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10400 VIKING DRIVE, SUITE 130
EDEN PRAIRIE, MN 55344

Hennepin County
Housing, Community Works & Transit
701 Fourth Avenue South, Suite 400
Minneapolis, MN 55415

Laura Anne Haynes
<lauraahaynes@gmail.com>
12/11/2012 09:55 AM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us
cc
bcc
Subject Relocation plan

Please reconsider the plan to relocate the freight rail line through St Louis Park. I feel this plan has been irresponsibly researched. The plan to relocate the freight line through St Loius Park ignores or minimizes many dangers to our community, especially to the students who attend the three schools along the proposed reroute. The cost to the taxpayers of Hennepin county has been grossly underestimated as well as misrepresented, not to mention the fact that the mitigation has not been researched completely. The DEIS ignores many of the concerns that have been brought to the attention of our representatives at Hennepin county. I feel the concerns and safety issues addressed by the residents of St Louis Park have been ignored or brushed aside as unimportant. Please revisit this issue before the safety of the students and residents in St Louis Park is compromised for ever.

My concerns include but are not limited to the following:

1. Taxpayers will pay the brunt of the cost for the relocation.
2. Schools will suffer and if our schools reduce in desirability, our tax base suffers, as well as home values.
3. Safety concerns for all residents along the proposed reroute as well as students and commuters.
4. Biased studies and ignoring of St Louis Park resident concerns.
5. Misrepresentation of mitigation costs for the future, haven't even been studied yet.
6. Risk of derailment due to insufficient rail infrastructure, incline, and curvature.

Sincerely,

Laura Haynes
3617 Bryant Ave. S. #303
Minneapolis, MN 55409

NORMAADAMS07@comcast.net
12/11/2012 10:06 AM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us
cc
bcc
Subject Response to the DEIS

Project Manager,

I live at Calhoun Isles Condominiums in the 3151 building (converted silo) that is closest to the tracks. My home is at the most narrow section of the ROW north of West Lake Street Station and south of Cedar Lake Parkway. While I support the LRT project, I do have concerns about mitigations that are not included in DEIS. My concerns include noise from both the station and the train/tracks, vibrations, and visual impact.

There is only 60 feet between our building and the Cedar Lake Shores Condominiums on the other side of the tracks. Your drawings show 100 feet ROW which of course does not exist here. If you utilize 58 feet for tracks and trails, then either trains or users of the trails will be inches from my window and patio. There is no specific mitigation listed in the DEIS for either the lack of privacy or for addressing the severe impact of the noise and vibrations. The studies for noise listed in the DEIS identify noise impact at 50 feet from the tracks. Since we live approximately 30 feet or less from the proposed track, the severe impact of the noise will be even greater than you show in your data. Right now there is a lovely berm with full grown trees along our property adjacent to the ROW that provides privacy as well as a harbor for birds and other wildlife. I feel that since Calhoun Isles Condominiums will be so significantly impacted by the LRT, we should have a say in any measures that are taken to mitigate the extremely severe impacts of noise/vibrations and violations of privacy. It is impossible to comment on mitigations that have not yet been identified. I would ask that you consider tunneling or cut and cover trench as a method to mitigate the negative impacts. I would also ask that the Calhoun Isle Condominium Association be a party to developing mitigations.

I2, O1

I2, O1

G2

L1

I am also concerned about the proposed West Lake Street Station. The intersection of Excelsior Blvd and Lake Street is extremely busy on a daily basis with automobiles, walkers, bikers. I fear a station being added as a destination in this already grid locked intersection will result in chaos if proper study and planning is not done prior to the design and building of the station. I am requesting a more in-depth study of existing traffic as well as projected traffic of automobiles, walkers and bikers. I would also request that access to the station be clearly identified so that overflow does not result in congestion or trespassing in the surrounding neighborhoods.

E10

E10, P4, I1

The design you propose for the bridge over Cedar Lake Parkway is appalling. Even though you did not give an alternative to this bridge, I do hope you will reconsider that design and go with either tunneling or cut and cover trench with the Parkway going over the LRT at that crossing.

E8

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. I look forward to hearing your response.

Sincerely,
Norma Adams
3151 Dean Court #101
Minneapolis, MN 55416
612-922-9204

Rhea Sullivan
<rhea.sullivan@gmail.com>
12/11/2012 10:30 AM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us
cc Kathleen Cobb <kathycobb70@gmail.com>, Meg Forney <megf@visi.com>, David Rhees <Rhees@thebakken.org>
bcc
Subject The Edge of Lake Calhoun Business Association's Comments on the DEIS

Dear Project Director,

Attached you will find a cover letter and comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Southwest Transitway from the Edge of Lake Calhoun Business Association.

Thank you,

Rhea Sullivan

Rhea Sullivan, Coordinator
West Calhoun Neighborhood Council
rhea.sullivan@gmail.com
612-386-6974

businesses
AT THE EDGE
of lake calhoun

Date: December 11, 2012

To: Hennepin County Housing, Community Works & Transit
Attention: Southwest Transitway Project Director

From: The Edge of Lake Calhoun Business Association

We are a group of more than 50 businesses located within a half-mile radius of, and in some cases immediately adjacent to, the Southwest Transitway's West Lake Station.

While we see the planned LRT line potentially creating more customers for our businesses, we also have some serious concerns, which are detailed in the attached comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. But listed below are our main concerns.

Accessibility
The Edge businesses are concerned about accessibility to both Calhoun Village and Calhoun Commons malls during and after construction. The West Lake St./Excelsior Blvd. corridor is already congested, and lane closures during construction or traffic pattern alterations after construction could cause drivers to use other routes, bypassing our commercial area entirely.

P5

E10

Parking
Parking is already an issue in this heavily used neighborhood, especially during the warmer months when people drive to Lake Calhoun for recreational purposes. The parking lots for both Calhoun Commons and Calhoun Village are often full, especially on weekends, making it more difficult for those visiting our businesses to find a parking space.

I2

Then if parking needs for users of the Southwest Transitway, even on weekends when riders may want to park near the West Lake Station to attend events at Target Field or the Metrodome/Bank Stadium, are added, it is clear that sufficient parking is a serious issue.

P10

P10

We feel that Preliminary Engineering plans need to include a parking study and serious mitigation efforts to avoid a shortage of parking spaces.

Thank you for the opportunity to have our concerns heard, and we look forward to the next steps in the Southwest Transitway project.

Sincerely,

The Ackerberg Group
BP Station
Barnes & Noble
Associated Clinic of Psychology
The Bakken Museum
Ben & Jerry's

Biderman Group
Burger Jones
The Calhoun Beach Club
Calhoun Fusion
Calhoun Vision Center
Center for Developmental Psychopharmacology
Chuck & Don's Pet Food Outlet
Coldwell Banker Burnet Realty
European Waxing Center
Fastframe
First Wok
H&R Block
Institute for Athletic Medicine
Jiffy Lube
Little Tel Aviv
Massage Envy
Minnesota Neurovascular and Skull Base Surgery
Moss Envy
Noodles & Co.
Orange Theory Fitness
PostNet
Rustica Bakery
Sports Clips
Subway
Tom Schmidt Salon
True Source IT, LLC
Twin Cities Medical Clinic
Urban Eatery
Wakame Sushi & Asian Bistro
West Lake Dental
Willows Massage
Body Restoration
Burnet Title
Calhoun Dental
Calhoun Natural Medicines
Caribou Coffee
Chipotle
Clothes Mentor
EagleVisions Energy
Fairview Uptown
Fire Station 22
Goddess Nails
Indulge & Bloom
Jamba Juice
Laurie Kottke Fine Jewelers
MGM Wines & Spirits
The Minikahda Club
Moksha Yoga
My Burger
North Beach Deli
PHH Home Loans
Punch Neopolitan Pizza
Salon Intrigue
Sprint Wireless
Sunwerks Tanning
Tonka Cleaners
Tryg's
Uptown Smile Dental Clinic
The Vitamin Shoppe
Walgreen's
Whole Foods
The Yogurt Lab

Comments on the Southwest Transitway DEIS from

The Edge of Lake Calhoun Business Association

Chapter 3: Social Effects

Page 3-33

3.1.5.1 Effects to Land Use and Socioeconomics

Accessibility is an important consideration when making development decisions for various types of land use, including residential, office and retail commercial, health and community services, and recreation facilities. Improved accessibility will help the study area become more attractive to business and residential development opportunities, especially when linking major employment centers with rapid transit.

***Comment**: Due to existing parking saturation in the West Lake Station area, we expect that parking will be mitigated in order to accommodate the addition of projected transit riders who will drive to the station in order to board the LRT.*

I2

People on foot must have ready and safe circulation in and around Calhoun Village, Calhoun Commons, Market Plaza, and the West Lake Station.

P10

Page 3-38

3.1.7 Mitigation

Short-term construction effects can be mitigated by using standard construction best management practices (BMPs) such as the use of construction staging, dust and erosion control, proper mufflers on equipment, restricted construction times, optimum traffic re-routing measures, minimization of lane, sidewalk, or trail closures during construction, and maintenance and timely removal of temporary traffic control devices. Although specific plans for maintaining access and construction BMPs are not yet established, it is expected that a BMP construction plan will be developed prior to construction. This plan will specify construction staging and treatments to minimize impacts. The BMPs could include working with residents and merchants to provide alternative access to their neighborhoods, properties, and businesses, providing advance notice of construction plans and phasing, maintaining access to bus stops and school routes, and alerting the public to road, sidewalk, and trail closures and detour routes.

[...] Businesses and residences may experience difficulties with accessibility at certain times of day during the construction of the project, and minor detours for through traffic might be required. In general, these effects will not change the land use of the area during construction, but may affect the number of people using area businesses directly affected by access or construction traffic issues.

***Comment**: Due to the particularly challenging proposed location of the West Lake Station, mitigation during construction to the business area and adjacent residential properties is needed.*

P5, I2

3.2.2.1 Neighborhoods, Page 3-52

• West Calhoun: The West Calhoun neighborhood sits between Minneapolis' border with St. Louis Park and Lake Calhoun. The neighborhood is principally residential, although the commercial region of West Lake Street has developed into a thriving shopping area. The Grand Rounds Scenic Byway, encircling Lake Calhoun, is a heavily used parkway road system that includes the off-street trails of a portion of the Minneapolis Chain of Lakes Regional Park. In addition to Lake Calhoun and the interim use trails and park space, the neighborhood is also home to the Bakken Museum and the Minikahda Club golf course.

***COMMENT**: The business area around Calhoun Commons is relatively newly developed. There is some concern about the curb cut onto Market Plaza and its effects on traffic currently. Increased auto and pedestrian usage at West Lake Station and the safety and access of Fire Station vehicles across from that curb cut need to be taken into account. Fire Department analysis of accessibility at Market Plaza is requested.*
The Southwest Transitway and West Lake Station fall within a half-mile radius of the Grand Rounds Scenic Byway and Lake Calhoun and may impact accessibility to both. User counts on the Chain of Lakes are the second highest in the state of Minnesota with 1.3 million at Lake Calhoun. The West Lake Station will serve as the gateway to the City of Minneapolis, and the Grand Rounds and the Chain of Lakes. An analysis of traffic flow and linkages to/from these assets and the commercial centers and the station is requested. In addition, safety and connections will need to be enhanced.

