

- June 26, 2006
Two Year Anniversary of Hiawatha Light Rail — Phase One
- August 2, 2006
Northstar Commuter Rail Corridor TOD workshop. Coon Rapids, MN
- September 5 - 8, 2006
14th Annual Pro Walk / Pro Bike Conference
Madison, WI
www.bikewalk.org
- November 5 - 8, 2006
12th Annual Rail-Volution Conference, Chicago, IL
www.railvolution.com
- December, 2006
TLC 10 year anniversary celebration
Look for more info in our next newsletter!

TLC Gatherings, *continued from page 6*

Linking Development and Transit – and Reconnecting America

This spring, TLC collaborated with the national non-profit Reconnecting America and the local chapter of the Urban Land Institute to host a workshop series about opportunities for transit-oriented development (TOD) in the Twin Cities region.

TOD complements transit use by providing vibrant, pedestrian-friendly housing, working, and shopping choices within a half-mile of transit. As interest in the Twin Cities grows for more transitways and expanded bus service, a great opportunity exists to guide land use policies to promote TOD and create memorable, walkable places.

Each workshop focuses on a planned or existing rail corridor, bringing together national TOD experts with local experts, business owners, city officials, neighborhood leaders, and transit and housing advocates. The Central Corridor workshop in March drew nearly 200 people, and over 150 people attended the Hiawatha LRT corridor workshop in April.

A workshop on TOD along the Northstar Commuter Rail Corridor will be held August 2nd in Coon Rapids.

For more information, go to:
www.reconnectingamerica.org/html/TOD/resources.htm

If you are not currently getting TLC's E-Mail Alerts, please share your e-mail address with us by:
E-mailing: tlc@tlcminnesota.org
Visiting our website: www.tlcminnesota.org
Calling Kevin at: 651-767-0298

Our Commitment: We won't overwhelm you with e-mail (average 2 per month) — We won't give your address to any other organization — We will remove you from our database if you request it.

Together we will make a difference. Sign up today!



Transit for Livable Communities

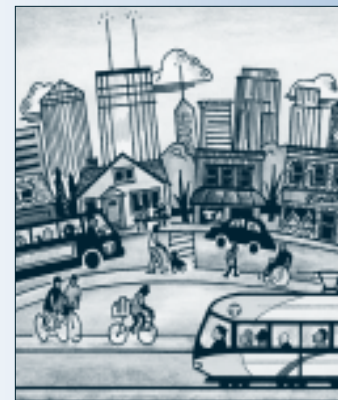
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TRANSIT

for Livable Communities



Summer 2006

In This Issue:

- **Separate Fact from Fiction — TLC's Updated Policy Briefs**
page 2
- **TLC Launches New Walking and Biking Program**
pages 5
- **Creating More Livable Communities Through Biking and Walking**
page 5
- **TLC Gatherings—Transportation and Land Use Discussions**
page 6

Whirlwind Session Shows Transit Progress

2006 Legislative Session Summary

For six years, Transit for Livable Communities has fought repeated cuts to transit funding. But as the 2006 session began, the legislature and the Governor finally seemed ready to change course and address the critical need for more transportation choices in Minnesota.

Major transit corridors were in play in the bonding bill. There were threats to the upcoming constitutional amendment set on transportation. TLC also supported the reintroduction of the Transportation Choices 2020 initiative — a plan to dedicate a 1/2 cent regional sales tax to expand Minnesota transitways and bus service.

Despite predictions of an early finish, transit concerns were tied up in political maneuvering through the final days of the session. In the end transit had a productive session thanks to the combined efforts of TLC and its members, our Transit Partners allies, and supportive legislators. Many transit projects will be moving forward, and the stage is set for voters to approve dedicated funding to make transit growth possible in the future.



BONDING FOR TRANSIT

The biannual bonding bill is critical for major transit projects because, with no dedicated funding for transit expansion, bonding is the sole method to get these projects built.

TLC recommended that the legislature make significant investments in eight key transitways projects in the Metro and increase the capital investment in bus transit facilities in both the metro and greater Minnesota. (See the Bonding Table, page 3). While the amount



See *Whirlwind Session*, page 3

MISSION

To improve the quality of life in Minnesota communities through a balanced transportation system that increases the availability of transit, walking, biking and transit-oriented development.

