



Civic Caucus

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Transportation Congestion Position Report

Report of the Civic Caucus

UNTANGLING TRAFFIC CONGESTION in the Expanded Metropolitan Region.

Congestion on the roadways of an expanding Twin cities region is a major public concern. Not only is more time spent commuting to jobs but the movement of goods is slowing with adverse impact on the economy. Complicating the challenge is the fact that the Twin Cities region is expanding outward from the core seven counties to fifteen in Minnesota and three in Wisconsin.

Our conclusions about what to do rest on the premise that market forces will continue to have the greatest influence on how much and how fast traffic congestion worsens. The bulk of this congestion results from the choices residents are making to drive alone and to make more trips each day rather than from population growth.

Continuous outward expansion finds regional job related trip making extending from seven into eighteen counties. As jobs and homes disperse they utilize a highway network that has not significantly expanded in the past twenty years. As a consequence a growing number of residents find themselves spending more time commuting during peak commute periods. Yet the popularity of automobiles and their affordability makes them the dominant form of transportation. Not only do people value auto ownership but they prefer to drive alone, enjoying the freedom, independence, privacy and convenience the private automobile offers.

To make significant progress on congestion will require not only more roads and additional transportation/transit services but significant incentives for employers and commuters to facilitate and reward use of transportation services as an alternative to driving alone.

Some planners offer another transportation vision of life in the Twin Cities for those who prefer to take a transportation service and leave the driving to someone else. They vision future residential and job development occurring along permanent ribbons of fixed guide way transit of LRT and Commuter Rail with the hope that this development will eliminate use of the auto by many people. They believe that movement by rail is more attractive than by buses and that with the fixed guide ways the public will be required to run vehicles more frequently, thereby giving the commuter many optional times. However, this alternative largely serves trips to the two downtowns that account for only 15 percent of the jobs. This alternative also assumes the public will pay for all the capital costs and most of the operating costs. Charging user fees to cover just the operating costs will make it a non-competitive alternative to the auto and put it beyond the financial reach of much of the population. Not only do these planners

and their supporters view this transportation alternative as more desirable but they see it as significantly affecting private development choices for homes and businesses to the extent that it will impact the overall development pattern of the region. We reject this vision.

Leadership for untangling congestion must come from the state.

Our recommendations start with the conclusion that only the state can untangle much of the congestion the region is experiencing. With nearly 70% of the state's population soon to be within these 15 county metropolitan boundaries, we see no practical alternative but to assign primary responsibility to the state. Most of the major roadways that are of greatest concern are state highways. In addition the state is the only level of government with the authority necessary to modify the framework for decision-making and to raise the funds to finance needed investments.

Untangling congestion requires focusing responsibility for leadership in one elected state official- the Governor- who should become primarily responsible for addressing the congestion issue over the short and long term. It also requires a change in the roles of the Metropolitan Council, the counties and the cities in road and transportation/transit service decision making and service delivery.

We recommend the Governor be assisted by a Transportation Commission which should not have any operating responsibilities. While the Metropolitan Council currently performs some of this role, its jurisdiction is limited to only seven of the fifteen counties in the expanded metropolitan region in this state. In addition, the Council has major responsibility for operation of the major bus system, contracting with suburban transit operating districts, and operation of Metro Mobility transportation services for the frail elderly and handicapped, as well as operating authority for sewage collection and treatment, and for housing and development grants. We concluded that expanding the existing authority of the Metropolitan Council to include the fifteen counties and to become the transportation policy advisory body to the Governor was unlikely to receive legislative support. If this were possible, however, the Council's transit/transportation service operating responsibilities should be shifted to the state so that for transportation purposes it would focus only on transportation/transit policy.

To untangle congestion, the state must have responsibility for all the major components of the solution. Therefore, its role must expand from just major roadways to include responsibility for all major components of congestion management including the location and level of transportation/transit services. These include express bus services, those that encourage car/van pooling, park and ride lots /ramps, and shuttles to employment centers. Finally, only the state can provide necessary tax and economic incentives to insure involvement by major regional employers.

Our recommendations look toward increased investments in highways, especially for the elimination of bottlenecks on freeways and expressways and for systematic set aside of land for future roadway development. Investment is also needed to develop many more conveniently located park and ride facilities, for "super lanes" and for significant test of transportation services that utilize large and small buses and car/van pools designed to provide service not only to the downtowns but for people that live and work in the suburbs.

