



August 23, 2016

The Honorable Mark Dayton
116 Veterans Service Building
20 West 12th Street
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Governor Dayton:

As Mayor of Minnetonka, I wish to once again express my sincere gratitude for your long-standing position that Minnesota needs to make a bold, substantial investment in our State and region's transportation needs. I appreciate all your tireless efforts to convince our legislative leaders to hold a special session and approve the last funding piece for the Southwest Light Rail Transit (Green Line extension).

Sadly, there are those in leadership positions who fail to understand how this line can positively affect not just the communities along the line, but the entire state with its tremendously positive economic impact.

We are running out of options. At risk is the FTA's commitment of \$928 million of federal funding if the 10% match of \$135 million is not finalized by December. The Met Council's project office will be out of funding by September 1 and will send lay-off notices, effectively halting any further progress.

The Met Council, CTIB, Hennepin County and cities along the line, including Minnetonka, have dedicated substantial staff time, resources and funding for this project. We all have skin in the game and just need this last small piece to move the project forward.

While it may be tempting to just throw in the towel and let the naysayers get their way (and take the majority of the criticism for not coming to the table), it is too critical to the future success of the region and state to let this opportunity slip away. I would encourage your sincere evaluation of any available option to provide the balance of the "local match" and keep the SWLRT project moving forward.

I thank you for all you've done to champion the line. Now, more than ever, we call upon your leadership to make the Green Line extension a reality in ensuring our position of global competitiveness.

Sincerely,

Terry Schneider, Mayor

c: Lt. Governor Tina Smith
Adam Duininck, Met Council
Senator Melisa Franzen
Representative Yvonne Selcer

August 23, 2016

Governor Dayton:

Despite your best efforts and those of local leaders from throughout the state, little progress has been made since May to finalize remaining funding for Southwest LRT. That said, I want to thank you for your strong leadership to date. You've made extraordinary attempts to give legislators a voice in crafting a solution and to find a balanced solution to supporting transit statewide. It's frustrating that some have refused to join you in that effort; and even more disheartening that not only will metro-area residents be hurt by this decision, but also the people of greater Minnesota.

As you know, we at the city of St. Louis Park as well as many others at multiple agencies have been working on this project since the early 1980's. Should a way forward be found for SWLRT, the debut of the line in 2021 will mark nearly 40 years since the project was merely a glimmer in the eyes of visionary thinkers and planners.

We cannot let 40 years of discussions and more than a decade of actual planning, environmental analysis and financial investment go by the wayside. St. Louis Park alone has committed \$6 million to the project, \$566,000 of which has already been spent for design costs of both the base project and also locally requested capital investment elements to SWLRT.

Our neighborhoods, our businesses, our residents – many of them transit-dependent – are counting on this project. The region and the state are counting on this transit asset, as well as other transit projects lined up behind it that may be affected negatively by a failure of SWLRT to be completed. It's the right project at the right time but that time is running out.

When difficult choices had to be made about the SWLRT route, local leaders worked with you to resolve them. When the SWLRT budget ran over by \$340 million, it was local leaders who worked with you to offer cuts to the project and commit local dollars to fund the shortfall. We have been with you all along to ensure SWLRT progressed.

On October 1, the SWLRT project office will shut down. The local match must be in place by December. As we have been for nearly 40 years, local leaders are still here to help you find a way to complete this project. I may be the fifth St. Louis Park mayor to be involved in planning of this regional asset, but I plan on being the last. The time is now.

Regards,



Mayor Jake Spano
City of St. Louis Park



The Honorable Mark Dayton
Governor of Minnesota

August 24, 2016
Sent via Email

Dear Governor Dayton:

The members of 2020 Partners represent businesses in downtown Minneapolis. We are writing to urge you to keep pushing to build the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) line from Minneapolis to Eden Prairie. This line forms a critical link between an area that houses one of the state's largest concentration of jobs and hundreds of thousands of prospective employees. It is a critical part of a regional transportation system that will allow our state to remain competitive in a global marketplace.

The opposition to SWLRT is not looking at the long-term regional needs this project will address. A recent study by the Minnesota Department of Transportation finds that nearly 25 percent of the Twin Cities freeways are congested today, and that percentage is expected to grow. An author of the survey says "congestion in Metropolitan areas is often inescapable." SWLRT and other rapid transit projects will give commuters the ability to choose not to drive. They offer an alternative that gets people to work on time, regardless of the traffic on the freeways.

This is a project that enjoys a great deal of support, both in the metro region and across the state. A statewide poll conducted by the Twin West, Minneapolis and St. Paul Area Chambers of Commerce found 70 percent support for SWLRT. Every community along the line has offered a resolution of support for the project and over 50 mayors from the Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities have offered their support.

