

REALTOR® Association Transportation Policy Statement

REALTOR® Associations of the Greater Twin Cities Area

Executive Summary

The REALTOR® Association Transportation Policy Statement has been a cooperative discussion between four local trade associations: the Minneapolis Area Association of REALTORS®, the North Metro REALTORS® Association, the Saint Paul Area Association of REALTORS®, and the Southern Twin Cities Association of REALTORS®. Combined they represent over 16,000 members involved in all aspects of the real estate industry.

As active members of the communities in which they live, REALTORS® are committed to community involvement – from housing options and affordability, to growth and transportation.

Twin Cities area REALTORS® have created a policy statement of priorities and policy recommendations, including the following.

- The transportation needs of the Twin Cities region are a priority for residents, business, and civic leaders, including REALTORS®
- Minnesota must address immediate transportation needs by devoting more resources to roads and other transportation options.

REALTORS® support:

- dedicating any increased transportation-related revenues solely to transportation and transit needs.
- approval of local option sales-tax-on-fuel authority for metro area counties.
- revision of the state funding formula which distributes transportation funds that has not been updated since 1957.
- A combination of funding sources, including adding \$.05 per gallon to the state gas tax, dedication of 80% of Motor Vehicle Sales Tax (MVST) to transportation, local government matches, and some general obligation bonding.
- long-term planning to meet the transportation needs of this region.
- accountability for transportation decisions by local planning commissions, the Metropolitan Council, state agencies and the legislature.

REALTORS® don't just sell homes; they sell neighborhoods, cities, and the Twin Cities region. REALTORS® are really selling “quality of life” attributes important to homebuyers. With the variety of housing options and high quality of life in this region, allowing transportation issues to stagnate hurts the housing market, employment, the economy, and the quality of life so critical to the success of this region.

Transportation is a Factor in Quality of Life

The transportation needs of the Twin Cities region are a priority for business and civic leaders, including REALTORS®. Across the Twin Cities area, and indeed across the country, commute time, congestion, and transportation concerns have risen in importance as key ingredients in the

REALTOR® Association Transportation Policy Statement

REALTOR® Associations of the Greater Twin Cities Area

quality of life recipe. Busy American lifestyles demand efficient transportation and commuter options to access schools, shopping, family, recreation, and work. Consumer demands for better, faster, and more convenient access to modern life necessities increasingly influence residential and development decisions.

In a recent study of Minnesota homebuyers conducted by the National Association of REALTORS®, 42 percent of first-time homebuyers and 36 percent of non-first-time homebuyers cited proximity to work and schools as a factor that influenced them to choose the location where they purchased a home.

Not only can commute time become a critical negative factor, but transportation options such as proximity to major and commuter airports, mass transit and options such as bike and pedestrian paths become positive factors separating one community from another in the eyes of homebuyers.

REALTORS® on Transportation

REALTORS® recognize that assessing transportation needs for today and future generations requires a multifaceted approach that provides various regional transportation options, and incorporates local planning and local involvement. An integrated transportation system in the Twin Cities is important for the housing market, as well as for continued growth and economic development of the region. Investment in infrastructure today will prepare the region for tomorrow. An efficient transportation system needs to include a combination of autos, buses, light and commuter rail transit, as well as coordinated land use planning. Transportation solutions also include improved ground, rail, water, and air transit options for producers to deliver their goods to consumers.

Overall, transportation options should be approached with the following five goals in mind.

1. Maintain and Expand Road Systems for Today and Tomorrow
2. Provide Options for Public Transit (including buses, light and commuter rail and other options)
3. Provide Options for Transportation (from ground and air cargo transportation to pedestrian options)
4. Encourage Creative Workplace Solutions to Drive Time Congestion
5. Coordinate Land Use and Planning Policies with Transportation and Housing Needs

Each of these goals is interrelated. Any attempt to improve transportation systems must be an integrated approach. Expanding roads alone without providing alternate transportation options will not be sufficient to resolve congestion concerns. Workplaces must also address drive-time congestion relief through creative solutions including employer-supported transit options, flexible-start times, workforce and mixed-use housing and more.

New roads must allow for the substantial growth projected for the Twin Cities area. Flexibility must be considered in everything from land use planning to expansion of today's roads and bridges. Transit options that seem unrealistic today may become tomorrow's reality.

REALTOR® Association Transportation Policy Statement

REALTOR® Associations of the Greater Twin Cities Area

Finally, accountability and stability must be visible in any solutions to regional transportation concerns in the Twin Cities area. The authority, mission, and decisions of the Metropolitan Council remain a mystery to most citizens, as do the activities of numerous city planning commissions and state transportation officials. Identifying who is accountable for the transportation decisions will be critical to public support. Stability and accountability in the planning process will ensure long-term planning reliability, which provides a framework for developers and citizens alike to both track and identify the progress, or lack of progress, on project affecting their lives.

Where do we go from here?

REALTORS® must be part of the solution to the transportation needs in the Twin Cities region. The first step is to inform our members about transportation needs and their impact on homebuyers and sellers. The second step for REALTORS® is to be active players in the transportation decisions in this region. When REALTORS® join their neighbors, elected officials, and other business leaders in pursuit of transportation solutions, the result will strengthen the quality of life so cherished in this region.

REALTORS® are active members of the communities in which they live and work. REALTORS® are committed to community involvement – from housing options and affordability, to growth and transportation. For additional information on local REALTOR® priorities, contact Bill Gerst (MAAR) at 952-988-3141, Julia Parenteau (NMRA) at 763-757-7230, Patrick Ruble (SPAAR) at 651-772-6343, or Christine Berger (STCAR) at 651-452-6611.

Drafted August 20, 2003

Revised March 29, 2004

Revised April 14, 2004

Revised October 2004

Revised January 2005

Revised February 16, 2005

Revised February 25, 2005

Revised March 16, 2005

Adopted April 20, 2005 by the North Metro REALTORS® Association