

REQUEST FOR DELAY OF APPROVAL

We, the undersigned as representatives of more than 100,000 people in affected families, businesses and neighborhoods; hereby demand a moratorium and a delay of approval of the January 1995 I-35W Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS). Our rationale for this request include:

- I. This FEIS is invalid, largely because the Alternative design on which this impact statement is founded, is still ambiguous and incomplete. This Alternative is *by its own admission* unbuildable as currently proposed (see exec. summary pg. 1-29, item 1.11.3). The EIS is therefore also incomplete and premature, in its attempt to gain tacit approval for subsequent design and construction activities, before any realistic final plan is put forth.
- II. The FEIS further impeaches itself in admitting the Alternative's lack of specific and committed linkage to mass transit outside project boundaries. This kind of patchwork planning is not only fiscally irresponsible but is short-sighted and will be obsolete before completion. Subsequent changes will be even more disruptive to both communities and commuters; therefore, it is critical that strategic planners better coordinate their efforts before proceeding.
- III. The FEIS does not adequately address the environmental, financial, and human consequences of collateral damage, from either construction or operation, to the surrounding city. These far-reaching secondary economic and social effects deserve a deeper and more farsighted consideration than the EIS's cursory comments offer.
- IV. Both the FEIS and the ambiguous Alternative proposal, miss opportunities for impact reduction by failing to integrate upcoming temporary repairs to twenty-

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THE SHACKLES WE FORGE

Neal J. Blanchett

Amid the discussion of highway expansion, we often lose sight of a bigger picture. Local arguments ignore a national conflict. Our choice to use oil for essential transportation needs determines our future. Oil costs more than just dollars. Our growing dependence forces us to secure a steady supply. We secure our supply with our military in an often overlooked part of the equation.

The 1990 Census lists Minneapolis-St. Paul as the nation's 16th largest metropolitan area. Obviously our decisions do contribute to U.S. policy. Part of that policy appears in *Forward . . . From the Sea*, a document issued by the Chief Of Naval Operations, Admiral Mike Boorda. It lists *power projection* as one of the primary purposes of the Navy and Marine Corps. The doctrine means that U.S. forces patrol potential trouble spots, ready to act, and foreign powers know it. We saw an example of *power projection* last year in the Persian Gulf. Iraq threatened Kuwait by moving several divisions south. In response, a Marine battalion and a Navy carrier group, already floating in the area, met a Maritime Pre-Positioning Ship and unloaded weapons and equipment. In just days, our forces were ready to fight, so Iraq withdrew their troops.

The use of power projection started before our time—almost before there was such a thing as foreign policy. We put two Marine battalions (4000 Marines) and two Navy carrier battle groups (22 ships) at sea, all the time, establishing U.S. presence, ready to respond to a crisis anywhere in the world. They protect our *vital national interests*. The problem arises when we must *project power* continuously in defense of just one *vital national interest*: oil.

We stretch ourselves to project power to the Middle East. We retool for the heat and sand. We retrain for the desert. Since Saudi Arabia and many other nations object to permanent U.S. bases, we ship it all

"Shackles" continued on page 2

CITY OF MINNEAPOLIS VOTES TO STRENGTHEN ITS POSITION ON I-35W

Months of work to stave off an effort to weaken the City of Minneapolis' positions on 35W came to a dramatic conclusion on March 10 when the City Council adopted two resolutions commenting on the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the proposed expansion of 35W. Both resolutions were then approved by Mayor Sharon Sayles Belton and forwarded to State and Federal Highway authorities.

The first resolution is a technical critique. The second is an analysis statement of the policy implications and states the political positions of the City. The resolutions also reflected the valuable input of affected residents and business owners along the corridor provided at several recent public venues sponsored by the City Council.

These resolutions articulately and comprehensively speak to the failure of the FEIS to appropriately describe, study or disclose the effects of adding freeway lanes at the expense of our natural and physical environment, the livability and viability of our neighborhoods and businesses, our ability to gain access to jobs and other opportunities and our ability to implement a sane transportation policy. As Council Member Doré Mead said when speaking about them, "We hope MnDOT takes these comments seriously and in responding to them realizes an opportunity to change our transportation policy paradigm. Then maybe we'll be able to avoid the necessity of a lawsuit to stop this project as MnDOT has proposed it."



