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TRANSPORTATION POLICY LEADERSHIP IN MINNESOTA

THE CENTRAL PROBLEM

Minnesota is plagued by fragmented decision-making on proposed road and rail improvements of a size that far exceeds our ability to fund them. Transportation is of vital importance to the future of Minnesota's economy. Yet the state has seriously overlooked the need for coordinating major transportation investments in a common budget. Consequently, the state has neither an overall economic strategy for such investments nor the ability to trade off investments in one area against another.

The state's future transportation path has evolved into a politically derived laundry list of earmarked local investments that do not fit into an overall plan **.** Assembled by a host of different agencies, these transportation ideas far exceed any reasonable cost forecast based upon growth in the economy.

We seem hopelessly swamped by fragmented decision making. We see investments in major roads that branch out to serve new development on the edge of the region while congestion grows on major circulator freeways. We see proposed investments for LRT that will do little to relieve congestion on adjoining freeways. Minnesota can no longer afford to ignore the synergy between road and rail. A change in one affects the other.

Today's main transportation problem is lack of leadership. We must have a statewide comprehensive transportation plan and budget. Projects that are undertaken within the budget should relate to reasonable estimates of revenue and should serve statewide priorities and objectives. Our challenge, with our fragmented system, is who should assume responsibility and provide the needed leadership. The state has highly qualified transportation staffs at various levels. *The issue isn't professional competence. The issue is policy leadership.*

RECOMMENDATION

A. Require an integrated, comprehensive transportation budget —We recommend that the Minnesota Governor and Legislature enact legislation requiring a fully integrated comprehensive transportation budget every two years. The transportation budget should contain estimates of expected revenue for each of the next ten years. It must identify priorities for construction and operation of both freight and passenger, rail and road, transportation facilities and services in all parts of the state. The budget must accommodate all modes of travel including high-speed, medium speed, and lower speed rail; buses, specialized bus services, freeways, expressways, trunk highways, major county and municipal roads, airports, and waterways.

The budget should encompass all transportation expenditures, both public and private. It should include public dollars not subject to the Governor and Legislature's control because they already are earmarked constitutionally or legislatively for certain purposes, agencies or units of government. The budget should recommend how all public funds be allocated, consistent with statewide needs. Even if such recommendations aren't followed, an overall state interest will have been asserted. A comprehensive budget will also help clarify the state's interest in facilitating agreement with municipalities which have veto power over the approval of trunk highway improvements within their borders.

Without such a budget, there's no overall visible basis for assuring that proposed new or expanded rail lines, freeways, interchanges or other transportation improvements are undertaken in the most cost effective manner and that agreed-upon public objectives within available funds are achieved.

MnDOT and the Metropolitan Council, both appointed by the Governor, have major 20-year detailed plans either approved or in draft stage. Those plans can be utilized in preparation of a comprehensive transportation budget, even though roads and rail appear to be treated more as unrelated components, with separate plans for each.

State and local expenditures for highways and transit in Minnesota totaled about $5.2 billion in fiscal year 2006, of which about $2 billion was for state government expenditures, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Private investment (including auto and other private expenses) in transportation dwarfs the public share. In 2001, the most recent year for which the U.S. Department of Transportation has reported cumulative private and public investment in transportation, about $1.6 trillion was spent on transportation in the entire United States, public and private, according to the department. The amount attributable to Minnesota was not specified. But if Minnesota's share were proportional to its population, Minnesotans would have invested $32 billion in transportation, public and private, in that year.

B. Place responsibility in the Governor and the Legislature —The Governor should be assigned ultimate responsibility to recommend a comprehensive transportation budget, just as the Governor now has that responsibility for the state's general fund budget. But special arrangements should be made to assure legislative involvement, because of the pervasive impact of transportation on all parts of the state and on a variety of interest groups. The Legislature should establish a bipartisan group of House and Senate members who would meet with the Governor's budget staff periodically during the time that the budget is being prepared to stay informed and provide input.

C. Integrate federal dollars. The state's transportation priorities too often are skewed by federal dollars that Congress earmarks for specific projects. Such earmarks usually require a significant match of state funds, irrespective of the state's budget or its preference to spend its funds elsewhere. We prefer that federal dollars be distributed as block grants to the state. Federal dollars ought to be distributed to be consistent with, and in support of, a credible, official, adopted comprehensive state plan and budget, and not be the result of end-run approaches by groups whose projects aren't given high priority by the state.

