

**Minneapolis Public Works Staff Comments  
on Hennepin County 2030 TSP  
Provided by city staff on 2/24/09  
Initial county response 3/2/09, refined on 8/5/09**

1. In addition to the regional transitways, Chapter 4 Multimodal Planning should address the role that County roadways play in serving bus transit. Many County roadways serve high volumes of buses, particularly in Minneapolis. These bus corridors support a significant share of the transit ridership in the region and will continue to do so in the future. They also serve an important role in providing access to regional transitways.

*We agree with the importance of county roadways for accommodating bus movements. The paragraphs and bullet points in the middle of page 4-5 of the draft plan were aimed at highlighting the role of county roadways with bus transit as the comments above noted, however we will add some text to emphasize this point further.*

2. Chapter 7 Access Management does not seem to be compatible with built urban areas, such as Minneapolis. Minneapolis attempts to consolidate driveways where possible through all site planning and street reconstruction projects, but the street grid in Minneapolis (330 to 660 foot blocks) has a finer level of access than the access management guidelines in this plan (exhibit 7-5 recommends full access be limited to a minimum of 660 foot spacing). The City does not support reducing the connectivity of the street grid in Minneapolis accessing county facilities. This incompatibility should be clarified.

*We acknowledge that constraints in urban areas support a different access management approach and much different dimensions than the suburban or rural areas. However, by general definition and by Metropolitan Council designation criteria, minor arterials carry a higher level of traffic and serve a mobility function regardless of their area context. The county is not recommending reducing the connectivity of the street grid in Minneapolis as a means of achieving the spacing guidelines. After further discussion with city staff, we have agreed to add an urban core category similar to that used by Mn/DOT which reflects a dense urban street pattern.*

3. The reference to the need for consistency in design guidelines, design speeds, access spacing, and safety elements on page 8-2 does not recognize the differences between urban, suburban and rural contexts.

*As with comment #2, we would acknowledge that the discussion should be expanded to account for urban area characteristics. We will examine some additional wording that talks about consistency within the particular urban / suburban / rural setting to help clarify this point.*

4. Why are Minneapolis crashes not part of the countywide trend? Page 9-2 should also note that while 55% of all county crashes occur in Minneapolis, the crashes per million vehicle miles shown in Exhibit 9-1 is lower in Minneapolis than in suburban/rural Hennepin County.

*We believe that Minneapolis staff may have misinterpreted Exhibit 9-1. The exhibit shows the crash numbers and rates with and without Minneapolis to address the point Minneapolis staff makes in comment #3 above about the urban area context. In both cases, the exhibit shows that the number of total crashes and the rates per million vehicle*

*miles are higher when Minneapolis is added to the county statistics (red is crash rates, green is total crashes). The exhibit uses color and line types to distinguish the Minneapolis and non-Minneapolis statistics, although we are open to presentation ideas that would make this clearer.*

5. The safety evaluation in Chapter 9, Exhibit 9-3, reports on the crash reduction experience resulting from 2 to 4 lane roadway expansions. It should also show the changes in crashes resulting from 4 to 3 lane reductions, such as on 50<sup>th</sup> Street W and Franklin Ave E.

*We would also like to show a crash comparison between the 4-lane undivided versus 3-lane configuration. Most of the conversions we have done are still relatively recent and only a few years old, so there is not enough crash data accrued to statistically confirm that the observed crash reductions are primarily due to the changed configurations (although we also believe that the 3-lane road reduces crashes). It is our intent to include this information in the future. We are planning on creating a map which could be included with the plan showing the locations and implementation year of 4-lane to 3-lane conversions in Hennepin County. These facilities would ultimately be the basis for the crash analysis.*

6. It would be useful for the plan to address bicycle and pedestrian safety in more detail in Chapter 9. Minneapolis' crash data from 1/04 to 6/08 shows that while crashes involving bicycles or pedestrians are only 8% of total crashes, they comprise 24% of crashes resulting in an injury and 32% of crashes resulting in a fatality or severe injury. While this data is for all streets in Minneapolis, including County streets, we expect a similar trend on County streets. The improvements needed to reduce these types of crashes may be significantly different than the types of roadway expansion safety improvements shown in Exhibit 9-3.

*Some expanded crash analysis for bicycles has been performed using GIS in combination with the refined DPS crash data on a prototype basis for some of our annual reporting documents. We would agree that the mitigating measures are much different than examples that improve roadway geometrics for traffic movements. This is still an emerging area for evaluation, and we did not feel we had enough hard data to warrant its inclusion in the plan at this time. As with the 3-lane information, it is our intent to add the information in the future – possibly as part of an updated county bicycle plan.*

7. The following objective on page 9-14 is inconsistent with the City's objectives for a multi-modal transportation system, and it seems to conflict with the TSP's objectives for a multi-modal transportation system. It suggests that vehicular movement will be prioritized above all other modal needs on County corridors, and it does not recognize the need, particularly in urban corridors, to achieve a reasonable balance among competing uses of public right-of-way. The following change is suggested.