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Downtown Minneapolis
Transportation
Management Organization

Separate fact from fiction with TLC's updated **policy briefs**. Need help making the case for more transit, bicycling, and walking? Check out TLC's Policy Briefs - two-page documents that quickly illustrate how the Twin Cities region lags behind in various measures of transit and other transportation choices. Copies can be obtained on TLC's web site or by contacting TLC's office. Recently updated Policy Briefs include:

Transit Investment in Peer City Regions

The Twin Cities region invests only 77% of what our peer regions on average do per capita. We are even further behind regions like Denver, Seattle, Portland, and Pittsburgh.

Findings from the 2005 Urban Mobility Report

Regions with comprehensive public transit systems reap hundreds of millions of dollars annually in congestion reduction benefits. Seattle saved an estimated \$560 million in 2003 thanks to transit, while the smaller Twin Cities transit system saved the region approximately \$160 million.

Funding Sources for Transit in Peer Regions

Major U.S. regions fund transit with a dedicated regional sales tax of 1/2 to 1 cent, allowing them to plan for and build improvements to their transit systems. In Minnesota, however, transit agencies must regularly return to the state legislature to seek approval of funding for both operations and new capital expenditures.

Driven to Spend

The average Twin Cities household spends \$9,300 annually, or 17% of its income, on transportation. Low income families spend an even larger percentage. The cities where households spend less on transportation are typically places with strong regional transit systems and good facilities for walking and bicycling.

Welcome New TLC Staff



David Van Hattum, Policy and Advocacy Program Manager

Dave was hired in January to help manage TLC's education, advocacy, and outreach efforts to communities, businesses, and public officials. He brings over a decade of experience with transportation policy through his former work as Executive Director of 494 Commuter Services, and his prior position as a Research Fellow in Transportation Policy at the Humphrey Institute for Public Affairs. Contact Dave at davevh@tlcminnesota.org



Patience Caso, Organizer

Patience began working for TLC in April, coordinating the Transportation Choices Network, TLC's network of people who want to help create a balanced transportation system in Minnesota. She formerly worked at Clean Water Action Alliance of Minnesota where she was the Water Program Coordinator and was responsible for the Minnesota Environmental Partnership's Day at the Capitol. Contact Patience at patiencec@tlcminnesota.org

Steve Clark, Walking & Bicycling Program Manager – see Article NTP, page 5.

See these Resources and much more at our website

www.TLCMinnesota.org

eventually approved for bonding is less in many corridors than recommended, this year's package does represent significant progress for transit in our region.

Northstar Commuter Rail got the final state funding needed for a 2009 opening date. The Central Corridor LRT line and the Union Depot received enough funding to show a good faith effort toward the amount needed to match federal funding. And important funding was provided to study or design other key transit capital projects.

VOTE YES - FOR TRANSPORTATION

Last year, the legislature put an initiative on the November 2006 ballot that gives voters the opportunity to dedicate 100% of the revenues from the Motor Vehicles Sales Tax (MVST) to transportation, with a minimum of 40% going to transit. This session, legislators debated a number of proposals to change the initiative, including whether or not the exact split between roads and transit should be fixed in the constitution. TLC and transit advocates maintained the original allotment of funding, thereby preserving the legislatures' flexibility to increase transit funding if necessary in the future.

TLC strongly supports a YES VOTE on the transportation amendment to finally provide some of the dedicated funding needed to expand Minnesota's transit system. More info on the MVST Referendum can be found at www.tlcminnesota.org or at www.VoteYesMN.org.

REGIONAL SALES TAX FOR TRANSIT

If the MVST referendum passes in November, transit

would likely receive only about a third of what is needed to build the region's planned rail and bus system by 2020. If the MVST referendum fails, transit service will continue to languish with unstable funding with no capacity for growth. To fill this funding gap, TLC and the Transit Partners again worked with transit friendly legislators to introduce the Transportation Choices 2020 Initiative, which proposes a 1/2 cent regional sales tax for transit.

TC2020 was not expected to go far in a year focused on bonding and MVST, but thanks to Senators Steve Kelley, Scott Dibble and Sharon Marko and others in the Senate, this transit funding plan was seriously considered as part of the stadium and transportation conference committees.