A longer term strategy for congestion reduction requires significant changes in the land use and the road access framework to assure land is set aside in many cities and towns for conveniently located park and ride facilities, service drives along freeways, and limits on access to major roadways,

especially those radiating out on the edges of the region. Our recommendations call for state leadership to indicate which roadways will require changed land use and access rules and action by cities and counties to modify their land use and transportation plans to reflect the need to preserve lands for this movement and for convenient operation of a set of transportation service alternatives.

We cannot rely only on additions to roadway capacity. Steps need to be taken to build the ridesharing and express bus service to increase vehicle occupancy as one of the congestion reduction objectives. New services that utilize many additional park and ride lots and shuttles going to many suburban job destinations hold considerable promise.

To achieve the increases in vehicle occupancy and to get new services developed we recommend the state strengthen and adopt a set of powerful incentives and dis-incentives directed to employers and commuters to provide and use these transportation service alternatives.

Added investments will require additional revenue for capital expansion, increased operating costs and for tax incentives. We concluded, however, that transportation is a function that can and should pay for itself from increases in user fees and by revenue from those who benefit from the investments.

Additional revenue will require increases in traditional user fees such as the gas tax and the introduction of congestion related pricing on fast moving super lanes of roadways for those who choose to drive alone. Landowners and cities that benefit from increased land value on land adjoining interchanges should further contribute part of the capital gain derived from the public investment in roads and interchanges at access points and in transit station for part of the revenue needed to pay for the freeway, transit and access improvements.

REPORT ON UNTANGLING CONGESTION

Untangling congestion in the Twin Cities region is a huge undertaking. It will require years of concentrated effort and substantial increases in resources. In the end it may be possible to only contain the growth of congestion to the current levels. Even this, however, would be a huge step.

Major elements in our proposal:

1. Freeway and Expressway improvements are key to congestion management including bottleneck elimination, some increased highway lane capacity especially for "super lanes" and the set aside of land for future roadway development.

Improvements that are needed include:

- a.) Eliminate bottlenecks on freeways and expressways inside the I-494 /610/694 beltway.
- b) Develop many conveniently located park and ride lots adjoining freeway interchanges. Such lots/ramps need to be specifically included in city land use plans.

1. Develop super lanes on freeways. These lanes should be available at no cost to buses, vanpool and carpools but charge variable fees tied to the levels of congestion for those who drive alone and choose to use them.
1. Provide land for service drives and for access to freeways for the long term especially on the freeways radiating into the outer portion of the expanding region outside the I494-I694-T.H. 610 beltway. This should become a responsibility of cities and counties who authorize development under guidelines set by the state.
2. Add lanes on some existing freeways such as I-494, I-694, T.H. 100, and T. H. 169. Development of another beltway around the existing one is not advisable. It will only add to the problem of congestion and the dispersal of trips.

2. Transportation/transit Services that build on the existing ridesharing and express bus services offer the greatest promise for increased vehicle occupancy essential to congestion reduction throughout the region. Added development of new park and ride lots with shuttle services to many suburban employment locations also will help address more than 80 percent of the congestion challenge of the region. .

More transportation services, including bus transit must be part of the untangling congestion package. One of the greatest challenges in reducing congestion, however, is determining what transportation/transit services will be effective. Less than ten percent of the work trips currently use alternatives to driving alone. Unfortunately, their use continues to decline and their market continues to shrink.

We concluded that fixed rail as a significant congestion reliever is a myth that must be destroyed. This myth is very popular today. It appears to offer the promise that many will get out of their cars, get off the congested roadways and take rail transit, thereby reducing congestion. This region is in the fortunate position of testing the theory without building another mile of LRT or Commuter rail since we can test the impact of rail transit on congestion after the Hiawatha LRT line is built. Consequently we recommend the state and region not make any commitment to building any additional fixed rail lines until an assessment of the impact of this service is completed four years after the line is opened.

Fixed rail lines will do little to reduce congestion in this region because of the dispersed and low density development of both jobs and homes. The bulk of the growing congestion challenge in this region will be experienced in the suburbs where 80% of the homes and jobs are located. These scattered and dispersed trips cannot be significantly served on any network of fixed rail lines.

A further complication to a fixed guideway strategy in the Twin Cities is that it will require nearly twice the number of routes and miles to serve two downtowns rather than the one downtown found in most metropolitan areas. This occurs because of the historic tendency to serve the economic and political interests in the two centers. A doubling of the capital investment and operating subsidies needed for a fixed rail strategy in this region will further depress investments in other more useful transportation/transit services.