I2

E9, P4

R3

Chapter 5 Economic Effects

Page 5-15
Table 5.2-2. Short-Term Station Area Effects

Environmental Metric: Traffic
LRT 3A (LPA) Low--During construction temporary closures or rerouting of traffic from at-grade intersections will be required. The area is well served by a mature integrated network of roadways so traffic diversions should have minimal affect upon the transportation system.

***Comment**: Accessibility and disruption of traffic around the West Lake Station will occur during and after construction. In the planning and budgeting process, funds for mitigation need to be made available. Limited accessibility and heavy traffic loads, often approaching gridlock, already exist in this area, as several sources report.*

P5, I2

- *According to Hennepin County in 2011, the Lake Street/Excelsior Boulevard corridor was the busiest county state road in Hennepin County, with 39,500 cars daily.*
- *The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board has reported that the Minneapolis Chain of Lakes, including Lake Calhoun (within a half-mile radius of the West Lake Station) is the second most-visited location in Minnesota (behind the Mall of America).*

- *Capstone studies by students from the Civil Engineering Department at the University of Minnesota have assembled existing data and background information from the city, county and state, and have conducted extensive traffic counts and other observations, including using digital video: "Traffic Assessment and Recommendations for Lake Street and Excelsior Boulevard Intersection and Adjacent Intersections." See this and other student Capstone studies relating to the Lake St. and Excelsior Blvd. intersection online at www.pwpg.org/lake-st-excelsior-blvd/.*
- *A November 2012 parking study commissioned by the West Calhoun Neighborhood Council and conducted by Spack Consulting found that parking was near to or over capacity in some locations near the proposed West Lake Station. The study was conducted outside the busy lake and park recreation season on cool cloudy days. When the estimated 2,800 daily Southwest Transitway riders are added to the mix, parking spaces will be at a premium. (For the full report, go to www.westcalhoun.org.)*

Pages 5-19 and 5-20
Environmental Metric: Developmental Potential (station development potential and transportation)
LRT 3A (LPA) High--Segments 3, 4, and A all have high potential for development around station locations. The areas, with the exception of 21st Street in Minneapolis, are identified as areas for transit-oriented development consistent with the implementation of LRT.
For Segments 3, 4 and A, the expansion of the transportation system and service to areas designated for growth and redevelopment will equate to a positive economic effect in terms of development around station locations.

I2

P4,P10

M1

***Comment**: The land use around the West Lake Station includes several commercial properties, including Calhoun Village and Calhoun Commons. There are few undeveloped parcels around this station and no plans to upgrade the current commercial parcels. Traffic flows are currently at saturation and private parking is fully utilized near this station, contrary to the statements made in Section 5.2.5.2 about parking and access to businesses. Two proposals to add residential apartment buildings on land zoned as residential, namely, the Bigos proposals for the vacant Weisman property on Lake St. and for vacant property behind Calhoun Commons. Hence, the prospects for economic development near the West Lake Station are minimal. In 2009 the city of Minneapolis retained R-1 zoning for properties near the station.*

Pages 5-21
5.2.5.2 Mitigation for Parking and Access
Parking
Build Alternatives LRT 1A, LRT 3A (LPA), and LRT 3A-1 (co-location alternative) are all anticipated to have a relatively modest impact on parking with the removal of 20 on-street parking spaces on Royalston Avenue. Mitigation of this effect may include working with staff from the City of Minneapolis to identify needs and opportunities for providing alternative parking solutions. However, based on adjacent land uses and long-term city plans for this area, the need for alternative parking solutions is believed to be low.

Access
Build Alternatives LRT 1A and LRT 3A (LPA) are not anticipated to have any long-term effects on business access; therefore, no mitigation is required.

***Comment**: While parking at Royalston Ave. is cited, there are also serious parking and access issues around the West Lake Station. With 2,800 riders predicted to enter this area daily, further study of how to mitigate these issues is requested. See below for further evidence of congestion issues that already exist.*

- *According to Hennepin County in 2011, the Lake Street/Excelsior Boulevard corridor was the busiest county state road in Hennepin County, with 39,500 cars daily.* P4
- *The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board has reported that the Minneapolis Chain of Lakes, including Lake Calhoun (within a half-mile radius of the West Lake station) is the second most-visited location in Minnesota (behind the Mall of America).* I2
- *A study by students from the Civil Engineering Department at the University of Minnesota have assembled existing data and background information from the city, county and state, and have conducted extensive traffic counts and other observations, including using digital video: "Traffic Assessment and Recommendations for Lake Street and Excelsior Boulevard Intersection and Adjacent Intersections." See this and other student Capstone studies relating to the Lake St. and Excelsior Blvd. intersection online at www.pwpg.org/lake-st-excelsior-blvd/.*
- *A November 2012 parking study commissioned by the West Calhoun Neighborhood Council and conducted by Spack Consulting found that parking was near to or over capacity in some locations near the proposed West Lake station. The study was conducted outside the busy lake and park recreation season on cool cloudy days. When the estimated 2,800 daily Southwest Transitway riders are added to the mix, parking spaces will be at a premium. (For the full report, go to www.westcalhoun.org.)*

Chapter 6 Transportation Effects

6.2 Effects on Roadways

This section describes the potential effects associated with the construction and operation of the Southwest Transitway on the roadway network, including long-term and short-term impacts. This section will describe system-wide impacts to the roadway system, physical modifications to existing roadways, operational effects to intersections, transit station access, and access effects to buildings and facilities along the proposed alignments. E10, P5

***COMMENT:** Effects on Roadways analysis is incomplete because the DEIS was issued*

before station area plans were adopted for all station stops within the city of Minneapolis and without the benefit of authorized Preliminary Engineering studies. In light of that omission, it is important to take the following issues into account in future planning. P4

I2

1. General Traffic Flow

The W. Lake St./Excelsior Boulevard vehicle thoroughfare is the sole primary east-west route between Interstate 394 and County Highway 62 (the Crosstown). There are three secondary east-west routes that can be used: Sunset Boulevard/Dean Parkway/S. Lake of the Isles Parkway and W. 28th St.; S. Calhoun Parkway and W. 36th St.; and W. 50th Street. None of these secondary routes carries even a fraction of the traffic on the W. Lake St./Excelsior Boulevard corridor. The W. Lake St./Excelsior Boulevard vehicle thoroughfare currently carries 39,000 vehicles per day, a number confirmed by Hennepin County at the October 9, 2012, charette on park improvements between Lake of the Isles and Lake Calhoun. A Capstone study conducted by University of Minnesota Civil Engineering students in 2010 and 2011 shows that this corridor is already over-congested, requiring 2 and 3/4 minutes to traverse the section of Excelsior Boulevard between Market Plaza and W. Calhoun/Dean Parkway, giving it an "F" rating for traffic flow at evening rush hour. This study did not include the effect of existing traffic lights at the Minikahda Club and Calhoun Commons entrances. P4

Hennepin County stated at the charette that there are no plans or funds allocated to improve traffic flows on this corridor in the next five years, during which the Southwest Transitway is scheduled for construction.

2. Traffic Flow on Excelsior Boulevard

The DEIS does not comment on the effect of a potential additional stoplight at the proposed traffic entrance to the W. Lake St. station and the impact of park-and- ride or kiss-and ride vehicle traffic from Linden Hills, Edina and Uptown on the southern entrance to the W. Lake St. station. Nor does it comment on how the additional boardings/disembarkations at the W. Lake St, station will affect traffic flow on Excelsior Boulevard. The additional traffic on Excelsior Boulevard could have a negative impact on business users at Calhoun Commons and Calhoun Village, commuters who continue to use Excelsior Boulevard, park users crossing Excelsior Boulevard and neighborhood residents. M3, P4

3. Traffic Flow on W. Lake Street

The DEIS does not comment on how traffic will access the W. Lake St. station from the W. Lake St. viaduct. By law, additional turn-out lanes on both the east and west bound lanes are prohibited because of reduced visibility for exiting from and merging onto Lake St.; hence, access to the W. Lake St. station for kiss-and-ride or park-and-ride LRT customers from the north side of Lake St. or from those coming east on Lake St. will be prohibitively restricted to using the south entrance to the station on Excelsior Boulevard, further exacerbating traffic congestion on that artery. There is no room to provide for exits and entrances to W. Lake St. without the taking of condominium property on the westerly approach to the viaduct or commercial property (Calhoun Village) on the easterly approach to the viaduct. I2

4. <u>Lake Street /Excelsior Corridor</u>

The Lake St/Excelsior corridor is already a very heavily used east-west commuting corridor, plus it is the major vehicle route for people whose destination is either Lake Calhoun for recreation or the businesses at Calhoun Commons or Calhoun Village. A serious exacerbating factor is that the Greenway also uses the same corridor for pedestrians and bikers who need to cross the Lake St. corridor or Excelsior Blvd. to reach Lake Calhoun for recreational purposes.

To move traffic and pedestrians safely and efficiently to destinations near the W. Lake St. station, further study and planning to mitigate the above traffic issues during and after construction are needed.

E9, P5, I2

6.3.1.1 Parking

The majority of the parking spaces available along the alignment alternatives are provided in privately owned parking lots. Existing off-street parking spaces that are located along each of the potential alignment alternatives were counted. The count included all marked parking spaces on properties located immediately adjacent to the proposed alignment alternatives. Table 6.3-1displays the number of parking spaces along each alignment segment. (Appendix H contains the detailed parking inventory including the property address, the property owner, and the number of private and public parking spaces available at each location.) Underground parking available only to private residential tenants was not included in the inventory, but surface parking lots at the same location were included.

***COMMENT**: The Table shows 1,005 parking spaces in segment A, but it is important to take into account the need for parking by visitors to Lake Calhoun and the Grand Rounds, as well as the commercial properties near the West Lake Station. See University of Minnesota Capstone study at (http://www.westcalhoun.org/uploads/2/5/1/3/251329/spring2011-capstonetrafficstudy-finalreport.pdf) for further discussion of traffic and parking congestion.*

E10, P10, I2

"Klemmensen, Todd"
<Todd.Klemmensen@mts.com>

12/11/2012 10:38 AM

To "swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us"
<swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>
cc
bcc
Subject Extension for public comment?

Dear Sir or Madam,

Can you confirm whether the deadline to submit public comments has been extended to 31 December 2012? Thank you.

V

Todd

Todd Klemmensen
Director of Contracts & Senior Counsel
952-937-4030 (o)
952-258-9704 (m)
Todd.Klemmensen@mts.com

MTS Systems Corporation
14000 Technology Drive
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Kathy A Grose
<kathyagrose@juno.com>
12/11/2012 01:47 PM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us
cc
bcc
Subject Comment on the DEIS

Attached are my comments I wish to make for the Southwest Transitway Project. I understand the deadline is today, December 11th. Thank you.

Kathy Grose

Woman is 57 But Looks 27
Mom publishes simple facelift trick that angered doctors...
http://thirdpartyoffers.juno.com/TGL3141/50c78dae66077dae2c1fst01duc

Southwest Transitway Project December 11, 2012

I spoke at the November 12, 2012 meeting in St. Louis Park but was not prepared to speak. I want to add additional thoughts and impressions I have about this study.