BEWARE THE TELECOMMUTER

John DeWitt

Twin Citians should take little comfort in the fact that our region is twenty years ahead of the rest of the country in our “do nothing” approach to mass transit. Those who set the transit agenda in our region seem to grasp every advance in technology and every demographic shift as a reason to further postpone any serious commitment to mass transit.

Today, telecommuting is offered as a justification for perpetuating the failed transit policies of the past. Yet there are serious concerns that should be raised about the promise of that technology. First, we must note that the work commute currently represents only about 26% of our overall traffic volume and this percentage is shrinking. So if even 50% of our workers started telecommuting exclusively, it would result in only a 12.5% reduction in traffic. Since traffic in our region is growing at 5% per year, we would be saving only 2½ years of growth. There is also reason to suspect that many people will resist telecommuting or add other trips which will offset any reduction.

There is a lot of talk about restructuring the work environment to better enable and encourage telecommuting. There is also talk of setting up telecommuting centers in cities all over the state. But we must look beyond the short term benefits of telecommuting. Soon, any telecommuting center in Minnesota, whether it's in Worthington, Bloomington, or Hibbing, will be just a satellite link away from a potential telecommuting center in China, India, or any other country. There is a very real risk that many jobs will simply be transferred overseas in pursuit of lower wages, just as many of our manufacturing jobs have moved overseas.

AT&T, Motorola, and Texas Instruments all have major computer programming centers in India, in constant communication with their home offices back in the U.S. Once telecommuting becomes commonplace, establishing a 100 person airline reservations center in India would present few challenges. As a result of two centuries of British colonialism, English is an official language in India and millions of Indians speak fluent English. There is also a thriving middle class for whom \$200 a month is considered a good income. This is about \$1.25 an hour. Entry level com-

A BIKING AGENDA

by Christina Hakala

The Bicycle Transportation Bill, S.F. 687, has been introduced by Sen. Jane Krentz. If passed into law it will help improve the safety of cyclists by making it mandatory that a motor vehicle operator shall pass a cyclist on the left with a minimum of three feet clearance, and by requiring that there be a question pertaining to cycling on the state driver's exam. As of this writing (March 6), it looks like the bill will also be introduced in the House shortly. What can you do to support this bill? Call the Senate Index Department at 296-2887, and the House Index Department at 296-6645 to determine the bill's progress. They can also help you find out how to contact your legislators and provide you with more information about the bill. Please show your support for the Bike Bill and call your state representatives.

The Midtown Greenway Coalition is actively fund raising, and has applied for \$47,000 worth of grants. MGC has three objectives: 1) Hire a staff person on a contract basis. 2) Continue our organizing and outreach efforts. 3) Pursue 501(c)(3) non-profit status. Outreach efforts this summer will include a series of picnics. Artists, musicians, performers, or anyone interested in helping plan these community feasts along the Greenway should call Tim Springer, 822-3957 or Joan Vanhala, 874-1711.

ALERT: be attentive to news stories regarding transportation funding rescission bills that could take away money appropriated for ISTEA-funded projects such as the Midtown Greenway. Call your Congresspeople and urge them to maintain the funding already designated for such projects. Congressman Jim Ramstad: 881-4600, Sen. Rod Grams: 427-5921. (I spoke with one of Congressman Sabo's assistants; he is supportive of ISTEA and projects like the Midtown Greenway.)



puter programmers in India earn about \$300 per month compared to about \$2,000 per month in the U.S. How many Minnesota companies would be able to resist cutting payroll costs by 80% or more given low communications costs? How many of the jobs amenable to telecommuting would wind up overseas?

