curriculum, reinforcing the principle that to lead others, one must first lead themselves. Each course is a building block that will link, overlap and blend together, creating a cohesive learning journey.

The Grow and Excel cohorts include team capstone projects, allowing participants to apply what they learn in a collaborative environment. Meanwhile, the Thrive cohort will embark on a capstone project chosen by the Director and Deputy Directors.

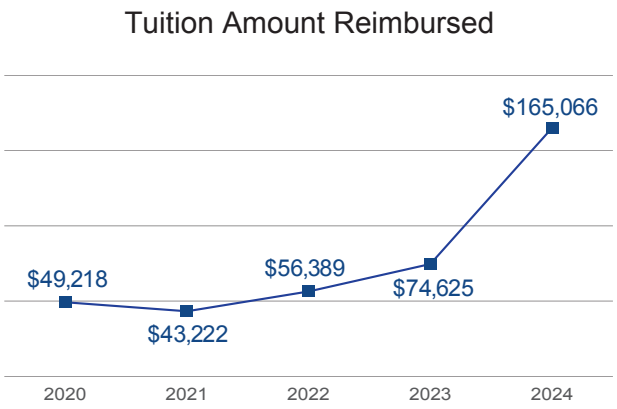
The program was designed by combining current Leadership Development best practice research and feedback from all levels of NDOT employees through surveys, focus groups and leadership engagement sessions. It focuses on communication and people leadership, covering competencies such as coaching, emotional intelligence, strengths-based leadership, leading change and strategy execution.

Leadership Cohorts

- **Grow** *(for emerging leaders)* has a strong focus on communication skills or "soft skills" with an emphasis on emotional intelligence. The cohort launched in March 2025, beginning with ***The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*** and a 360-degree assessment, offering each participant a comprehensive view of their areas of strengths and areas for improvement. The program then moves into navigating conversations.
- **Excel** *(for new-to-mid-level leaders)* kicked off in January 2025, focusing on leadership, building trust and personal strengths, incorporating the Clifton Strengths Course to help participants apply their natural talents in a leadership setting, and introduces the leadership practice of coaching. Participants also receive two, 60-minute 1:1 coaching sessions with a Gallup Certified Strengths Coach during the second half of their cohort.
- **Thrive** *(for senior leaders)* Set to begin in May 2025, this cohort centers on team growth, strategic leadership and bringing out the best in your individuals and teams, reinforcing NDOT's long-term vision for leadership development.

Tuition Reimbursement Program

The tuition reimbursement program has proven to be an unequivocal success. Not only has it enriched the skills and knowledge base of NDOT employees, but it has also fostered a culture of continuous learning and growth within the organization. The program has empowered individuals to pursue higher education, enhancing their capabilities and enabling them to contribute more effectively to NDOT's collective goals. As a result, we've witnessed an increase of employees utilizing the tuition reimbursement program from previous years. The investment in our employees' education has undeniably yielded significant returns, both in terms of individual career advancement and organizational success.



Building Nebraska's Future Workforce

One of the NDOT's strategic goals is workforce development, which includes ensuring Nebraska has the skilled and qualified people needed to maintain and enhance the state's transportation infrastructure. To meet this demand, the NDOT implemented initiatives like the Good Life, Great Journey Scholarship Program and the Talent Ambassadors Program, designed to inspire and support individuals pursuing careers in transportation, engineering and technology-related fields and provide direct pathways to employment at the NDOT.

Good Life, Great Journey Scholarship Helps Fill Critical Roles

In the spring of 2024, the NDOT Director's Office, HR Team and the Pillen Administration joined forces to launch the Good Life, Great Journey Scholarship Program, helping to ensure Nebraska has a strong pipeline of talent to fill critical roles at the NDOT. The program provides scholarships to individuals pursuing technical degrees at a technical college, while obtaining hands-on experience working at the NDOT.

In its first year, the program successfully provided scholarships covering up to 100% of tuition, books, fees, tools and housing expenses for three students studying diesel technology, information technology and electronics systems. Additionally, recipients gained valuable real-world experience through paid internships at NDOT locations statewide, with the potential for full-time employment upon successful program completion.

Following its initial success, the NDOT continued the scholarship program into spring 2025 and will continue it again in the fall. Eligible programs of study include Diesel Technology, Electronics Systems/Electrical Technology, Land Surveying/GIS, Drafting/Design Technology, Engineering (associate's degree) and Information Technology.

The Good Life, Great Journey scholarship is open to individuals of all ages, from recent high school graduates to seasoned professionals. More information about the scholarship and eligibility can be found at dot.nebraska.gov/about/scholarship-program/

Talent Ambassadors Make Lasting Impact

The NDOT Talent Ambassadors are essential to talent acquisition by representing the agency in communities throughout the state, while advocating for careers within our organization. More than 300 NDOT employees go beyond their daily roles to engage with their communities, attending career fairs, parades, school visits, hosting hiring events, conducting mock interviews, organizing job shadow opportunities and hands-on events like touch-a-truck demonstrations and trunk-or-treats—all to positively showcase every aspect of our agency to the public and potential hires.

And their efforts are paying off! This past year, the NDOT talent acquisition team hired over 840 new teammates, resulting in a 15% increase in new hires over a two-year period.

Talent Ambassadors played a key role in that success by serving as a trusted and recognizable presence in their communities. These outreach efforts provide Nebraska's students and job seekers with direct exposure to the essential work of the NDOT and its dedicated team members. Thanks to these efforts, NDOT teammates proudly share how their work strengthens Nebraska's economy and transportation infrastructure.

AERONAUTICS DIVISION

Nebraska's airport system is a dynamic part of the state's economy which enhances quality of life through infrastructure and services that meet the diverse and evolving needs of all Nebraskans.

New Grant Prioritization System Enhances Transparency and Efficiency for Aeronautics Funding Decisions

The NDOT's Division of Aeronautics implemented a new prioritization tool to assist the Aeronautics Commission in awarding state grant funds, aimed at enhancing transparency and efficiency in the funding process.

Previously, grant allocations were based on available funds and subjective preferences of the Aeronautics Commission. The new prioritization tool utilizes a criteria matrix that scores project proposals based on factors such as safety, economic impact and regional connectivity.

Implementation began in October 2024 when the Commission had the opportunity to test the new matrix while selecting projects for 2024 state grants. This data-driven approach allows for more equitable funding decisions, ensuring that resources are allocated to projects that provide the greatest benefits to Nebraska's aviation infrastructure.

78
Public-use Airports

9
Airports with Commercial Service

1,746
Based Aircraft at Public-use Airports

$57M
2024 Federal Grants for NE Airports

$6M
2024 State Grants for NE Airports

Federal Funding for Nebraska Airports

	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24
State Apportionment	$3,410,005	$3,096,016	$3,155,920	$3,110,839	$2,882,857
NonPrimary	9,685,530	8,559,443	8,924,222	9,141,400	8,708,321
Primary & Cargo	12,492,485	6,824,918	1,867,000	7,850,500	6,870,041
Discretionary	2,946,280	2,900,919	7,849,488	16,612,161	2,260,143
Stimulus/Supplemental	15,194,523	11,039,000	3,369,500	---	7,000,000
CARES/ARPA	2,554,966	2,201,187	38,250	11,619,197	---
BIL	---	---	223,000	45,884,573	29,447,485
	$46,283,789	**$34,621,483**	**$25,427,380**	**$94,218,670**	**$57,168,847**

I-80 between Lincoln and Omaha

For more on NDOT operations, projects and fiscal reports visit our Publications page
https://dot.nebraska.gov/news-media/publications/