

Date: June 9, 2016

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

From: Rob Vanasek

Re: Legislative Report

The 2016 Regular Legislative Session has ended. A Special Session might be convened.

What's left undone?

The bonding bill and tax bill are the two major items not acted upon by the state legislature and governor. A supplemental spending bill was enacted into law, but did not contain substantive transportation dollars as a comprehensive transportation finance bill was discussed separately in conference committee up until the 2nd last day of regular session, but no action was taken. Offers discussed in the last meeting by the House and Senate conference committee were not considered official.

The potential contents of the bonding bill did receive quite a bit of attention and time by legislators and their staffs in hearings and individual meetings, but the use of as many bonding "vehicle bills" as press conferences on the legislation illustrated the challenge the public infrastructure had in getting to a 3/5s majority in both chambers. In the final minutes, the final bonding bill (and sort term transportation "pothole" bill) was mostly agreed to, but did not pass both legislative chambers in the closing minutes of session due to disagreement over Southwest Light Rail funding.

Bonding?

The Solutions Alliance focused much of its resources into obtaining \$12.1 million, the final installment of the state's share for the Orange Line BRT (through bonding as a backup to a comprehensive transportation bill) and \$25 million in bonding for the 35W/Lake Street Access Project (ramps and bridges). The sum of these two amounts would equate to a 3-5 year construction project on 35W instead of 7-8 years and result in about \$250 million of total improvements to the corridor. (It is unknown exactly how much more it might cost to build the Orange Line, Lake Street Access Project, and 35W/94 braid bridges independent of each other or how many components may be lost from each of the first two if current budget maximums are maintained.) We also focused considerable effort on the 35W/494 phase I interchange and much less so on the MOA transit station.

Orange Line (without the costly reroute language), the Lake Street Access Project, the MOA transit station, Corridors of Commerce program, and local road improvement program were all included in the final bonding bill. Southwest Light Rail was not. As of Tuesday, Majority Leader Bakk said a bonding bill would not pass the Senate without a solution for Southwest. Speaker Daudt has stated that Southwest and additional funding hoped for by the Governor would go over in his caucus like a lead balloon.