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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Media event to highlight future of public transportation at National League of Cities conference

Key leaders and innovators in transportation will host a media event March 5 at the National League of Cities (NLC) Mobility Matters Conference in Burnsville. This event will highlight the essential role diverse mobility options play in enhancing the daily lives of millions of Americans, with a focus on accessibility, sustainability, and economic impact.

The event is hosted by the National League of Cities, Minnesota Valley Transit Authority (MVTA), the City of Burnsville, and Enterprise Mobility.

The primary goal of this gathering is to emphasize the fundamental role public transportation plays in ensuring access to employment, education, and essential services while contributing to local economies. Collaboration efforts on the federal, state, and local levels are integral to mitigating mobility gaps in our communities.

Public transportation is not only a vital service that carries millions of riders across the nation every day, but it is also a key driver of economic vitality. With more than 430,000 people employed in the industry, public transit supports millions of jobs while directly contributing to the U.S. economy. According to a 2025 study, 77 percent of federal funding for public transit initiatives flows into the private sector, supporting companies across the United States.

The media event is scheduled for 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. at the conference at Wyndham Burnsville Nicollet Inn, 14201 Nicollet Ave. S., Burnsville.

2024 National League of Cities Board member and Transportation Federal Advocacy Committee Chair, Burnsville City Council Member and MVTA Board Chair Dan Kealey will be master of ceremonies for the event, which will feature the following speakers:

Steve Patterson, President of the National League of Cities

Patterson will discuss the essential partnerships between local, state, and federal leaders that are creating accessible transportation solutions. These partnerships are not only helping people get to work but also contribute to the growth of regional economies.

Elizabeth Kautz, City of Burnsville Mayor and Former Chair of the MVTA Board of Commissioners

Kautz will spotlight the growing movement of U.S. cities and transit agencies working to reduce carbon footprints, improve air quality, and ensure access to transportation. She will also discuss Burnsville's sustainability efforts and the Minnesota Valley Transit Authority (MVTA)'s leadership in implementing cleaner transportation. The MVTA's Zero Emission Bus Plan, including the addition of five new electric buses this year, is part of a larger effort to electrify the fleet and reduce reliance on fossil fuels. Kautz will also discuss the city's broader sustainability initiatives, including its 2009 sustainability guide and the reduction of community-wide greenhouse gas emissions.

U.S. Representative Angie Craig, Minnesota's 2nd District

As a key advocate for infrastructure improvements, U.S. Rep. Angie Craig will address the need to invest in transportation systems to bolster the state's economy. She will discuss her support for funding projects such as the transformation of the Burnsville Bus Garage, which received \$4.96 million to create a hub for economic activity. Additionally, she will touch on her efforts to secure \$1 million for transit improvements in Rosemount, which helped advance the electrification of the Rosemount Transit Station.

Elle Larkin, MVTA Director of Finance

Larkin will provide insights into the diverse funding streams that support public transit agencies, with a particular focus on Minnesota's new Sales and Use Tax funding. Her discussion will emphasize the importance of a fair and effective distribution of these funds to ensure that transit agencies across the state can continue to deliver services that meet the needs of their communities.

Luther Wynder, MVTA Chief Executive Officer

Wynder will discuss the significant growth of MVTA's microtransit service, MVTA Connect, which began in 2019 and has expanded to cover all cities in the south metro region. This year, MVTA introduced five new e-Jest vehicles to enhance the service's sustainability and meet increasing demand. Wynder will also highlight how MVTA Connect has become the agency's fastest-growing service, with over 600 rides per day, and how the new electric vehicles are key to improving service for riders, particularly those using the service for work-related trips.

Event Details:

Date: March 5, 2025

Time: 1 p.m. – 2 p.m.

Location: National League of Cities Mobility Matters Conference, Wyndham Burnsville Nicollet Inn, 14201 Nicollet Ave. S., Burnsville.

This media event will provide an opportunity for attendees to hear from industry leaders, transit experts, and government officials as they discuss the future of transportation and its critical role in building strong, accessible communities. At the close of the media event, MVTA's new battery electric e-Jest vehicle will be on site for review.

About the National League of Cities (NLC):

The NLC is a resource and advocate for the nation's cities, towns, and villages, providing local leaders with the tools and guidance needed to create more inclusive and sustainable communities. Through events like the Mobility Matters Conference, NLC promotes discussions and partnerships that empower cities to create better quality of life for their residents.

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