How urban planners, politicians and bureaucrats are strangling Minnesota’s road systems.
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Did you know that over the past 10 years, transportation spending has increased by 109% — from $2.6 billion to $5.4 billion?

The dramatic increase in spending has not translated into more road construction. While traffic volume has increased by 33% since 1992, road capacity only increased a miniscule 2%.

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The reason why is simple: Minnesota's urban planners have decided against building enough roads to meet the growing demand. They have instead chosen a different path: changing the way Minnesotans live, work, and commute by forcing new development patterns on our communities.

Transportation funding doubles, Road capacity up only 2%

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Mass Transit: Costly and Inefficient

The reality is that mass transit cannot solve our traffic congestion problems. While automobiles cost taxpayers 5 cents per passenger mile traveled, light rail costs taxpayers $1.37 per passenger mile. The gas tax and user fees paid by drivers actually more than pay for the building and upkeep of the road system. Conversely, fares paid by riders account for a small fraction of the operating cost of the transit system.

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Mass transit carries few passengers. The Metropolitan Council and Mn/DOT are currently spending $675 million to move 24,000 people on the new light rail line in Minneapolis. They could have spent $848 million to enhance traffic flow and capacity on roads which carry 500,000 people every day. More car trips will be added each year to these highways than light rail will ever carry.

Population density is crucial for light rail and other transit investments to pay off. Cities with efficient rail and transit systems, like Tokyo, are much more densely packed than the Twin Cities. Tokyo, for instance, has nearly 10 times the population density of our metro area.

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Ramp meters, “sane lanes,” light and commuter rail all fail to address the real problem Minnesotans face: traffic has increased much faster than road capacity. Our transportation planners need to quit wasting time on “solutions” which fail to address the problem.

Focus on solving the problem

Over the next decade, more than $4.5 billion will be siphoned from car taxes to be used on transit and other projects. Raising gas taxes is a quick and effective way to infuse cash into the system to buy right of way and other long-term investments.

Increase Funding for Roads and Issue Bonds

Right now, Minnesota’s roadbuilders face a myriad of obstacles. They must comply with over 74 environmental laws, deal with 19 state and federal agencies, and seek consent from every municipality involved before they can begin to lay pavement. It’s time to streamline the road building process.

Remove Roadblocks

The Metropolitan Council has recommended spending 70% of new transportation funds on transit instead of roads. Even if a congestion-free highway system were possible, it would produce negative impacts on transit usage and this, in turn, would make it more difficult to serve transit-dependent people and provide an alternative to the automobile...— Metropolitan Council

Congestion has increased faster in cities with light rail than in cities that invested mainly in roads.

Clearing the Roadblocks

More and better roads. The only way to get there is through replacing the current leadership and implementing dramatic reforms to our planning and road building system.

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Social Engineering: How Smart Growth = Dumb Planning

They call it “smart growth.” It’s a philosophy of city planning that promotes transit use and high density living, including cluster housing, apartments, and condominiums instead of single family homes.

The Metropolitan Council has recommended spending 70% of new transportation funds on transit instead of roads.

Source: Met Council 2025 Plan

The results are clear: housing costs and land prices have skyrocketed and traffic congestion is worsening by the day. Families are getting priced out of the housing market, and parents are wasting hours in commutes. Despite huge spending increases in recent years, transit ridership has plummeted to almost half of what it was in 1982.

Clearing the Roadblocks

The Minnesota Department of Transportation is spending more today than at any time in its history. Yet despite that fact, remarkably few construction projects that add capacity to the system will actually be completed in the near future. The state legislature and the Governor should set goals and deadlines for specific projects, or they never will be completed.

Axes from Cars should go to roads

100% of taxes collected on automobiles are user fees and should be spent on building and maintaining the road system. Light rail, commuter rail, urban walkways, and bike paths will not relieve congestion and should not be funded from car taxes. The raid on car taxes will cost our highway system $4.5 billion in new funding over the next decade.

$4.5 Billion
Car taxes siphoned out of the road system into transit and the general fund over the next decade.

$1.8 Billion
New revenue if gas taxes are raised 5 cents a gallon.