The two light rail lines that are currently operating have been tremendous successes, far surpassing their ridership projections and creating billions in new economic development. There is simply no evidence to support the assertion by SWLRT opponents that the line will not be a success.

If Minnesota is to continue to compete in a global market, if we are to continue to be the home of worldwide corporations, we need to build a world-class transportation system. If it goes forward, SWLRT will be an investment in a comprehensive system that will serve the region for the next 50 years. It is unreasonable to assume that we can continue to build a 21st Century economy on a decades-old freeway system.

By rejecting light rail and failing to fund the expansion of other modes of transit, legislative leaders are displaying a shocking lack of vision. It's time to fix our roads and bridges, build transit and eliminate gridlock – both on our roads and in the Minnesota Legislature.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nick Koch".

Nick Koch, Chair
The 2020 Partners Steering Committee

2020 Partners is a forum to facilitate the continuing transformation of a vital and unique place. Its goal is to lay the foundation and attract investment for future development by knitting together communities and leveraging the assets of Target Field, Minneapolis Farmers Market, transit and energy.

www.the2020partners.com

The 2020 Partners membership includes the following stakeholders,
along with many individual participants:

Minnesota Twins Baseball Club

Hines Interests

North Loop
Neighborhood Association

Minnesota Ballpark Authority

Covanta Energy Corporation

Downtown Minneapolis
Neighborhood Association

HGA Architects & Engineers

Minnesota Timberwolves | Lynx

United Properties

Warehouse District
Business Association



Memorandum

Date: August 24, 2016

To: Governor Mark Dayton
Minnesota Legislative Leaders

From: Kelly Doran

Re: Southwest Light Rail Funding

This memorandum is to advise you that it is critical that immediate action be taken to enable the Southwest Light Rail project to move forward. As a business owner who has invested hundreds of millions of dollars developing and constructing commercial and residential projects in Minnesota, for the following reasons I believe the Southwest Light Rail project is a sound business investment for the State of Minnesota and its taxpayers:

- I am currently investing millions in a residential apartment project in Hopkins. While the success of this project doesn't absolutely rely on Southwest Light Rail, without it many of its residents and other citizens of Hopkins will be burdened with years of additional travel expense and clogged highways that could be mitigated by the convenience of light rail transit.
- Studies have shown that many new jobs are created in the suburbs along the Southwest line but hundreds of unemployed citizens who live in the urban core have no way to get to these jobs.
- Over the past decade there has been little long term funding legislation to deal with a transportation infrastructure that is crumbling before our eyes. I believe it would be unconscionable for our leaders to pass on almost one billion in federal funds to help alleviate our dependence on cars for everyday transportation.
- As a significant state and federal taxpayer I like the idea of my federal tax dollars coming back to our state. To give up this project and the federal funds that go with it would be one of the most short-sighted business decisions our legislative leaders have ever made.
- And finally, to use the lawsuit filed by a group of residents to try to stop the train from passing near their homes as a reason not to go forward is lame at best and for sure blame shifting political nonsense.



August 24, 2016

Governor Mark Dayton
116 Veterans Service Building
20 W 12th Street
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Governor Dayton:

On behalf of the members of the Minnesota Transportation Alliance including counties, cities, townships, labor, contractors, suppliers, consulting engineer firms, transit systems and other advocates, I am writing to reiterate our support for important transportation projects that are waiting for state funding including the Southwest Light Rail Line, local bridges on the master bridge waiting list compiled by MnDOT, highway/rail grade separation projects and highway projects waiting for the funds needed in order to be programmed for letting.

Transportation investments not only create immediate jobs, they improve the very backbone that allows our economy to function and grow by improving the ability of businesses to move people and products. Larger projects provide larger benefits. Major investments in the state such as the Southwest LRT line and major highway and bridge projects create thousands of jobs and provide a significant return on the investment for the state. According to a study by the Itasca Project, every dollar invested in building out the transitway in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area on an accelerated schedule returns three dollars in economic benefits. A sustained \$600 million increase in highway and bridge construction spending would boost the state's economic output by \$1.45 billion and add more than 12,000 new jobs, providing a \$2.40 return for every dollar invested.

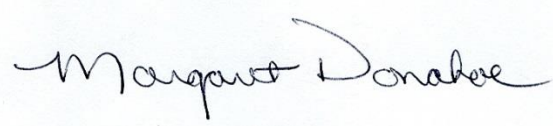
States and metropolitan areas that are investing in highway and transit infrastructure that increases capacity and improves the safety and effectiveness of traffic flow are able to attract new businesses as well as allowing existing businesses to expand in their states. Minnesota can't afford to do nothing as other states move ahead in putting together the financing for major transportation infrastructure investments.

