

By Colvin Roy

Supporting the MnDOT proposal for an Urban Partnership Agreement project for the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area.

Whereas, the City of Minneapolis supports a multimodal approach to meet existing and future transportation needs of citizens and workers in Minneapolis; and

Whereas, the Minneapolis Plan, the city's comprehensive plan (updated in 2004) states that "Minneapolis will follow a policy of 'Transit First' in order to build a more balanced transportation system than the current one"; and

Whereas, on May 16, 2006, the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) announced its new National Strategy to Reduce Congestion on America's Transportation Network, of which one major component is the Urban Partnership Agreement (UPA); and

Whereas, the USDOT has indicated that UPA funding of up to \$1.2 billion will come from several USDOT programs and be matched at 20 percent by state and/or local sources in the selected metropolitan areas; and

Whereas, under a UPA, USDOT's partner metropolitan areas will commit to innovate and test methods using four strategies—dynamic pricing, transit, telecommuting, and technology—in a combined approach to reducing traffic congestion; and

Whereas, the goal of the UPA is to demonstrate a significant reduction in congestion within three years by implementing these strategies; and

Whereas, the UPA initiative represents a fiscally responsible paradigm shift on the part of the Federal government by first making best use of existing infrastructure and maximizing capacity by increasing transit ridership, before building more expensive infrastructure; and

Whereas, a successful UPA application would significantly advance the City's goal of implementing Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) on the inside lane of 35W south of Downtown with at least two stations at 46th Street and Lake Street; and

Whereas, UPA could pay for 1) new, high-quality BRT buses, 2) new BRT stations and bus stop amenities 3) new park & rides, 4) new bus lanes in downtown, 5) "a larger toolbox" – methods and technologies aimed to improve

freeway flows by reducing congestion, 6) better managed construction traffic and less construction delays and diversions; and

Whereas, the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) is leading the effort to submit a proposal for the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area, jointly with the Metropolitan Council; and

Whereas, metropolitan area cities and counties, environmental and private sector interests, the University of Minnesota, and private sector businesses are part of a broad coalition planning the Twin Cities submittal; and

Whereas, project areas identified for congestion reduction and transit opportunities are the I-35W and Trunk Highway 77 (Cedar Avenue) corridors in Hennepin and Dakota Counties and Trunk Highway 169 corridor in Hennepin and Scott Counties; and

Whereas, selection of I-35W, Trunk Highway 169 and Trunk Highway 77 as Twin Cities Metropolitan Area UPA corridors could significantly advance pricing, transit, technology and telecommuting along the corridors and utilize the new initiatives to reduce congestion; and

Whereas, the reconstruction of the “Crosstown Commons” portion of 35W from 46th to 66th street will be very frustrating for both commuters and neighborhoods along 35W particularly during the second and third years of the project, and this makes it all the more important that alternatives including BRT be implemented as soon as possible to provide choices for commuters;

Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved by The City Council of The City of Minneapolis:

That the City of Minneapolis hereby supports the proposal by the Minnesota Department of Transportation for an Urban Partnership Agreement project for the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area that encompasses the I-35W and Cedar Avenue Bus Rapid Transit Corridors in Hennepin and Dakota Counties; Trunk Highway 169 Corridor in Hennepin and Scott Counties; Dynamic Priced Lanes on I-35W and on Cedar Avenue; and conversion of the I-35W High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes to High Occupancy toll(HOT) lanes from I-494 to the City of Lakeville.

Be It Further Resolved that the City of Minneapolis would also support a more aggressive proposal by MnDOT which includes a continuous dynamic priced lane from Lakeville to Downtown Minneapolis in which buses can always travel for free at posted speeds.

Be It Further Resolved that elements of a more aggressive proposal include 1) pricing the Crosstown Area from 46th Street to 66th Street during re-

construction in order to provide choices for commuters including Bus Rapid Transit, and 2) converting an existing lane north of 46th street to HOT/BRT use during reconstruction.

Be It Further Resolved that the City of Minneapolis strongly encourages Governor Pawlenty, Commissioner Molnau and MnDOT to seize this opportunity to bring our federal tax dollars home to Minnesota by making the most innovative and competitive UPA application.