I am very concerned about a heavy industrialized train being re-routed through St. Louis Park from Kenilworth. I ran into a familiar situation back in 1982 when I moved into an apartment building next to a railroad track in Maplewood. I thought it was great because I like trains. What I didn't realize was the impact this train would make living so close to the tracks. I was woken up at 2 AM when the train came roaring through the neighborhood. The building was shaking violently for over 20 minutes and I thought it was an earthquake. This went on every night the year I lived there. I eventually moved. C

Now I face this situation all over again as I live next to the railroad track in St. Louis Park. This time I am a homeowner and not just a renter. Because this impacts me so deeply, I would appreciate my opinion to be taken into account in this matter. Honestly I am concerned about this train being re-routed through St. Louis Park, impacting the area not only where I live, but also the high school and the intersection at Library Lane. Simply, our community is not set up to handle this level of train and traffic congestion through our community, especially along Dakota Avenue. C

I am concerned that you are trying to push this railroad project through St. Louis Park without adequate input from the residents who live here. I support the light rail, but are we considering how best to do this without destroying communities the train is going through? I would ask that all considerations be taken into account before a final decision is made because communities impacted will have to live with these decisions once this project is finalized and approved. L2

If you do plan to go ahead with the re-route, I propose that the west side of Blackstone and east side of Brunswick Avenue homes be removed, the high school be rebuilt someplace else in St. Louis Park and homes taken out of Library Lane to accommodate for the noise, vibrations and visibility issues I mentioned previously. C

Thank you.

Kathy Grose

2606 Alabama Avenue S.
St. Louis Park, MN 55416
952-942-7245

Clark Gregor
<clarkg@gmail.com>
12/11/2012 01:59 PM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us
cc
bcc
Subject SWLRT DEIS Comment

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in response to the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) published in regard the SWLRT which includes the proposed freight rail re-route in St. Louis Park, Minnesota.

The current SWLRT-DEIS has significant flaws and the planned re-route idea either needs to be dropped completely or a great deal more study must be done. As this action is proposed and described in Chapter 1, Section 1.3.2.3 as rebuilding a little known, lightly used spur line into a main freight rail line, which will initially allow a 788% increase of rail car traffic. What the SWLRT-DEIS does not address, but should, are the real world impacts of this action on the affected area. C

Besides my general concerns about the SWLRT-DEIS, the portion of the report dealing with Safety (3-132 and 133) causes me the greatest concern. Only a passing reference to safety and the proposed re-route is mentioned in the SWLRT-DEIS; however there are many features about the MN&S, which make it undesirable as a freight, rail main line. The reasons the MN&S is an unsafe main rail line include, but are not limited to the following: C

- Multiple grade level crossings
- Tight Curves. Derailments are more likely to occur on curves than on straight track
- Proximity to St. Louis Park schools, homes and businesses - many are closer than the length of a rail car
- Number of pedestrians who transverse crossing every day
- Permeable soil under MN&S
- Medical emergency response hindered when crossings are blocked – only one fire station has emergency medical response (page 80)
- Hazardous materials are being carried on the rail line without sufficient right of way.

None of the mitigation requested by the City of St. Louis Park on behalf of her residents is being considered. This mitigation is not frivolous; it is necessary to maintain the safety, livability and property values for the residents of St. Louis Park. C

Thank you for considering these concerns.

Clark R. Gregor
2620 Hampshire Ave
St. Louis Park, MN 55426
612-217-2277
clarkg@gmail.com

"Eriksmoen, Marit"
<MEriksmoen@hppinc.org>
12/11/2012 02:08 PM

To "swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us"
<swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>
cc "Thompson, Tim" <TThompson@hppinc.org>
bcc
Subject Comments on SW LRT DEIS

Attached please find comments submitted on the Southwest LRT Draft Environmental Impact Statement, on behalf of the Housing Preservation Project and the Alliance for Metro Stability.

Thank you,

Marit Eriksmoen
Office Manager
Housing Preservation Project
570 Asbury Street, Suite 105
St. Paul, MN 55104
(651) 642-0102 x101 (ph)
(651) 642-0051 (fax)
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www.HPPinc.org
www.TCHousingPolicy.org

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Please think before you print.

December 7, 2012

HPP
Housing Preservation Project
Public Interest Legal Advocates

Hennepin County
Housing, Community Works and Transit
ATTN: Southwest Transitway
701 Fourth Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55415

RE: Comments Regarding Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Southwest LRT

Dear Sir / Madam:

The Housing Preservation Project (HPP) and the Alliance for Metropolitan Stability submit this letter as comment upon the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Southwest Light Rail Transit project. HPP is a public interest law firm focused on preserving and expanding the supply of affordable housing, both in Minnesota and across the country. The Alliance is a coalition of grassroots organizations that advances racial, economic, and environmental justice in growth and development patterns in the Twin Cities Region. During the last several years, we have both done considerable work with local community groups and agencies to try to ensure greater equity, including affordable housing opportunities, along the Twin Cities' emerging network of transit corridors.

We write today to address one issue in the DEIS that has not been adequately addressed: the risk that gentrification will displace lower income households and minorities, thus depriving these residents of the opportunity to benefit from this public investment. The DEIS mentions several times the possibility of gentrification adversely affecting low income and minority groups, but concludes that gentrification is not an environmental justice issue, and therefore need not be addressed. We believe this conclusion is in error, and needs to be remedied in the final version of the Environmental Impact Statement. In addition, the DEIS fails to adequately consider mitigation measures or alternatives with respect to the adverse effects of likely gentrification, and this must also be addressed.

M5

DEIS Discussion of Gentrification

The report periodically notes the possibility of gentrification, but then fails to address it consistently or address its implications.

The first point at which gentrification is mentioned comes in Chapter 3 of the DEIS at p. 3-41 and 42. Gentrification is defined as "the displacement of poorer economic populations by wealthier residents." p. 3-42. To determine whether gentrification has the potential to occur in the future, the DEIS examines past changes in neighborhood and community characteristics to see if this suggests potential gentrification in the future. The section concludes that "the analysis does not quantify nor qualify potential future changes to neighborhoods, community cohesion, social or cultural networks, or economic conditions." p. 3-42. From what we can tell, this is based upon an analysis of various neighborhoods in the following sections, and in the section on community cohesion on p.

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3-55, where the DEIS contrasts Eden Prairie, Minnetonka, Hopkins, and St. Louis Park from Minneapolis, noting that in the case of these suburbs, new job centers did not displace existing neighborhoods, nor substantially change those neighborhoods.

As discussed further below, we do not believe the inquiry should stop there, as the past conditions considered do not account for the current conditions on the ground, where significant minority and poor populations now live in circumstances made precarious by the likelihood of the LRT line. The substantial East African community which has recently burgeoned in Eden Prairie, for example, should be addressed in the Community Cohesion section, along with a similar situation in the many apartment buildings along the Blake Road station area. Yet the only reference in this section is to "details about race and ethnicity are provided in Appendix H." M5

Also relevant is Section 9.0 on Indirect Effects and Cumulative Impacts. The possibility that the LRT line will lead to increased land values and increasingly unaffordable rents for lower income tenants forcing them to leave, meets the definition of indirect effects as "those that are caused by the action and are later in time or farther removed in distance, but are still reasonably foreseeable." p. 9-1. These outcomes are foreseeable both because the possibility of gentrification is repeatedly referenced in the DEIS, and because evidence from the SW Corridor and from around the country suggests increasing rents frequently follow construction of light rail. Attached is a recent report discussing the likelihood of escalating rents and resulting displacement among the apartment buildings concentrated along the Blake Road station area in Hopkins. *Affordable Rental Opportunities in a Changing Suburb* (2011).

In addition, according to the Dukakis Center for Urban and Regional Policy at Northeastern University, "Median gross rent increased faster than in their metro areas in 74% of TRNs [transit-rich neighborhoods]." *Maintaining Diversity in America's Transit-Rich Neighborhoods* (October 2010). This is particularly the case when combined with cumulative impacts also addressed in this section. However, this gentrification risk is never mentioned in this section. On p. 9-3, changes in land use and intensity of development are noted as indirect effects, but the conclusion is simply "in most cases, these indirect effects are desired and the local and regional governments are planning for them." What about those effects which are not desired, such as the involuntary displacement of low income and minority tenants? M5

Gentrification is addressed in Section 9.5 at p. 9-14 and 9-15. The DEIS observes that neighborhood composition could change and that "gentrification is possible as more affluent people are attracted to minority and low income neighborhoods." In the section on Environmental Justice on p. 9-26, clusters of minority populations are noted, and the point is made that where development demand is strong along new station areas, "natural market forces in these areas will drive up property values." Also: "low income persons may experience the expected increase in property values to a greater extent if rents or real estate taxes increase." In Section 9.3, gentrification is considered a cumulative impact. Gentrification increases property values, "often displacing low income families and small businesses that can no longer afford the new rents." Despite citing this evidence, the section ends with the following statement: "*Although gentrification is not an*

environmental justice issue, the potential for gentrification of urban areas is often associated with minority and low income community areas where major public investments have been made that attract developers and individuals to areas with convenient transit access and high quality service." (emphasis added)

No explanation is given as to why gentrification would not be considered an environmental justice issue. The only other reference to this issue is on the chart at p. 9-40. The chart states that, "It is likely that continued development and redevelopment could change some of the ethnic, racial and income characteristics of established neighborhoods." However, the chart then states, "The effects and impacts are expected and planned for. No further mitigation is necessary." On p. 9-46, the statement amplifies slightly: "To benefit all populations in the study area, project partner cities have engaged in extensive land use planning activities to stabilize natural market forces." It is unclear what this means. As best we can determine, however, nowhere in the DEIS is there any identification of any planning specifically with respect to potential displacement of low income and minority residents due to transit related gentrification.

M5

Gentrification is an Environmental Justice Issue

As the DEIS notes, in determining environmental justice issues, the DEIS is to be guided by Executive Order 12898, USDOT Order 5610.2 (a), and FTA Circular 4703.1. We believe the application of this guidance to the gentrification risks along the SW LRT Line compel the conclusion that an environmental justice (EJ) issue is present here.

A guiding EJ principle "is to avoid, minimize or mitigate disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects, including social and economic effects, on minority populations and low income populations." FTA Circular, p. 17. The first step is to identify adverse effects. Such effects include the totality of significant individual or cumulative human health or environmental effects to human health, the natural and social environment, community function, etc. p. 17. Adverse effects also include the denial, reduction or delay in receiving benefits. Id. As discussed above, the report repeatedly makes the largely uncontestable point that gentrification often occurs in circumstances such as this, and that when it does, low income and minority residents are often displaced by the increasing rents that follow. There can be little question this is an adverse effect for those displaced residents. It is also an adverse effect because it means that those residents will be denied the benefit of this public investment, that is, the opportunity to live in proximity to this valued transit service.

M5

Once an adverse effect is identified, the next question is whether the effects are disproportionately high. Part of this analysis involves considering offsetting benefits to affected minority and low income populations. Circular, p. 18. While it is true that like others, minority and low income populations will benefit from access to the LRT line, those who are displaced and removed from access will not benefit, and those who manage to stay but pay greatly increased rents will see much of the economic benefit from LRT access cancelled out by their increased housing cost. The other element to determining whether the adverse effect is disproportionately high is whether the effect is (1) predominantly borne by an EJ population, or (2) will be suffered by the EJ population and

is appreciably more severe or is greater in magnitude than the adverse effect that will be suffered by the non-EJ population. p. 19. In this case, as the DEIS itself notes, low income populations—which often coincide with minority populations—will be more likely to be tenants and thus vulnerable to escalating rents, and will be less able to continue to pay those rents, thus forcing displacement. The adverse effect is clearly disproportionately high for low income and minority residents along the SW LRT corridor.

