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## UNITED PROPERTIES

June 14, 2007

Council Member Sandra Colvin Roy  
City Hall  
350 South 5<sup>th</sup> Street, Room 307  
Minneapolis, MN 55415

Dear Council Member Colvin Roy:

As an owner, manager and developer of commercial real estate in downtown Minneapolis, United Properties is very concerned with the Downtown Transportation Action Plan. Our company owns and manages Midwest Plaza and the Midwest Plaza Parking Ramp.

There are serious unsolved problems created by this plan's proposed consolidation of multimodal mass transit on Marquette Avenue. I urge your leadership in opposing this plan until these problems and conflicts are solved in a comprehensive way or an alternative to Marquette Avenue is identified.

The plan proposes increasing bus traffic on Marquette Avenue by dedicating two lanes to bus traffic. The problems and conflicts in this proposed plan include:

- Eliminating an existing parking lane to allow creation of a second dedicated bus lane.
- Compressing into a reduced area all the vehicular traffic, commercial delivery, and parking ramp usages that have been established over past decades.

The traffic congestion that will result from implementing such changes threatens

- parking ramp ingress and egress,
- loading dock ingress and egress, and
- street level retail business operations.

The plan creates safety hazards: Leapfrogging buses in the dual dedicated contra-flow bus lanes will create safety hazards for drivers and bicyclists on Marquette.

The plan threatens existing retail and will inhibit future development by eliminating the curbside drop off and parking zones crucial to vibrant street-level retail business.

The proposed plan relies upon unproven solutions to relieve the unquestionably increased traffic and congestion that will result from its imposition on Marquette. It proposes mid-block semaphores to regulate parking ramp and loading dock ingress and egress. If those untried measures fail, then affected ramp operators will need to employ off-duty police officers for extended hours at increased expense to manage the traffic congestion the plan will create.

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These are not desirable consequences for any plan that claims to anticipate the future needs of downtown. They are scarcely improvements to the CBD. The plan proposed by the project team promises negative consequences for property and business owners – City stakeholders – on Marquette Avenue without providing compensating positives.

Over the past 7 months, we have asked the project managers on several occasions whether alternatives to Marquette and Second Avenue had been considered as the Downtown Transportation Action Plan was being developed. On each occasion the answer has been “No” – alternatives to Marquette and Second Avenues have not been considered. This is particularly troubling when – despite the proposed plan’s negative consequences for property and business owners on Marquette – the project managers have professed emphatically their interest in stakeholder input. If no alternative to Marquette and Second Avenue has been considered, then the Downtown Transportation Action Plan, as it stands today, has not been openly conceived or fully considered. I request that you, as Council Member, oppose that plan.

The increasing population of the Metro area is inevitable. The need to improve the transportation infrastructure of downtown Minneapolis is essential to the continued vitality of downtown Minneapolis. However, the proposed Downtown Transportation Action Plan shouldn’t be approved until alternatives have been identified and evaluated in relation to the proposed plan or the proposed plan is revised to eliminate its threats to safety and existing commerce.

Sincerely,

  
Boyd B. Stofer  
President & CEO  
United Properties LLC