



## **Request for City Council Committee Action From the Department of Public Works**

Date: June 27, 2002  
To: Transportation and Public Works Committee  
Referral to: none

**Subject: Concept Language for a new Bus Lane Ordinance**

### **Recommendation:**

1. Direct the Public Works Department to:

- a) Post a copy of Exhibit A on the City web site and send copies as needed to requestors.
- b) Hold four (4) public meetings with inviting individuals, organizations and businesses that may be affected by a new bus lane ordinance.

These four public meetings will be 4:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. in **225 City Hall** on:

- Tuesday, July 23, 2002
  - Tuesday, August 6, 2002
  - Thursday, August 22, 2002
  - Tuesday, September 10, 2002
- c) Work with City Attorney staff (September 11 through October 4) to create the new bus lane ordinance based on the public meeting comments.
  - d) Bring a new bus lane ordinance to the October 17, 2002 T&PW Council Committee meeting and request an official public hearing and ordinance process to begin.

**Previous Directives:** Numerous

Prepared or Submitted by: Jon Wertjes, Transportation Engineer, 673-2614  
Approved: David J. Sonnenberg, P. E., City Engineer, Director of Public Works

By: Greg Finstad \_\_\_\_\_  
Presenters in Committee: Jon Wertjes

**Financial Impact** (Check those that apply)

No financial impact - or - Action is within current department budget.  
(If checked, go directly to Background/Supporting Information)

- Action requires an appropriation increase to the Capital Budget
- Action requires an appropriation increase to the Operating Budget
- Action provides increased revenue for appropriation increase
- Action requires use of contingency or reserves
- Other financial impact (Explain):

Request provided to the Budget Office when provided to the Committee Coordinator

**Community Impact** (use any categories that apply)

See below

**Current Bus Lane Ordinances and Council Actions:**

The current ordinances and Council Actions governing bus lanes are as follows:

- Nicollet Mall – City Ordinance Title 17, Chapter 439
- Hennepin Avenue – Council Action on October 10, 1980
- Marquette/2<sup>nd</sup> Avenues – Council Action on August 9, 1974
- 4<sup>th</sup> Street does not have ordinance or Council Action defining its use.
- 6<sup>th</sup> Street and 3<sup>rd</sup> Street are not covered by ordinance but are signed for exclusive bus and carpool use. City staff is still researching possible Council Action.

**Bus Lane Issues and Problems:**

City staff over the past two to three years has received numerous complaints, collected observations, and discussed the problems regarding the bus lanes. City staff held meetings with Metro Transit, taxi industry, Teamsters trucking representative, City Regulatory Services staff, City Attorney staff, and City police staff to understand issues and problems they have encountered. The problems can be summarized as follows:

- Confusion by public and enforcement as to whom is allowed and when they are allowed to use a bus lane.
- Inappropriate and Illegal Use (short-cutting, stopping, parking) by non-authorized vehicles (such as taxis, limos, private, trucks, delivery vehicles, school buses, Public Works and other city vehicles, marked police squads, unmarked police vehicles, etc.)
- Safety — Inappropriate use and unsafe passing of buses by other vehicles resulting in safety issues for pedestrians, bicycles, and vehicular traffic.
- Congestion and Delays to Buses – The inappropriate and illegal bus lane use results in delays and congestion for buses.

To understand the magnitude of this issue, Jon Wertjes observed on Friday, February 1, 2002 the following vehicles using the southbound Hennepin Avenue bus lane between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Streets in a 10-minute time period:

- 1 taxi
- 2 delivery trucks
- 1 semi truck
- 1 Public Works pick up
- 1 private vehicle with out-of state plates
- 1 school bus
- 1 courier car with private plates, company logo, and commercial vehicle sticker
- 1 taxi that stopped and departed a passenger to the adjacent housing complex

All vehicles except for one could have been ticketed for a bus lane violation.

### **Goals of a New Bus Lane Ordinance:**

City staff believes that the following goals can be met with a new bus lane ordinance:

- Address the existing bus lanes that are not covered by ordinance or Council Action.
- Create a single ordinance that can be understood by the public and enforced by agencies that governs all bus lanes.
- Define a bus lane and which vehicles are allowed to use a bus lane.
- Allow provisions for use of the bus lane based on demonstrated special needs
- Provide consistent understanding and use by the vehicles authorized in the bus lane.
- Encourage and promote the City of Minneapolis comprehensive plan's (*The Minneapolis Plan*) goal of "Transit First".

### **Recommendations:**

Based on the above stated bus lane issues and goals Public Works Transportation and Parking Services staff have developed "Concept Language" for a new bus lane ordinance. (See Exhibit A – Draft Concept for a New Bus Lane Ordinance).

Staff recommends the City Council take the following action:

1. Direct the Public Works Department to:
  - a) Post a copy of Exhibit A on the City web site and send copies as needed to requestors.

- b) Hold four (4) public meetings with inviting individuals, organizations and businesses that may be affected by a new bus lane ordinance. The intent of these public meetings will be to review and discuss the Draft Concept for a New Bus Lane Ordinance (Exhibit A).

These four public meetings will be 4:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. in **225 City Hall** on:

- Tuesday, July 23, 2002
- Tuesday, August 6, 2002
- Thursday, August 22, 2002
- Tuesday, September 10, 2002

Notices of such meetings shall be sent to, but not limited to, the Downtown Council, BOMA, Metro Transit, Taxi Industry, Trucking Industry and Union representatives, Limousines Industry, Downtown TMO, Other bus companies, Utility companies, State, County and City officials and staffs, University of Minnesota, the general public and others.

- c) Work with City Attorney staff (September 11 through October 4) to create the new bus lane ordinance based on the public meeting comments.
- d) Bring a new bus lane ordinance to the October 17, 2002 T&PW Council Committee meeting and request an official public hearing and ordinance process to begin.

Enclosure: Exhibit A -- Draft Concept for a New Bus Lane Ordinance.