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## MEMORANDUM

TO: The I-35W Solutions Alliance Board of Directors

FROM: Robert J Tennesen

RE: August Legislative Report

DATE: August 14, 2014

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### Legislative Candidates Forum

Plans are being made for legislative candidate forums to be held October 1 in Bloomington and October 8 in Burnsville. Kim Larson and Ryan Peterson have secured the city Council chambers for the forums. Without senate elections two forums are sufficient. Board approval is requested.

We should seek to expand the audience for the forums. Suggestions on ways to improve the forums will be greatly appreciated. A small committee of the board to oversee the forums will be helpful.

### Federal Highway Trust Fund

On July 31 Congress passed a bill transferring \$10.8 billion to the Federal Highway Trust Fund that will continue the [Federal Transportation Act, MAP-21](#), providing money to the states, counties and cities through September 30, 2015. Congress did **not** fix the \$16 billion a year Trust Fund deficit. The additional funding came from [pension smoothing \(changing how employers fund worker pension programs\)](#), [extending customs user fees](#) and [transferring money from a fund to repair leaking underground fuel storage tanks](#).

## **Metropolitan Council**

The existing 2030 Transportation Policy Plan was updated in April 2014. Planning is underway for the 2040 Transportation Policy Plan. Details are available at

<http://www.metrocouncil.org/Transportation/Planning/2030-Transportation-Policy-Plan.aspx>

## **MnDOT**

Commissioner Zelle has spoken over 60 times to audiences in all parts of Minnesota of the need for a major transportation funding program to fix and improve Minnesota's transportation system. The foundation for a funding package is the TFAC Report that identified a \$12 billion funding deficit for highways over the next 20 years. His message includes the *Return on Investment* studies (a) for transit by the Itasca Group, and (b) for roads and bridges by SGA. It is claimed that the ROI is \$2.50 for every \$1.00 invested.

On August 18 the Commissioner is expected to provide a list of efficiencies the department has implemented since passage of the 2008 funding bill Chapter 152.

## **Legislature**

Now, with the primary election over, is the time to engage candidates and ask their support for the legislative objectives of the Solutions Alliance. Transportation is expected to be a major issue in the legislative and gubernatorial campaigns. Hopefully will be productive debate that addresses the needs and provides a solution.

## **MOVE>>>MN**

This umbrella group is organizing a state-wide effort to pass a major transportation funding package in 2015. It has developed a comprehensive and focused strategy to engage the public and candidates to support a funding bill that (a) balances needs and interests from all geographic regions of Minnesota, (b) balances needs for roads, bridges and transit, (c) provides funding for transit in both the Metropolitan Area and Greater Minnesota, and (c) provides stable and sufficient funding sources to fully meet the transportation funding requirements.