Both downtowns are experiencing increases in the cost of parking because of the limited amounts of increasingly expensive land and the construction of expensive parking ramps. Escalating parking charges, however, are a significant incentive for alternatives to driving alone and should encourage additional car and vanpools and increase the demand for express bus services. Incentives from employers or the city that reduces the bus fare or the cost of parking for carpools/vanpools can further speed up the trend. Corridors that anticipate large numbers of buses and van/carpools are prime candidates for development of separate "super lanes" to speed up movement by these alternatives. Such lanes might either be on existing freeways or on separate rights of way such as abandoned railroads right of way.

Instead of a system of fixed rail guideways this region needs to dramatically expand many effective alternatives to driving alone and take steps, with incentives and disincentives, to reward and optimize their use. Some of these will use large vehicles while many more will use smaller ones. Nearly all of them assume that part of a person's trip to work will be by private auto and part by a transportation service or it will be by people riding together. Some of the services that need to be developed or expanded include:

1. Employer sponsored shuttle services between park and ride ramps and large employment concentrations and employer sponsored car and van pool matching with their own employees and employees of adjoining employers.
2. Small vehicle reverse commute services between homes in the inner cities and suburban jobs.
3. Express bus services between park and ride lots in the suburbs and the downtowns or other employment locations where there is paid parking. These transit services are an alternative to paying for increasingly expensive parking. Financing to cover most of the operating costs for these services might come from peak period fares only slightly lower than the price of convenient parking.
4. Local circulation transit service connecting the increasing number of homes around the downtowns with downtown jobs. These services might use smaller buses or even test a small vehicle personalized rapid transit service.

Many bus routes radiating from the downtowns follow old streetcar routes that had substantial historic transit ridership from adjoining lower to middle income residents or from higher density apartment development. Consequently many miles of streets where frequent all day and weekend service exists are candidates for concentrated residential development and re-development in the region. Residents of new higher density development along streets such as Hennepin, Nicollet, Lake St., Chicago, Central, and Broadway in Minneapolis, along University Ave. in St. Paul, Broadway in Robbinsdale, and Excelsior Blvd. in St. Louis Park and Hopkins may be primary targets of opportunity for development and re-development.

Other areas such as in the large and growing residential communities surrounding the downtowns where much of the population works downtown might be good candidates for new small bus service or for a test of Personalized Rapid Transit (PRT).

Focusing increased densities along miles of streets with frequent bus service rather than along new fixed guideway lines will compliment the existing service, grow demand for service to fill up empty seats, and justify the gradual increased investment in additional service.

3. Powerful incentives and disincentives to employers and commuters that facilitates and encourages use of alternatives to driving alone are needed to significantly take hold of the congestion challenge in this region.

Significant progress toward congestion reduction requires the introduction and use of some powerful incentives and disincentives to encourage the use of transportation/transit and ridesharing services and to make the investment in them productive and worthwhile. Additional incentives and disincentives will increase the demand for these services which as they increase will make them more convenient and responsive to commuter trip needs.

Some advocate tying the style and types of development to transportation/transit services as a way of increasing use of the transit and decreasing driving alone. They hope that so called "Transit Related Smart Growth" that relies on an investment in fixed guideway transit in the long run will grow a market of customers to fill the empty seats of new transportation/transit services built years before much of the new housing is built. This planning model, however, ignores the location of most jobs in the region and the inability of fixed guideway routes to serve the multiple origins and destinations typical of the Twin Cities area. One consequence of this strategy is that huge amounts could be spent for years to run nearly empty vehicles in the hope that some day there will be sufficient demand from the new residential development to cover a significant part of the cost of these services and to reduce the level of single driver auto dependence.

A strategy that encourages and assists employers region wide to organize rides for work trips and provide shuttle services from new park and ride facilities will be a much more effective congestion management strategy than the "Transit Related Smart Growth" approach of linking new development in the region to transportation/transit services.

Examples of incentives designed to reduce peak period trips and to more fully use the seats available in cars and buses include:

1. Employer organized car pooling and van pooling.
2. Financial rewards for carpooling, van pooling and use of public transit, including substantial reductions in parking charges for carpooling and bus fares in the downtowns and wherever there are charges for parking or significant amounts of transit service.
- c. Telecommuting or tele working so the place of work in whole or in part is outside the usual office location at home or at a remote work center.

