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MEMORANDUM

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

FROM: Robert J Tennesen

RE: Legislative Report

DATE: December 11, 2014

The Solutions Alliance

Thank you for the opportunity to represent the Solutions Alliance for more than two decades. It has been both my pleasure and satisfaction to observe the board of directors working together and agreeing upon a common agenda for the benefit of all.

The Solutions Alliance is the forum in which the members, the cities and counties, have developed an understanding of the needs of each, a trust in the good faith of each, respect for each, and through its efforts have achieved improvements in the I-35W Corridor probably not imagined possible in 1989 when Dan McElroy, then mayor of Burnsville, and others created the Solutions Alliance as a joint powers board.

The enduring usefulness and importance of the Solutions Alliance is attested by the county and cities that have joined since its inception, and by the participation of MnDOT, Metropolitan Council, Metro Transit, Minnesota Valley Transit and others in monthly board meetings. Members recognize the benefit of participating in the forum and cooperating with each other to achieve the common good. The achievements have been many but the challenges are even more. Continuing to work together the Solutions Alliance will meet them.

Success has been made possible by an enlightened board and by the strong and wise leadership of the three people who have served as the board chair: Dan McElroy, Michael Turner and Sue Sandahl. I thank each of them and all directors for the opportunity and privilege afforded me of being your legal counsel and lobbyist.

I leave you now, and all who have preceded you, as I retire from the active practice of law. Thank you for the honor of representing the Solutions Alliance.

Legislature

The legislature will convene at 12 o'clock noon January 7 to begin its 89th session.

The House Transportation Committee, chaired by Rep. Tim Kelly of Red Wing will meet on Mondays and Wednesdays from 12:30-2:15 PM in the State Office Building. The Senate schedule remains as last year. The Senate Transportation Committee will meet from 3 to 5:30 PM on Mondays and Wednesdays under the chairmanship of Senator Dibble. Check the senate schedule for any room changes.

Metropolitan Council

The **METRO Orange Line** has received approval to enter project development from the Federal Transit Administration. When completed it will provide all-day BRT service on I-35W helping thousands of residents in Minneapolis, Richfield, Bloomington, Burnsville and beyond get to work, shop, and entertainment while providing congestion relief on one of the state's busiest roadways.

This line was first envisioned by Representatives Mary Liz Holberg and Frank Hornstein, who early in the last decade, successfully authored legislation to conduct a feasibility study of BRT on I-35W. Much has happened since then to make BRT possible including the reconstruction of the I-35W/Hwy 62 Interchange and the Urban Partnership Agreement that provided funding to increase the capacity of I-35W north of 46th Street and to rebuild Marquette and 2nd Avenues in downtown Minneapolis to accommodate additional bus traffic.

FTA's approval is another step in a long process; additional future steps, prior to expected completion in 2017-18, include more advanced design, engineering and environmental work. Although led by Metro Transit is being done in coordination with the Minnesota Department of Transportation, Hennepin and Dakota counties, the cities of Minneapolis, Richfield, Bloomington and Burnsville, and the Minnesota Valley Transit Authority.

This project directly affects all members and has been a priority of the Solutions Alliance.

Minnesota Department of Transportation

Commissioner Charlie Zelle continues to travel the state explaining the need to fix our roads and bridges and provide the additional funds necessary to do so.