As a transportation organization, TLC has no position on stadium funding, but a proposed transit/stadium bill provided a unique opportunity to educate legislators and the general public.

Through the last night of the session the transportation conference committee considered allowing metro counties to opt into an increased sales tax for transit. The near success of this idea in 2006 sets the stage for TC2020 to be seriously considered again in 2007.

Thanks to support from transit supporters like you, decision makers are getting ever closer to finally achieving the long planned vision for transit in the Twin Cities region and across Minnesota. Stayed tuned as we will need every member of our Transportation Choices Network to help in this historic endeavor!

TRANSIT PROJECT BONDING	TLC RECOMMENDATION	FINAL BONDING
Metro Transit Capital	\$32.8 million	\$31.5 million
Northstar Commuter Rail	\$60 million	\$60 million
Central Corridor Transitway	\$50 million	\$7.8 million
St. Paul Union Depot	\$12.5 million	\$3.5 million
I-35W Bus Rapid Transit	\$8.3 million	\$3.3 million
Greater MN Transit Facilities	\$7.1 million	\$2 million
Cedar Avenue Busway	\$5 million	\$5 million
Robert St. Transitway	\$2 million	\$0.5 million
Red Rock Commuter Rail	\$1 million	\$0.5 million
Duluth Depot & Rush Line Commuter Rail	\$1 million	\$1.3 million
TOTAL	\$179.7 million	\$115.4 million

TLC Launches New Walking and Bicycling Program

After six months of detailed discussions with federal, state and local agencies, Transit for Livable Communities will proceed with a federal pilot program intended to reduce dependence on automobiles by improving walking and bicycling conditions in the Minneapolis area. On June 1, 2006, TLC's workplan received formal approval from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

In August 2005, the Non-motorized Transportation Pilot (NTP) Project was authorized as part of the federal SAFETEA-LU transportation bill. The Minneapolis area is one of four communities receiving a \$25 million, 4-year grant to determine "the extent to which bicycling and walking can carry a significant part of the transportation load." TLC is the only independent non-profit designated to lead an NTP project - local government agencies will administer the other pilots in Sheboygan County, WI; Marin County, CA; and Columbia, MO.

CONTINUING TLC'S MISSION

Expanding bicycling and walking choices is an important part of TLC's mission, and the organization is committed to expanding education and advocacy around the issue. "Every transit trip begins with someone walking or bicycling, so our mission has always encompassed strategies to make these activities safer and more convenient," says Chuck Holtman, TLC Board President. "The federal program will allow us to build on TLC's past efforts to research and promote bicycling and walking."

In 2003, TLC, in collaboration with the Center for Neighborhoods, published "Sharing the Road: Encouraging Bicycling and Walking in Minnesota," which highlights innovative biking and walking programs in Minnesota and around the country. The McKnight Foundation funded the publication and continues to support TLC's walking and biking efforts by funding TLC's new Walking and Biking Program. The new program also has funding from Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Minnesota.

WHAT CAN BE FUNDED

TLC has been working with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to clarify the usage of NTP funds, particularly regarding the availability of funds for new facilities and projects addressing planning, safety, education and promotion. The FHWA determined the geographic scope for the project would focus on Minneapolis, with consideration for connections from adjoining communities. The funds are available until expended, require no match, and cannot be used for other purposes.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

Congress created the NTP pilot project to determine how

U.S. cities can increase pedestrian and bicycle trips; as a result, the pilot project will require rigorous measurement and evaluation. Along with the FHWA and other NTP communities, TLC is developing methodologies to measure success. Baseline travel data regarding the number of bicycling and walking trips will be collected in September 2006, and will be collected again in September 2010 at the end of the pilot program. The law also specifies that communities document health benefits, energy conservation, and pollution reduction.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

TLC believes that community input from a broad range of stakeholders will be essential to the program's success. A project advisory committee, including community members and public agency staff, will advise the TLC board regarding funding criteria, ranking priorities, and outreach strategies. TLC will also provide opportunities for the public to have input throughout the project.