- d. Preferential, close to the door parking for carpoolers.
- e. Convenient close to the door transit shelters.
- f. Four day work weeks.
- g. Staggered start and ending work times that moves times to the edge of the peak period. .

Examples of disincentives that will reduce trip making and longer trips in the peak period or increase use of alternatives to driving alone include:

- a. Limited, convenient parking - fewer parking spaces than employees.
- b. Parking charges where parking is "free" or increased charges where pay parking already exists.
- c. Peak hour pricing on super lanes for those who drive alone but free for buses, vanpools and certified carpools.
- d. Freeway metering designed to reward shorter trips and discourage longer trips in the region including those originating in outer portions of the region.
- e. Special licenses

Employers and commuters encouragement could come from increased tax credits and other financial incentives for those who adopt their own incentive systems to offset the cost of new or additional services.

4. Substantial increases in existing sources of funding and adoption of new forms of funding that capture part of the benefit from transportation improvements are needed to pay for the capital expansion, increased operating costs, and for tax incentives are urgently needed.

Congestion will only get worse unless spending increases for additional roads and transportation/transit services.

We concluded, however, that transportation is a function of government that can and should be nearly totally self supporting. Except for transportation services required by those who cannot afford an auto, all other parts of this system appear capable of finding funds from either those who use the facilities or services or from those who benefit from them.

What is needed now, is a significant broadening of the source of funding to include funds from those who directly benefit from these improvements and increases from those who use the facilities.

We recommend the State legislature, with the support of the Governor, do the following in 2003-2004:

- A. Increase the state gas tax by six to eight cents per gallon.
- B. Request the federal government increase the federal gas tax by 3 to 4 cents per gallon with this and greater increases in revenue allocated back to states based on the amount collected and with a reward to states that are taking the initiative to address congestion with their own resources or who are using new user and benefit financing arrangements.
- C. Modestly increase vehicle license fees to make up for a small portion of the revenue lost from reductions made in 2001.
- D. Adopt a system of user fees based on the level of congestion during the peak period for travel by drive alone autos and trucks on super lanes developed for the use of buses, vanpools and certified carpools.
- E. Adopt a new set of benefit charges based on a percentage of the land value increase realized by landowners and of increased taxes obtained by local government from new development as a consequence of access around freeway interchanges. A similar set of benefit charges should also apply to development that occurs next to any fixed guideway transit stops.
- F. Use borrowed funds for emergencies and obtain a large amount of capital from borrowing to enable a speedup of the construction and equipment program needed to eliminate some bottlenecks, build super lanes, expand lanes, build park and ride facilities, and purchase transportation service vehicles to get the expanded program well underway. This borrowing, however, should be tied to increases in new forms of financing and increases in existing funding sources over the next five years sufficient to generate the amounts of revenue needed to make the program self supporting. We further recommend the use of this bonding be limited to five years during which bond payments would come from funds collected from an increase in the sales tax dedicated to transportation bond retirement sufficient to pay for the bonds.

5. Leadership to reduce congestion in the region should primarily rest with the Governor and the Legislature. The Metropolitan Council, counties and cities should continue to exercise significant roles but these need to be clarified and modified to meet the congestion challenge and eliminate the paralysis that currently exists.

- A. Currently decision making about the regional transportation/transit system is very fragmented between numerous state agencies, the Metropolitan Council, fifteen counties and hundreds of cities.

At the state level no one is currently responsible for developing and advancing a plan for congestion reduction even as state agencies have responsibility for some of the roadways and transit ways and for many of the financial decisions.

- Governor proposes a budget and any special program initiatives, while the Legislature makes policy, spending, and tax decisions subject to the Governor's veto and legislative override.

A number of state executive branch agencies have important roles. The Department of Transportation (MnDOT) is becoming primarily responsible for freeway and expressway development and maintenance in the region, for highway financing and right of way acquisition operating through a central office and three district offices in rural Minnesota. It also has responsibility for providing some transit assistance outside the seven county core of the region, and for construction of LRT and Commuter Rail lines. However, it is not responsible for transit policy, the acquisition of buses, for funding transit operating deficits, or for the development of park and ride lots except along state highways on the perimeter of the region. Other state agencies such as the Departments of Public Safety, Planning, Revenue, and Finance provide many information, policy, enforcement, and support services.