To the extent individual projects are earmarked for federal funding, Congress and the sponsoring congressional legislator should:

1. Specify how a proposed project serves to advance an adopted comprehensive state transportation plan and budget.

2. Specify the national purpose being met by each earmarked project.

3. Specify other short-term and long-term capital and operating expenses that will have to be covered in an earmarked project, along with identifying who will be responsible for covering such financing.

D. Essential principles of a comprehensive state transportation budget:

1. Be comprehensive , covering all types of transportation facilities and services including air, water, road and rail services, all locations, all agencies and jurisdictions, with no exceptions.

2. Express measurable objectives very clearly. It is essential that the transportation budget articulate official objectives of state government. Some primary objectives might be that improvements increase safety of movement and ease congestion. Another objective might be to reduce reliance on fossil fuels or to influence the location of residential and businesses development.

It's not uncommon now for some advocates to advance objectives with little evidence about whether or how objectives will be realized or whether such objectives are in the state's interest. Some groups cite economic development or redevelopment as objectives without mentioning other public investment for housing, retail, or other types of development and without knowing how much the transportation investment will contribute to achieving an objective.

3. Be specific, prioritized and sustainable —That is, what will be done; what won't be done, with financial resources specified, short-range (over the next two to four years) and longer-range (over the next 10 years). No simple laundry list of everyone's desires or list of ostensible needs.

E. Essential components of a comprehensive state transportation budget:

1. Recommend changes in transportation taxes and user charges , along with moving to a unified transportation fund. Widespread interest is present today in future revenue sources, given major uncertainty about declining revenue from gasoline taxes and sales taxes on purchases of new and used vehicles. New revenue sources such as taxes on vehicle miles traveled (adjusted for weight of vehicles) need to be explored. Maximum efforts should be undertaken to capture revenue from benefiting properties. New revenues ought to be controlled by the Governor and Legislature and not be subject to constitutional or legislative dedication, as has been the case in the past. Changes will be needed for a fully-unified fund to be established, but the Governor could suggest ways to cap the growth of separate funds and gradually reduce their significance. User fees on autos, trucks, bus and rail transit users should be recommended as part of the comprehensive transportation budget.

2. Recognize limitations of state general fund dollars, which are supported by general taxes and are in limited supply for other state services such as health, education and public safety. It is much more appropriate to raise transportation revenue from those who use and those who benefit from the services, leaving general sales and income taxes for state services that need to rely on such revenues.

3. Link to the vision of Minnesota in 2020 or 2030 and thus relate to serving job locations, and the balance of public investments in education, environmental improvement, and other investments.

4. Include operating expenses , now and those projected in the future. No capital project should be included without realistic arrangements for covering all estimated operating expenses of the facility or services.

5. Compare various modes; encourage innovation, in travel options for the same corridor, e.g. bus, roads, and rail, side-by-side, to treat all options equitably and to avoid unnecessary duplication and extra expense. This means all options are treated as part of the system, rather than separate systems. Innovative—and perhaps heretofore risky—approaches for bus, roads and rail must be examined, to take advantage of latest technologies.

SUPPORTING STATEMENTS FOR THE RECOMMENDATION

What a richly creative time for transportation in Minnesota, seemingly filled almost daily with ideas from every direction. We can identify a long list of successful transportation projects, brought about by highly professional, dedicated staff at all levels of government in the state.

But because of a leadership vacuum, what an incredibly disjointed, foggy outlook for the future. Minnesota's overall transportation decision-making structure is in disarray. No one is in charge.