We believe the inescapable conclusion is that the likely risk of gentrification-related displacement resulting from the LRT Line is an EJ issue.

The DEIS must further address gentrification as an EJ issue, and mitigation measures or alternatives. M5

Finally, the analysis calls for consideration of whether further mitigation measures or alternatives are practicable, and if they are, take mitigation measures or alternatives before moving ahead with the activity. The only indication we have found that relates at all to this is the reference cited above to "partner cities having engaged in extensive land use planning activities to stabilize natural market forces. " It is unclear what this means, but if it is meant to apply to mitigation measures or alternatives to prevent gentrification related displacement, it must be addressed in much greater detail than is provided herein. We have closely followed land use planning activities along the SW corridor, and while we are aware that planning has begun to assess the inventory of current housing along the corridor, we are not aware of any work done yet to address how to minimize involuntary displacement due to escalating land values and rents.

The DEIS is legally defective until it specifically addresses mitigation measures or alternatives. L4, U

Sincerely,

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/s/ Russ Adams

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Enclosure

PERCH CONSULTING

HPP Housing Preservation Project

AFFORDABLE RENTAL OPPORTUNITIES IN A CHANGING SUBURB

PREPARED BY PERCH CONSULTING

MARCH 7, 2011

This report aims to create a risk assessment measure that can predict likelihood of gentrification in rental property near an impending major transit improvement. The City of Hopkins, Minnesota, is preparing for the construction of the Southwest Light Rail line in 2014-2015. The light rail transit (LRT) line has three proposed stops within the city that would become operational around 2017. The stop on Blake Road is of particular interest due to the high level of blight, abandoned, vacant, and underutilized properties in the area. This neighborhood is expected to undergo major redevelopment over the next decade, and the transit improvement is a primary catalyst. Hopkins is located ten miles from downtown Minneapolis, and is served by several major highways. It has a fairly unique housing stock, with a more urban feel and smaller scale than the surrounding suburbs, as well as a major asset in its charming, traditional downtown business district. As of the study date, average rents in Hopkins are substantially less expensive than in the adjacent central cities. The Housing Preservation Project aims to identify properties that are particularly at risk of becoming too expensive for current residents as the transit improvement sets off a new period of redevelopment.

Gentrification is a troublesome side effect of otherwise positive changes in city infrastructure and housing stock. The reviving of interest in a neighborhood usually leads to rising property values, healthier business activity, improved curb appeal of residential and commercial areas, increased infill building and other redevelopment, along with corresponding decreases in crime and disinvestment in the physical building stock. While these are all considered positive changes, the term "gentrification" connotes a shift in neighborhood composition that prices out existing residents, and replaces them with higher-income people. Although most studies of this phenomenon focus on homeownership, it seems apparent that the rental market would be more sensitive to the effects of gentrification and demonstrate evidence of its existence more immediately. This is perhaps particularly the case when the effect grows primarily out of a single major improvement in a geographic area. In this report, a baseline for such an area is established in order to anticipate and measure the results of a major transit investment in a suburban area of Minneapolis.

Evidence in the Literature

The responsiveness of rental markets to reinvestment in an area is not a well understood phenomenon, but a recent study of a student dominated neighborhood in Winnipeg did ask a similar question. Changes in rents were documented over a five year period of property management company reinvestment in an area of concentrated government-sponsored urban renewal efforts. The authors indicate that the neighborhood change is in its infancy. Much more investment, additional physical improvements, and demographic shifts are anticipated in the area. Even with that caveat, rents in the area had already increased between 30% for 1-bedrooms to over 50% for two-bedroom units over the five year study period. The Dukakis Center for Urban and Regional Policy studied gentrification effects in a number of US cities between 1990 and 2000. Their findings showed that in some cities rents near new Light Rail stops rose 50% faster over the

decade compared to the larger Metropolitan Statistical Area in which they were located. In this context, concern about the loss of natural affordability in the city of Hopkins appears to be fully justified.

The arrival of LRT in the city is part of a larger body of research that examines the impact of transit. The academic literature suggests that proximity to fixed route transit stops can contribute greatly to increasing property values. A study of property values in Chicago demonstrated that in most economic climates over a thirty year study period, the growth in property values for units near rail lines had a 20 point advantage over property values beyond 0.5 miles from the stop (Lin, 2002). A recent study in the Twin Cities demonstrated similar effects on property values around the Hiawatha Light Rail line. Where sales prices prior to the introduction of LRT lagged 4% below the surrounding area, after the train became operational, sales prices surged ahead to 16% *above* average for the larger neighborhood (Goetz, 2010).

One surprising side note to research regarding transit is an examination of the actual transportation choices made by new residents. A timeline developed by the Dukakis Center report outlines a number of common unintended consequences of transit improvements. As land value increases, rents also go up, and current populations are replaced by families with higher incomes that tend to be car owners. This can result in lower ridership than would be anticipated with the existing resident profile. In another study, the values of the gentrifying class of a certain area were examined at length. While their political beliefs favor public transit, their actual usage of that mode was lower than average. This is important to remember when considering the desired results of the location of a transit stop. While much of the decision making is under practical constraints, such as site control, a high priority in the selection of stop locations is to benefit future users of the resource. If the less wealthy, including zero-car households, are a large share of the likely group of users, a gentrification process that replaces them with middle-class residents who *value* transit, but rarely actually use it, is a poor outcome for the transit asset itself. Preserving opportunities for heavy transit users to live near stops is valuable across sectors.

METHODOLOGY

A telephone survey was conducted with property managers of as many rental units as could be reached in the winter of 2010-2011. Property managers included in the survey oversee a total of 381 rental townhomes and 2,836 apartments were contacted. This constitutes 68% of registered apartment licenses and 82% of townhouses. Although there are a fair number of unsampled converted condos, duplex, triplex and single family home rentals in Hopkins (about 1000 in total) the overall sample is a fairly valuable representation at 57% of the total number of units. In addition, intervention and advocacy efforts will likely be more effective if focused on companies and individuals that own multi-family developments and buildings. In addition, the vast majority of triplex, duplex and single-family rentals are beyond a mile away from the three station areas.

The survey gathered information about unit composition of buildings and current rents, and property managers were asked their opinions about what type of effect the LRT line might have on the demand for their units and the rents they are able to charge. Although a few subsidized properties were included in the study, information about units where rent is income-based are not factored in to any averages. The loss of affordability in units with subsidy is considered a different issue than the out-pricing of working-class residents from market-rate rental housing and is not the focus of this study. Results for a senior building that includes some high-end amenities specific to their resident population were also not included in averages.

PROPOSED FORMULA

The situation that Hopkins faces in its immediate future is not unique. If the federal government continues its commitment to rail transit in the upcoming years, it is very likely that low-cost suburbs will receive the benefits and face the challenges that major improvements can bring. There are a couple of strategic advantages of using Hopkins as a test case. First, there is a similar study that examined shifts in property values as LRT was introduced in another part of the metropolitan area. The culture and market variables that can color the impact of a transit investment are thus

This formula is nearly pure conjecture, intended primarily for the purposes of helping the city of Hopkins and interested non-profit organizations to target their resources strategically at preserving affordable housing opportunities near the new LRT line. Its secondary purpose is to provide a suggestion that can be tested as the transitions actually take place in a real life setting. As the study may have an impact on how resources are allocated, it will not be possible to evaluate it as a controlled experiment, but institutional knowledge about efforts to preserve affordable rental opportunities can help to mitigate this problem as long as the idea stays in the sights of local advocates and city officials and efforts are recorded so that they can be considered in an ultimate evaluation of the accuracy of the risk assessment formula laid out in this section.

FORMULA COMPONENTS

This formula is designed to help identify the level of risk that an individual property will become unaffordable, defined as exceeding Fair Market Rent. Components of the formula should include all items that are demonstrated in the literature to have an impact on gentrification, such as proximity to a stop.

PROXIMITY to BLAKE ROAD and OTHER STATION AREAS

The area around the Blake Road station is of particular interest to this study as a focus for intervention. This area is also currently the most distressed. Proposals for the Shady Oak stop suggest extending the street grid for new development and the downtown stop is set to capitalize on the existing asset of the thriving Mainstreet business district without competing with it. In contrast, the Blake Road corridor is currently struggling with underuse and blight. Just beyond the main corridor is a large amount of multifamily rental housing, much of which is among the lowest rent amounts. This is the most important category, given the existing research about property values and transit. The units in the closest range to the Blake Station are put in the highest risk bracket.

Downtown and Shady Oak Station Areas
Beyond 0.75 miles: 0
0.5 to 0.74 miles: 4
0.25 to 0.5 miles: 6
Zero to 0.25 miles: 8

Blake Road Station Area
Beyond 0.75 miles: 2
0.5 to 0.74 miles: 6
0.25 to 0.5 miles: 8
Zero to 0.25 miles: 10

RELATIVE RENTS

There are a number of ways that rents in a small area, such as a transit stop, could be compared with the broader community. For most housing programs, either Fair Market Rent or Area Median Income (AMI) could be a starting point. Median income is calculated for the three-county suburban area on an annual basis and various percentages of this median are used to determine the relative status of lower-income families. The standard calculation for rent affordability is 30% of income. Using the 2010 AMI statistics, rent that is determined "affordable" for the following categories are listed below. Unaffordable rents are highlighted in grey.

			80% AMI		50% AMI		30% AMI	
Household Size	Unit Size	Hopkins Average	Affordable Rent	% of Hopkins Average	Affordable Rent	% of Hopkins Average	Affordable Rent	% of Hopkins Average
1	0	$655	$1,128	172%	$735	112%	$441	67%
2	1	$740	$1,289	174%	$840	114%	$505	68%
3	2	$932	$1,450	156%	$945	101%	$568	61%
4	3	$1,214	$1,610	133%	$1,050	86%	$630	52%

Despite being the industry standard, this method of determining who is considered low-income has some setbacks in this context. Typically, 80% AMI is called "low-income," 50%, "very low income," and 30% is considered "extremely low-income." It is helpful to see that, using this perspective, Hopkins averages are well within reach of all but the lowest income families. However, the translation of household size to unit size is problematic on its own. The Section 8 program does not award a larger bedroom-size voucher for families with opposite gender or age differentiated children to have their own space. However, as an example, a single parent may find that it is untenable for a teen to share a room with a small child, causing a three person household to require a three bedroom unit. Housing Authorities do use AMI to determine eligibility and family composition effects the voucher size, but the dollar amount of a family's subsidy is based on Fair Market Rent.

Fair market rent (FMR) is determined on an annual basis by HUD for different geographic areas. There are several calculations that could be used in this model.

	Fair Market Rent Options				
	0BR	1BR	2BR	3BR	4BR
55305	$890	$1,050	$1,270	$1,660	$1,870
55343	$730	$860	$1,040	$1,360	$1,530
Average Small Area	$810	$955	$1,155	$1,510	$1,700
Metropolitan Statistical Area	$646	$761	$924	$1,210	$1,359
Metro HRA Payment Standards	$671	$790	$960	$1,294	$1,454

There are several considerations involved in making this selection. The Metropolitan Statistical Area is the broadest geography for which HUD calculates Fair Market Rent. In the Minneapolis-St Paul-Bloomington MSA, depressed rent amounts in exurban, rural and less desirable inner city

neighborhoods have kept this value low. In contrast, looking at the small area FMR for zip codes that cover Hopkins and some of the surrounding suburbs demonstrates the relative desirability of the area, and the associated higher rents.