In the seven county core of the metropolitan area there are conflicting responsibilities for major components of a congestion reduction strategy by the Metropolitan Council and the seven counties while the more than 200 cities have substantial influence on land uses and transportation facility locations. They also can hold up action on improvements by not approving them.

- Metropolitan Council is responsible for a regional transportation plan but not for freeway planning or funding, allocation of federal transportation improvement funds for minor arterial roads, transit, bikeways, congestion management air quality, and transportation historic structures.

Through its Metro Transit Division the Council is an operating organization that collects and spends federal transit grants, owns and operates the largest portion of transit services in the region including buses, garages, bus maintenance, the employment and training of bus drivers and mechanics. The Council also contracts with four suburban transit operating agencies representing one or more cities to supply transit services on the western and southern edge of the seven county area. It also plans and operates, under contract, Metro Mobility Transportation Service, a dial-a-ride specialized service for the handicapped.

As part of its historic role the Council owns and operates or leases a number of park and ride lots and provides bus shelters in the core of the region through its Metro Transit Division. It is also responsible for a car pool and van pool assistance program through its Metro Commuter Services division.

The Council also may declare an issue to be of metropolitan significance and intervene to become a body that resolves the issue. However, they rarely use this power on transportation location and development disputes.

- Counties are responsible for the planning, ownership, and maintenance of a network of minor arterials as well as other historic roadways, for expenditure of considerable federal and state aid, and for the levy of property taxes for county roads and bridges.

Each of the seven counties in the core of the region have constituted themselves as a Railroad Authority for the purpose of acquiring abandoned rail lines for transportation purchases. They also jointly participate on a regional Rail Authority to plan Light Rail lines along the lines that some of the counties have purchased. In some cases these abandoned lines are developed as bike and walking trails.

Counties through their Jobs, Welfare, and Health/hospital departments are also major purchasers of transportation services for clients of their programs.

- Cities directly influence the location, development and traffic operation of facilities and services designed to affect congestion. Their approval is required for state and county highway projects to proceed within their boundaries including purchase of rights of way. They also determine allowable land uses near and adjoining interchanges of freeways and of service roads alongside them, and they are responsible for subdivision of land, for planning, development and maintenance of local streets, the regulation of traffic including handicapped pick up and bus stop areas, the regulation of taxicabs, and enforcement of traffic laws.

Cities and some counties often actively encourage job and property development or re-development. This includes assembling land parcels or providing financial incentives that encourage specific types of development at freeway or rail station intersections. On the edge of the region and in smaller rural towns development of a major highway around a town may result in substantially increased land values near a new interchange and a decrease in land values or even abandonment of commercial activities in the old centers. Re-development efforts may also be tied to new roads or to rail stations in the hope that a major transportation facility will spur desired residential or commercial development. As a consequence some cities and counties actively lobby the state and the council to build specific roads, LRT or Commuter Rail lines, provide interchanges or stations at specific locations, or hold up road relocation approvals until various city interests are satisfied.

School Districts operate or contract for one of the largest transportation services in the state. In addition, they provide parking for the staff and provide a growing amount of parking for students.

B. Responsibilities between various levels of state, regional and local government must be changed to clarify and focus responsibility for congestion management decisions, to change land use and road access rules, and provide funds needed to address the congestion challenge.

Changes should insure land uses along and at intersections of freeways and expressways are compatible with congestions reduction strategies, insure funding is focused on the congestion challenge, and that regional and local funding provides transportation services for those who cannot afford to own or cannot operate a vehicle.

The Legislature, with the support of the Governor, must reorganize transportation/transit responsibilities, change road access rules, broaden the base of transportation financial support with increased use of user fees and by collection of some of the benefits from transportation investment, and provide additional funds needed to address growing congestion in an expanding region that is the economic engine of the state.

The state must clarify and assume major responsibility for untangling congestion by taking the following steps:

A first and essential step is to assign primary responsibility to the Governor for preparing and advancing a transportation congestion reduction plan to the Legislature by February 2004 with progress reports to the Legislature every two years after that. A Transportation Commission should assist the Governor in this effort.