Not that there's any shortage of plans. MnDOT and the Metropolitan Council have been hard at work compiling growing lists of needs and preparing detailed descriptions of hopes and expectations for the next 20 years. MnDOT illustrates what can happen without additional funding, as well as outlining what could happen with more revenue. For the MnDOT plan, see: http://www.dot.state.mn.us/planning/stateplan/download.html . For the Council plan see: http://www.metrocouncil.org/planning ansportation/tpp/2004/TPP04Chapter4_Final.pdf

But more importantly, these plans don't begin to encompass all transportation aspirations. For example, Minnesota seems to be contemplating an up-to-five-tier system of rail passenger service:

—(1) ultra high-speed rail on new and existing rights of way between the Twin Cities and Chicago, with either a Rochester stop or stops by way of Red Wing and Winona;

—(2) high-speed rail between the Twin Cities and Duluth and to other communities in the state,

—(3) commuter rail from north of St. Cloud to the Twin Cities, plus more long-distance commuter lines reaching many smaller towns in Minnesota,

—(4) Light Rail Transit (LRT) between the downtowns and extending to southwest of Minneapolis and in many other directions as spokes from both downtowns to many suburbs, and

—(5) maybe slower streetcars in and near the downtowns.

Plus:

—New busways south and northwest of Minneapolis and more buses on lines that largely serve the two downtowns.

—Financing operating deficits that grow as each new set of rail cars and each new bus is added.

—Enhancing rail for freight.

—Maintaining smooth road surfaces and rebuilding our 130,000-mile road system.

—Adding lanes for freeways and expressways and adding interchanges.

Controversies frequently occur over which cities will be served by proposed improvements, assuming that all plans are moving ahead and all revenue is accounted for, or expected from the federal treasury. It is as if we have unlimited capacity to accomplish everyone's desires, whatever construction or operating expenses happen to be.

Many of us might be deceived simply because there's so much going on: a recent increase in the state highway user taxes, making more sales tax revenue available to transit, speedy construction to replace the collapsed 35W bridge, new Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) on I-35W and Cedar Avenue into Dakota County, use of the Hiawatha LRT line, reconstruction of the Crosstown-35W interchange, extension of Hwy. 610 in the north suburbs, extension of Hwy. 312 in the southwest suburbs and the building of Hwy. 169 across the Minnesota River and around Shakopee, as well as other improvements under way, including the forthcoming opening of commuter rail from Big Lake to Minneapolis, and the start of the Central Corridor light rail between downtown Minneapolis and downtown St. Paul.

If everything can't happen, what will? The state and nation today face unprecedented short-term and long-term financial challenges that were not even imaginable a year ago. Even keeping existing roads and rail in decent shape will be expensive. Moreover, possible new revenue sources encounter more critics than advocates.

There seem to be as many objectives as hoped-for projects. We need to fix the potholes. We need to replace old bridges. We need to repave the roads and streets to smooth the surfaces. We need more alternatives to the private car. We need to reduce our reliance on fossil fuels. We need to move people faster. We need to reduce congestion. We need to guide the location of new residences and employers into the central cities. We need to increase densities to reduce sprawl and increase the market for transit. We need to guide the location of new residences and employers into rural areas. We need improved rails, roads, busways, waterways, and airports. We need to help the poor and those who cannot operate a car with their mobility. We need to keep transit fares low or at least competitive in the peak hours with the expense of all day parking in the downtowns and at the University of Minnesota. We need to provide low cost fares for those going to entertainment events in the downtowns to reduce out-of-pocket costs for those events. The Governor and Legislature must sort out all ideas and establish the objectives to govern transportation budgeting and priorities.

Agency upon agency has some influence over priorities for transportation dollars, including a new metropolitan transit agency established in 2008, on top of one already in existence. There's lots of collaboration and cooperation, and lots of administrative expense. But no one really is in charge.

Someone or some body with statewide credibility must identify which objectives are paramount and which improvements—in order of priority—are needed, and how they will be paid for, both capital, and long-term operating expense.

How to deal with constitutional or statutory preferential access to revenue for certain projects, regardless of need or priority, must be addressed.

The central question isn't what do we build next. It isn't where do we find the money.

Where's the leadership? That's the question we address in this report.

FRAMING THE ISSUES

1. LEADERSHIP

a. Importance of transportation to the economy of the state —Transportation policy ought not be based on the sum total of all projects favored by every agency or interest group or on arbitrarily parceling some projects to everyone. Transportation ought to be regarded for what it is—a central component in building the economy of the state—and be planned strategically. The need to bring raw materials to business and goods to markets, so essential for the state's economy, might be receiving lower priority in favor of the more popular need of moving people.

b. Importance of identifying specific objectives —State policy on transportation needs to be expressed specifically, so that people throughout the state can clearly understand the state purposes of each major state investment. The Interstate highway system started in the 1950s had clear federal objectives for the use of federal funds.

c. Strategic leadership by the Governor and Legislature is essential — The Governor must reclaim a comprehensive transportation policy for the people of the state, with clear direction from the Legislature as to what is possible. It is essential that overall strategies be outlined, in sufficient detail to assure a framework for intelligent choices in an atmosphere of continuously growing wants that far exceed available funds. Only at the state level, within the offices of Governor and the Legislature, is it possible to bring all aspects of transportation together in one budget and produce any kind of coherent statewide policy.

