

Date: April 14, 2016

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

From: Rob Vanasek

Re: Legislative Report

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As announced at our March meeting by Joe Marble, House Transportation Committee Administrator, the House-Senate Conference Committee on the omnibus transportation finance package did meet the following week. Staff went through the provisions of each chamber's bill and reminded members of the similarities and the differences between the two. Both Chairs were cordial to each other and hinted at a potential path forward where they might write a bill between themselves and the conference committee, and then return to their respective chambers and work their colleagues on the merits of the compromise.

But, that Wednesday night meeting was also the only meeting of the Conference Committee this year to date. Frustration is felt by many throughout the state on the lack of action on a transportation bill. A minority of members is making it their number one priority this year. Hopefully more will. House and Senate leadership continue to express strong support for a solution, yet debate last year's respective approaches. Another month from now the pressure to focus on transportation will be much stronger than today.

The 35W/494 interchange press release dated March 24 initiated by the 494 Commission incorporated a quote from our Chair and a number of our suggestions. It resulted in print article and a story on KSTP TV last Friday.

### **Targets Are Out**

A week ago the House released its targets for spending and yesterday the Senate released theirs. The House is mostly holding the line on current spending levels across board, except they propose to use half of the \$900 million general fund surplus on tax cuts and half on transportation this year. (Note: the House transportation bill proposes ~\$7 billion on roads and bridges for the next 10 years & the Senate bill proposes ~\$11 billion on roads, bridges and transit the next 10 years.)

Yesterday, the Senate released its targets for spending the surplus and set aside \$300 million for the Tax Committee and \$31.5 million for the Transportation and Public Safety Committee, which is marking up its bill today.

### **Bonding**

The House targets included \$600 million for a bonding bill. This compares to the governor's \$1.4 billion proposal, which did not include any money for transportation projects because he believes transportation should be dealt with in the transportation bill. The Senate bill is likely to be a little over \$1 billion.

On March 21, the House Transportation Committee acted on a procedural motion that laid over the 55 bills heard in informational hearings on April 22 and April 23, 2015. These bills were laid over for possible inclusion in the capital investment bill (or a omnibus transportation policy and finance bill). There was no testimony taken. We support the following bills from that list:

HF313 (Lenczewski/Anderson, C.) I-35W and I-494 interchange improvement funding provided, and money appropriated.

HF2221 (Slocum) Richfield; 77th Street underpass at Highway 77/Cedar Avenue funding provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2155 (Peterson) Dakota and Hennepin Counties; I-35W bridge over the Minnesota River replacement funding provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF1137 (Hornstein) Minneapolis; Lake Street Transit Station funding provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

### **Orange Line and Lake St Interchange**

Due to the administration pushing a comprehensive transportation package, which includes a sales tax component addressing transit capital costs, there have not been bills introduced for transit capital needs as has been done in past sessions. We have taken the lead in addressing this need by introducing our own bill to fund the Orange Line via bonding chief authored by Representative Jon Koznick from Lakeville:

HF3833 Metro Orange Bus Rapid Transit line funding provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

Representatives Roz Peterson (R-Lakeville), Frank Hornstein (D-Minneapolis), Sandy Masin (D-Eagan), Brian Daniels (R-Fairbault), Drew Christensen (R-Burnsville), Raymond Dehn (D-Minneapolis) are coauthors.

Our Senate chief author is Senator Melissa Wiklund (D-Bloomington), and co-authors are Senator Jim Carlson (D-Eagan) and Senator Dan Hall (R-Burnsville).

In addition to the co-authors above, we have met with:  
Transportation Chair Tim Kelly (R-Redwing)  
Transportation Vice-Chair John Petersburg (R-Waseca)  
Capital Investment Chair Paul Torkelson (R-Hanska)  
Representative Chad Anderson (R-Bloomington)  
Representative David Bly (D-Northfield)  
Senator Dave Thompson (R-Lakeville)

We will be meeting with:  
Majority Leader Tom Bakk (D-Cook)  
Transportation Chair Scott Dibble (D-Minneapolis)

Capital Investment Chair LeRoy Stumpf (D-Plummer)  
Capital Investment Minority Lead David Senjem (R-Rochester)

Chair Workman and I would like to ask each of you call or email your representative(s) and senator(s) representing your communities and express your support of the Orange Line bill, HF 3833. These talking points are for potential discussion and use by board members:

- The deadline for having the remaining \$12.1 million of the state's share for the project is this summer. Hennepin has already approved over \$12 million, Dakota has already approved over \$2 million and the State has previously bonded for \$3 million in 2014 for the project.
- Bus ridership on 35W has increased 41% since 2009. Even though buses make up 5% of vehicles in the HOV lanes, they carry 41% of the people, which equals a full lane and a half of traffic.
- The more folks that find it useful to utilize improved transit facilities, the more traffic we can move through the limited number of lanes we have for those of us who use our cars on 35W.
- Please support HF 3833, (Koznick), and please support the bonding bill if the Orange Line is included.

Finally, the 35W/Lake Street interchange is also very timely. In 2017 MnDOT is required to begin to replace the bridges connecting 35W to 94. This is a multiple year construction impact to 35W, which would double in length if full funding were not secured this year.

The 35W/Lake Street project is expected to cost ~\$150 million and the request is \$25 million in state bonding. The project would complete a new freeway exit ramp on northbound I-35W to 28<sup>th</sup> Street, a new freeway entrance ramp to southbound I-35W at Lake Street, and related local street throughputs.

Efficiencies with the work scheduled by MnDOT for 2017 along with the Orange Line would result in cost and timesavings for all three 35W projects in this singular area. An integrated design and single project delivery contractor in partnership with MnDOT for all three of these system components could benefit the Orange Line cost share and perhaps allow for additional amenities such as more park and ride spaces along the Orange Line.