More specifically, we recommend, the Governor propose and the Legislature take the necessary steps to:

1. Create a 15 member Transportation Commission with specific responsibility for Transportation/transit policy planning that focuses on congestion in the 15 county metropolitan region in Minnesota. Membership of this commission should include seven members representing equally populated sub-areas of the 15 counties and 7 others at-large appointed by the Governor. The sub-area or territorial members might be from two to three senatorial districts or from sectors of the region to assure that half of the members have familiarity with the jobs, housing settlement, retail services and traffic problems in each part of the region. Their nominations might be suggested or reviewed by the cities and counties within the sub-area or territory. All members should serve a term co-terminus with that of the Governor. The Chair of the Commission should be appointed by the Governor, serve at the pleasure of the Governor, and be the fifteenth voting member of the Commission.

The Governor, with assistance of the Commission and the Governor's office staff would be charged with developing and recommending a transportation policy plan for the 15 county region that focuses on congestion relief and the riding needs of residents in the region. The Commission would prepare an annual report on the levels of congestion on each major roadway, the use of alternatives to driving alone, the cost-effectiveness of investments to reduce congestion, funding required to achieve the plan, sources of funding for the program, and progress with its implementation.

In performing its tasks the Commission would be able to call upon any state, regional, or local units of government regarding their plans, travel demand studies, or other information necessary for development of facilities, their maintenance and operation.

The Governor with the assistance of the Commission should consider the options for congestion reduction and make the tradeoffs between long term investments in more freeway lanes, super lanes for multi-passenger vehicles, in fixed guideways, park and ride lots, large and small buses, changes to the fixed route bus system, the use of car and van pools, and the adequacy of incentives and dis-incentives designed to meet policy objectives.

The Governor and Commission should:

1. Identify and prioritize federal funds the state will spend in the next five years on regional facilities and transportation services in the eight county area that is part of the regional commuter shed surrounding the seven county metropolitan area.
2. Receive all federal transit assistance funds in the 15 counties in the regional commuter shed and allocate them to designated capital projects and for transit operating contracts.
3. Review and approve the land use policies and plans of cities and counties to assure the state interest in state/regional movement is achieved by development of many park and ride lots, super lanes, and lane expansion.

Such plans should note the official mapping that legally sets aside land for service roads or expanded freeways before development is permitted, commitments by cities and counties to pay for land required to develop service roads along adjoining freeways, and the timing, location and financing of interchanges or use of fixed guide ways that will be effected in these plans. The authority of cities and counties outside the Municipal Service Area of the Metropolitan Council to approve plats and issue building permits should be related to state approval of the adequacy of land use and transportation plans.

1. Assign responsibility to Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) for ownership, maintenance and operations of capital facilities and equipment used in regional

transportation including park and ride facilities, major roadways, any fixed guideways, and buses used for peak period transportation/transit services in the region.

MnDOT's responsibility for many operational components of the regional system would increase as the state assumes responsibility for regional transportation policies, financial decisions, and the development of the regional system of roads and public transportation/transit services in peak commuter periods. MnDOT would own and be responsible for these facilities and equipment but would be encouraged to contract with others for their maintenance and operation.

The proposed re-organization would shift to MnDOT responsibility for:

- a. Construction, and maintenance of super lanes for high occupancy vehicles, certified carpools, van pools, buses of various sizes, and possibly trucks, and enforcement of their use.
- b. Continued ownership, operation, and maintenance of freeways and major expressways. All two lane state trunk highways and any expressways the state determines will not be part of the regional system will be transferred by MnDOT to the counties over the next ten years
- c. Ownership and development of all rail rights of way that may be used for fixed guideways including LRT, busways, and for "super lanes in the future. This requires transfer of all such rights of ways owned by the Counties to MnDOT that the state determines should be part of the state/regional system. Counties would be permitted to sell any rail rights of way not transferred or to use them for any trails or bikeways the counties choose to develop and maintain as part of their park systems.
- d. Ownership, development and maintenance of all park and ride facilities adjoining freeways that provide for easy transfer from driving alone to multi use vehicles (cars used in carpools, vans, small buses and large buses). This anticipates transfer to MnDOT of all existing lots/ramps owned by the Metropolitan Council that adjoin regional arterials.
- e. Ownership of all publicly owned large and small buses that primarily serve people commuting in the peak periods. This anticipates transfer of most of the existing fleet of buses from the Metropolitan Council in addition to bus garages and maintenance facilities that support these buses. MnDOT would own the buses and facilities but would contract for their operations with the Metropolitan Council, or any of the existing single or multiple city transit operating agencies such as Southwest Metro, Maple

Grove Transit, Plymouth or Minnesota Valley or with any others that might be organized.