2. STRUCTURE

a. Current situation is much more serious than is widely accepted or understood —We in Minnesota have established so many independent and overlapping governmental arrangements for planning, building, maintaining, and financing roads, buses, rail, airport, and waterway systems that it is virtually impossible today to identify—let alone implement—goals. The problem is intensifying year-by-year as new structural and financing devices are added. Regrettably, the problem is not widely recognized. When it comes to competing with other states for economic development, we ought to be keenly aware that a strong transportation system with targeted improvements can offset natural handicaps caused by our location.

b. Multiple interests are present— Decisions on rail, buses, and roads are parceled among many agencies and units of government, each with its own interest groups advocating expansion and claiming their own revenue sources while advocating for more. Struggles among rail, bus, and road interests, among different parts of the state and among different agencies and levels of government are inevitable, and might be desirable. These struggles assure that needs won't be overlooked. But an absence of overall direction means local and personal interests too often will triumph and the overall public interest will be sacrificed or severely lag.

The title of one agency, the Minnesota Department of Transportation, implies influence over all transportation, but its traditional assignment, highways, remains its prime function. MnDOT is in the midst of its first state rail plan, but it is far from clear that the rail plan and highway plan will be merged into a single rail-highway plan or that separate rail and highway plans will be retained. A State Planning Agency was abolished several years ago, although arguments are made that the state planning function was simply reassigned to other parts of state government. Nevertheless, state planning is clearly not acknowledged as a strategic part of state government today.

c. Regional needs don't jibe with jurisdictional boundaries —The Metropolitan Council's transportation responsibilities are largely limited to a seven-county area, even though the real metro area has extended at least to 11 counties and perhaps to as many as 19 counties.

3. PRIORITIES

a. Importance of setting priorities —MnDOT's draft Statewide Transportation Plan identifies total needed investment, if performance targets are to be met, of $62 billion between 2009 and 2030. MnDOT estimates that at current tax rates, $15 billion will be available, producing a gap of $47 billion over 21 years, or $2.2 billion per year, vastly in excess of whatever would be reasonably possible to raise. A one-penny-a-gallon increase in the state gasoline tax yields about $32 million a year. However, because of constitutional guarantees to counties and cities, only about $19 million a year would be available for state trunk highways. A $1.16-a-gallon *increase* in the state gasoline tax would raise $2.2 billion a year for state trunk highways, assuming no decrease in vehicle mileage. Consequently, priorities on improvements must be set very carefully within this very constrained budget. Revenue increases may be possible from various sources but they too are likely to be politically very limited.

b . **Current demands by benefiting interests are very influential** —Regardless of the importance of ranking projects by sober analysis and systematic rating, the demands expressed by units of government, associations of communities, and other benefiting interests appear very politically influential in setting priorities.

Setting priorities for capital improvements is an essential part of every public and private endeavor, and need not be different when it comes to transportation. Priorities can be clearly identified and will emerge from use of widely recognized measurements. Many projects need to be compared and contrasted with each other and their comparative impacts measured. While results of such analysis are never accepted without question, they can build much needed rationality into every system that weighs one need against another.

c. Imbalance between new construction and rebuilding/maintenance— Minnesota needs aggressive action on rebuilding and maintenance to preserve its substantial network of roads, buses and rails for years to come. Yet we are allowing capital earmarks for added lanes or interchanges on highways or new rail lines and giving too little attention to investments to preserve and maintain the existing system. This approach also fails to give adequate attention to future operating and rebuilding expenses.

d. Availability of federal matching dollars is distorting investment choices and real needs— In many cases it appears that certain projects are scheduled because of availability of federal dollars, even though the state and localities might have higher priorities elsewhere.

