

LET'S GO

SPRING 2011
NEWSLETTER

BICYCLING, WALKING,
AND TRANSIT ARE
ON THE RISE

**DON'T STOP
PROGRESS**
WITH FUNDING CUTS



**NORTHSTAR
COMMUTER RAIL**

↑ 6%

(Year-over-year gain during
rush hour service)



WALKING

↑ 17%

(From 2007-2010)



**EXPRESS
BUS RIDERSHIP**

↑ 3.5%

(First quarter 2010 versus
first quarter 2011)



BICYCLING

↑ 33%

(From 2007-2010)

TRANSIT
for Livable Communities



PROTECTING PUBLIC TRANSIT NOW—AND FOR THE FUTURE

We are in the midst of a major fight over the future of public transit in this state—and in the nation.

This spring, TLC and our members and allies have been pushing back hard against moves to cut Minnesota’s modest bus systems and to stall progress in building a rail and busway network that will serve this region’s long-term economic and environmental health.

As we work hard to counter naysayers who often seem stuck in an outdated paradigm of cheap gas, we are encouraged by signs that the paradigm is shifting—as Mn/DOT embraces state goals for multimodal transportation and people call for more walkable, bikeable communities. Nevertheless, we have not yet reached the tipping point. There are still far too many decisions based in a driving-only frame of mind.

At the federal level, the leadership from US DOT Secretary LaHood is inspiring. A pragmatic, visionary Republican from Wisconsin, LaHood extols the virtues of public transit and bicycling and calls for repairing existing highways before building new ones. His agency is the architect of a transformational new federal transportation bill. **Over the next year, we need you to join with us and Secretary LaHood and speak out for change.**

At TLC one new staff member joining the work is Bill Neuendorf. A civil engineer with a master’s degree in planning, Bill comes to TLC as director of policy and advocacy after several years as the director of communications and economic development in Morton Grove, Illinois. Welcome, Bill!

Barb Thoman




Barb Thoman
Executive Director

SALT LAKE CITY



“Adding 70 miles of rail over a seven-year period is ambitious, and Utah’s investment in public transit has earned us the #2 spot on *U.S. News & World Report’s* list of the 10 Best Cities for Public Transportation.”

—SALT LAKE CITY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

	Minneapolis/Saint Paul	Salt Lake City
	MetroTransit bus rides per year: 67 million	Salt Lake City bus rides per year: 22 million
	Hiawatha LRT line 30,500 weekday riders	SLC TRAX system (2 lines) 45,000 weekday riders
	NorthStar commuter rail (opened October 2009): 41 miles, 2,129 average weekday rides. One-way fare: \$3.25-\$7.00 (distance-based)	FrontRunner commuter rail (completed spring 2008): 44 miles, 5,400 average weekday rides. One-way fare: \$2.25-\$5.25 (distance-based)

The Salt Lake City region is about a third smaller than the Twin Cities region. Our bus system is much bigger, but Salt Lake City is investing more in rail. Their TRAX LRT system currently runs two lines, with two more slated to open by 2015. Construction is also underway to extend the 44-mile FrontRunner commuter line south to Provo.

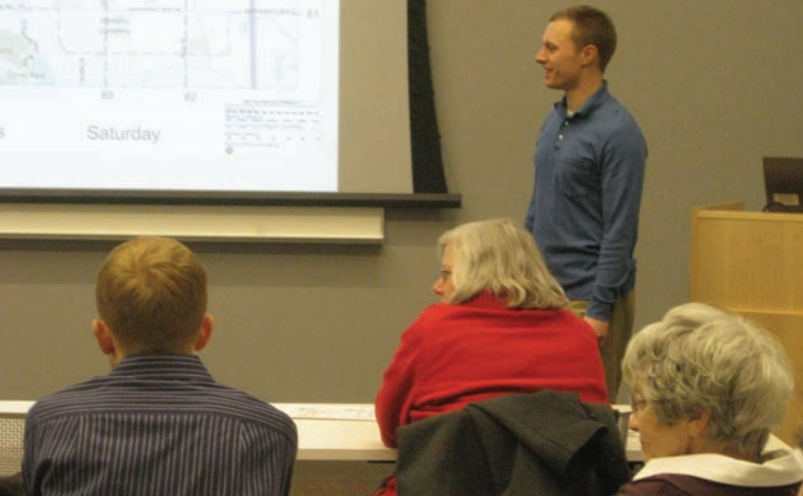
In 1997, Envision Utah launched an unprecedented public effort—involving residents, elected officials, developers, conservationists, and business leaders—with the goal of keeping Utah beautiful, prosperous, and neighborly for future generations. The transportation element of the plan is focused on increasing transportation choices.

