



Minnesota Department of Transportation

Metropolitan District

1500 West County Road B-2

Roseville, MN 55113

TO: Rhonda Sivarajah
Anoka County Commissioner/Board Chair

FROM: Scott McBride, MnDOT Metro District Engineer *Scott McBride*
Pat Born, Met Council Regional Administrator *Pat Born*

DATE: January 17, 2012

SUBJECT: Trunk Highway 10

MnDOT and the Metropolitan Council appreciated the opportunity to meet with Representative Jim Abeler, Senator Mike Jungbauer, and Anoka County and City of Ramsey officials and staff on November 21, 2011. The meeting allowed all parties to explain and discuss their perspectives and understandings regarding the TH10 corridor and the properties acquired along TH10 through the Right-of-Way Acquisition Loan Fund (RALF) program. As a result of that meeting, this memo summarizes MnDOT's and the Met Council's position on TH10 and replaces the September 19, 2011 letter to Doug Fischer, Anoka County Engineer.

As we move forward with TH10, all stakeholders (including Anoka County, City of Ramsey, City of Anoka, MnDOT and Council) need to continue to work together to determine the future improvement strategy, both near-term and long-term, for the corridor.

Near Term Improvement Strategy- MnDOT's Corridor Investment Management Strategy (CIMS) Approach

- Over the past two decades, MnDOT, the MPOs and local partners have developed plans and visions for every major transportation corridor in the state, including TH10. These plans were developed at a time when the economy was booming, the system was in better condition, and revenues were increasing. Even under those more prosperous conditions, anticipated funding levels prevented the metro area corridor plans from being adopted into the region's Transportation Policy Plan. Today we are facing more challenging trends and our stakeholders are asking how to move forward together in light of these challenges. Some rethinking of these plans and strategies has already occurred, particularly in the Twin Cities Metro Area, but MnDOT has not systematically examined these trends and their implications for all our major corridors around the state. At the December 12, 2011 CIMS Workshop, MnDOT introduced a new approach for collaborative investment planning and programming on the major trunk highway corridors in light of these current challenges. We appreciate that Commissioner Andy Westerberg as well as Anoka County staff Jack Corkle and Kate Garwood attended the workshop. The presentation given at the workshop outlining the new approach to corridor planning and collaboration is attached for your reference.
- The CIMS process will focus on developing a near term improvement strategy for the next 10 years. MnDOT will be meeting with corridor stakeholders to share information on system condition and performance trends, anticipated funding, investment priorities and the resulting implications for potential improvements on each corridor over the next 4-10 years. MnDOT will identify the improvements planned and needed on each corridor to keep the roadway in a safe and sound condition. Given the near term funding outlook, these needs will focus primarily on pavement, bridge, and spot safety improvements. Local partners on each corridor will be asked to identify local priorities and other efforts in the corridor to determine if there are partnering or synergistic opportunities to maximizing available investments in the corridor.

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Long Range Improvement Strategy: Next 20+ years

- Improvements to the TH10 corridor may occur in the form of incremental smaller projects and converting intersections to interchanges that result in a controlled access freeway without added capacity to TH 10. (New lanes are considered added capacity while a new interchange would not be considered added capacity.) It is anticipated that any such improvements would be accomplished over a long term. MnDOT and the Council recognize that Anoka County and the cities of Anoka and Ramsey, along with the FHWA, have not only contributed significant funding to past TH10 studies, but also done a very good job to plan for and advocate for their local needs on the corridor.
- Given that corridor improvements now need to be reassessed, MnDOT acknowledges that it should and will fund as well as lead future scoping of the long-term and interim improvements in the TH10 corridor starting in 2012. This reassessment will identify and prioritize the existing intersection modifications that should occur along the TH10 corridor. This scoping of future improvements will be done in a manner that is consistent with regional policies of identifying lower-cost, high benefit projects, utilizing existing right-of-way and capacity to the greatest extent possible and implementing technology solutions where possible. The identification of the future improvements will follow the CIMS process and will look at decisions in the context of overall regional needs and priorities.

CSAH 83/Armstrong Interchange is a TH10 Corridor priority

- MnDOT and the Council agree with Anoka County and the City of Ramsey that the CSAH83/Armstrong interchange is the priority improvement *within* the TH10 corridor for both mobility and safety reasons.
- We applaud the City of Ramsey's and Anoka County's efforts to "right-size" the design of the CSAH 83/Armstrong interchange. This design will make the project more competitive for funding opportunities. Anoka County and/or the City of Ramsey are encouraged to apply to MnDOT's upcoming competitive NexTED funding solicitation as it is consistent with program priorities. This program was briefly addressed at the December 12 workshop. Anoka County did submit the CSAH 83/Armstrong interchange project for TED funding at the behest of MnDOT and the Metropolitan Council in 2010. While it did not make the funding cut, it did score relatively well.
- There are no restrictions, including in MnDOT or Met Council policies, on seeking funding for or constructing the CSAH 83/Armstrong interchange.

RALF Reassessment

In 2010, the Council suspended the RALF program so that a reassessment of the program could be conducted. Reasons for the reassessment include 1) the potential that new requests will exceed available funds, 2) an interest in aligning RALF acquisitions and expenditures more closely to the priorities in the region's Transportation Policy Plan and 3) after more than 25 years, a need to review the program in light of today's variable land prices. In addition, as authorized by the Legislature, \$8.2 million in RALF funds were used to balance the 2012/2013 transit operating budget to partially offset a reduction in state general funds. The RALF program reassessment is underway with Anoka County staff Jack Corkle and City of Ramsey staff Brian Olson both serving on the regional RALF reassessment technical committee.

TH10 RALF Parcels

Until the long-term investment strategy for the TH10 corridor is developed, MnDOT and the Council recommend that all parcels acquired with RALF funding be retained and no new properties be acquired with limited exception for extraordinary circumstances. The long-term strategy will determine which parcels are needed. All stakeholders agree that important safety benefits are being realized today as a result of the RALF acquisitions through closed access onto TH10.

While we all recognize that in the short term there is a significant transportation funding crisis and it may delay improvements, Ramsey should not sell back RALF-acquired parcels which would allow further development to occur on those parcels until the updated TH10 corridor strategy is completed. As was discussed at the November 21, 2011 meeting, decisions on specific RALF parcels can be made after the long term strategy for TH10 has been developed.

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Cc: Representative Jim Abeler
Senator Mike Jungbauer
Tom Sorel, Commissioner of Transportation
Sue Haigh, Met Council Chair
Commissioner Andy Westerberg
Edward Reynoso, Met Council District 9
Lona Schreiber, Met Council District 2
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