

May 7, 2021

Governor Tim Walz
Speaker of the House Melissa Hortman
Senate Majority Leader Paul Gazelka
House Minority Leader Kurt Daudt
Senate Minority Leader Susan Kent

(Sent via electronic delivery)

Dear Governor Walz and legislative leaders,

As conference committees commence and you begin final negotiations with House and Senate leadership on the biennial budget, we as local government leaders urge you to include the half-cent metro-area transit sales tax provision in the House bill as part of a final deal. We know that NOW is the time to make critical transit investments with the power to improve daily life for Minnesota families, to protect our climate, to expand access to jobs and resources, and to create a better future for all of us in a post-COVID world.

The need for an expanded transit system is clear. We need more transit service and supportive bicycling, walking, and rolling connections in order to meet many of our state and local goals: to substantially reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 2050; to make Minnesota the best state in the country to raise a family; and to meet our moral obligation to address the inequalities Minnesotans currently face based on race, income, and ability. Providing the reliable funds from a dedicated half-cent sales tax for transit now, combined with the one-time federal funds we've received from recent national relief packages, ensures that we will be well on our way to building out a comprehensive system in the metro area that:

- Ensures transit service is faster, more frequent, more convenient, more sustainable, and more reliable for people throughout the Twin Cities;
- Attracts new transit riders and dramatically improves the lives of Minnesotans who currently rely on transit;
- Rolls out on a timeline that can successfully meet urgent climate and equity goals; and
- Improves transit access and coverage within the 694/494 beltway, enabling more metro residents to easily use transit to meet their everyday needs and realistically forgo car ownership.

A half-cent sales tax does not put Minnesota at the front of the pack on transit investments across the United States—and should be considered the minimum acceptable investment in 2021. In fact, we are rapidly falling behind other major metropolitan areas when it comes to transit investments. Cities like Seattle, Cleveland, Dallas, Denver, and Houston all impose transit sales taxes of at least a penny. We need additional investments to just to keep pace.

We stand with you, ready to applaud your dedication to improving the lives of Minnesotans through a significant investment in transit. In what will no doubt be a difficult negotiation on new revenues, we think a modest sales tax increase, limited to the area where Minnesotans will benefit from it most, will be a winning compromise.

Sincerely,

Patrick Martin, Council Member, Bloomington (Treasurer, Move Minnesota) (continued on next page)

Jenna Carter, Council Member, Bloomington
Mitra Jalali, Council Member, St. Paul
Lisa Bender, Council Member, Minneapolis
Steve Fletcher, Council Member, Minneapolis
Cameron Gordon, Council Member, Minneapolis
Andrew Johnson, Council Member, Minneapolis
Kevin Reich, Council Member, Minneapolis
Jeremy Schroeder, Council Member, Minneapolis
Sean Hayford O'leary, Council Member, Richfield
Larry Kraft, Council Member, St. Louis Park
Margaret Rog, Council Member, St. Louis Park
With the support of: Sam Rockwell, Executive Director, Move Minnesota

Cc: Rep. Frank Hornstein, House Transportation Committee Chair
Sen. Scott Newman, Senate Transportation Committee Chair
Chris Schmitter, Chief of Staff to Governor Walz
Hue Nguyen, Deputy Chief of Staff for Policy and Legislative Affairs to Governor Walz
Alexis Donath, Policy Advisor
Sean Rahn, Executive Director, House DFL Caucus
Craig Sondag, Executive Director, Senate GOP Caucus
Susan Closmore, Executive Director, House GOP Caucus
John Pollard, Chief of Staff, Senate DFL Caucus

