



Capitol Contact by State Representative Steve Simon 2006, Volume III

CRITICAL TRANSPORTATION ISSUES

A Chance for Meaningful Transportation Funding

Dear Friends,
This is a big year for transportation. Our state roads and public transportation system may get much-needed funding if we the voters pass a constitutional amendment this fall. Closer to home, the Highway 100 “interim” project will begin as early as June. Although the project is just a band-aid to last us until the “full build” in 2014, its completion will bring welcome relief. More disappointing is the continuing refusal of the Department of Transportation (MnDOT) to release public documents that could reveal why the “full build” of Highway 100 has been postponed so many times. In the meantime, I am optimistic about the chance to make our transportation system better.

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STATE REPRESENTATIVE

This fall, we’ll all get to vote on a change to the way we fund highways and transit. Currently, money from the motor vehicle sales tax (MVST) goes into the state’s “general fund” which is the big pot of money that funds most of state government. A proposed constitutional amendment on the ballot this fall would shift all of that MVST money to roads and transit. The money is urgently needed. Right now, 31% of our metropolitan highways are considered “congested” according to state statistics. If we fail to invest further, the “congested” figure will be 50% within the next several years. I strongly support the ballot proposal.

Good News and Bad News on Highway 100

*The Good News:
The Highway 100 “Interim” Project Will Start Soon*

I’m proud to have worked with business leaders, city officials, and others to get an “interim” solution for Highway 100. The project, which will add a temporary third lane on each side of the highway, starts this summer. Although it’s an imperfect solution, it will help cut down on traffic until the final project is built (as late as 2014).

*The Bad News:
MnDOT is Apparently Hiding Public Documents on Highway 100*

Over fourteen months ago, I asked MnDOT to produce public documents about the continuing delay of Highway 100. State law requires that MnDOT release those documents, and even calls for court intervention if the agency refuses. Unfortunately, MnDOT has failed to comply fully with state law. A lawsuit should always be a last resort. But I am willing to bring MnDOT to court so that our local residents can get answers about why the “full build” of Highway 100 has been delayed until 2014.

**As always, please feel free to contact me
about any issue, idea, or concern.**