Since 1893

525 Park St., Ste. 240 • Saint Paul, MN 55103 • 651/659-0804 • Fax 651/659-9009
Email: margaret@transportationalliance.com • www.transportationalliance.com

We support efforts to develop financing plans with local and state dollars that will attract federal dollars and move needed transportation projects forward. Thank you for your support for making the vision of a safe and effective transportation system in Minnesota a reality.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Margaret Donahoe". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping "M" and a long, horizontal tail on the "e".

Margaret Donahoe
Executive Director

Dear Governor Dayton:

I am the CEO of a mid-size business headquartered in Eden Prairie – Milestone AV Technologies. We employ over 300 people in Minnesota across 3 facilities as part of our 1,000 employee global workforce. I understand there is a meeting on August 25th to discuss funding options for the remaining portion (less than 10% of total cost) of SWLRT. Unfortunately I will not be able to attend in person, but I wanted to make sure you understand there is business support for this project.

Specific to SWLRT, we have a growing operation based near the proposed City West Station. We expect a significant benefit of SWLRT for “reverse commuting” employees – particularly those residing in the urban core. The ability for businesses like ours to have access to employees that would otherwise not consider employment in our area, coupled with the ability for a greater number of individuals to have access to employment opportunities along the line, will lead to sustainable job growth. As a state, we are spending more on Hwy 100 and Hwy 169 renovations (more than \$140 million) that will not demonstrably increase north/south commuting capacity (3 lanes on 100, 2 lanes on 169 before and after each project) than we need to fund the remaining portion of SWLRT. SWLRT is an important element of ongoing job growth and connectivity in the vital southwest metro area. This isn’t just a collection of Minneapolis suburbs – it’s home to companies large and small that help power the Minnesota economy. Without well-developed transit, we will choke off our future potential.

As it relates to the future of the state of Minnesota, we are in competition with a host of locations nationwide for the next generation of businesses and the employees that will make those businesses successful. Portland and Denver, to cite just two examples, have fully committed to well-developed transit infrastructure including light rail – and both cities and states are places that attract next-generation leaders. Not funding SWLRT would be a ‘double whammy’ for Minnesota- not only would we become less attractive as a living destination, but the federal funds already committed to SWLRT would go to other locations that will turn around and compete with us. Legislative leaders should not pretend that the federal funds will not get spent – they will. If we pass up the opportunity to build SWLRT, we will be impacting the future of Minnesota in a meaningful way.

I wish you the best of luck in your meeting. I’m available for follow-up or discussion if you are interested.

Best Regards,

Scott Gill
Chief Executive Officer
Milestone AV Technologies
scott.gill@milestone.com
+1.952.225.6860
Milestone.com



August 24, 2016

The Honorable Mark Dayton
Office of the Governor
130 State Capitol
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Governor Dayton,

On behalf of the Board of Directors and the more than 700 member businesses of the TwinWest Chamber of Commerce, I'm writing in support of the Southwest Light Rail project.

The economic impact and the job-growth statistics for the southwest corridor are encouraging. The Southwest Light Rail Transit line will serve 210,000 jobs in the corridor on the day it opens. Additionally, 60,000 new jobs are predicted to be created along the southwest corridor by 2030. Access to these jobs cannot be met by road expansion alone. Additional transportation capacity is needed to support and encourage business growth and new private-sector economic development. The Southwest Light Rail line adds yet more way to move workers to jobs and help to attract an up-and-coming work force to the region.

The economic and job growth statistics that support this project are compelling and the reason the TwinWest Chamber of Commerce has supported this project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Brad Meier". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Brad" being more prominent than the last name "Meier".

Brad Meier
President, TwinWest Chamber of Commerce



City of Hopkins

Office of the Mayor

1010 First Street South • Hopkins, MN 55343-3435 • Phone: 952-935-8474 • Fax: 952-935-1834

Web address: www.hopkinsmn.com

Dear Representative Daudt,

I am writing to express my grave concerns regarding the unwillingness to support transit funding and the SWLRT project in particular. As Mayor of Hopkins, I hear daily from both our businesses and residents about the need and importance of the Green Line Extension from Minneapolis to Eden Prairie, as well as additional transit to complete a metro-wide system that includes light rail.

Our business leaders have said they have difficulty filling the needs of their workforce, as many employees are dependent on transit options to get them safely to and from their work. SuperValu, with a large distribution center in Hopkins, has talked with me about their struggle in filling some of their shifts as the last bus departs at 10 p.m. and leaves workers stranded on later shifts.

Other large employers in our city, such as Cargill, have spoken in-depth about the need for transit to continue to attract the employees they actively seek. One of the top three reasons today young people decide to set down roots, select a home, and pick the community in which they want to raise their children is access to a transit system. We are in competition to attract the workforce that supports so many of our Fortune 500 companies headquartered here, with other major metropolitan areas that already have systems in place, such as Salt Lake City, Dallas, Seattle, Portland and Phoenix.