In an inner city gentrification assessment, it would be logical to use the fair market rents for the city itself. The results of this study would look much more dire if we used that measure, as the suburbs that share Hopkins's zip codes are significantly more expensive. However, renters are more mobile than homeowners. Although suburban and urban markets are by no means fully distinct, it seems logical that renters have selected the type of neighborhood where they want to live. More specifically, suburbs are interpreted as competing primarily against one another for renters who prefer to live outside the central city. This assumption makes the Metro HRA Payment Standards the best candidate for comparison. Metro HRA has Section 8 jurisdiction over most Anoka, Hennepin and Ramsey County suburbs. The payment standards they use are based on FMRs for the communities in which they operate, and which ostensibly share a market of suburban renters.

This factor is slightly less important than proximity to a stop. One critical aspect of this category is the transition of properties out of the range that Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher holders can afford. For this reason, emphasis is on the units right on the margin. Increasing of the lowest rents does have the potential to become unaffordable to existing tenants without rental subsidies, but there are not defined ways to specifically evaluate this issue, so it is rated as a lower concern for the purposes of the formula. Similarly, increasing rents that are above FMR is somewhat undesirable, although slightly less relevant to this study, hence its lower point value.

70% to 79% FMR: 2
80% to 89% FMR: 3
90% to 99% FMR: 4
100% to 140% FMR: 1

Vacancy Rate
Increasing demand will result in filling vacancies before property managers begin raising rents. As a result, points are inversely related to vacancy rate.

0%: 5
1-3%: 4
4-6%: 3
7-9%: 2
10%+: 1

Opinion of Property Manager
This is given a relatively lower score. Many property managers were surprised to hear about the upcoming improvement, and it is far enough in the future that only a few had concrete impressions about the potential impact. It is likely that if this survey is repeated in two years that these questions may be more revealing.

Confident the LRT will increase demand: 2
Believes it may have that effect: 1.5
Unsure of the result: 1
Believes it unlikely that it will increase demand: 0.5
Confident the LRT will have no effect: 0

Year Built and Renovation
A dummy variable was created for this element giving a single point for buildings built since 1990 or substantially renovated since 2000. Even the potential increase in rents resulting from the transit improvement is not likely to be enough to dramatically transform renovation schedules. If the mid-2000s boom did not spur reinvestment in these properties, it is unlikely that access to light rail would do so.

Section 8 Vouchers Accepted
Housing Choice Vouchers are a federal strategy specifically aimed at helping to eliminate concentrations of poverty. Almost all properties with high proportions of subsidized renters in the sample are on the cusp of exceeding payment standards. Although landlords routinely lower rents by a small amount to meet those standards, it is feasible that sufficient increased demand for units could make those compromises untenable and eliminate those housing opportunities.

50+ voucher holders: 4
30-49 voucher holders: 3
10-29 voucher holders: 2
1-9 voucher holders: 1

The total number of points is simply tabulated for every individual property

RESULTS

Total scores range from 5 to 23, with the bulk of properties in the Blake Road area scoring in the high teens into the twenties. Although this is somewhat by design, variables besides location certainly contributed to the higher level of risk perceived in properties in this area. As seen in this first chart, townhomes are not perceived to be a high risk category, as their prices are already high in most cases. Auburn is the only complex that is closer to Blake Road than either of the other stops.

	NUMBER OF UNITS				AVERAGE PERCENT OF FMR	DISTANCE FROM NEAREST PROPOSED LRT STOP (MI)	VACANCY RATE	SECTION 8 TENANTS	TOTAL RISK LEVEL
	0 BR	1 BR	2 BR	3 BR					
TOWNHOUSES									
Raspberry Woods Townhomes	0	32	32	0	141%	0.5	3%	-	7
Brentwood Park Townhomes	0	0	143	3	98%	1.3	0%	58	14
Westbrook Patio Homes	0	0	17	18	111%	0.6	0%	2	12
Auburn North and South	0	27	63	46	124%	0.6	2%	-	14

Apartments show a wide range of scores that reflect the current diversity in the Hopkins rental market. There are five complexes that score at 20 or above, and all are in the Blake Road category. These very risk properties constitute well over 1,000 units, as the list includes a few of the city's largest developments

If this formula's predictions turn out to be even somewhat accurate, a full 20% of the city's rental stock could be at risk of gentrification. This calculation is conservative – it does not include any unsampled unit types, such as the duplexes along Lake Street, whose rents would likely face the same type of upward pressure.

	Number of Units				Average Percent of FMR	Distance from Nearest Proposed LRT Stop (Mi)	Vacancy Rate	Section 8 Tenants	Total Risk Level
	0 BR	1 BR	2 BR	3 BR					
MARKET RATE APARTMENTS									
NEAREST to DOWNTOWN and SHADY OAK STATIONS									
Loon Apartments	0	6	6	0	81%	0.2	17%	-	15
Lamplighter Apartments	0	12	12	0	81%	0.2	3%	1	18
Town Terrace	0	28	80	0	82%	0.3	3%	7	19
110 11th Ave S	0	20	0	0	78%	0.3	0%	-	15
Parkside	1	6	21	0	77%	0.4	0%	-	14
33 6th Avenue N	0	24	24	0	83%	0.4	4%	2	15
Viking-Hopkins Apartments	0	9	3	0	83%	0.4	8%	1	14
Hopkins Park Plaza	110	0	0	0	115%	0.4	0%	-	15
922 ½ Mainstreet	2	2	0	0	72%	0.6	0%	-	11
Central Park Manor	0	103	6	0	83%	0.6	6%	-	10
Chapel View Apartments	8	44	4	0	134%	0.7	0%	-	11
Rosewood West	0	70	85	0	94%	0.9	0%	-	11
Trailside	0	8	8	0	77%	1.0	0%	-	8
Golden Apartments	0	15	8	0	81%	1.2	17%	2	5
Greenfield Apartments	0	117	181	27	116%	1.2	6%	-	6
Brentwood Apartments	5	75	0	0	83%	1.3	3%	32	10
NEAREST to BLAKE ROAD STATION									
Westside Village I and II	6	51	153	60	93%	0.1	0%	16	22
Knollwood Towers East	50	79	0	0	84%	0.2	4%	-	18
2nd Street Station	0	150	0	0	88%	0.2	0%	-	21
Creekview Apartments	2	35	0	0	80%	0.3	8%	4	18
Hiawatha Court	0	60	0	0	83%	0.3	3%	6	21
Creekwood Estates	110	106	70	2	91%	0.4	1%	58	22
Cambridge Towers	52	52	6	0	93%	0.5	3%	-	19
Ramsgate Apartments	0	180	180	0	99%	0.5	2%	54	23
Carriage House	0	13	22	2	118%	0.6	1%	3	15
Plantation Apartments	0	14	47	2	111%	0.6	0%	2	16
SUBSIDIZED APARTMENTS									
41 8th Ave N	0	14	0	0	N/A				
Hopkins Village Apartments	0	130	31	0					
Sonoma Apartments	0	18	2	0					
SENIOR APARTMENTS									
The Terraces	32	45	9	0	N/A				
The Towers Retirement Living	0	129	95	0					

The data were aggregated for easy comparison with future studies, by bedroom size. As with the other data, the high-end senior building with included services and the buildings with income-based rent are not included in the averages.

APARTMENTS	0 BR	1 BR	2 BR	3 BR
Total Units	378	1615	1053	93
Grand Total	3139			
Avg Rents	$655	$740	$932	$1,214

TOWNHOUSES	0 BR	1 BR	2 BR	3 BR
Total Units	-	59	255	67
Grand Total	381			
Avg Rents	-	$1,023	$1,098	$1,411

LIMITATIONS

This report was compiled for the express purpose of providing the Housing Preservation Project and the City of Hopkins with a practical target list of properties that face gentrification. This is still not a complete list, and there are several properties very near the Blake Station area that could be included in a continuing study.

Given the state of the housing market in 2011, it is likely that rent prices are still depressed, and as the economic situation improves overall, it will be difficult to isolate the causes of rent increases. However, if rents increase more quickly or in greater amounts for properties very close to the station areas, the effect could be teased out statistically.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The major finding that many properties in the Blake Area exhibit other risk factors is cause for some city and non-profit discussions on courses of action that could help prevent full gentrification, such as inclusionary zoning for new development, a replacement policy for demolition permits, or other planning tools. Reaching out with a more extensive survey to property managers and to residents could also help assess the risks, by determining factors such as rent-to-income ratios for at risk buildings. This study has been completed enough in advance of the transit improvement that there is time to follow up with additional research as well as to plan adequately for the future. The 2nd Street Station apartment complex, however, shows that that ball is already rolling. The major redevelopment of that property and its rechristening that nods to the coming stop across the street is a glimmer of the future of the area – and the granite countertops that might come with it.

Reinterviewing property managers for the same buildings immediately after the Southwest LRT commences operation, and then again in 2021 would provide the opportunity to examine a real life test case, and to evaluate the effectiveness of the risk assessment formula postulated in this report.

There is a tremendous amount to be gained from futher research into this area, both in informing future decisions about transit improvements and aiding affordable housing advocates and city planners in anticipating unintended consequences of gentrification around transit hubs. Comparisons with the existing Hiawatha Line and the coming LRT connection between Minneapolis and downtown Saint Paul will offer invaluable context.

Property by Property

Alphabetical Index

110 11th Avenue South	City
2nd Street Station	Blake
33 6th Avenue North	City
41 8th Avenue North	Special
922 ½ Main Street	City
Brentwood Apartments	City
Cambridge Towers	Blake
Carriage House	Blake
Central Park Manor	City
Chapel View Apartments	City
Creekview Apartments	Blake
Creekwood Estates	Blake
Golden Apartments	City
Greenfield Apartments	City
Hiawatha Court	Blake
Hopkins Park Plaza	City
Hopkins Village Apartments	Special
Knollwood Towers East	Blake
Lamplighter Apartments	City
Loon Apartments	City
Parkside Apartments	City
Plantation Apartments	Blake
Ramsgate Apartments	Blake
Rosewood West	City
Sonoma Apartments	Special
The Terraces	Special
The Towers Retirement Living	Special
Town Terrace (lines 11 and 22)	City
Trailside Apartments	City
Viking-Hopkins Apartments	City
Westside Village I and II	Blake

BLAKE AREA PROPERTIES
Included in the Study

0.1mi **Westside Village & Westside Village II**
97-107 Blake Road North
270 Units, Mostly 2-Bedroom
Rents average 7% lower than FMR

0.2 mi **Knollwood Towers East**
320 Blake Road North
129 Units, Slightly more 1-Bedrooms than Studios
Rents average 16% lower than FMR

0.2 mi **2nd Street Station**
1005-1121 2nd Street North
150 1-Bedroom Units
Rents average 12% lower than FMR

0.3 mi **Creekview Apartments**
434 Blake Road North
37 Units, Primarily 1-Bedroom
Rents average 20% lower than FMR

0.3 mi **Hiawatha Court**
1105-1125 Hiawatha Avenue
60 1-Bedroom Units
Rents average 17% lower than FMR

0.4 mi **Creekwood Estates**
1328 Lake Street
288 Units: 110 Studios, 106 1-Bedroom, 70 2-Bedrooms, 2 3-Bedrooms
Rents average 9% lower than FMR

0.5 mi **Cambridge Towers**
1301 Cambridge Street
110 Units, Mostly split between Studios and 1-Bedrooms
Rents average 7% lower than FMR

0.5 mi **Ramsgate Apartments**
700 Cambridge, 725 Lake, & 401-421 Van Buren Avenue North
360 Units, Half 1-Bedroom and half 2-Bedroom
Rents are almost exactly at FMR – there are many Section 8 tenants here. Voucher holders may not rent units that exceed FMR with their subsidy, so this could be a factor.