UTA Transit Authority, 2011, <http://www.rideuta.com/mc/?page=UTA-home-bus>.



CITATIONS FOR FRONT COVER: Paul Walsh, *Star Tribune*, “Metro Transit Gets More Customers,” April 14, 2011. | 2010 Bicycling Walking Counts, Bike Walk Twin Cities, March 24, 2011.

PHOTO BY DORIS



Thanks to members Steve (pictured above), Bob, and Dave for leading TLC's Roseville transit event



Transit funding press conference, March 31, 2011. From left to right: Tim Brausen, Jo Taliaferro, Katie Jones, Vaughn Larry, and Ron Williams

MEMBER ACTION UPDATE

MEMBERS STAND UP FOR TRANSIT!

Members are the lifeblood of TLC. This session, more than 60 TLC members turned out at legislative hearings about transit cuts and at least 150 more contacted their legislators.

Members from TLC and allied organizations joined a press conference March 31 with Chair Sue Haigh of the Met Council and county, state business, and union leaders.

In response to proposed cuts, TLC organizers, interns, and members convened transit supporters at meetings in Roseville, Hopkins, Oakdale, the St. Croix Valley, and Brooklyn Center. TLC's "Transit Funding 101" presentation provides a basis for understanding where funding comes from and the benefits of transit.

As part of a session-long campaign, TLC members and our allies visited bus stops and park and rides to gather more than 10,000 postcards with messages supporting transit—postcards delivered to legislators at TLC's Transit Day at the Capitol on May 10.

SUPPORTING TRANSIT PLANNING

While our major focus has been protecting existing bus service, TLC organizers and members also have joined community discussions about the Central Corridor Line now under construction and proposed new transitways in the region, including the

Southwest, Bottineau (northwest metro), and Gateway (east metro) corridors.

Our work won't stop when the session ends. We're fighting to protect transit today and for a better, bigger system for the future!



MEMBER PROFILE THE McNAMARA FAMILY

When Patrick and Bronnie McNamara moved to Inver Grove Heights from rural New York, they were distressed to learn that their neighborhood had no bus service.

They both grew up taking the bus and had access to a nearby route in New York. Bronnie doesn't drive and one of their sons uses a wheelchair, so lack of transit greatly restricted their access to medical appointments and shopping. When Minnesota Valley Transit Authority opened a bus route within a fifteen

minute walk from home, the McNamara family gained a new level of freedom and personal dignity. Now, Patrick can take the bus downtown to work and the rest of the family has options for getting around.

Read more member profiles at www.tlcmnnesota.org.



PATRICK AND BRONNIE McNAMARA AND SON, TLC MEMBERS



BIKE WALK TWIN CITIES

PUTS NEW INFRASTRUCTURE
ON THE GROUND

KNOW IT,
USE IT,
SHARE IT



THE CHALLENGE

The Twin Cities is the most urban and northernmost of the four communities charged by Congress in 2006 to see how far they could go with \$22 million to increase bicycling and walking as a means of transportation.

THE RESPONSE

The network for getting around is changing before your eyes, especially this year as many long-planned projects open. Bike Walk Twin Cities, working closely with local partners, is introducing innovations in street design that focus on the needs of nonmotorized users.

Bike Walk Twin Cities has invested in infrastructure, innovative programs (such as Nice Ride Minnesota bike sharing and the Sibley Community Partners Bike Library), community outreach (through the Bike Walk Ambassadors and Saint Paul Smart-Trips' neighborhood marketing), planning, and measurement. Infrastructure or capital investments will add more than 75 miles of new bike lanes and sidewalks as well as key connections to the region's already strong network of off-road paths and trails.



"The goal is to greatly expand the network for bicycling and make bicycling and walking the easy, safe choice."