Many of the residents in the neighborhoods surrounding the three LRT stations that would be located in Hopkins either do not own or have access to a car, or could better use the limited resources they must devote to having a car, to other household expenses. A transit system would allow them much greater access to jobs, as well as the ability to see family members and enjoy a better quality of life with the ability to access the many amenities we Minnesotans are so proud of, and that contribute so much to enriching our lives. This is an issue of fairness and equity.

To turn out backs on the \$895 million Federal match at this stage would be a travesty! We simply cannot build and maintain enough roads to keep up with our growing population. So much time currently is wasted sitting in traffic gridlock in the metro area. We must expand our transit system, which has already surpassed ridership expectations and caused a multi billion dollar boom in development around the existing lines. This is NOT an issue of the metropolitan area vs. greater Minnesota as some would try to make us believe. Greater Minnesota fully understands that the entire State will benefit in untold ways through the expansion of transit in the region.

I urge you to support the final \$135 million commitment from the State to allow the Green Line Extension and Bottineau Line to continue to move forward. All of the communities along the line have made significant contributions to this project and we ask the State of Minnesota to step up now!

Respectfully,

Molly Cummings
Hopkins Mayor

May 18, 2016

Kurt Daudt, Speaker of the House
Minnesota State Legislature
463 State Office Building
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Saint Paul, MN 55155

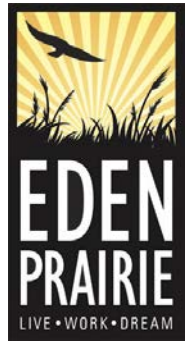
Dear Speaker Daudt,

Regarding your recent statement that Eden Prairie does not support the SWLRT project, with all due respect, nothing could be further from the truth. After numerous public hearings, literally hundreds of meetings with business and property owners, and thousands of hours of our staff's time vetting alignments and station locations and thoroughly reviewing design plans - the Eden Prairie City Council has twice approved Municipal Consent for this project. Our residents and business community also support the project and recognize the long term benefits it will provide our community by improving mobility and supporting job growth and economic development. The Eden Prairie Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors has approved a resolution of support and their organization has very much been engaged in the planning and advocacy of the project over the past 6 plus years. In a statistically valid business survey conducted in 2011, 6 in 10 businesses said they supported the project. Some of the direct quotes from the survey included:

- "It can bring the workforce to Eden Prairie."
- "We're hoping to recruit and retain good talented people, we're excited to see it coming in."
- "Positive effect, as far as getting new employees and current employees to work. I have some employees that are very interested in the light rail."
- "It would be as positive a thing to get from Eden Prairie to downtown. It would increase commerce in both directions."

We recently arranged meetings with Representatives Loon and Selcer, Senator Hann and leaders of three Eden Prairie companies, Liberty Property Trust, Whiteboard Product Solutions, and Milestone AV Technologies – so they could hear directly from these leaders why they support the SWLRT project. All three companies will be directly impacted by the project's construction, yet they still support it and recognize the long-term benefits it will provide by providing their employees another commute alternative.

In a survey of our residents from 2012, 79% supported SWLRT coming to Eden Prairie. Like our business community, they recognize from growing congestion on our roads and freeways that other modes of transportation are needed to provide greater mobility, to support job growth, and to provide a better quality life for the entire region.



OFC 952 949 8300
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Eden Prairie, MN
55344-4485

edenprairie.org

With over a \$100 million already invested in its' planning and design, and hundreds of thousands of hours of time invested by city, county, and metro staff, elected officials, business leaders, and citizens at large, and with all funding partners committed and prepared to deliver their share of this important investment, it's now clearly time for you and rest of the Minnesota Legislature to approve a long-term comprehensive transportation funding package that includes funding for the Southwest Light Rail project.

The City of Eden Prairie supports the Southwest Light Rail Project!

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Nancy Tyra Lukens". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Nancy" being the most prominent.

Nancy Tyra Lukens
Mayor, City of Eden Prairie

cc: Governor Mark Dayton

May 19, 2016

The Honorable Kurt Daudt, Speaker of the House
Minnesota State Legislature
463 State Office Building
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Dear Speaker Daudt,

The City of Minneapolis encourages the House of Representatives to pass a comprehensive, long-term roads- and transit- funding package — and to do so this year. We specifically support the Senate proposal to enact a ¼-cent sales tax in the metro area to build a comprehensive transit system that includes major trunk line corridors like the Green Line (Southwest) LRT Extension and the Orange Line Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project on 35W from downtown Minneapolis to Burnsville. A comprehensive transit package should also include operating dollars for the Metropolitan Council to improve and extend our regular route bus system. This connecting bus service to major trunk lines is necessary to have those larger projects meet their full potential.