0.6 mi **Carriage House**
400 Cambridge Street
37 Units, Mostly 2-Bedroom
Rents average 18% higher than FMR

0.6 mi **Plantation Apartments**
500 Cambridge Street
61 Units, Mostly 2-Bedroom
Rents average 11% higher than FMR

0.2 mi **Loon Apartments**
57 6th Avenue South
12 Units, Half 1-Bedroom and half 2-bedroom
Rents average 19% lower than FMR

0.2 mi **Lamplighter Apartments**
28, 38 6th Avenue South
24 Units, Half 1-Bedroom and half 2-Bedroom
Rents average 19% lower than FMR

0.3 mi **Town Terrace Apartments**
19 – 49 5th Avenue South, 9850-9930 Excelsior Boulevard
108 Units, Primarily 2-Bedroom
Rents average 9% lower than FMR

0.3 mi **110 11th Avenue South**
20 Units, All 1-Bedroom
Rents average 22% lower than FMR

0.4 mi **Parkside Apartments**
115-129 13th Avenue South
28 Units, Primarily 2-Bedroom
Rents average 23% lower than FMR

0.4 mi **33 6th Avenue North**
48 Units, Half 1-Bedroom and half 2-Bedroom
Rents average 17% lower than FMR

0.4 mi **Viking-Hopkins Apartments**
105 13th Avenue
12 Units, Mostly 1-Bedroom
Rents average 17% lower than FMR

0.4 mi **Hopkins Park Plaza**
10-36 5th Avenue North & 517 Main Street
110 Studio Apartments
Rents average 15% higher than FMR

0.6 mi **922 ½ Main Street**
4 Units, Half studio and half 1-Bedroom
Rents average 28% lower than FMR

0.6 mi **Central Park Manor**
1510 Main Street
109 Units, Primarily 1-Bedroom
Rents average 17% lower than FMR

0.7 mi **Chapel View Apartments**
605 Minnetonka Mills Road
56 Units, Primarily 1-Bedroom
Rents average 33% higher than FMR

0.9 mi **Rosewood West**
460 5th Avenue North
155 Units, Half 1-Bedroom and half 2-Bedroom
Rents average 6% lower than FMR

1.0 mi **Trailside Apartments**
335 17th Avenue North
16 Units, Half 1-Bedroom and half 2-Bedroom
Rents average 23% lower than FMR

1.2 mi **Golden Apartments**
529 17th Avenue North
23 Units, Primarily 1-Bedroom
Rents average 19% lower than FMR

1.2 mi **Greenfield Apartments**
920-1030 Feltl Court
325 Units: 117 1-Bedrooms, 181 2-Bedrooms, 27 3-Bedrooms
Rents average 16% higher than FMR

1.3 mi **Brentwood Apartments**
614-626 Robinwood Lane
80 Units, Primarily 1-Bedroom
Rents average 17% lower than FMR

SPECIAL CATAGORIES

41 8th Avenue North
13 1-Bedroom Apartments
This PRAC 811 property has a waiting list for income-based rents. Existing tenants are looking forward to the improvement, but there would be no other meaningful impact for this property.

Hopkins Village Apartments
161 Units, Primarily 1-Bedroom
64 units are project-based section 8, and 97 are Section 42 and restricted to 60% AMI. This property serves the elderly disabled population and typically has a 3% vacancy rate. Between the special population, the vacancies and the income restriction, the LRT would not make a material difference for this property.

Sonoma Apartments
20 Units, Primarily 1-Bedroom
Units are assisted with project-based section 8.
Many residents of this property are in wheelchairs, and all are disabled in some way. The property manager believed that these residents are unlikely to use the train.

The Terraces & The Towers Retirement Living
910 & 1011 Feltl Court
310 Senior Units, Studio, 1-Bedroom and 2-Bedroom Units
Leases at this building include some special services, such as an on-site nurse and a shuttle. Rents are up to three and four times FMR and are a significant outlier for the area, but the property managers stated in the interview that despite the close proximity to a proposed stop, the population of this building is very unlikely to use public transit.

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zurn0015@umn.edu
12/11/2012 03:37 PM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us
cc
bcc
Subject Comment on the SWLRT-DEIS

To:

Hennepin County Housing, Community Works and Transit
Attn: Southwest Transit way
701 Fourth Ave. S., Suite 400,
Minneapolis, MN 55415
swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us

Attached please find my Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) – Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) response. Please use the attached PDF version, though I have attached an MS Word version in the case that the PDF version is not suitable for your document formats.

Thank you for including my response.

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2608 Webster Avenue S.
St. Louis Park, MN 55416

From: Denise Zurn
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zurn0015@umn.edu
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11 December 2012

To: Hennepin County Housing, Community Works and Transit
Attn: Southwest Transit way
701 Fourth Avenue S. – Suite 400
Minneapolis, MN 55415
swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us

Regarding: Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) – Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in response to the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) – Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) published in regard the SWLRT which includes the proposed freight rail re-route in St. Louis Park, Minnesota.

The current SWLRT-DEIS has significant flaws and the planned re-route idea either needs to be dropped completely or a great deal more study must be done. As this action is proposed and described in Chapter 1, Section 1.3.2.3 it is rebuilding a little known, lightly used spur line into a main freight rail line, which will initially allow a 788% increase of rail car traffic. C

What the SWLRT-DEIS does not address, but should, are the real world impacts of this action on the affected area. I have several specific concerns, including:

Noise and Vibration

The portion of the report dealing with Noise (3-93 and 94) and Vibration (4-117) causes me great concern. The SWLRT-DEIS underestimates the effects of vibration for because it considers only the immediate traffic increase from the re-route and not additional traffic that is likely to occur. Currently trains travel on the MN&S for approximately two hours a month. If the re-route occurs there will be a minimum of 6 hours 39 minutes, a 232% increase, in train related vibration each month. Currently, all vibration and its negative impacts occur five days a week during regular business hours. In the future vibration will occur on weekends and nights as well as during business hours. Not only will the duration of vibration increase, but also the amount of vibration will increase with longer, heavier trains. The assumption stated in the SWLRT-DEIS that the increase in vibration is insignificant is incorrect. Listed below are reasons why the assumptions are incorrect: C C

A quiet zone is said to end all of the noise issues. This assumption is incorrect for the following reasons:

1. A quiet zone is not a sure thing.
    a. Implementation could be denied by the school board because the building of a quiet zone will limit access to the Senior High School. C

b. Locomotive engineers are compelled to blow the horn if they perceive a dangerous situation. What kind of responsible person would drive a train through a series of blind crossings, past several schools without blowing the horn? C

2. Quiet zones do not limit locomotive noise.
   a. Multiple locomotives will be necessary for pulling a fully loaded train up the 0.86% grade of the new interconnect. C
   b. Multiple locomotives laboring with long trains will make more noise than the locomotives that currently use the MN&S.
3. Trains traveling west will need to use their brakes to maintain a slow speed going down grade and through curves.
4. Train wheels on curves squeal; the tighter the curve the greater the squeal.
5. Bells on crossing arms in a quiet zone will ring the entire time a train is in the crossing.
6. Because there are currently no trains at night, even one night train means diminished livability.

Safety

The portion of the report dealing with Safety (3-132 and 133) causes me great concern. Only a passing reference to safety and the proposed re-route is mentioned in the SWLRT-DEIS. However, there are many features about the MN&S that make it undesirable as a freight rail main line. The reasons the MN&S is an unsafe main rail line include, but are not limited to the following:

- Multiple grade level crossings;
- Proximity to St. Louis Park schools, homes and businesses – many are closer than the length of a rail car; C
- Number of pedestrians who transverse crossing every day;
- Permeable soil under MN&S;
- Medical emergency response hindered when crossings are blocked – only one fire station has emergency medical response (page 80);
- Tight curves - derailments are more likely to occur on curves than on straight track;
- Hazardous materials are being carried on the rail line without sufficient right of way.

Crossings

The portion of the report dealing with freight rail trains blocking street crossings (6-38 and 39) causes me great concern. In the SWLRT-DEIS we are told the blocked crossings will not cause significant travel or safety issues. To the consultant sitting miles away the increase may seem insignificant, but to residents who must travel the area and rely on quick responses from emergency vehicles the 580% increase in blocked crossing time is unacceptable.

A supposed benefit of the proposed re-route is explained in chapter 1, pages 11 and 12 of the SWLRT-DEIS. According to the document Twin City and Western (TCW) freight trains will regularly travel north of St. Louis Park into Golden Valley, Crystal and New Hope. When the trains travel north they will have to cross Cedar Lake Road; however, no data is given for the impact of this blocked crossing. C

Issues about blocked crossings not dealt with in the SWLRT-DEIS include, but are not limited to the following:

- Effects of multiple blocked crossings on residents' ability to move freely about their neighborhood;

- Amount of time it takes congestion to clear once a train has passed -
    - Making turns from one street to another with backed up traffic, and
    - Pedestrian safety as traffic clears;
- Possibility that trains will be going slower than the "worst case scenario" in the EAW, because trains often stop at McDonald's for train crews to have a break and when they resume travel they will NOT be going 10 mph; C
- Medical response times can be affected -
    - Narrow side streets will be blocked with waiting automobiles, and
    - Only one fire station has medical response;
- No plan to alleviate auto traffic congestion when train volumes increase.

Closing 29th Street

The portion of the report dealing with the closing of the 29th street crossings (Chapter 3/p. 135) causes me great concern.

Residents from the Birchwood neighborhood requested on behalf of the Birchwood neighborhood that the grade crossing at 29th Street stay open.

- According to page 135 of the DEIS the 29th street crossing is being closed as a mitigation measure.
- However, the closing of the crossing will not benefit the neighborhood. It will, in fact, jeopardize residents because it will make emergency vehicle access difficult – if not impossible – during winter months due to narrowed streets. C

It is inconsistent with good city planning practices to remove the 29th Street crossing from what is already a very limited street grid in this part of the community. Such a closing will push more traffic onto Minnetonka Boulevard, which is already a heavily-traveled roadway without the turn lanes and signals that manage public safety concerns. Yet, improvements to Minnetonka Blvd were ignored when this closing was included.

Property Values

The portion of the report dealing with loss of property value in the re-route area should be in Chapter 9: Indirect Impacts, but it is not, and this causes me great concern. C

If I owned a home on what are very short distances from this rail, I would feel compelled to sell it to manage safety concerns for my family. The rail sits almost literally on the other side of your back-yard picnic table from you. C

Yet the SWLRT-DEIS does NOT mention the impact of re-routed freight trains from a main line fright corridor to a bridge line on property values of the re-route area.