Joan Pasiuk, director of Bike Walk Twin Cities

Through infrastructure investments, education, and outreach, Bike Walk Twin Cities is helping to build a 21st century multi-modal transportation system that will connect communities, provide better access to destinations, and make streets safer for all users.



BICYCLE BOULEVARDS

Familiar in some U.S. cities but new to our region, bicycle boulevards are streets that are optimized for bicycle travel.

Also better for pedestrians, these boulevards use traffic calming measures, diversions, signage, pavement markings, and slower speed limits to appeal to cyclists who are less comfortable in high traffic areas. By being a safe space for families, slower riders, and novice riders, the bike boulevard street becomes a community-centered space that is safer for all users.

Berkeley, Calif.; Eugene and Portland, Ore.; and Vancouver, British Columbia, all have extensive bicycle boulevard networks. Bike Walk Twin Cities helped to fund our region's first bicycle boulevard, the Riverlake Greenway.

The Riverlake Greenway is nearly complete along 40th and 42nd Streets East in south Minneapolis. The Riverlake Greenway is a bikeway/walkway that connects the Chain of Lakes (Harriet, Calhoun, Lake of the Isles) to the Mississippi River. This east-west route falls midway between the Midtown Greenway and the Minnehaha Park bicycle path. Bicycle boulevards will also be coming to 5th Street and Bryant Avenue South in Minneapolis.

BIKE BOXES

Also known as advance boxes, bike boxes allow cyclists to be more visible at complex intersections and to safely pull ahead of cars waiting for a light to change.

When the light turns green, bicyclists can make a vehicular style left turn or go straight through the intersection more easily. Bike boxes also call for the stop bar for cars to be farther behind the crosswalk, creating a more safe and pleasant crossing experience for pedestrians.

A recent example of a well-placed bike box is on the Franklin Avenue Bridge at East River Parkway, where the bike box is a natural extension of the new bike lanes now along both sides of the bridge. Cyclists can use the bike box to get a head start for either a left turn, going straight, or a right turn. This transformation makes a tricky intersection safer for all road users.

PEDESTRIAN COUNTDOWN TIMERS

At first glance, countdown timers for pedestrians at intersections might not seem like a significant infrastructure change, but they help vehicles, bicyclists and pedestrians anticipate each other's actions and reduce the number and severity of crashes.

CURB BUMP-OUTS

Curb bump-outs and mid-crossing refuges decrease the crossing distance for pedestrians and make them more visible to vehicles.

Bike Walk Twin Cities helped fund a redesign of Como Avenue in Saint Paul between Eustis and Scudder to complete bicycle and pedestrian connections between Saint Paul and Minneapolis. The Como Avenue project includes curb bump-outs at Como and Scudder and on Como east of Eustis.

T-O-D NOW!

Transit-Oriented-Development (TOD) is the sweet spot where increased transportation options are linked with more compact, pedestrian-friendly development.

For transit to reach its full potential, we need greater residential and employment density. For denser development to work—and to avoid excessive auto traffic—we need walkable, bikeable neighborhoods with access to transit.

When done right, TOD expands transportation and housing options for all, preserves open space, and drastically reduces energy consumption and the cost of new infrastructure. The benefits of TOD are getting attention from Gen Y (the 80 million adults under age 30) and baby boomer generations, who desire the benefits of living closer in.

New development along Central Corridor takes advantage of nearby transit and bicycling options.

As new bus and light rail transitways take shape, our region is embracing a multi-faceted conversation about TOD. The Met Council's Corridors of Opportunity program addresses local planning along five emerging transitways. The Healthy Corridor initiative and the Central Corridors Funders Collaborative are efforts to "get it right" on and near University Avenue.

We look to the new Met Council to craft a regional vision that directs growth along new transitways and the high-frequency transit network in order to meet the growing demand for transit and TOD.



////////// TRANSPORTATION NEWS TICKER

TLC is a member of Transportation for America (T4A), a national coalition working for a new federal transportation law.

The T4A coalition strongly supports the Obama administration's proposed bill, which would increase funding for public transit and high speed rail, establish a national infrastructure bank, and establish performance measures, including requirements for a "state of good repair" for roads, bridges, and transit.

However, some members of Congress are putting transit, bicycling, and walking programs, such as the ones described here, on the chopping block.