The City of Minneapolis, and the region as a whole, is growing. This is great news. But whether or not we are getting ready for that growth is up to the Legislature. We have two options to accommodate growth.

1. A roads-only approach will not work, in part because it is financially impossible for the State to come up with enough revenue to build enough new freeway lanes to accommodate projected growth. MNDOT has been telling us this for years. We cannot build our way out of congestion. More congestion, more delays and more pollution is not the answer. It will choke our air — and our economy.
2. We can instead choose a balanced approach of roads and transit. We can use new technologies and new policies to squeeze the maximum capacity out of our existing lane miles. We can provide choices for commuters with both rail and bus transit expansions. We can use congestion pricing. We can accommodate a greater proportion of new growth near transit corridors. This is the only realistic future.

The principles of this more realistic vision drove the City of Minneapolis to lead in the development of a new vision of 35W, together with MnDOT, Met Council and our suburban counterparts. After decades of controversy, we now have a bipartisan, urban/suburban consensus around the Orange Line BRT project at the center of a redesigned freeway.

As this example demonstrates, the City of Minneapolis does not reflexively promote rail transit anywhere and everywhere. Quite the opposite: on each corridor, we should build the mode that is appropriate for that corridor, and buses will continue to provide service on the overwhelming percentage of corridors in the region.

But to deny the overwhelming success of Blue Line (Hiawatha) LRT and Green Line (Central) LRT is misguided in the face of the facts. Those who claimed these would be “trains to nowhere” have been proven wrong. Both of these projects exceeded their 2020 ridership projections years in advance. We’ve seen a huge surge of private-sector investment along the Green Line in just a few years, which is not a

coincidence: when the public makes a permanent investment in rail in the right corridor, the private sector responds with private investment. Rail is far superior as a catalyst for jobs and economic growth. Could the Green Line could have achieved this level of success as a bus project? Absolutely not. Rail transit also provides level boarding, which is “roll on, roll off” service for people with mobility challenges. This is a more accessible option on key corridors in a rapidly-aging society.

It is still possible for a transportation bill to be approved this year. But it is necessary to let go myths that are holding us back. It’s a myth that transit alone is subsidized but roads pay for themselves through the gas tax. In reality, driving is subsidized just as much, if not more, than transit. Your proposal to rely ever more on the general fund moves even further away from any notion that roads are self-supporting.

It’s also a myth that rural areas are being asked to pay for transit in the metro area. Under the Senate’s proposal, the metro area would pay for its own transit. Rural Minnesota would not have to pay for any transit in the metro area, including Southwest LRT. In the interest of getting a transportation bill passed, I would request that you publicly acknowledge this fact.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Betsy Hodges". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Betsy" and last name "Hodges" clearly distinguishable.

Betsy Hodges
Mayor of Minneapolis

May 18, 2016

Speaker Daudt:

As mayor of the City of St. Louis Park, I want you to know that our elected officials and our community have supported the Green Line extension for years. We have committed extraordinary staff resources and time to planning for this transportation project, not to mention committing millions of dollars in city funding.

As a result, we are already seeing the benefits of the expected station locations in our community through redevelopment and proposed redevelopment, all of which contributes to the economic vitality of St. Louis Park, the region, and the state.

As such, it's disappointing to see that those charged with leading our state into the future have presented a transportation proposal with no funding for transit, and that you would unilaterally presume that constituents aren't in support of this project. All along the line, we hear quite the opposite, and we know residents throughout the region have already contacted your office to voice their support for this project.

Further, I am concerned with the underlying assumptions of the argument that because "too few people use transit" it is not a wise investment. We cannot build enough roads to meet the coming demand in the region and so transit, including light rail, is a necessary component of a comprehensive transportation system. Additionally, passing a transportation bill including the Green Line extension results in taking cars off the roads and frees up dollars to be spent on roads and invests in transit in other areas of the state. If we were to play out the logic in your statement, that we should only build for existing and highest use, no roads would be built or repaired in greater Minnesota where traffic volumes are low. Instead we'd focus all our funds on high-volume metro roads like Hwy. 100, or I-35E, or the Crosstown. I simply don't agree with that philosophy. If applied to our transportation budget as a whole, the end result would be one that would be disastrous for the future of greater Minnesota.

My family grew up in Tracy, Minnesota, and I have spent a great deal of my work and leisure time throughout the state. I will tell you that I, and many of those who live in the Metro area, know that a strong greater Minnesota is good for the Metro area and a strong Metro area is good for greater Minnesota. This manifests itself directly in Local Government Aid and general fund dollars that are spent throughout the state to build road culverts, fire stations, and other needed infrastructure. It's a false assumption to think that any city in Minnesota can thrive when entire areas of the state are economically isolated from one another.