Freight rail re-routes are not exclusive to Minnesota, and the cost of the re-routes to residents has been documented. For example, according to an article in a 2001 issue of The Appraisal Journal bringing additional freight rail traffic to an area will negatively affect properties 250 feet from the rail tracks by 5-7%. All of the properties along the MN&S are well within 250 feet. Based on this article, one can conclude that property values along the MN&S will drop more than 7%.

T1

Two major questions arise that are not addressed in the SWLRT-DEIS.

- First, what happens to the tax base of St. Louis Park when the drop in value is realized?
- Second, how are property owners who lose value because of this government action going to be compensated for their loss?

C

T0

It is unreasonable for the Hennepin County to ask any resident to pay a higher price for the benefits of light rail than others.

Safety at the High School

The portion of the report dealing with freight rail noise and safety at the High School (Chapters 3, 4, and 9) causes me the ***GREATEST*** concern.

The unique noise and safety issues associated with locating main line freight within 35 feet of the High School parking lot and 75 feet from the building are not adequately discussed.

When the High School is mentioned the information is dismissive. At no point in the SWLRT –DEIS are the negative impacts the extra freight trains will have on the learning environment and safety of the students at St. Louis Park High School. Before the proposed re-route should even be considered, the cost of sufficiently mitigating the impact to St. Louis Park High School need to be evaluated.

C

Examples of concerns include but are not limited to the following:

- How the school will be evacuated should evacuation be necessary when a train is passing;
- How the many classrooms affected by train noise will be sound proofed;
- How the students who want to use the new rail bridge to cross Highway 7 on their way to school will be kept off the bridge;
- How the added vibration of longer, heavier, and more frequent trains will be mitigated so the investment the school makes in technology is not lost;
- How the safety hazards of blind crossings, curves, and hundreds of teenagers in close proximity will be eliminated;
- How a derailment will be prevented so our children's lives are not at risk.

C

As a parent of 4 students who recently attended St. Louis Park High School, I cannot stress enough the need for a thorough study of ALL mitigation options and costs to reduce or remove student exposure from the proposed high level of freight rail through the high school campus.

The head-in-the-sand approach taken to date with regard to severe safety issues is completely unacceptable. In my personal opinion, only complete grade separation of all roadways near the high school, from this proposed high level of freight rail, is likely to sufficiently mitigate the risks.

Further, as a property tax payer, I do not think it is reasonable to place the entire financial burden of future grade separation, or relocation of the St. Louis Park High School, on St. Louis Park residents. These future costs will hit the discussion table when – not if – serious student injury results from the proposed high volume of freight rail through the high school campus without appropriate mitigation.

If these changes do indeed benefit the entire region, then ALL mitigation options and costs should be part of the discussion, part of the study, and part of the project.

C

The DEIS is not Objective, nor is it Complete

Riddled with phantom assumptions, unsubstantiated assertions, and inexplicable omissions, the DEIS is not a serious attempt to consider the effect of the proposed re-route.

Chapter 1 of the DEIS states that without the re-route the TC&W's only options for moving its freight will be to access the MN&S tracks by use of the notorious switching wye in St. Louis Park, or to transfer cargo from railcars to highway trucks. The unstated assumption behind this statement is that the current route used by the TC&W will be severed. Presenting the either/or assumption for the switching wye or highway trucks creates the illusion of a fait accompli, when in fact the TC&W's current route through the Kenilworth corridor is a viable alternative. C

Unsubstantiated assertions include the depiction in the DEIS that the historical character of the Kenilworth corridor (Chapter 3, page 58) would be compromised by its continued use for freight train traffic. The Kenilworth corridor was the home to not just railroad tracks, but an *entire railroad yard* for over one hundred years, beginning long before the current homes in the area were built. C

Inexplicably omitted from the DEIS is how the re-route would be funded (Chapters 5 and 8).

- The re-route must be considered as part of the SWLRT.
- Even without mitigation, construction of the interconnect and upgrading the tracks on the MN&S to handle the heavier traffic is estimated to cost $125,000,000. This money was not originally included in the projected cost of the SWLRT, and the projected budget for the SWLRT has NOT been adjusted to recognize the added expense. C
- Also missing from the cost estimates are the costs for maintaining the interconnect structure after it is built.

The Process to choose Locally Preferred Alternative was Flawed

I am particularly concerned with Chapter 12 (Public and Agency Coordination and Comments).

NEPA 1500.2(d) states that the leading agency must "encourage and facilitate public involvement in decisions which affect the quality of the human environment." This regulation was clearly ignored in regards to the potential freight rail re-route issue. L2

Hennepin County did not "encourage and facilitate" public involvement concerning this issue. In fact: C

- Hennepin County refused attempts for public comments and concerns regarding the freight rail issue at all of the outreach meetings listed in table 12.1-1 and all of the community events listed in table 12.1-2.
- Public comments regarding the freight issue were denied at the 7, 14, and 23 OCT 2008 scoping meetings and the comment period that followed as listed in section 12.1.3.1.
- Public comments regarding the freight issue were refused at the 18 and 20 MAY 2010 open houses.
- Most importantly, public comments regarding the freight issue were denied during the entire LPA section process. This included all of public hearings listed in section 12.1.4.1.

All public comments regarding the freight rail issue were denied at all of SWLRT's major milestones leading up to the DEIS. Worse, the public was not made aware of the significant environmental impacts L2

caused by SWLRT and the potential freight re-route because the freight issue was not discussed at any of the SWLRT meetings leading up to the DEIS.

The only opportunity the public was given by Hennepin County to discuss the freight rail re-route was at the PMT meetings discussed in section 12.1.5. However, any discussion of possible alternatives to the re-route (co-location) or the freight re-route's connection with SWLRT was strictly forbidden at these PMT meetings. C, L2

Lastly, the DEIS fails to mention the 17 and 28 APR 2011 freight re-route listening sessions that were held by the city of St. Louis Park. Hundreds of St. Louis Park residents voiced their opposition to the freight re-route.

Because those opposed to the re-route have been denied comment during the entire SWLRT planning process leading up to the DEIS, the freight rail issue needs to be dropped or significant more work needs to be done on the alternative studies and public outreach.

Conclusion

None of the mitigation requested by the City of St. Louis Park on behalf of her residents, and by St. Louis Park residents directly, is being considered. This mitigation is not frivolous; it is necessary to maintain the safety, livability, and property values for the residents of St. Louis Park. C

The re-routing of freight WILL negatively impact the safety, livability, and community cohesion of St. Louis Park residents and students. The SWLRT DEIS does NOT adequately describe the impacts.

Freight re-route should not be given any further consideration as an option.

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To "swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us"
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cc "Freese, Lisa" <LFreese@co.scott.mn.us>
bcc
Subject Scott County Comment Letter

Please consider the attached comments from the Scott County Board of Commissioners regarding the Southwest Transitway Draft EIS. A hard copy of the letter will be delivered as well.

Thank you,

Andy Hingeveld, AICP
Senior Planner | Scott County Community Services
(952) 496-8839 | ahingeveld@co.scott.mn.us

SCOTT COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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JOSEPH WAGNER, DISTRICT 1
TOM WOLF, DISTRICT 2
DAVID MENDEN, DISTRICT 3
BARBARA MARSCHALL, DISTRICT 4
JON ULRICH, DISTRICT 5

December 11, 2012

Hennepin County
Housing, Community Works & Transit
ATTN: Southwest Transitway
701 Fourth Avenue South, Suite 400
Minneapolis, MN 55415

Re: Southwest Transitway Draft Environmental Impact Statement

A

On behalf of the Scott County Board of Commissioners, I am hereby submitting the following comments regarding the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Southwest Transitway Light Rail Transit (LRT) line. Scott County supports the continued analysis and implementation of the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) to provide a regionally significant transit corridor for residents and businesses in the southwest metropolitan area.

C

P1

The 2030 Transportation Policy Plan has a 2030 goal of doubling transit ridership and a 2020 goal of a 50% ridership increase. The implementation of the Southwest Transitway will provide a significant investment to improve ridership opportunities and make transit more attractive for travelers in the southwest metropolitan area. However, we find that there are some additional opportunities not discussed in the DEIS that could further increase ridership and meet regional transportation policies of providing an integrated transit network. We are concerned that LRT connections to express bus service along TH 169 have not been fully addressed. In addition, the document does not discuss any future connections or impacts to the potential Dan Patch commuter corridor between Minneapolis and Northfield. Please consider the following comments regarding these concerns.

- The DEIS does not reference any recommended connections of the Southwest Transitway LRT to TH 169, an Express Bus Corridor with Transit Advantages. There are five proposed stations in the vicinity of TH 169 (Golden Triangle, City West, Opus, Downtown Hopkins, Blake Road) that could be accessed by express bus service along TH 169. All five LRT stations are planned to include Park and Ride facilities. However the DEIS does not identify which stations, if any, would be utilized for express bus service connections along TH 169.

- The DEIS also does not mention any transit advantage opportunities along TH 169 to provide quick access for express buses to and from any of the LRT stations. LRT station locations and arterial road connections (such as TH 169) should be evaluated to determine efficient routing of transit service from the TH 169 corridor. P1

- The proposed relocation of freight rail traffic to the CP MN & S and BNSF Wayzata rail lines would redirect freight rail traffic to the Dan Patch Line commuter corridor. The Dan Patch Line is a 40-mile corridor from downtown Minneapolis in Hennepin County, through the west and south suburbs of Hennepin, Scott and Dakota Counties, to the city of Northfield in northern Rice County. In the 1990s the Dan Patch Commuter Rail project was identified in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Commuter Rail System Plan as a Tier 1 Corridor. The DEIS does not evaluate the impacts of an increase in freight rail activity on any future commuter rail opportunities along the CP MN & S and BNSF Wayzata rail lines (Dan Patch Line). The DEIS also does not evaluate opportunities for intermodal connectivity between the Southwest LRT Transitway and the future commuter rail corridor near the planned Louisiana and Wooddale LRT stations. C N12

Providing efficient connections between transit services will ensure that the overall regional transit system functions as a seamless and user-friendly regional network (2030 TPP Strategy 13a). This will help the region achieve its goals in increasing transit ridership. We thank you for your attention to these comments, and welcome your interest in addressing the concerns of Scott County.

Sincerely,

Tom Wolf
Chair, Scott County Board of Commissioners

Ann Beuch
<ann.beuch2@gmail.com>
12/11/2012 04:59 PM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us, marisol.simon@fta.dot.gov, Cathy Maes <director@icafoodshelf.org>
cc
bcc
Subject Southwest Transitway DEIS - Comments attached

Hello,

Please accept the attached comments in response to the Southwest Transitway DEIS.

Thank you,
Ann Beuch

--
Ann Beuch
Community Organizer
Blake Road Corridor Collaborative

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December 11, 2012

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cc: Marisol Simon
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ICA Food Shelf is located in Minnetonka, MN and serves the communities of Hopkins, Minnetonka, Excelsior, Shorewood, Greenwood, Deephaven, and Woodland. Our clients are neighbors who find themselves struggling to make ends meet. ICA offers a food distribution program; financial assistance for rent, mortgage, and utilities; and employment assistance. Since 2008, ICA Food Shelf has been the lead agency of the Blake Road Corridor Collaborative (BRCC). This collaborative is a partnership of community and governmental organizations working to engage with residents of the Blake Road area of Hopkins to improve the quality of life in the neighborhood through projects related to increasing safety, supporting positive activities for youth, and improving neighborhood infrastructure. Over the past year, with support from a Corridors of Opportunity Outreach and Engagement grant, this work has included outreach activities around the development of the Southwest Transitway.