Federal dollars ought flow directly to the states, perhaps in a manner similar to the way federal Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) flow to cities, with a requirement that they be distributed to advance state-adopted transportation budgets. Another possibility is that the federal gasoline tax could simply be returned to the states where the tax was paid.

e. Questionable decisions on choice of modes —It is difficult to identify a consistent policy on LRT priorities. For example, Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) rather than Light Rail Transit (LRT) was chosen for the 35W corridor south of Minneapolis, while other corridors with less travel demand were selected for the higher-capacity LRT.

f. In the metro area high-demand, congestion-producing, job-related cross-town trips often seem to have lower priority than traditional downtown-oriented routes— Fixed-route transit continues to largely serve the jobs, governmental, retail and entertainment activities found in the two downtowns as did the earlier streetcar system. But jobs, retail and many entertainment locations have changed. Now in the Twin Cities area 85 percent or more of the jobs are outside the two downtowns. New ways to serve much more dispersed locations are needed.

The biggest need for workers and employers is that the workers have available a transportation system that gets them to work as efficiently as possible. A transit system that serves only those workers and employers who happen to be served by downtown-oriented fixed transit routes will touch barely a fraction of work trips—particularly in a metro area where trips resemble more a ball of yarn than spokes on a wheel.

g. Groups with control over public funding sources have extraordinary influence on priorities —The state constitution gives counties and cities exclusive use of a significant portion of state gasoline and motor vehicle license revenue and prohibits their use for non-highway purposes. The constitution also now prescribes which agencies shall have access to the sales tax on new and used vehicles.

Minnesota's constitutionally-protected highway user tax distribution fund for fiscal 2008 provided some $783 million to state highways; $358 million to county highways; $111 million to municipal highways; $30 million to township roads and bridges, and $35 million, to other state, municipal, and county highways, according to House Research, Minnesota House of Representatives.

State law has authorized metro counties to raise sales tax revenue that is specifically limited to construction of transitways, by rail and buses. Moreover, each county essentially exercises veto power over how much of this revenue stays within the county. Almost forgotten is the fact that counties under the constitution are not home rule units of government. They are operating arms of the state.

h. Using transportation policy to deliberately influence community development needs a closer look— Influencing the location of new residential and business development, not just easing congestion, is frequently cited as an objective for investing in a new transportation mode or an interchange, lane expansion or rail transit station. However, no one knows who is supposed to make development decisions. It's often not clear whether a transportation investment will achieve a development objective or whether the investment is only a part of the total public investment that will be requested or needed. The current system, for example, lacks the ability to determine how much of the transportation investment in an LRT line will contribute to re-developing a corridor and what other public funds will be needed in addition to transportation investments.

Much of the big debate about transportation appears to swirl around whether the region as it grows should be built at higher densities or continue to reflect lower density choices of the market and of most cities. These development objectives sometimes appear inconsistent with popular rail proposals. For example, discouraging urban sprawl seems to conflict with building long distance commuter rail to outlying counties.

We need to recognize that transportation is but one—and maybe not the most significant—factor affecting where, what kind, and how much residential and commercial development occurs, its location and type. Developers and land investors who are market sensitive and who work with individual municipalities are extremely influential. Location and timing of construction of major sewers might be the most significant public investments in directing the location and extent of development on the outer edge of the urban area. .

4. REVENUE

a. Finding revenue sources outside the general fund —The general revenue fund, supplied by income and sales taxes, is in precious short supply for services like education and health and human services, which are poorly suited to be funded by other state sources. Transportation instead can rely on user taxes, fees, fares, and income from various measured benefits. However, transportation in Minnesota has tapped general revenue sources twice in the last three years, for transit operating expenses, for highways, and for transit way construction.

b. Decisions on paying for operating expenses are not being made at the same time as decisions on capital investments— Today, financing to expand rail, bus or roads is frequently considered first, and operating expenses are seen as something to address later Lawmakers should insist that every capital project for transportation be accompanied by arrangements to cover operating and maintenance expenses. *With fare box revenue covering one-third or less of transit operating expenses (25 percent for Metro Transit in 2008) , and with transit operating expenses escalating, even as riders increase, it is absolutely critical that operating and capital financing be arranged concurrently and in advance.*

c. Different kinds of vehicles don't pay their proportionate share of transportation expenses, based on weight, distance traveled and time of day— When certain heavier vehicles require stronger bridges and pavements and if these vehicles are not paying for the wear and tear they cause, their fees ought to be adjusted accordingly.