STEVE CLARK LEADS TLC'S EFFORTS

In March, TLC hired Steve Clark, a veteran bicycle and pedestrian advocate to manage the new Walking and Bicycling program. Steve was the first manager of the bicycling and walking program in Boulder, CO as well as a past president of the League of American Bicyclists and a co-founder of the Minnesota Coalition of Bicyclists. As a consultant, Steve has also written bike/pedestrian plans for cities throughout the U.S. Although his primary responsibility will be implementing TLC's NTP Project, Steve will also develop TLC's Walking and Bicycling Program, which will continue beyond federal program.



Steve Clark

NEXT STEPS

TLC and the project advisory committee will work throughout 2006 to develop a project solicitation process, with projects selected for funding in early 2007. Proposals will be rated on their ability to induce a shift from driving to walking and bicycling. In 2006, TLC will focus on assessing existing conditions and determining areas of greatest need and opportunity. If you have questions about TLC's Walking and Bicycling Program, contact Steve Clark at stevec@tlcminnesota.org.

Creating More Livable Communities Through Bicycling and Walking

Nearly 200 Minnesota transportation policy leaders packed the Great Hall at the University of Minnesota in April to hear the Mayor of Munster, Germany, describe how his city became the most "Livable Community" in the world.

Mayor Berthold Tillman was the featured speaker of the 2006 Oberstar Forum - an annual event on transportation policy and technology hosted by Congressman James Oberstar and the University of Minnesota's Center for Transportation Studies.

Mayor Tillman proudly explained how bicycling in Munster grew to 37 percent of all transportation trips - a larger percentage than those who drive alone. The city encourages cycling and walking through well-designed facilities and active promotion. Munster also has pioneered special signalization for bicyclists allowing them to proceed through intersections ahead of cars. Mayor Tillman challenged the audience to rethink transportation policy, and consider ways to "make it more difficult for people to drive, and easier to walk and bike."

The event also featured a discussion of the new Non-Motorized Transportation Pilot Program. Transit for Livable Communities Executive Director Lea Schuster described TLC's role leading the program in Minnesota, while representatives from the other three regions participating spoke to their unique

situations. Other speakers included Professor Kevin Krizek, of CTS and the HHH Institute of Public Affairs, and Professor Ann Forsyth of the U of M's Metropolitan Design Center.

Congressman Oberstar followed a panel of U of M researchers who addressed the significant

challenges of getting Minneapolis to follow Munster's lead. He responded by recounting the success of the Marin County, CA, Safe Routes to School Program, which quickly and dramatically increased the number of children walking and biking to school. He also spoke eloquently and forcefully about the coming "biking and walking tsunami" that he believes will soon overtake our cities, bringing better air, improved health and reduced congestion in its wake. For more information about the Oberstar Forum visit www.cts.umn.edu/events/oberstarforum/index.html



Robert Johns, Director of the Center for Transportation Studies; TLC's Steve Clark; and Congressman James Oberstar get ready to ride after the 2006 Oberstar Forum.

**WHAT
\$25,000,000
COULD BUY:**

**1/4th of a mile
for a third lane
on Hwy 100**

OR ALL OF THESE:

- 200,000 maps and booklets, *and*
- 25,000 signs, *and*
- 15,000 bike racks, *and*
- 8,000 bicycles, *and*
- 1,000 miles of striped bike lanes, *and*
- 800 mid-block pedestrian signals, *and*
- 20 miles of sidewalks, *and*
- 15 miles of widened shoulders, *and*
- 10 miles of paths (No ROW), *and*
- 4 pedestrian overpasses (150' long)

Figures derived from National Biking and Walking Study Pub. Num. FHWA-PD-94-023 - with adjustments for inflation.

NTP ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

- Network and project planning, assessments of current conditions
- Construction plans, cost-estimates, permits
- Safety projects to decrease bicycle and pedestrian crashes
- Improved bicycle or pedestrian access to transit stops
- Infrastructure projects including bike lanes, pathways, sidewalks, bridges and tunnels
- Striping, signing, signalization, bike racks, kiosks, showers and lockers.
- Data collection to assess mode shift, environmental and health benefits associated with program
- Education, promotion, communication, and outreach related to non-motorized transportation

Transit for Livable Communities has been busy this spring bringing together local experts and community members to discuss key transportation and land use issues. If you would like to stay informed about similar events in the future, please share your e-mail address with us. It is the most cost-effective way to keep you informed so you can participate on the issues that interest you most.