In closing, I am asking you to exercise your leadership on behalf of St. Louis Park, and Tracy, and Zimmerman, and yes, Minneapolis and St. Paul, as you enter these final days of the legislative session. All Minnesotans are counting on you and I'm confident you will do what is in all our best interests.

Regards,



Mayor Jake Spano
City of St. Louis Park



May 3, 2016

Members of the Minnesota Legislature:

Thank you for your efforts over the past two years to pass a new, long-term funding package for Minnesota's transportation infrastructure.

As representatives of Minnesota's local chambers of commerce across the state, we work every day to help ensure our member businesses are able to thrive in our communities. We also know their success doesn't depend solely on our work at the local level. Our members – no matter how big or small – are increasingly reliant upon access to goods, services, employees, and customers from other parts of the state, country, and world. Accordingly, we need a safe, reliable, efficient transportation system that works for the entire state.

We all have local projects we hope to see accomplished with new investment into the transportation system. But we understand that each of those projects – whether a road, bridge, or transit route or line – is part of a much larger, interconnected, and interdependent transportation system in the state that serves all of our communities, increases mobility, and helps ensure the success of all of our members.

We strongly support sustained, increased investment in our roads, bridges, and transit systems. The state's historic budget reserve and surplus give us the opportunity to invest in our infrastructure and reach compromise on how to bring new resources into the transportation system. In addition, we support investment in transit services in Greater Minnesota and efforts to build consensus for an additional metro funding source for metro area transit – recognizing that any new transit investment in the metro must allow for flexible use and be tied to documented efficiencies and reform in the delivery of services. Transit services, whether in the Twin Cities metro area or Greater Minnesota, are vital links in our state's transportation system and ensure mobility of workers and customers. We strongly believe that a comprehensive transportation funding package must include the state's transit needs.

Last month, many of us traveled to St. Paul to participate in the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce's Transportation Day at the Capitol. That event kicked off with a thorough discussion about the current state of play on this issue between Senator Scott Dibble and Representative Tim Kelly, chairs of their respective chambers' transportation committees. We were very pleased with the positive, optimistic tone of their remarks and with the clear commitment to work constructively together to find compromise and pass a comprehensive transportation funding bill this legislative session. After lunch, roughly 300 business leaders from across the state fanned out across the Capitol to meet with individual legislators about transportation funding. Once again, we were pleased with the level of commitment we found among you and your colleagues to taking advantage of the unique opportunity we have this session to pass a transportation funding bill.

We write today to give further encouragement to you in the work that's being done to bring this important work to a successful conclusion before the 2016 session adjourns. Transportation – roads, bridges, and transit – is essential to a healthy, vibrant business climate in Minnesota. Investing in economic and physical infrastructure is essential to making Minnesota ready for the future – ready for change and ready to grow.

(Over)

We thank you for your continued commitment to this important issue, and we stand ready to assist you and your colleagues in any way we can to ensure a long-term, comprehensive transportation funding bill is passed and signed into law in the coming weeks.

Albert Lea-Freeborn County Chamber of Commerce
Apple Valley Chamber of Commerce
Austin Area Chamber of Commerce
Belle Plaine Chamber of Commerce
Bemidji Area Chamber of Commerce
Bloomington Chamber of Commerce
Brainerd Lakes Chamber
Burnsville Chamber of Commerce
Cloquet Chamber of Commerce
Dakota County Regional Chamber of Commerce
Duluth Area Chamber of Commerce
Eden Prairie Chamber of Commerce
Elk River Area Chamber of Commerce
Faribault Area Chamber of Commerce & Tourism
Grand Rapids Area Chamber
Greater Mankato Growth Inc.
Hastings Area Chamber of Commerce & Tourism Bur
Hibbing Area Chamber of Commerce
I94 West Chamber of Commerce
International Falls Area Chamber of Commerce
Laurentian Chamber of Commerce
Litchfield Chamber of Commerce

Marshall Area Chamber of Commerce
MetroNorth Chamber of Commerce
Minneapolis Regional Chamber of Commerce
Minnesota Chamber of Commerce
New Ulm Area Chamber of Commerce
North Hennepin Area Chamber of Commerce
Northfield Area Chamber of Commerce
Owatonna Area Chamber of Commerce and Tourism
Redwood Area Chamber & Tourism
River Heights Chamber of Commerce
Rochester Area Chamber of Commerce
Saint Cloud Area Chamber of Commerce
Saint Paul Area Chamber of Commerce
Shakopee Area Chamber
SouthWest Metro Chamber of Commerce
Twin Cities North Chamber of Commerce
TwinWest Chamber of Commerce
Waconia Chamber of Commerce
Waseca Area Chamber of Commerce
White Bear Area Chamber of Commerce
Willmar Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce
Winona Area Chamber of Commerce
Worthington Area Chamber of Commerce

The Eden Prairie Chamber of Commerce is a strong supporter of a sustained, comprehensive funding package that supports the needs of our transportation system that includes a multi-modal approach, with invest in roads, bridges and transit. We ask that the State Legislature and Governor work together to pass a transportation bill before the 2016 session ends. Our businesses count on the transportation system to get their employees to work, ship their products and to do business in Minnesota. We ask for an investment that ensures that our transportation system supports our economy now and into the future.