TRANSPORTATION ENHANCEMENTS (TE)

- TE is the main conduit of annual federal transportation funds for bicycling and walking.
- TE helped fund the Stone Arch Bridge, Midtown Greenway, and bicycle trails across the state, such as the Paul Bunyan State Trail.

NEW STARTS

- States compete for these federal funds for transit "guideway" capital investments—from heavy to light rail, commuter rail to bus rapid transit systems.
- \$478 million was received for the Central Corridor LRT, the largest federal grant ever received in Minnesota for a transportation project.

MELVIN CARTER III TALKS ABOUT THE NEW MET COUNCIL



“Encouragement from constituents gives policymakers the license, ability, and courage to continue to be bold for the things they believe in.”

—MELVIN CARTER III

Melvin Carter III, Saint Paul City Councilmember for Ward 1, was part of the team that selected new members of the Metropolitan Council.

TLC: What were the consistent themes you heard in the interview sessions with Met Council candidates?

Carter: When Chair Haigh asked me to be part of the process to select my next Metropolitan Council representative, I joked with her about the word “next.” Until recently, I’d never said the words “Met Council representative for this area” because they’d been a quasi-invisible entity at the community level. This time, the selection committee was either all current or former elected officials. Governor Dayton recognizes that we need Met Council members who connect to their communities. We asked the candidates, “How will you make sure that when you come into these council chambers, that you are truly representing people in your community?”

TLC: What does it mean to have a Met Council that is working regionally and locally? Where is that intersection?

Carter: This Met Council is passionate about representing their communities. For example, they understand the interplay that exists between affordable housing and transit. There is an understanding of regionalism and how to create creative synergy that benefits communities and the region. That’s the balance—a strong local representative that can also put on a regional hat. We need Met Council representatives that understand the importance

of maximizing investment in light rail—the light rail is just the vehicle, not the destination. My goal is to figure out how to use that line to pick us up and take us somewhere.

TLC: The Met Council will immediately make some important decisions about transit funding. How do the members balance the challenge of making tough decisions right away and having a broad impact for their whole four-year term?

Carter: There’s a huge learning curve with the Met Council, but this is also a group of people that can, and will, accelerate quickly. My hope is that when there is a bold decision to make, they’ll make it. And they’ll understand that they will still be the Met Council representative the next month and will learn from their experiences and the community around them. They need to hear from their constituents. The public needs to stay engaged and give their Met Council representative the encouragement they need to be bold. Otherwise it would be like expecting a captain to sail a ship without any wind in its sails.

TLC: What’s on the horizon for the Met Council?

Carter: The Met Council is a wide body, they are the stewards of many public resources, and they cover a diverse set of issues. The big question is: how do we make sure that the folks who sit at the table are connected to the community they represent, while also representing the diversity of our region as a whole? Governor Dayton told the selection committee to find people who represent our unique communities and to not play politics—these are Met Council members to be excited about.



The full interview can be found online at www.tlcminnesota.org.

See the new Met Council at www.metrocouncil.org

TIGER

- States and regions compete for Transportation Investments Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) funds.
- TIGER funds are being used to renovate Saint Paul’s Union Station and for a new freight, highway, and pedestrian crossing in Staples, Minnesota.

HIGH-SPEED RAIL

- The Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008 (PRIIA) established three new competitive grant programs for high-speed and intercity passenger rail capital improvements.
- Funding planning studies about high speed rail linkages between Twin Cities and Chicago are funded by the grant. It is critical for Minnesota to maintain funding for Mn/DOT’s Office of Passenger Rail in order to compete for federal intercity rail.

Advocates for transportation choices should call on the Minnesota Congressional delegation to oppose cuts to these programs and to support the Obama administration’s proposed transportation bill.



TRANSIT for



Livable Communities

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TRANSITEERING TIPS



Main Street in Fridley— Bicycle and Walking Connections to Transit

The City of Fridley, a suburban community of 27,000, established a transit-oriented development (TOD) district to strengthen the connection between the Northstar train station and nearby commercial areas. The district encourages pedestrian-friendly design, including sidewalks, crosswalks, and buildings oriented toward the street rather than toward vehicle parking. With funding from Bike Walk Twin Cities, Fridley's complete streets design also will include new bike lanes and sidewalks, as well as landscaping.