Transit Advocates Confer on Central Corridor

On May 9th, TLC invited people from across the metro area to discuss the Central Corridor transitway and its Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), under consideration by the Met Council in June. The purpose was to provide an opportunity for transit advocates to meet, ask questions, and share their hopes and concerns about the Central Corridor transitway and its impact on the communities it will serve.

The 70 attendees included both long-time TLC activists and new faces. Many were local residents and regular riders of University Avenue bus routes #16 and #50, while others came because of their interest in this regional transitway project.

To help inform the discussion, Steve Morris from Ramsey County and Donna Drummond from the City of St. Paul briefly presented what local governments are doing to move the project forward. TLC Program Director Barb Thoman also provided the TLC Board's draft issue paper on the Central Corridor, identifying many of TLC's concerns including transit friendly zoning, community participation, connecting bus service, and affordable housing.

The second half of the evening was devoted to small group discussion where attendees could ask questions, share their opinions, and learn from each other. These discussions helped inform TLC's official comments on the Central Corridor DEIS, submitted June 5.

See TLC's website www.tlcmnnesota.org for TLC's DEIS comments, the TLC Board draft issues paper, and many other resources related to the Central Corridor transitway process.

TLC Hosts Midwest Transportation Forum

On April 11th and 12th, TLC welcomed the Surface Transportation Policy Project (STPP), a diverse national coalition working to ensure safer communities and smarter transportation choices, for a workshop to help communities strategize how to use the federal transportation law to meet their needs for greater access and mobility.

The "From the Margins to the Mainstream" event brought together over 100 transit professionals and advocates from the Twin Cities region with experts from Washington D.C., Chicago, St. Louis, Milwaukee, and across the Midwest. The State and Local Policy Project of the U of M's Humphrey Institute also co-hosted the gathering, which was held at the Institute.

Among the national speakers were Brigid Hynes-Cherin, Associate Administrator for Planning and Environment, Federal Transit Administration; Art Guzzetti, Director, Policy and Advocacy, American Public Transportation Association; Jacky Grimshaw, Vice President, Center for Neighborhood Technology; Keith Laughlin, President, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy; Les Sterman, Executive Director, East-West Gateway Council of Governments; and Jeff Squires, Vice President, Parsons. Local speakers included Hennepin County Commissioner Peter McLaughlin, Metro Transit General Manager Brian Lamb, and lead staff from the Metropolitan Council and MnDOT.

TLC continues to work with STPP to assess the performance of the Twin Cities transportation system and to create stronger tools for accountability. More information can be found on STPP's website: www.transact.org/.

See *TLC Gatherings*, page 8

LOCAL

MnDOT Highway Expansion Projects Take Funds from Transit, Local Roads, Bikes, Pedestrians

With MnDOT overestimating its revenue from last year's federal transportation bill, highway expansion projects planned for the next few years didn't have enough funding to move forward. To fill the gap, MnDOT and the Metropolitan Council and its Transportation Advisory Board pinched \$50 million that the Council typically uses to fund local road, bicycle, pedestrian and transit projects. While the council has allocated \$87 million for local projects to be built or implemented in 2009-2010, many other local projects didn't get funded. No public testimony was solicited on this decision. For a list of funded projects, visit www.metrocouncil.org.

Central Corridor Moves to Engineering Phase

On June 6, the Central Corridor Coordinating Committee recommended light rail transit as the preferred transit improvement alternative for the University Avenue corridor. The vote was unanimous, with only the MnDOT representative abstaining. The Met Council will review the LRT recommendation June 28, after which the project can move into the 2-year preliminary engineering process. While funding for this next step was left out of the state bonding bill this year, \$7.8 million was made available through a shift of funds from a proposed bus garage at Snelling Avenue.

Two years of delay ended in May when the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) approved the cost-effectiveness index (CEI) for the project, enabling Ramsey County to issue the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for public comment. In late May, 570 people attended four public hearings on the DEIS. More than 800 individuals or organizations also provided written comments, with 671 (76%) favoring LRT. TLC's official comments can be viewed at www.tlcmnnesota.org.

