



Thank you for the warm welcome. I salute BOMA members for your work and partnership in making downtown Minneapolis a success story.

And what a success story it is:

Downtown Minneapolis is in the Top 10 of central business districts in the nation, with more than 145,000 employees.

Downtown Minneapolis will have 33 million sq. ft of office space by mid-2003. That accounts for 52 percent of the entire office space in the 7-- county metro area.

And, Downtown Minneapolis has 25,000 residents -- more than downtown Denver, Dallas and Indianapolis combined.

Despite all the good news, I have some long-term concerns. The recent news coverage in the Star Tribune about the Twin Cities and our ability to compete should be required reading for all lawmakers. We are falling behind forward-looking cities that are attracting workers and businesses with modern transit systems.

In January, I announced my administration's Transportation Funding Proposal that would bring a balanced, multi-modal approach to our transportation system. It is not an either transit or roads debate. It is about choices for commuters.

The growth that lies ahead ... half million more people and 285,000 new jobs over the next 20 years ... is a loud wake-up call on the importance of providing an expanding and improved transportation/transit system for this state and metropolitan area. Just think, half a million more people and over 285,000 new jobs in the next twenty years -- if we don't invest in transit how many more cars is that -- just think about the commute.

My investment strategy to build and maintain a 21st century transit and transportation system for the State of Minnesota provides a plan for long-term, stable financing for both transit and highways.

In response to my proposal, the legislature has proposed one-time, small-change spending for only road construction. That is a sin. And dare I say, it cowardly. You know the truth. You see the future of Minneapolis and so do I. That is why I need you to go over to the legislature and tell them to look beyond election year politics and towards long term problem solving.

Talk about this wonderful city where you work. Tell them this is one of the top ten downtowns in America. Of the 145,000 workers here, half use only transit to get to work. Half. Tell them a lot of those folks come in from the suburbs. They might even live in Republican districts.

You know in February, I led a delegation to Denver, where the Republican Governor proudly showed us their transit system. In Denver we saw what happens when the first line gets put in.



The mayor warned me not to underestimate ridership because they did. Now they have a system linked with circulator buses -- from Republican suburbs -- bringing people downtown to jobs. The impact on their congestion has made believers out of the citizens there.

In fact, they voted a BILLION DOLLAR referendum for transit last year. And rest assured they will be more than happy to take our federal money dedicated right now to the Hiawatha Corridor line.

I know that the Hiawatha light rail line will make downtown Minneapolis and the Twin Cities region more competitive. It will improve transit service and be a catalyst for economic development downtown and near and around LRT stations.

Light rail is a key link in the network of bus and rail. It is the link between jobs, housing and economic prosperity. A recent federally-funded market study confirms what light rail advocates have known all along: LRT will be a boon to the regional economy. The corridor-wide development potential to the year 2020 includes 7,150 new housing units, more than 19 million square feet of new commercial development that will house more than 67,000 new jobs.

This isn't rocket science -- people need a place for jobs. You provide that. People need to be able to get to work -- government working with business must provide that -- and my plan provides for growth in our transit/transportation system that will meet our needs for the next 25 years.

For those legislators without a vision for the future economic needs of the Twin Cities and the state ...

Do they know that continued development of the transit system is fundamental to the continued economic success of downtown Minneapolis?

Do they understand the potential growth for downtown Minneapolis?

Do they know about the \$1.2 billion investment in improving and expanding capacity at the is a key to our continued economic growth and our ability to compete in the world--wide economy.

We all know that a healthy state depends on healthy metropolitan areas and healthy rural areas. It's a vision we all share. It's the fodder for a lot of political speeches to preach and promise about healthy communities.

I believe that the state's job in that picture is about making those investments that no one community can afford. It's our job to make absolutely sure that there is a strong, basic infrastructure that we can all benefit from. I learned at Harvard University last summer that it's not our job as a State to pick winners and losers in this economy. That's your job.

My job as Governor is to do the basics and do them well.



If you travel around the nation as I have and continue to do, you can see the regions that have their act together and are working collectively to get things done. Behind all of their successes, be it in Denver, Chicago or Silicon Valley, you will find an engaged business community helping to lead the way.

While we live in a great place, with a strong economy . . . I worry that our vision is too limited . . . that we are engaged in a debate, not on how we out-compete other regions . . . but on Democrats vs. Republicans, central cities vs. suburbs and roads vs. transit. If we do not change, we will lose the regional competition and fail our children and grandchildren. My 'Big Plan' is about moving in this new direction. I need your help to be successful and for the Twin Cities and Minnesota to succeed. I look forward to working with you in the months and years ahead.

Thank you.