



January 29, 2021

Dakota County Commissioners
1590 Highway 55
Hastings, Mn 55033

Re: Dakota County Participation in MVTA Joint Powers Agreement

Dear County Commissioners,

It is our understanding that Dakota County is debating to withdraw its participation from the existing joint powers agreement with Minnesota Valley Transit Authority (MVTA). The Board of Directors of the Dakota County Regional Chamber of Commerce is stating its deep concern with this and is asking that the Dakota County Board of Commissioners not withdraw.

Membership in the MVTA Joint Powers helps ensure that MVTA serves Dakota County needs

The MVTA Board governs the MVTA. Leaving the Joint Powers Agreement—and thus the Board—would mean that Dakota County has no seat at the table where decisions are made about transit service to much of Dakota County.

Transit service is important to Dakota County businesses

Livability is a key metric of all vital communities, large and small. It is not achieved by any one individual action, but a combination of many factors, to appeal to a diverse set of residents and businesses. Public transit is one key component of a vital livable community. Not only does it reduce congestion to, from and through our communities and neighborhoods, it provides vital and sustainable access for residents and employers whose workers need access to employment and educational services.

Livability is also measured by the economic wellbeing of a community or area. The Dakota County Regional Chamber of Commerce is committed to attracting and retaining employers and their employees to the County. One of our strategic goals is economic development and job creation. Transit is very important for both. We know this is true in Dakota County because our members have told us so.

Responding to our members, over the past two years, the Chamber has led efforts to plan for future transit services and to support the use of transit service, including that of MVTA, in order to provide employers and residents in our County with sustainable access to jobs and other regional amenities. A strong and vibrant transit system is needed to meet the long term needs of the County, its residents and businesses. Dakota County's decision to withdraw from participating in this important regional transit service sends the wrong signal to businesses and

residents of Dakota County and jeopardizes the progress the County has made in developing its transit system.

As we have done previously these past several years, the Dakota County Regional Chamber of Commerce is formally requesting that Dakota County Commissioners take an active lead in planning for increased public transit service for the future. This means not only participating in the joint powers organization with MVTA and other communities, but also making a financial commitment to plan for and implement county-wide transit services that are beneficial to Dakota County residents no matter where they live, and to Dakota County businesses and academic institutions that rely on public transit to provide access for their customers, employees and students.

In conclusion: the best way for the County to help ensure that its residents and businesses have access to efficient, quality transit is to be part of the governing board that makes service decisions. We believe that removing the County's participation in transit planning and operations would unnecessarily limit the County's ability to guide the provision of a service that residents and businesses want and need. We respectfully ask you to reconsider this action.

Sincerely,

Janet Benton



Maureen Scallen Failor



CC: Matt Smith, Dakota County