

RESOLUTION

By Reich

Expressing the City's Priorities for the Highway 252/I-94 MnPASS Expansion Project.

Whereas, the City recently adopted Minneapolis 2040, the policies of which support a multimodal network that prioritizes walking, biking and transit and are intended to achieve outcomes that increase equity in our transportation system, address climate change and reduce carbon emissions, improve human health through improved air quality and increases in active travel, and enable the movement of people, goods, and services across the city; and

Whereas, the City has set a greenhouse gas emissions reduction goal of 80% by 2050 which will require that we reduce the energy, carbon, and health impacts of transportation through reduction of single-occupancy vehicle trips and phasing out of fossil fuel vehicles; and

Whereas, transit is essential to providing transportation choices and accessibility that aid in combating climate change and reducing economic disparities, it is necessary to increase the frequency, speed, and reliability of the public transit system in order to increase ridership and support new housing and jobs; and

Whereas, the City has previously passed a resolution of support for the project's Corridor of Commerce grant application with explicit support for anticipated transit advantages and environmental benefits anticipated through the inclusion of MnPASS; and

Whereas, the City of Minneapolis has worked with the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) and local and regional partners on the Highway 252/I-94 Environmental Review; and

Whereas, the project will correct several deficiencies in the operations of the roadway and provide an important MnPASS benefit for users in the corridor; and

Whereas, The City of Minneapolis welcomes the opportunity to bring MnPASS service, primarily for the transit advantages that it provides, for users traveling to and through the city boundaries; and

Whereas, project plans presented at open houses in August 2019 show an additional four miles of roadway being built (two lanes for two miles in each direction) in Minneapolis, from the northern city limits to the exit at Dowling Avenue North; and

Whereas, the Minnesota Department of Transportation acknowledges that expansion of Highway 252 may create traffic issues on I-94; and

Whereas, the proposed additional lanes are adjacent to a community having at least half of its residents being people of color and at least 40% of its residents having incomes less than 185% of the federal poverty thresholds, and the impact of highway construction through communities of color has been well documented; and

Whereas, I-94 borders the neighborhoods of North Minneapolis whose residents have long been subjected to disproportionate pollution and environmental injustice; and

Whereas, research by the Health Effects Institute has found increased exposure to traffic pollution to be linked with higher rates of childhood asthma attacks, impaired lung function, premature death, and cardiovascular mobility; and

Whereas, the City of Minneapolis declared a climate emergency on December 13, 2019; and

Whereas, transportation is the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in the state of Minnesota; and

Whereas, the Minneapolis Climate Action Plan has stated goals to reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) in the city and support the Metropolitan Council's goal of doubling regional transit ridership by 2030; and

Whereas, while the project would provide a MnPASS lane for use by transit, it does not have a direct connection into downtown Minneapolis so that transit vehicles could safely access the existing ramps into downtown; and

Whereas, the Dowling Avenue bridge over I-94 is within the project boundary and is the primary access point between the adjacent neighborhoods and the redevelopment site at the Upper Harbor Terminal which will be a premier park and destination with riverfront access; and

Whereas; the Dowling Avenue bridge is currently a hostile environment for pedestrians that lacks adequate sidewalk and bicycle infrastructure to provide safe, comfortable and convenient access to the redevelopment site; and

Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved by The City Council of The City of Minneapolis:

That the City of Minneapolis strongly opposes adding lanes on roadways within its boundaries, and any project developed by MnDOT should include the following components:

- A MnPASS direct connection into downtown as part of the 2023 construction project while maintaining 14' shoulders along the entire corridor for transit priority until MnPASS and the direct connection is completed; and
- Improving the Dowling Avenue bridge for all users as part of the work that will be done in the area, including enhanced pedestrian and bicycle facilities with protection from motor vehicles, pedestrian scale lighting and conversion of the motor vehicle portion to a three-lane cross section, such that the Dowling Avenue bridge can serve as a welcoming park entrance for the community; and
- Right-size University and Central avenues in northeast Minneapolis, as modeling indicates that fewer cars will use these roads after Highway 252 is expanded; and

Be it further resolved that:

The City of Minneapolis encourages and supports transit investment in North Minneapolis, including but not limited to the planned D Line Arterial Bus Rapid Transit project; and

Be it further resolved that:

The City of Minneapolis supports the Metropolitan Council's effort to update the evaluation of a Bus Rapid Transit alternative considered in conjunction with the Highway 252/I-94 project; and

Be it further resolved that:

The City of Minneapolis calls upon its partners to continue to advocate and work toward implementing plans and strategies to improve access, remove barriers and increase equity in our transportation system for those most negatively impacted and in need and particularly for this community along I-94.