3. Supply the funds required for regional road and transportation services used for congestion reduction including all state owned freeways and expressways, fixed guideways, buses used for peak period transportation services, and park and ride lots. This includes:
 - a. Capital funds necessary to build needed roads, transportation /transit facilities including buses, and park and ride lots.
 - b. Operating funds for road maintenance, for transportation mobility services to the physically disabled and those who cannot afford to own or operate an auto that are provided by the counties and by the Metropolitan Council, and for operating subsidies for transit operations.

The state needs to determine the amount users should pay for fuel taxes, licenses, transit farebox charges, congestion pricing fees, and the amount of revenue to be collected from cities and landowners that financially benefit from increased land values in areas around freeway interchanges and fixed guideway stations, and from transit fare boxes. The mixture of taxes, fees and benefit charges should be sufficient to address growing congestion in the expanded region.

The state should also provide funding or devise a funding system for the operation of transportation/transit services for those who cannot afford to own and/or operate their own vehicle.

4. Establish sufficient incentives and disincentives needed to accomplish congestion reduction including those that encourage employers to modify working hours or the use of transportation services such as car and van pooling, shuttling to work from park and ride lots, or use of regular route express buses.
5. Require school districts to limit land purchases for student parking only to space that accommodates certified carpools and/or require them to charge for parking at rates that will discourage students from driving alone and increase use of district provided school buses.
6. Develop an interstate compact with the state of Wisconsin relating to major roadway development and river crossings and the use of congestion related user fees in the three county area adjoining Minnesota that is part of the regional commuter shed.

We recommend the role of the Metropolitan Council be modified to:

1. Become an advisory body to the state for regional transportation facilities and transportation/transit services in the seven county metropolitan area, especially within the most urbanized portions of the region.
2. Prioritize fiscally constrained federal funds on the maintenance of existing facilities and on projects that reduce congestion in the seven county metropolitan area consistent with state plans for regional facilities and services. The Council should continue to do this in conjunction with its Transportation Advisory Board.
3. Become actively responsible for timely resolution of conflicts between cities, counties and the state within the seven country metropolitan area when disputes arise over access to regional facilities, their location, rights of way, and steps to mitigate their impact on adjoining property.
4. Change their role in operating buses to whatever level the state contracts with them for peak and non-peak regular route service and for Metro Mobility. The Council would further determine whether services it contracts to provide will be done by their employees or by contract with other operators such as is done with Metro Mobility.

The Council should continue to be responsible for coordination and uniformity of transit farebox policies such as transfers and farebox charges consistent with state plans and funding to insure services are interconnected and integrated within the seven county area. It should also make recommendations to the state on these policies for any transportation/transit services provided in the territory in the expanded region outside the seven county jurisdiction of the Council.

1. Approve the location and development of local arterial roads designed to connect trips between cities in the metropolitan area and prioritize constrained federal funds the Council determines are needed in the next five years on these arterial roads in the core seven county metropolitan area.

We recommend the state modify the role of Counties to:

1. Substantially increase their responsibility for the purchase of transportation services for those who cannot drive or cannot afford an automobile. This is consistent with the preeminent role of the county as a provider of human welfare, job, and health services.
2. Eliminate their authority to plan and purchase railroad right of ways for passenger rail purposes and transfer county acquired railroad lands to the state that the state determines should be used for the regional system.
3. Increase the miles of minor arterials and collector roads owned and maintained by counties in the expanded 15 Minnesota metropolitan region by

transfer in the next ten years of all two lane state trunk highways and portions of multi-lane trunk highways the state determines are not part of the regional system.

We recommend the state modify the role of cities to:

1. Development and adoption of land use plans that reserve lands for frontage roads and park and ride lots next to freeways and for other regional transportation facilities identified by the state.

Cities should provide for land set aside by official mapping or other devices that preserve these areas from development for at least a decade. State decisions on where to locate or build interchanges should be contingent on the set aside of land for service roads and committed local funding for service road and interchange development.

2. Provide transportation alternative services for those who cannot drive or cannot afford to own a car as they desire either by themselves or jointly with other nearby cities. These services might include transportation/transit services operating in the evenings and on weekends. These services may be provided under contract with the state. They may utilize small buses provided by the state, vehicles and services supplied by taxi companies, or from contracts with private providers.
3. Work with employers to develop transportation services that collect commuters at home or at park and ride facilities and transport them to large and moderate sized employment centers. This may consist of small vehicle service for both peak and non-peak period employment, particularly to the many suburban job locations.