Shackles *from page 1*

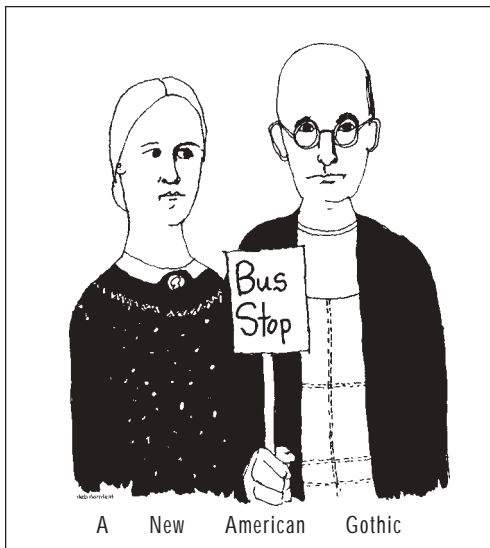
over—tanks, trucks, helicopters, planes, food, water, and living quarters—and ship it back. The logistics boggle the mind. Take everything the people of Minneapolis eat, drink, buy, and use in half a year. Now, repaint it and pack it. Then, ship it, along with 450,000 people, to Saudi Arabia (don't forget the tents and all the equipment we use at work). Now, pay the bill—that's what dependency on oil costs.

As long as we depend on oil, this will continue; every six months, two battalions and two battle groups, with 40,000 people aboard, go out on the seas to project power. Not in defense of democracy, not to enforce human rights or to promote world stability, but to protect our supply of oil. When our dependence forces us to the brink of war, and we search for allies to share the burden, who will we accept as allies? Propping up Saddam while we worried about Iran showed the danger of picking despots as allies. I pity the commander writing letters home to mothers, trying to explain the need to protect the American Way: oil.

A core highway fills to its capacity; that is an axiom of transportation planning. Traffic planners overbuilt the Interstate System, designing it to remain relatively uncluttered in the event of nuclear evacuation. Traffic filled it. Now as a result every major metropolitan area in the country experiences near-gridlock, severely reduced air quality, and serious traffic hazards. I-394 filled beyond its capacity just two years after construction. If I-35W expands, it will suffer the exact problems it suffers now, on an expanded scale. In a few years, traffic will fill it. Fortunately, Detroit, Boston, Milwaukee, Phoenix, and Los Angeles already proved this, saving us the pain.

Freeway expansion ties us to oil, which ties us to an expensive foreign policy. Add this to the list of bills you will pay for freeway expansion.

One speaker before the Senate Transportation Committee recently noted that IBM was evacuating entire office buildings as the company moved into telecommuting. How do we ensure that the office buildings being evacuated in Minnesota wouldn't be the result of jobs moving overseas?



RURAL MASS TRANSIT WORKS

Jean E. Smith, Central Arkansas Development Council

The mission of South Central Arkansas Transit buses is community transportation in a rural and edge city setting. This is consistent with SCAT's membership and active participation in the Energy and Equity Transportation Roundtable.

For 17 years, the five-county SCAT bus operation has used Head Start and Senior Citizen vans to provide safe shared rides for carless, non-driver, or handicapped commuters to and from rural job sites without disrupting or displacing social agency client riders during the day.

Access has come to mean a bus ride—not just a new 4-lane highway built through a community. Access has brought lower unemployment rates and increased production at factories served by the SCAT rural bus. Environmentally, Arkansas has no areas of clean air non-attainment. Can community transit (available in half of our counties) take credit for this?

SCAT maintenance keeps the 41 vans and buses well-tuned. Recycling of R-12, antifreeze, oil and oil filters is in place. Future plans call for converting two vans from gasoline to LPG.

Ridership of 201,520 is expected this year based on first quarter figures exceeding first quarter 1994 by 15,349. Over 100 insured operators both paid and volunteer are employed to provide these rides. The typical rider trip to work is 15 to 25 miles. The largest town has a population of 18,177.

SCAT is part of a nonprofit community action agency funded for coordinated public transportation in areas other than urbanized (50,000 population). Federal Transit Administration Section 5311 (formerly Section 18).

DESTRESS YOUR COMMUTE

Raymond Novaco, Ph.D., Professor of Psychology, University of California at Irvine as quoted in "Working Wellness, Destress Your Commute", *Prevention*, March 1995

"First of all, try to spend less time on the road. You can do that by avoiding peak commuting hours. Even if you don't have flex-time, leaving for work a little earlier and coming home a little later will mean missing the worst traffic. Schedule your health-club visit or a walk before you leave work so you're relaxing during rush hour."

"Second, consider ride sharing. Studies we've done show a significant lowering of blood pressure in commuters who switch to sharing a ride with someone else even a few days week. Men in particular respond well to ride sharing, especially when they're passengers. . . . And these ride sharers, surprisingly, were highly job-involved."

"Most Americans can identify more cars than birds."

