



# **TRANSPORTATION CHOICES 2020**

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **WHAT IS TRANSPORTATION CHOICES 2020?**

The Transportation Choices 2020 initiative will dramatically expand the availability of transit, bicycling, and walking facilities in Minnesota. It uses a half-cent sales tax in the seven county metropolitan area to implement the Metropolitan Council's transit plan by 2020 rather than 2030, and nine percent of Transportation Amendment revenues to substantially expand transit in Greater Minnesota.

### **WHY DOES TRANSIT PARTNERS ADVOCATE FOR SPLITTING THE TRANSIT PORTION OF THE TRANSPORTATION AMENDMENT REVENUES WITH 31 PERCENT GOING TO URBAN NEEDS AND NINE PERCENT GOING TO GREATER MINNESOTA?**

The Transportation Amendment was a statewide ballot initiative, so it makes sense for some of that money to go toward transit in Greater Minnesota. It's a fair compromise, since the proposed half cent sales tax will help pay for transit needs in the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

Transit is important to Greater Minnesota--many young people and elderly residents living outside the metro can't use cars to reach their grocery stores, doctor's appointments, and churches. Also, Minneapolis and St. Paul aren't the only cities in Minnesota—Duluth, Rochester, St. Cloud, and other cities need transit too.

### **WHAT IS TRANSIT PARTNERS' POSITION ON SPECIFIC BONDING PACKAGES?**

We support a comprehensive approach to funding transit, rather than specific bonding packages. Although we support many of the projects currently falling under bonding proposals, we would prefer to see the full transit addressed through a half-cent sales tax in the seven county metropolitan area.

### **WHY IS TRANSIT PARTNERS ADVOCATING FOR A HALF CENT SALES TAX? WHY NOT ANOTHER FUNDING SOURCE?**

We're open to other funding options, but the sales tax is most commonly used by other states for funding regional transit systems. The sales tax also provides the right amount of money needed to develop the entire system by 2020.

### **WHAT IS TRANSIT PARTNERS' POSITION ON SPECIFIC PROJECTS?**

- We support all of the light rail projects proposed in the Metropolitan Council 2030 plan.
- We support the study of light rail transit on I-394 and on all three of the proposed bus rapid transit corridors in the Metropolitan Council's 2030 plan.
- We haven't fully analyzed the proposed Cambridge line or high speed rail between Hastings and Red Wing. At this time, we have no position on those projects.

## WILL MOST OF TRANSPORTATION CHOICES 2020 FUNDING GO TO LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT?

Light rail transit has many benefits, but it can't go everywhere. The bus system will always be the foundation of a regional transit system, and our funding package ensures that the bus system receives the funding it needs.

## WHY ARE YOU ADVOCATING FOR 2020 RATHER THAN 2030?

Minnesota shouldn't have to wait a quarter century for the transportation results we need now. With at least half a million new residents living in the metro area by 2020, we need to have the courage to invest in a future that takes care of all of our state's residents.

## WHAT IS THE CURRENT TIMELINE FOR EXISTING PROJECTS?

- **Bottineau Boulevard bus rapid transit** is a proposed 22-mile busway that would connect northwest Minneapolis, Crystal, Brooklyn Park, Osseo, Dayton, Maple Grove, and Rogers. This project is currently on hold.
- **Cedar Avenue bus rapid transit** is a proposed 16-mile busway that would run from the Mall of America to Burnsville, Eagan, Apple Valley, and Lakeville. It could start operating in 2009 if properly funded.
- **Northstar commuter rail** is a 40-mile, six station commuter rail line that would connect downtown Minneapolis to Big Lake. It could start running in 2009.
- **I-35W bus rapid transit** is a proposed 20-mile busway connecting Burnsville to downtown Minneapolis. It could start operating in 2010, but the project is currently on hold due to Crosstown funding problems.
- **The Union Depot** could start operating as a regional transit hub in 2011 if properly funded.
- **Central Corridor light rail transit** is a proposed 11-mile light rail transit line connecting downtown Minneapolis and downtown St. Paul by way of University and Washington Avenues. If properly funded, it could start operating in 2013.
- **Red Rock commuter rail** is a proposed 20-mile commuter rail corridor running north along Highway 61 from Hastings to St. Paul and on to Minneapolis. This project is expected to open after 2020. Under Transportation Choices 2020, it could start operating in 2015.
- **Southwest light rail transit** is a proposed 14-mile light rail transit line connecting downtown Minneapolis to Hopkins, St. Louis Park, Minnetonka, and Eden Prairie. This project is expected to open after 2020. Under Transportation Choices 2020, it could start operating in 2017.
- **Rush Line commuter rail** is a proposed 80-mile commuter rail line that would connect downtown St. Paul with Hinckley. This project is expected to open after 2020. Under Transportation Choices 2020, it could start operating in 2020.

## WHAT HAPPENS IF TRANSPORTATION CHOICES 2020 ISN'T PASSED?

If Transportation Choices 2020, or any significant transit funding, is not passed, it would be highly difficult to meet the previously mentioned timelines. Central Corridor, for instance, needs \$280 million before the 2008 legislative session in order to receive the federal funding for the project to stay on track.