



## REGIONAL COUNCIL OF MAYORS

December 14, 2009

### INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION

#### TRANSPORTATION

##### **SPECIAL PRESENTATION: MN DOT COMMISSIONER TOM SOREL**

Commissioner Sorel described the changes underway at MN DOT including: a focus on multi-modalism, the appointment of a chief engineer for the state, and the creation of the nation's only transportation ombudsman.

The Commissioner described MNDOT's work on several key issues. "Complete Streets" (i.e. developing a balanced transportation system that integrates all modes and transportation users) efforts are underway, noting that partnerships will be critical to the initiative's success. Within MNDOT, Complete Streets efforts are part of the newly elevated office focused on Context Sensitive Solutions. MNDOT's safety program "Toward Zero Deaths" combines education, enforcement, engineering, and emergency medical services to identify proactive and systematic solutions to roadway fatalities. These efforts are paying off with this year's fatalities at the lowest level since World War II. Sorel also described the new risk-based planning system used to identify bridges for repair and replacement and new work on accessibility projects and ADA compliance.

MNDOT has dispersed its federal stimulus funds (ARRA) statewide across a variety of project types to keep diverse industries healthy. 50% of funds are targeted to resurfacing; 30% toward mobility/expansion; 10% to structures; and 10% to safety. As of October 31, MNDOT calculated that 4,056 on-the-project jobs have been created through this funding infusion. MNDOT is also waiting to hear from USDOT if any of its five applications for the discretionary TIGER grant program will be funded.

The Commissioner emphasized the importance of the region "getting on the same page early" when the state has an opportunity to compete for national funding. He pointed to the passenger rail forum as a good example of efforts that support one another and help the state nationally. Sorel believes that Minnesota is ahead of other states when it comes to high speed rail and that

Working with DEED and other state agencies, MNDOT is looking to create a new economic development program focused on multi-modal transportation in the bonding bill. MNDOT has also created a national model for "performance based intersection design." Challenging USDOT intersection design policies, MNDOT was able to demonstrate that the performance of the 494/169 intersection did not need to be fully built out to move traffic efficiently. This saved the state \$40

million and shifted the national conversation from one-size fits all standards to performance evaluations.

### **BACK TO THE FUTURE POWERPOINT PRESENTATION**

Developed by ULI MN, RCM, and the Itasca Project, this presentation is designed for Mayors, other local officials, engaged citizens, and ULI MN members to make the case for the importance of integrating transportation and land use.

Suggestions to improve the presentation included: adding specific action items for audience; create slides that illustrate how integration would look in urban, suburban, and exurban settings; consider creating a video with a well-known personality doing the voiceover.

A final version of the presentation will be available on the ULI MN website in the transportation initiatives section.

### **DRAFT COMPLETE STREETS RESOLUTION**

A coalition of organizations has drafted a customizable Complete Streets resolution for consideration by city councils across the state. The draft resolution was included in attendee packets. Mayors suggested that the more definitional language be included in the resolution before bringing it to city councils. A revised version will be emailed.

### **JOBS/ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

#### **Brookings Selects MSP to Participate in New, High Profile Demonstration Project**

The Minneapolis-Saint Paul metropolitan area, along with Cleveland and Seattle, has been selected by the Brookings Institution to participate in the high profile “Metropolitan Business Plan” demonstration project. Team members representing the region’s three largest cities, DEED, the Itasca Project, and ULI/RCM will be participating in ongoing talks with Brookings and its consulting partner, RW Ventures of Chicago to further refine the project.

#### **Itasca Project Jobs Task Force**

Mayor Harpstead and Kathy Schmidtkofer discussed results of the Task Force’s information gathering. A recent gap assessment has shown that the region’s lack of a clear economic vision and implementing organization is a weakness. With 76% of job growth occurring in small businesses, the Task Force is focusing its efforts on innovation and entrepreneurship. The culture of entrepreneurship is declining in the state, there is limited capital available, technology transfer is average, and while the state scores high marks in human capital, educational attainment is getting worse. All of these factors highlight the importance of focusing on this area. Implementation strategies will be identified and implemented in the new year.

#### **ULI/RCM, DEED, U of M Regional Competitiveness Project (RCP)**

Mayor Harpstead noted that the activities of the Itasca Project and the RCP will begin to merge as both move forward. The RCP plans to have conducted 30 interviews between Mayors and CEOs by 1/30. The group discussed meeting with a diverse range of CEOs from large and small companies, established and new ones. Please send suggestions to Caren Dewar, ULI MN and Mia Adams, University of Minnesota.

For more information about the Jobs/Economic Development Initiative, see:

<http://minnesota.uli.org/JobsEconomicDevelopment.aspx>

## **RCM BUSINESS**

### **Free ULI Memberships for Mayors Continue for Another Year**

ULI MN Executive Director Caren Dewar encouraged participants to invite city councilors and staff to become members of ULI Minnesota.

### **Coming Up**

The next RCM meeting will be Monday, January 11, 11:30am-1:30pm, Dorsey & Whitney, 50 S. 6th St., Minneapolis, 15th floor-Minnesota Room.

## **ATTENDEES**

### **Mayors**

Terry Schneider, Minnetonka; Stan Harpstead, Arden Hills; Jim Hovland, Edina; Dean Johnston, Lake Elmo; Mark Steffenson, Maple Grove; Steve Lampi, Brooklyn Park; Debbie Goettel, Richfield; R.T. Rybak, Minneapolis; Marvin Johnson, Independence; Mike Maguire, Eagan; Mary Hershberger Thun, Victoria; Janet Williams, Savage; Doug Anderson, Dayton; Gene Winstead, Bloomington; Chris Coleman, Saint Paul; John Sweeney, Maple Plain; Peter Lindstrom, Falcon Heights.

### **Staff and Contractors**

Caren Dewar, executive director, ULI Minnesota; Cathy Bennett, Housing Initiative; Jill Kiener ULI Minnesota Initiatives ; Mary Kay Bailey, ULI Minnesota Communications.

### **Advisors and guests**

Elizabeth Ryan, Family Housing Fund; Travis Bunch, Minnesota Chamber of Commerce; Erika Carter, Target; Ethan Fawley, Fresh Energy; Cara Letofsky, City of Minneapolis; Bob Close, Close Landscape Architects; Colleen Carey, The Cornerstone Group; Ann Mulholland, City of Saint Paul; Patty Lilledahl, City of Saint Paul; Todd Olson, Metro Cities; Kevin Frazell, League of Minnesota Cities; John Oybvig, Blue Green Alliance; Kathy Schmidkofer, Itasca Job Growth Initiative; Barb Thoman, Transit for Livable Communities; John Adams, University of Minnesota, Steve Berg, minnpost.com, Michael Huber, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Minnesota;