Pat MulQueeney
President
Eden Prairie Chamber of Commerce

Minnesota businesses need transit, and we need it now

As CEOs of the Twin Cities' major employers, we ask legislators to seize this opportunity.

- Richard Davis, U.S. Bank
- Scott Wine, Polaris
- Doug Baker, Ecolab
- Penny Wheeler, Allina Health
- Hubert Joly, Best Buy
- Robert I. Bonar Jr., Children's Hospitals and Clinics of Minnesota
- Ken Powell, General Mills
- Chris Policinski, Land O'Lakes
- David Mortenson, Mortenson Construction
- Brian Cornell, Target
- David Kvamme, Wells Fargo Minnesota
- Ben Fowke, Xcel Energy

As major employers in the Twin Cities region, we have a vested interest in helping to ensure that our region is growing and evolving to meet the needs of our employees, customers, patients and communities we care for — now and into the future.

We are therefore calling on the state Legislature to make a comprehensive investment in our overall infrastructure by passing a bipartisan transportation funding bill this year. To us, comprehensive means money for roads, bridges and transit.

Collectively, we employ more than 100,000 people in the region. Many of them rely daily on public transit to get to work, to school and to other opportunities. In fact, according to transit surveys, 80 percent of public transit riders are commuting to work or school and both are increasingly linked to a person's long-term health outcomes.

And the demand for transit is only increasing.

Estimates show that our region will add around 750,000 people over the next 25 years. Many will be the younger workers all businesses are looking to attract. And they are driving less and choosing transit more frequently. A Rockefeller survey showed that young workers consider transit to be a quality-of-life factor that draws them to a region to live or work. Gone are the days of moving to a city or region because of work; today's young workers choose first where they want to live, and then seek a job in that location.

What this means for business is that our region needs to be an attractive place to live — and that means access to affordable and convenient transit options.

The good news is that our region has already invested in transit, and several valuable projects are underway to expand access to additional communities. However, state funding is critical to ensure that those projects can be completed. The Green Line Extension (Southwest light-rail line), the Orange Line

bus rapid transit (including the completion of the Interstate 35W access project), the Blue Line Extension (Bottineau light-rail line), the Gold Line bus rapid transit, and dozens of bus lines all depend on new transit funding.

These are transit lines that travel through some of the densest areas of the region, rich with current and future jobs. The planned lines would put 500,000 more people within a 30-minute commute from work. They would provide a faster, more reliable option for workers who don't want to sit in traffic on a snowy day or don't want to buy a car to live and work here.

State funding is also critical to leveraging federal dollars.

Right now, there are more than a billion dollars on the table from the federal government to realize these transit projects. These federal funds cannot be used for roadway or highway systems, and we will receive them only if the state dedicates its portion of local funding.

These are federal dollars that will help create thousands of local jobs, while having a significant positive impact on suppliers, subcontractors and contractors in the construction industry.

The state's investment is small compared with what the federal government is willing to dedicate. For example, on the Green Line Extension, securing the remaining \$135 million in state funding leverages \$895 million in federal funding. When you add in the county and city funds dedicated to the project, the state will receive \$9 in federal and local support for every \$1 invested.

Wise investments in transit are worth making.

Passing a comprehensive transportation bill that includes transit is critical in this session. If the state doesn't act to provide funding for these projects, these federal dollars will go to a transit project in another state. Failure to act this year also means some of these projects will be in jeopardy.

The business community can't afford to miss out on this investment. Neither can the health of our communities, our region or the state of Minnesota. We hope state lawmakers will take action to ensure the best future for our region.

In Support of Southwest Light Rail

Sara Maaske
5911 Oxford Street Apt 9
St. Louis Park, MN 55416

Dear Representative Daudt,

The fact of the matter Rep. Daudt is that you're holding Southwest Light Rail hostage. Last summer and fall I ran for St. Louis Park City Council. I knocked on thousands of doors from May to November, actively seeking resident's thoughts and opinions on my community, including Southwest Light Rail. I can tell you St. Louis Park Residents overwhelmingly support the project. This is a far more representative sample than the divisive minority who have contacted you.

If you were listening to our representatives and the communications that they've received, your 10 to 1 count would be far different. Just because my community is not represented by your caucus does not make our voices count less.

