



The Honorable Mark Dayton
Governor of Minnesota

August 24, 2016
Sent via Email

Dear Governor Dayton:

The members of 2020 Partners represent businesses in downtown Minneapolis. We are writing to urge you to keep pushing to build the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) line from Minneapolis to Eden Prairie. This line forms a critical link between an area that houses one of the state's largest concentration of jobs and hundreds of thousands of prospective employees. It is a critical part of a regional transportation system that will allow our state to remain competitive in a global marketplace.

The opposition to SWLRT is not looking at the long-term regional needs this project will address. A recent study by the Minnesota Department of Transportation finds that nearly 25 percent of the Twin Cities freeways are congested today, and that percentage is expected to grow. An author of the survey says "congestion in Metropolitan areas is often inescapable." SWLRT and other rapid transit projects will give commuters the ability to choose not to drive. They offer an alternative that gets people to work on time, regardless of the traffic on the freeways.

This is a project that enjoys a great deal of support, both in the metro region and across the state. A statewide poll conducted by the Twin West, Minneapolis and St. Paul Area Chambers of Commerce found 70 percent support for SWLRT. Every community along the line has offered a resolution of support for the project and over 50 mayors from the Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities have offered their support.

The two light rail lines that are currently operating have been tremendous successes, far surpassing their ridership projections and creating billions in new economic development. There is simply no evidence to support the assertion by SWLRT opponents that the line will not be a success.

If Minnesota is to continue to compete in a global market, if we are to continue to be the home of worldwide corporations, we need to build a world-class transportation system. If it goes forward, SWLRT will be an investment in a comprehensive system that will serve the region for the next 50 years. It is unreasonable to assume that we can continue to build a 21st Century economy on a decades-old freeway system.

By rejecting light rail and failing to fund the expansion of other modes of transit, legislative leaders are displaying a shocking lack of vision. It's time to fix our roads and bridges, build transit and eliminate gridlock – both on our roads and in the Minnesota Legislature.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "NICK KOCH".

Nick Koch, Chair
The 2020 Partners Steering Committee

2020 Partners is a forum to facilitate the continuing transformation of a vital and unique place. Its goal is to lay the foundation and attract investment for future development by knitting together communities and leveraging the assets of Target Field, Minneapolis Farmers Market, transit and energy.

www.the2020partners.com

The 2020 Partners membership includes the following stakeholders,
along with many individual participants:

Minnesota Twins Baseball Club

Hines Interests

North Loop

Neighborhood Association

Minnesota Ballpark Authority

Covanta Energy Corporation

Downtown Minneapolis

Neighborhood Association

HGA Architects & Engineers

Minnesota Timberwolves | Lynx

United Properties

Warehouse District

Business Association