d. Newer methods for financing transportation need to be evaluated —Shortcomings of existing revenue sources that are dependent upon the price of vehicles and the price and usage of gasoline are clearly evident. But so many other options have yet to be implemented, such as having users pay according to weight of the vehicle, time of day, location, and length of trip. Also the state is hardly prepared for taxing energy used by electrically-powered vehicles.

e. Discontinue past practices of revenue allocation when new sources are implemented — Lawmakers should no longer permit any one agency, level of government or mode of transportation to be granted exclusive access to specific revenue sources. This has been a widespread practice for decades that has multiplied in recent years. If a new source of funding is identified, the proceeds should not flow into the constitutionally-dedicated funding pot. Instead the state itself should collect the funds and then distribute them. In no event should new revenues be allocated by fixed percentages as is the case with the current constitutionally-dedicated revenues. Nothing is perhaps more critical in implementing state transportation policy.

Every agency and unit of government that delivers any service—transportation or otherwise—would like a stable revenue source that isn't vulnerable to year-by-year decisions of elected officials or the vagaries of the economy. Some argue that large transportation projects may take many years or that the upgrading of a corridor or rail line will take many years. While this is true, it is not much different from the multi-year nature of many health care and education programs. *Elected officials must retain authority over revenues—to balance new priorities over time, to keep revenues in check and to preserve representative government.* As has been clearly evident recently, revenues sometimes shrink significantly. That may mean some transportation projects will take longer to complete or that some changes will need to be made to the scope of the improvement. Some agencies should not continue to reap funds automatically because of a previously-approved statute or constitutionally approved revenue share.

OTHER POSSIBLE RECOMMENDATIONS CONSIDERED

We selected our recommendation, to center transportation leadership in the Governor and Legislature, over four other possibilities.

1. Enact state legislation to require MnDOT to follow the earlier-mentioned principles and components in a recommended comprehensive state transportation budget. Currently, MnDOT is involving all stakeholders (contractors, architects, counties, cities, freight, rail and other transportation interests) in its development of a plan it says will be comprehensive. But the MnDOT plan doesn't appear to be in a position to enforce one set of priorities that combine roads, rails and buses. Under existing law, MnDOT can involve, but can't bind, participating stakeholders. Moreover, "stakeholders" in this case are groups or local elected officials with intimate involvement in transportation construction and operations, not the general public.

2. Enact state legislation to require the Metropolitan Council to prepare plans for an enlarged metropolitan area (extending beyond the current seven-county area), with MnDOT responsible for the balance of the state.

3. Elect or appoint a state transportation board, independent of stakeholders, with responsibility to present a comprehensive budget to the Governor and Legislature, incorporating above-mentioned principles. Such a board would need to be strong enough to withstand end-run approaches to the Legislature by transportation interests with their own agendas.

4. Enact a constitutional amendment to eliminate the highway trust fund and the dedication to transit of a portion of state sales taxes. Those funds would then flow into the general fund, where the Governor would have no choice but to include them, including priorities, in the state's general fund budget.

Clearly, the first two options can be incorporated in our preferred recommendations. The Governor undoubtedly would use MnDOT as prime staff and could decide to utilize the Metropolitan Council to be chiefly responsible for plans in the metro area.

The third option is a more extreme proposal and subject to criticism that the state doesn't need another agency. Stakeholders likely would demand seats on any such board, which would dilute its ability to present a truly comprehensive budget that cuts across all interests.

The fourth option represents the best way to unify the state's transportation budget but probably stands the least chance of enactment today. Highway and transit interests both would be likely to oppose an amendment, fearing loss of revenue.

BACKGROUND

A. Reports issued over the last six years —The Civic Caucus has issued three reports on transportation over the last six years:

1. Untangling Traffic Congestion in the Expanded Metropolitan Region, March 12, 2003— http://www.civiccaucus.org/Reporttransportation_03.htm. This report recommended increased revenue and a stronger state role in transportation for the entire 19-county metropolitan area.

2. Follow-up Statement on 2003 report, October 25, 2004**—** http://www.civiccaucus.org /ReportTransportation_04.htm. This report recommended stronger community leadership to obtain support for legislative action on transportation.

