



4646 Dakota St. SE
Prior Lake, MN 55372

January 20, 2010

A Message from the Mayor

County Rd. 21 North Extension Update

Since seeking office last fall, I have received a lot of questions about city and county matters. It is important to me that elected officials provide answers to your questions and more transparency regarding activities and decisions made on your behalf; therefore, I would like to dedicate myself to providing answers to your questions and improving transparency in decision making.

One of the questions I received was regarding the purpose of the extension of County Rd. 21 to the north. Simply stated, the purpose is to provide another key north-south linkage for Scott County to the metropolitan area. In addition, the roadway will provide a secondary access to hundreds of homes in the Deans Lake area of Shakopee. This project has been contemplated by our city and the county for nearly 30 years and should provide benefits such as the ability to continue to travel expeditiously for work or recreation purposes; businesses can be assured their customers and suppliers can reach them; the area in general can continue to grow because adjacent transit ways have been planned and built, and our downtown will be more accessible to more customers helping us to be robust and growing.

Less than 15 years ago, County Rd. 21 was a two-lane undivided bituminous road beginning at County Rd. 42 on the north and ending at County Rd. 27 on the east. Transportation plans have long contemplated that County Rd. 21 would be "Main Street" in Prior Lake and an important north-south and east-west connector for the county. It was also contemplated that the original two-lane segment would be expanded to a four-lane divided highway. This improvement was completed by Scott County some years ago after the Wagon Bridge was upgraded to carry the traffic.

The next improvement to County Rd. 21 was from County Rd. 27 to Interstate 35. This segment was also originally two undivided lanes and has subsequently been improved to a four-lane divided highway.

The final improvement to County Rd. 21 will be a four-lane divided highway segment which will begin from the north at County Rd. 18 and move southerly to the intersection of County Rd. 21 and County Rd. 42. Although the proposed roadway terminates at County Rd. 18 on the north it does provide easy access and egress to Hwy. 169 (state intersection spacing requirements prohibit direct connection to Hwy 169).

The alignment for the final segment of County Rd. 21 in Shakopee is slated to intersect with County Rd. 18 one block north of Home Depot. The new road will travel west toward Dean's Lake and then jog south to intersect with County Rd. 16. From there the road travels southward and into Prior Lake where it intersects with County Rd. 42 just east of Jeffers Waterfront and Prior Lake Fire Station No. 2.

Under state law both Prior Lake and Scott County must have a comprehensive plan which is approved by the Metropolitan Council. The comprehensive plan is a blueprint for how the city and county will grow. One of the elements of the comprehensive plan is the transportation system. Cities and counties need neighborhood streets, collectors, minor and major arterials to support residential and commercial industrial areas by conveying current and future traffic.

For many years, County Rd. 21 has been in the Scott County and City of Prior Lake Comprehensive Plan. But to receive funding and become reality, a project must be included in the city and county transportation plans which allocate dollars to make the projects possible. Construction of this roadway segment was originally estimated at \$25 million with improvements contemplated over two years, but federal stimulus money has made this project financially feasible today.

Thanks to today's competitive market, the construction costs have been bid at \$20 million. Through stimulus dollars and other sources, the federal government will provide \$17 million; Scott County will pay the lion's share of the remaining \$3 million; Prior Lake and Shakopee are responsible for the rest. The maximum amount Prior Lake could pay is \$700,000.

In reality, the northerly extension of County Rd. 21 has been underway for years because many of the steps take time. For example, the Environmental Impact Statement took almost five years to complete alone. Here what has been completed so far:

- Environmental Impact Statement
- Alignment
- Roadway design
- Acquisition of Right of Way (as development in Shakopee took place, land was set aside.)
- Funding
- Bidding
- Contracts
- Clearing and grading is underway
- Anticipated roadway opening in the fall of 2011.

Scott County and the City are presently looking at design alternatives for intersections in the Prior Lake downtown area including Hwy. 13, Main, Arcadia and Duluth. City representatives together with downtown business people and state representatives will work to assure that the final plans facilitate effective access to our residential and downtown areas.

We all know that larger transportation corridors are necessary. But they are not without challenges. Traffic sound, enforcement and accidents will be minimized as much as possible. But these are the challenges we face as we build Prior Lake and Scott County in a way that attracts business and quality residential development. Both require effective transportation routes. For more information on County Rd. 21, please check the Scott County website at www.co.scott.mn.us, or contact Mitch Rasmussen at (952) 496-8346.

I hope this clarifies some of the ongoing progress regarding a very important corridor in and out of Prior Lake, and I look forward to writing more articles responding to citizens' concerns regarding our community and providing answers to questions regarding the actions of the city or county.

Sincerely,
Mayor Mike Myser