"The Ecology of Commerce"
by Paul Hawken

LA'S MTA AIDES THE WEALTHY

Adapted from an article by Don Chen, in the February 1995 issue of STPP Progress

"... As part of a decades-long transit development plan, MTA [Los Angeles' Metropolitan Transportation Authority] is spending roughly 70 percent of its funds on rail travel. However, rail passengers who represent only 8 percent of total MTA customers are predominantly white, relatively well-to-do, and live in ex-urban areas. The remaining 92 percent of riders who take the bus only receive 30 percent of transit subsidies, which translates into an urban bus trip subsidy of \$1.17, as opposed to the \$11-\$21 per trip that is used to subsidize the average suburban rail trip."

Last August, the Labor/Community Strategy Center (LCSC) charged the MTA with "class bias, discrimination against people of color, and malfeasance" over a proposed bus fare increase. 81 percent of LA's bus riders are people of color. The typical bus rider earns less than \$15,000. In effect the MTA is taxing the poor while subsidizing the rich.

This civil rights lawsuit uses Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Title VI ensures that Federal expenditures aren't biased against minorities. Usually used in areas like housing, justice, and employment; its use in transportation could help core areas improve bus service.

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Representative
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NEIGHBORHOOD TRANSPORTATION NETWORK

2116 2nd Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55404
(612) 872-4079

INTERESTED IN

VOLUNTEERING?

NTN NEEDS YOU!

CALL MICHAEL O'NEAL

AT 872-4079

Yes, your contribution is
tax deductible

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To comment on this or previous newsletters, or to submit articles for future publication, contact us at the office (872-4079). To join our newsletter committee call Laurie Frevert at 823-4504.

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"The pedestrian remains the largest single obstacle to free traffic movement."
From a Los Angeles planning report as found in Reclaiming our Cities by David Engwicht.

"Today's problems come from yesterday's 'solutions'."
Peter Senge in "The Fifth Discipline"



BUILDING NEW ROADS DOESN'T HELP

Excerpted from "Cars that Beat Traffic," by Alex Taylor, III; Fortune, February 20, 1995.
 Wiring America's cars and highways may be the only way out of the traffic mess. Building new roads doesn't help. The reason is a phenomenon known as triple convergence. When a new highway is finished, it immediately draws extra rush-hour traffic from (1) drivers who formerly used alternate routes, (2) drivers who formerly commuted during off-peak periods, and (3) drivers who used to take mass transit. The result, explains Anthony Downs, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution: "Traffic volume keeps rising until vehicles are once again moving at a crawl during the peak period."

ANXIOUS TO START

The crane pictured above stands ready to begin construction on the bridge over Minnehaha Creek. MnDOT recently sent the adjoining homes notices of its intention to begin driving pilings for a 3 week period beginning in mid-April.

The announcement also mentioned an informational meeting on or about April 1. They worry about shaking the ground. In order to protect MnDOT they plan to place monitors that will measure the ground vibrations.

The Mpls. Park Board sued to stop this construction but so far no one appears able to stop MnDOT.

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eight bridges and the I-35W roadway. A virtually unending cycle of: neglect, repair, demolition and reconstruction, not only wastes limited capital and resources, but also repeatedly injures the surrounding communities. The reality is that the present corridor's negative effects are being expanded piece-by-piece, and circumventing appropriate review processes.

In consideration of the significant human and capital resources at stake, we urge all concerned parties: to pause, declare an immediate moratorium on 35W, and take a hard look at the real costs, missed opportunities and avoidable impacts. Only then can we clearly and honestly assess realistic future scenarios, and their full and true impact.

Our families, businesses and neighborhoods deserve better solutions, that combine both transportation needs and community preservation.

- Hale, Page, & Diamond Lake Community Association
- Neighborhood Transportation Network
- Kenny Neighborhood Association
- Tangletown Neighbors Together
- Lyndale Neighborhood Association-Environment Committee
- Armatage Neighborhood Association
- Bryant Neighborhood Organization
- Windom Neighborhood Business Association
- Windom Community Council
- Field-Regina-Northrop Neighborhood Association
- Urban Coalition
- Alliance for Metropolitan Stability
- East Harriet Farmstead Association
- Minneapolis Livability Project

(partial listing of groups to sign-on)



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