LRT and Higher Gas Prices Boost Metro Transit Ridership

Despite a 25% fare increase and a 3.5% cut in bus service, Metro Transit ridership last year rose a surprising 7% to 70 million rides. While higher gas prices led more people to use transit last year, transit ridership nationally was up just 1.3% in 2005. The big increase in the Twin Cities points to the Hiawatha light rail line in its first full year of operation. LRT carried 11% of Metro Transit customers, and continues to far exceed projections, setting a new monthly record in May 2006 with 841,000 rides. Bus ridership remained flat from the previous year.

Regionwide, Twin Cities transit ridership remains 2 million rides below the high of 77 million rides in 2000 and 2001. From 2002 through 2004 ridership fell as service cuts and fare increases were forced by the 2001 legislature's decision to change Metro Transit's primary funding source from

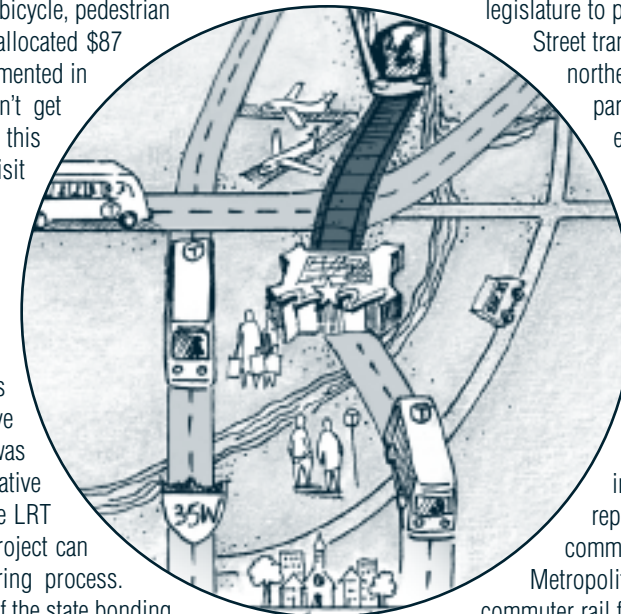
the property tax to the motor vehicle sales tax (MVST). MVST has proven to be a more volatile source of revenue, and has grown at a slower pace than predicted.

South Robert Street Transitway Study Funded

A successful grassroots organizing effort this spring led the state legislature to provide \$1 million for a study of a Robert Street transitway from downtown St. Paul through northern Dakota County. The route is not currently part of the Metropolitan Council's transit plan. The effort was advanced through resident of Dakota County associated with the Sierra Club Northstar Chapter and through the leadership of Senator James Metzen and Representative Rick Hansen.

Envision Commuter Rail to Duluth

Duluth area leaders also succeeded in adding a transitway proposal. The 2006 bonding bill included \$1.3 million to partially fund both repairs to the Duluth Depot and to study extending commuter rail from St. Paul to Duluth. The Metropolitan Council plan includes only a proposed commuter rail from St. Paul to Hinkley by 2030, but TLC's Transportation Choices 2020 initiative would have it built by 2020. The line's extension could compliment other transitway ideas advanced by Duluth area leaders — like an enterprising commuter rail experiment last summer using a 1950's era diesel "Budd Car."



NATIONAL

Illinois Invests in Amtrak

The Bush Administration again proposes to cripple Amtrak by providing the national passenger rail system with only \$900 million for FY2007, \$400 million less than last year and \$700 million less than Amtrak requested. Meanwhile Amtrak ridership is increasing, hitting a record 25 million riders in FY2005 despite service disruptions caused by hurricanes and problems with the high-speed Acela trains. The state of Illinois is increasing its investment in Amtrak service from \$12 million to \$30 million to operate four new trains.

The High Cost of Driving

Auto insurance giant AAA recently released its annual estimate of the cost of auto ownership. AAA estimates that owners who put 15,000 miles per year on a 2006 medium-sized sedan pay a whopping \$7,967. The estimate includes fuel, maintenance, tires, insurance, registration, finance charges and depreciation. For information see www.aaapublicaffairs.com.

TLC's Dave Van Hattum briefs transit supporters with a legislative update at TLC's Central Corridor meeting.



