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Thanks, Ted.

- I'd like to ask a question right off the bat: Who here uses roads, highways or buses?
- I think that you'll understand then why I firmly believe that transportation is key to healthy and vital communities, both urban and rural.
- I'm proud to have played a role in the Hiawatha light-rail line, which will begin service late next year. There has been plenty of opposition but I have not wavered in my support of multimodal solutions to deal with increasing congestion.
- I relied on city buses in my youth. Each Friday night, my Roosevelt High School classmates and I would ride city buses from my south Minneapolis neighborhood to the high school football game of the week played at Parade Stadium not far from here.
- I say these things about transit because it always has been a constant in the life of our community. Transit, like cotton, is part of the fabric of our lives. But our investment in transit hasn't kept pace with times.
- When I came into office, I created Moving Minnesota, a long-term, statewide and multimodal initiative to meet Minnesota's growing transportation needs. It focuses on three basic initiatives, the ABC's of improved transportation: Advantages for transit, Bottleneck removal and Corridor connections.
- My main goal within the Moving Minnesota initiative is transit. To stay competitive, transit must have advantages over driving alone. This will require a significant increase in Twin Cities bus service, light rail, commuter rail and busway transit plus transit service in all Minnesota counties.
- To keep roadways flowing and shippers getting their goods to market, we must address bottlenecks. Doing so is a critical, cost-effective way to improve mobility and safety on urban highways and bridges.
- Another facet of Moving Minnesota involves improving and protecting the important highway connections between Minnesota's regional trade centers to enhance the competitiveness and economic vitality of the state. Commerce cannot excel if goods cannot reach their destinations quickly and effectively.
- Some of you are fortunate enough to have dedicated funding for transit. Minnesota transit has to fight our Legislature each year to fund a portion of its operations. And now, like many states, we are dealing with a budget shortfall. In its wisdom, our legislature cut the transit budget for the current funding cycle. And it is discussing a roads-only approach for the



future. Somehow, we in Minnesota, think we can escape the congestion that plagues other big cities by building more roads. Maybe we should bus all of you over to the State Capitol to talk some common sense about transit to our lawmakers.

- Minnesotans are way ahead of policymakers on transportation issues. In a recent poll, 89 percent of Minnesotans believe that transportation should be a legislative priority. They want transportation choices. In short, they get it.
- These are challenging times for state and big-city leaders. We are shaping the future for our young people by the decisions we make today. Strong support of transit must be a key investment choice both nationally and locally.
- Welcome to our state. Enjoy your visit.