

## SAVE OUR BUS SERVICE ON 42<sup>nd</sup> AVENUE NORTH!

The residents of Victory Neighborhood object strongly to the proposed routing changes outlined in the "Northwest Metro Transit Restructuring Study". This controversial draft plan would replace Rte 5 with Rte 19 buses; it would entail discontinuing service west of 42<sup>nd</sup> & Thomas Ave. N. (including the elimination of the 42<sup>nd</sup> & York layover); and it would involve an overall reduction in the frequency of service. This is unacceptable.

We purchased our homes in Victory because the area met most of the quality of life measures that define "smart urban development", i.e. access to lakes and green spaces, and to a variety of transportation choices - public transit, cars, biking and walkways. Indeed for over half a century the #5 bus has served this community. On July 11, 1953 Metro Transit replaced the electric powered trolley system owned by Twin City's Rapid Transit. Back then, the #5 bus followed the old trolley route; for example, the northbound traveled via downtown to Penn and over to Thomas; 44<sup>th</sup> near Loring Elementary School was end of the line. A few years thereafter, Mr. Orrin Tibou, a local citizen, canvassed successfully for an extension of the bus service to 42<sup>nd</sup> & York. This farsighted move not only linked Metro Transit to our most unique asset - the Memorial Parkway; also it enhanced nearby Robbinsdale's access to Metro service.

Ironically, if the changes in the Concept Plan are implemented the very uniqueness of Victory as a livable community with a historically balanced transportation system will be undermined. This will negatively impact our working population, many of whom rely solely on public transit. Furthermore such changes ignore the access needs of our employed seniors, our retired citizens who continue to remain active, and our neighbors with disabilities who would be compelled to walk or wheelchair, etc. (over five blocks in some instances) to the bus stop on Thomas. Robbinsdale's stakeholders who currently board the bus at 42<sup>nd</sup> & York will be effectively shut off from the service.

## Recommendations

Strategies to improve service along this route and to ensure the efficiency and attractiveness of public transit, we offer the following suggestions:

- **Continue Bus Service on 42<sup>nd</sup> Ave N and Keep the 42<sup>nd</sup> & York Layover**  
In his 2004 review of Victory Memorial Regional Parkway/Trail Master Plan, Mr. Michael McDonough, Landscape Architect and Senior Planner of Parks, acknowledged that "Metro Transit currently, and for a long time has operated buses crossing the parkway without problems". *As the saying goes, "If it ain't broke, let's not worry about trying to fix it"*. Keep in mind that this transit route provides direct access for visitors and tourists to the historic rows of trees commemorating WW I veterans, the Abraham Lincoln monument, and the Grand Rounds.
- **Improved Bus Environment = Increase in Ridership**  
Concern for personal safety, which is related to the too frequent incidents of anti-social behavior by some bus passengers, is a major factor discouraging ridership. Those who can, turn to such options as driving, carpooling or motor scooters - alternatives free from drama and anxieties. When this very serious problem is addressed, Victory ridership will increase significantly.
- **Increase Frequency (2 buses per hr) on Off Peak Service**
- **Express Buses During Peak Times**  
Provide express buses and expanded service during peak hours, e.g. AM Express from 42<sup>nd</sup> & York, Thomas to Dowling, I94 to downtown.
- **Develop East/West Service**  
There is a strong demand for East/West service to, for example, downtown Robbinsdale, Rainbow Foods, North Memorial Hospital, and etc.
- **Only Buses Operating in Victory to Retain Route 5 Designation**  
The "#5" has operated in both north and south Minneapolis for as long as public transportation has existed in the Twin Cities, about 125 years. From the horsecars along Penn and Fremont Avenues in the 1880s to the coming of the trolley in 1891; and right up to the present day with Metro buses, these vehicles displayed the same route number. Consistent with the historic theme that has shaped the identity of Victory; we would urge transit planners to recognize the value of preserving this piece of the Twin Cities' public transportation history.
- **Change Bus Title**  
Also we recommend consideration be given to changing the "42<sup>nd</sup> & York" bus title to the "Victory Memorial" or "Victory Memorial Parkway" bus.