Reconciling ~~Protecting~~ the concept of functional classification and the importance of vehicular mobility on County corridors with the potentially-competing needs of transit, pedestrians, bicyclists, and users of on-street parking for physical right-of-way space, operational advantages, and funding in the face of increasing advocacy for roadway operation degradation to benefit other modes of travel—such as transit signal timing advantages, non-motorized vehicle right-of-way concessions, desires for on-street parking, etc.

*We appreciate the City's comment and will look at possibly rewording this paragraph.*

8. The system evaluation of bicycle/pedestrian systems on page 9-16 does not include any information about pedestrian facilities. It would be useful to reference the recommendations on page 4-23, which provide guidance for future evaluation.

*The county pedestrian plan that was originally anticipated to provide information for this section has been delayed. It is now likely that the pedestrian plan will be completed after the 2030 HC-TSP is finalized. The county is proceeding with data collection efforts, however these also probably won't be compiled and analyzed before the completion of the plan. As suggested, a reference to the recommendations summarized on page 4-23 will be added to the discussion in Chapter 9.*

9. The criteria for the County's Capital Improvement Program do not include the condition, safety, or performance for transit, pedestrians, or bicyclists. It might be useful to explain how these elements could be included in the future. In Minneapolis, we are continuing to try to integrate these elements in our capital improvement program.

*The county "Complete Streets" policy recently adopted in July 2009 addresses this question. The implementation of this policy will establish the criteria on how these modes are integrated within county construction projects, reconstruction activities, changes in allocation of pavement space on an existing roadway, or other changes in a county corridor. Bicycle accommodations have been integrated into the CIP for some time (since 1995) and a process exists for referencing the Bicycle Transportation Plan when roadway improvements are being contemplated.*

*As part of the refinements of the plan, there will be expanded portions in Chapter 4 that address "Complete Streets", Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accommodations, and "Active Living" initiatives being pursued by Hennepin County.*

10. The statement on page 10-7 that curb bump-outs are inappropriate on county streets is inconsistent with County practice in Minneapolis. Curb bump-outs have been installed on Lake Street, Lyndale Avenue S, and Franklin Ave E. Minneapolis supports use of curb bump-outs on streets with on-street parking, including County routes.

*We agree that Minneapolis staff is correct on this point. The wording is somewhat a holdover prior to Hennepin County allowing bump-outs. The recent installations appear to be working quite well. We will remove the affected wording.*

11. The Jurisdiction Revisions In Process map show the segment of Washington Avenue SE between 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Streets and University Avenue SE as a "system deletion." It is our understanding that the only portion of Washington Avenue SE under discussion for jurisdiction revision is between University Avenue SE and East River Parkway, not the Mississippi River bridge or the segment to the west of the bridge. This should be clarified on the map.

*The map will be revised.*

12. We don't think the traffic volume projections on the 2030 ADT map in the appendix are realistic for two reasons: (1) the rate of growth varies widely from one street segment to another, (for instance, Hiawatha Avenue increases 69% on one segment and decreases 12% on another segment), and (2) some growth rates are unusually high. On virtually every street

in Minneapolis, the traffic counts vary from one year to another, but are virtually flat over the long-term. In order to balance the many competing needs for the design and operations of county streets in Minneapolis, it's essential that traffic projections be realistic. Below are some of the projected volumes which stood out as unrealistic; historic traffic counts for these locations are also attached.

*As noted in the plan, the accuracy of the volumes is to the level of providing guidance for roadway lane needs. Although the percentages that are referenced may seem high or low, from the perspective of roadway lanes these deviations are within the tolerance of what is needed to determine lane needs.*

*The computer model is a macro-level modeling effort which inherently has variation that must be refined when evaluating the system at a project development level. The model does not include all local streets, which can lead to some segments varying as was noted. Traffic projections for project development are typically done as part of the SPAR process which looks at historical trends, model forecasts, and more detailed peak hour characteristics. This is the next level of analysis for which the general planning model was not intended to address.*

*Another aspect is that the City of Minneapolis does have a significant amount of future land use development and redevelopment anticipated. If this occurs as expected, the traffic volumes and patterns will likely change from those seen today. As the comment stated, most streets within Minneapolis are currently experiencing minimal traffic growth.*

*As we recently discussed with City staff, we will review the computer model results further. We may develop an alternate display methodology which incorporates historical trend information and previous SPAR and other traffic study results to "smooth" the volumes shown on the map which could mitigate the volume variation somewhat.*