Southwest light rail is more than an investment in the communities along the line – it's an investment in our region. Without this kind of connectivity our region will lose relevance in a future that could look like this <http://mobile.nytimes.com/2016/04/17/opinion/sunday/a-new-map-for-america.html?referer=>

Minnesota needs a comprehensive transportation plan that takes into account the needs of the unique communities throughout our state. That means including all forms of transportation, including light rail.

I urge you to release your hold on Southwest Light Rail and stop holding our transportation infrastructure for ransom.

I'll share a note I sent to my elected officials in January of 2014.

Here's my viewpoint. I'm a bus commuter. I ride the bus daily from St. Louis Park to St. Paul. And, it's not fun or easy. My commute has been at best 45 minutes, and at worst - during some of the coldest weather we've had - 3+ hours. Bus service from St. Louis Park is inadequate and unreliable. SWLRT would provide a reliable commute, run more frequently and with much more comfort.

Secondly, I live in a condo just a few blocks from the proposed Wooddale station. Property values in St. Louis Park have remained high for single family homes, but the same cannot be said for the condo market. I continue to lose value on my investment and because of that lost value and lack of a market, I'm unable to sell my condo and move to a single family home. Something I had pledged to do after five years in my condo. I've now been in my condo for eleven years.

To maintain a thriving community, we need to attract young people - not just young families. The condo market in SLP provides that opportunity - an affordable alternative to purchasing a single family home when a person hasn't yet mapped out their future. And provide them with transportation options that allow them to be car-free. Give them the time in the Park and they'll want to stay there as much as I do.

Final point, I want to stay in St. Louis Park. I have roots there, I know I can be a benefit to my community in many ways. However, I'm seriously considering moving closer to St. Paul because in the three years that I've been commuting by bus, the frustration has only grown.

There has to be a way to get this done and to do it in the best way possible. This is my impassioned plea to the Met Council and my elected officials to not miss this opportunity - to not leave St. Louis Park behind.

Support for the Southwest LRT Project

“Part of the health of our metro area is investment in transportation infrastructure. The TwinWest Chamber understands that growth of business, jobs and people in the area requires a transportation system for the future that improves roads, bridges and transit. We believe businesses will grow the economic base of the area, and we know a strong transit infrastructure along with roads and bridges will support job growth in the west metro.”

- **Brad Meier**, President of the **TwinWest Chamber**

“It's a local project with local contractors. It's a project we're looking forward to bidding [on].”

- **Justin Gabrielson, Ames Kramer Joint Venture**, speaking about SWLRT (*KSTP-TV, 10/21/15*)

“The ease and speed that light rail provides to riders should prove to greatly benefit the Twin Cities – and in fact the entire state – for decades to come. Building the Southwest LRT project is a significant investment in tomorrow – future residents, workers and metro-area visitors. We urge our city, county, metro and state leaders to work together to move this project along.”

- **ECM Publishers** Editorial (*8/11/15*)

“We...may see increased development in that area, even before the LRT opens. They're really setting the stage for development.”

- **Janet Jeremiah**, Eden Prairie Community Development Director (*Sun-Current, 12/10/15*)

“SWLRT will provide us greater access to the geographically spread-out Twin Cities workforce which, in turn, will make us more competitive in the job market. There's no question that there's upside to having a public transit system situated adjacent to a business.”

- **David Dalquist, Nordic Ware CEO**, based in St. Louis Park

“To be sure, the Southwest process has been difficult. But the economic and environmental benefits of the line would make the effort worthwhile.”

- **Star Tribune** editorial (*7/7/15*)

“This (SWLRT) is economic development for the people that live in the neighborhood. They have that opportunity to decide and do the job because they'll own it, they'll use it and they'll maintain it.”

- **Susan Rani**, president of **Rani Engineering**, Minneapolis-based DBE (*Finance & Commerce, 10/22/15*)

“Southwest Light Rail would make my commute a bit shorter and more direct,” said Janelle, who takes buses three days a week to Shady Oak Road and Highway 62 and drives his family car two days a week. “It’s more of a challenge in the winter months to try to piece together the commute. If the express bus doesn’t work out, I take the city bus route 12. If I work late, I have to walk three-quarters of a mile which is OK for me but for people who are older it would be a bit tougher.”

- **Peter Janelle, Minneapolis resident** who works at **UnitedHealthcare** in Minnetonka

“Providing quality care begins with hiring and retaining the best possible staff. Not all of our 50-plus employees currently have dependable private transportation, which creates stress for them and our leadership team. A fully functioning LRT will expand our labor pool and reduce stress among our caregivers, which translates directly to better care for our seniors and children. In addition, we have many senior residents who no longer drive. The ability to offer activities accessible by LRT will create excitement and energy for both our day-care children and senior residents.”

- **Greg Zoidis, Managing Partner of TowerLight** Senior Living and Child Day Care in St. Louis Park