

Wednesday, May 4 2016

To The Editor:

With only a few weeks left of the 2016 Legislative Session, it's important for people in our communities to understand what is at stake. Critical projects in the north metro area that won't get done without action at the legislature include the completion of area roads needed to support the Trunk Highway 610 connection to I-94, improvements on TH 10, TH 169, TH 65, TH 252, I-35W north of downtown Minneapolis and more.

We have waited far too many years for needed improvements that will provide the safe and reliable connection businesses need to locate and expand in our area and workers need to get to their jobs. This is not only an economic development and jobs issue. It also concerns congestion on the existing highways and is a safety and quality of life issue for residents. It's time to get these and other key projects finished.

Unfortunately, existing and projected highway funding available to MnDOT will average only \$50 million per year for capacity expansion projects in the Metro area. After 2022, there will be zero dollars available. With an aging road and bridge system, MnDOT has to dedicate more and more funding to maintaining the existing pavement and structures. Many communities around the state are facing the same situation: they need major corridors completed but the funding is not available.

Area Legislators recognize the need. The fate of the funding requests will be determined in the next few weeks. With all of these needs in the region adding up to hundreds of millions of dollars it's clear that the only way to make progress is with a comprehensive transportation funding bill that provides dedicated funding for roads and bridges. If the 2016 Legislative Session ends without a transportation funding bill, we will all continue to wait, congestion will get worse, there will be more crashes.

We urge all residents to contact their State Senators and Representatives now and let them know that you feel strongly that they not end the 2016 Session without passing a long term significant funding increase for Minnesota's transportation system. Please act now!



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