3. Proposed Constitutional Amendment on Transportation, September 26, 2006—http://www. civiccaucus.org/ReportTranspAmend_09_06.htm. This report opposed using the state constitution to dedicate the sales tax on new and used vehicles to transportation.

B. Circulating information on transportation on an on-going basis —The Civic Caucus has interviewed more than 150 thought leaders in recent years. The Civic Caucus has organized these comments according to different topics, including transportation. All transportation comments may be reviewed by clicking on http://www.civiccaucus.org/issuetransportation.htm. Comments are further subdivided by eight separate transportation categories.

Among transportation leaders interviewed in the last several months are Tom Sorel, state commissioner of transportation; State Rep. Margaert Anderson Kelliher; State Rep. Martin Seifert;

four persons involved in freight transportation, State Rep. Alice Hausman; John DeWitt, co-founder, Transit for Livable Communities; Arlene McCarthy, transportation director, Metropolitan Council; Conrad deFiebre, fellow, Minnesota 2020; Matt Kane, policy fellow, Growth & Justice; Craig Westover, Minnesota Free Market Institute; Peter Bell, chair, Metropolitan Council; Peter McLaughlin, Hennepin County Commissioner, and Congressman Jim Oberstar.

C. Receiving commentary —Summaries of all interviews, along with commentary from Civic Caucus participants, are available at http://civiccaucus.org. Summaries are distributed via email to some 1,100 participants, who are invited to share their thoughts on the summary and respond to specific questions. All comments, along with individual and aggregated responses to questions, are available on the website. Comments routinely run six to 10 pages, single-spaced, from an average of 35 to 40 individuals per summary.

D. The Civic Caucus process— The Civic Caucus is a non-partisan, tax-exempt, educational organization, with a unique approach for involving participants. A small core group meets weekly. (See http://www.civiccaucus.org/about/meet-the-group.html for background on members of the core.) Another 1,100 persons participate on-line. Summaries of weekly meetings are circulated to all participants, who, in turn, are invited to share their comments and respond to questions. Those comments and responses are placed permanently on the Civic Caucus website.

The Civic Caucus occasionally prepares position papers, such as this position paper on transportation leadership. When a position paper is prepared, the Civic Caucus reviews information provided by thought leaders on the subject under study, as outlined above.

A first draft is prepared, reviewed and changed by the Civic Caucus core group, after which it is circulated among on-line participants for their input. The Civic Caucus makes further changes based on participants' suggestions, and the report then is approved by the Civic Caucus core group. After approval, the final report is circulated among the on-line participants, requesting their signatures in support. Names of supporters then are included in the final report. Participants' suggestions and comments, pro and con, are placed on the website adjacent to the final report.

E. Persons signing on in support of this report:

John S. Adams	Susan Myhre Hayes	Joe Nathan
David Alden	Roger F. Heegaard	Jim Olson
Stephen Alderson	James L. Hetland, Jr.	George Pillsbury
Donald H. Anderson	Jan Hively	Wayne Popham
Donna Anderson	John C. Hottinger	Shari Prest
Ray Ayotte	Timothy A. Huebsch	Al Quie
Dave Broden	Wayne B. Jennings	Bert Press

Robert J. Brown	Verne C. Johnson	Carolyn Ring
John A. Cairns	James Keller	John Rollwagen
Austin Chapman	Sheila Kiscaden	Roger Scherer
Norman R . Carpenter	Joseph Lampe	Ray Schmitz
Gary Clements	Dan Loritz	Eric Schubert
Marianne Curry	Charles P. Lutz	Lyall Schwarzkopf
David Dillon	Marina Lyon	Fred Senn
Dave Durenberger, U. S. Senate, ret.	Robert P. Mairs	Clarence Shallbetter
Kent E. Eklund	Tim McDonald	Chuck Slocum
John R. Finnegan Sr.	Richard H. McGuire	Terry L. Stone
Don Fraser	Alan Miller	Tom H. Swain
Bill Frenzel	Michael E. Miller,	Brian and Sharon Thiel
Paul Gilje	Marilyn G. Miller	Roy L. Thompson
Ruth and Paul Hauge	Connie Morrison	Bob White