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Minnesota is ‘rolling in cash’: Let’s use it to connect Minnesotans to jobs

Minnesota and Minnesotans will always need people who show up. How will they show up? A lot of us will show up by taking the bus ... if the Legislature lets us.

By Maureen Scallen Failor and Will Schroeer



Minnesota State Capitol

MinnPost photo by Peter Callaghan

June 18, 2021 “Latest tax collection report reveals the state of Minnesota is pretty much rolling in cash” was the headline on June 11. That’s the state, of

course, not all our families or businesses. So, what's the best way to use that cash to benefit all of us?

COVID-19 upended almost everything we do. For many, "upended" meant we could commute over phone lines. For others, "upended" meant using the bus as always, but now the bus came less often.

COVID also made clear that good transit, transit that connects us, is fundamental to a healthy Minnesota.

Grocery stores? Hospitals? Everyone needs these. The folks that made sure they were open and serving? A lot of us got there by bus and by train.

During COVID, many of the rest of us got to do our jobs over the wires. Will that continue? We don't yet know. But that shouldn't stop us from working on what we do know.

Before COVID, one in five of East Metro residents said that bad transportation interfered with their ability to get to work. We can fix that. [[East Metro Pulse](#) PDF]



Maureen Scallen Failor

Minnesota and Minnesotans will always need people who show up. How will they show up? A lot of us will show up by taking the bus ... if the Legislature lets us.

During the special session, our representatives and senators will be choosing between two futures for Minnesotans trying to get to work.

In one future, everyone going to work, or to school, will have to buy and insure their own car. The American Automobile Association — Triple A, which likes cars — thinks this costs about \$9,000 a year, on average. Sure, many people spend less. No one thinks cars don't cost a lot to own and operate. And car prices are rising fast.



Will Schroeer

In another future, Minnesotans across the state can save \$9,000 a year and take the bus to work and to school. That \$9,000 then goes to a down payment for a house, or to tuition.

No, taking the bus is not free, nor should it be. It's always less than owning your own car.

How does this play out in Dakota County? We're booming — or rather, we could be booming, if people who live here could get to work and to school.

The Dakota County Regional Chamber of Commerce and our members, including the Vikings, Thomson Reuters, and TC Orthopedics, studied

our transportation needs, and identified better transit as our No. 1 need.

Minnesota's budget surplus can connect Minnesota residents with Minnesota jobs.

Let's call it "Connecting Minnesota Families to Minnesota's Open Jobs." Let's make sure that every Minnesotan can get to school, to work, and to see their family.

We can fix it. We have the money. Let's make sure all of us can get to work.

Maureen Scallen Failor is the president and CEO of the Dakota County Regional Chamber of Commerce. Will Schroeer is the executive director of East Metro Strong, a partnership between cities and employers.

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