

Good afternoon.

Today we're demonstrating how a solid partnership can pay off for everyone.

This administration has been saying since the day we came into office that if you combine sound transportation investments with strong managed growth principles and an active partnership with the private sector – good things can happen!

The agreement we're announcing today is an example of one of those good things.

Our Department of Transportation and Hennepin County are getting together for a project that will provide more transportation options for the people of Minnesota.

Today, I'm pleased to announce that a new funding agreement between the state and the county will mean improved access along the I-35W corridor at Lake Street in Minneapolis. More than 181,000 vehicles travel along this corridor every day.

We need these improvements.

They'll ease congestion and provide an economic boost to the community, and this agreement will support private investment.

And these improvements will not just be an economic boost for Minneapolis. They will help stimulate the economy of Hennepin County as well as the entire state of Minnesota.

But given the current stalemate in the legislature, this project, along with many others, are put at risk.

While the Senate has agreed to a transportation plan and my hope is that the house will pass a similar measure, I want to emphasize the importance of a comprehensive agreement on the overall budget.

I cannot—and will not—accept tax increases for new projects without a budget bill that adequately funds projects that are already in law.

Our citizens demand a transportation network that allows them to get where they are going safely and efficiently.

This project, if funded, would begin within two years and be completed in 2008. We need to move forward now.

The people standing up here with me represent the many groups and organizations working together to make this project happen.



It's a great example of a public/private partnership, and they will be able to answer your questions in detail.

Now I'll introduce Transportation Commissioner Elwyn Tinklenberg who has more on the state's role in this project.

Thank you.