The Blake Road neighborhood is an Environmental Justice Community located along the Southwest Transitway. It is slated to be a station location. The corridor contains primarily medium density housing that serves low-income families. A large majority of the housing, over 80%, is rental. About 4,000 people or 2,000 households live within this area and large immigrant populations including East African, Indian, and Latino are represented. Over 40 languages are spoken in the corridor. Since the neighborhood is divided between two separate Census tracts, exact demographic characteristics are difficult to capture. However, some demographic data are known about the two elementary schools that serve many families from the neighborhood. Of the 819 students enrolled in Eisenhower Elementary, 46.5% receive free and reduced price meals. This number increases to 70.6% when not including XinXing Academy, a Chinese immersion program. At Alice Smith, 55% of the 608 students enrolled receive free and reduced price meals. Additionally, 56.7% of students at Eisenhower and 48.4% at Alice Smith are students of color. We recommend that Environmental Justice Communities along the Southwest Transitway, particularly the Blake Road neighborhood, be duly noted within the Southwest Transitway DEIS. M5

ICA Food Shelf supports the construction of the Southwest Transitway. The light-rail has the potential to bring numerous benefits to the area. Not only will it provide community members with greater mobility and access to a regional transit system, resulting in better access to jobs, educational and recreational opportunities, it will also provide opportunities to enhance economic development and to increase affordable housing in the area. For these reasons, ICA Food Shelf supports the project. A

At the same time, there are several areas of concern to note. In the Blake Road neighborhood, over 80% of the housing is market-rate rental. While this housing had been affordable for lower-income families, rents have already been increasing due to the tight rental market, and residents are finding fewer opportunities to utilize Section 8 vouchers. There is a concern that construction of the light-rail will result in displacement of this naturally occurring affordable housing in the station area. Therefore, we recommend that construction of permanent quality affordable housing be included in station area plans. M5

There is also concern about increased traffic in the Blake Road area with the addition of an LRT station. Blake Road already maintains high levels of traffic, has few crosswalks and no bike lanes. This makes it difficult to cross and to walk or bike along and creates a barrier within the neighborhood. Unless addressed, the increased traffic due to the addition of the Southwest LRT stop will likely increase the difficulty of navigating the neighborhood. Therefore, we recommend that Blake Road be developed as a Complete Street - not only to ensure pedestrian, bicycle, and bus access to the station, but also to improve mobility within the neighborhood. Along with this, we recommend ensuring that the Cedar Lake LRT Regional Trail remains as is in its entirety since it provides neighborhood residents with valuable access to safe and convenient recreation and transportation. P4

Another related concern is the station location. Currently, the Blake Station is slated to be located on Second Street NE at the site occupied by 43 Hoops Basketball Academy. The DEIS mentions a parking facility is intended to be located at this station. For drivers to access this site from the south (the closest exit from Hwy 169), they would need to either take Jackson Avenue to Second Street NE or to turn onto Blake Road from Excelsior Boulevard and then turn left onto Second Street. Since neither Jackson Avenue nor Second Street are accustomed to as much traffic as Excelsior or Blake, neither of these options would be convenient for drivers and both would likely increase congestion in the area. It is also important to note the valuable role 43 Hoops Basketball Academy has played in the neighborhood in terms of community cohesion. With few places for community members to gather in the neighborhood, 43 Hoops has acted as a community center – partnering with the school district to offer a free summer lunch program to neighborhood families and providing meeting space for community groups. Given this important role 43 Hoops has played and given the concerns about increased traffic, we recommend that the station be located on the south side of the tracks which would allow traffic to enter the station area directly from Excelsior Boulevard. We also recommend that any parking facility added at this site be integrated with development that includes affordable housing and space for small businesses. If the station location is to remain at the current site under consideration north of the tracks, we recommend that the station development incorporates 43 Hoops so that this valuable community asset is not lost. I2

Along with an interest in affordable housing, community members have also expressed an interest in small business development. Although a business advisory committee has recently been established, there is a lack of involvement by small businesses along the line. We recommend engagement of small business owners and not only additional opportunities for these businesses to prepare for the impact of construction, but also opportunities to support small business development along the line. M2

By participating in outreach activities over the past year, we have seen the importance of building relationships with community members through one-to-one and small group meetings as well as the importance of bringing information, meetings, and events directly to neighborhood residents. We recommend that these types of activities continue in order for community members to be more fully engaged in the process, to voice concerns such as those listed above, and to create outcomes that benefit all members of the community to the greatest extent possible. L1

Sincerely,

Cathy Maes, Director
ICA Food Shelf
12990 St. Davids Road, Minnetonka, MN 55305

schaedave@aol.com
12/11/2012 06:56 PM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us
cc delag002@umn.edu
bcc
Subject DEIS comment

I have comments on the following the areas of the DEIS:
1) freight rail move
2) impact to the bike trail
3) impact to access to Cedar lake from Kenwood
4) stop, and park & ride at 21st street

1) freight rail has been allowed to continue to go thru the kenwood area with the agreement that it would be moved to St Louis Park in the future. That future is now and it needs to move. The impact of a freight train accident to the fragile natural area beauty of Cedar lake is too large of a risk to continue. The lake is valuable asset of Minneapolis and kenwood year round. The area is parked for blocks during the summer for people to go to the beach. Having such a lovely swimming area, that the city recently added life g uards, is a place for people of all ages and backgrounds to connect. There are very few locations in the city with this blending of young people, young families and neighbors. A freight train accident would takes years to repair in addition to clean up costs. D

2) the bike trail allows me to travel without competing with cars for a safe and healthy way to downtown and along the mississippi river. This bike trail also allowed my kids to bike to their jobs near whole foods While Minneapolis is often in the top position for city biking, putting a light rail along side would have a negative impact to the healthy and safe way to downtown. The existing LRT has places to bring your bike on board, there is no need for this from the stop at 21st street. In fact, having such an option will have negative health impacts as people opt to ride the LRT instead of giving their body a healthy work out. The risk of riding alongside the rail must be mitigated to prevent the LRT from the potential of striking the bikers. E1, E2

3) the LRT at grade will cut off the access to Cedar lake at 21st street. The proposed bridge over the rail is not acceptable as people will try to walk around and it is not attractive in this neighborhood. I am recommend that we bury the LRT along Cedar lake and under the canal. This will minimize the impact of access to cedar lake and will allow the train to have a clear throughway also minimizing the impact to car travel on the south side of cedar lake. E1 E2 E0

4) We do not need a park and ride. Currently the area is minimally served by the 25L bus route, which most recently reduced the scheduled buses. In fact the most recent reduction, elimination of the 6am run, has made it difficult for me to arrive at work using this bus route. Given the lack of bus riders on the 25L, i do not see a need for a stop nor a park and ride at this location. This stop would not serve the neighborhood, nor minneapolis in general as proven by the reduction of bus service currently serving the area. I would suggest that by routing the LRT thru this area it would be eliminating the need for bus service, which is contrary to the goal of having LRT in the first place. LRT was not suppose to replace current public transit. I1

Thanks
Dave Schaenzer
2456 West 24th Street
Minneapolis, MN 55405

Shawn Smith
<ssmith288@icloud.com>
12/11/2012 07:50 PM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us
cc ssmith288@me.com
bcc
Subject SW LRT

Dear HCRRA,

I am a resident of the Kenwood neighborhood in Minneapolis and would like to comment on the proposed LRT line through the Cedar Lake Corridor. While disappointed that this corridor location was selected due to the low number of users in our neighborhood vs other routes that could have boosted ridership, now that it is moving forward I believe the following are essential to having mitigation within our area

1. Freight line relocation is essential. The corridor is well used and an essential part of our bike and trailway system, which would not be possible if both freight and LRT are on the line. D
2. Noise/vibration mitigation is essential. We have old homes and a quiet neighborhood, and the increased rail traffic threatens our property values and stability of our homes. Noise reducing berms, reduction of use of train horns, and reduced speeds are essential for co-existence in the neighborhood. We deserve considerable mitigation because of our low usage of the line and high exposure to its negative effects. Vibration assessments must be done immediately. O5 E4 O6 O9
3. Cedar Lake is an important natural resource, and there are water, land, and prairie restoration issues that need to be considered to prevent damage to the fragile environment E3 E10
4. I oppose the use of a parking lot due to the additional encroachment on our neighborhood open space.
5. There must not be an ugly, expensive bridge built at the junction of Cedar Lake Parkway and Kenilworth Trail. What an incredible albatross that would be. E8
6. We are open to a station at 21st St only if there is not a "Park and Ride" mentality, prohibited within the city, and only if studies are done on traffic impacts with input from KIAA.

In general, I am very upset that this train is coming. The portion of the route is unlikely to produce the same residential and commercial benefit of the more obvious choices such as the Hiawatha and University Ave corridor. And neither the federal, county, or state have the money for this project in the first place. I1, I2

We deserve the best you can do from a mitigation standpoint. We already pay incredibly high property taxes in my neighborhood but recognize the enjoyment we have of our park-like setting; don't be the straw that breaks the camel's back for us that causes us to flee to the 1st Ring Suburbs where we can still have good driving access to downtown without the increasing detriments that taxes and trains are sure to cause on our peaceful neighborhood.

Sincerely,
Shawn Smith
2420 W 24th St

Mike Pliner
<brianwinters83@yahoo.com>

12/11/2012 10:08 PM

Please respond to
Mike Pliner
<brianwinters83@yahoo.com>

To "swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us" <swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>
cc "brianwinters83@yahoo.com" <brianwinters83@yahoo.com>
bcc
Subject DEIS comment as part of the freight rail re-route

To Whom it may concern,

I am writing to voice my concern with regard to your locally preferred alternative and the re-routing of freight traffic through St Louis Park. When it gets down to the heart of the matter I think there are a few key questions to ask, and they are to assess if this the most cost effective option, and if this is the safest option. I think it is easy to say to both of those questions the answer is clearly no. Based on the information in the DEIS the cost to go with the LPA is 23 million more than the co-location option, assuming that the amended numbers are correct. In this era of fiscal responsibility it is hard to justify the increased cost when other options exist. This is a simple numbers argument, and numbers do not lie. The LPA is a more expensive option for the taxpayers of Hennepin county to bear. C

The next question is with regard to safety. The question of safety should consider both the safety of the residents of St Louis Park, as well as the users of the existing trail space in the corridor in question. The co-location of freight traffic and light rail traffic would occur in a train corridor designed for train traffic. The contention of the DEIS is that this is not viable due to the fact that an existing bike trail would be compromised if co-location was implemented. Per my reading of the DEIS this is one of the main pillars for the argument to kill the co-location option. I would argue that if this is the main reason why freight rail must be moved from an existing train corridor to a more residential residential neighborhood setting then the concept of common sense makes no appearance anywhere within the DEIS. It is amazing to me that the main justification for the action of moving the freight train rests with the incompatibility of a bike path. If the measurement of safety bears any weight within this process one would have to ask whether having a bike path in close proximity to a light rail makes any sense at all. Anyone who has biked, run or skated on the system of trails in place can tell you that a significant percent of the trail users are effectively operating in that space without the benefit of their full hearing faculties due to the use headphones to listen to music. It would seem a better and safer option to remove bikers and pedestrians from close proximity to the trains in an effort to prevent avoidable accidents. If the option of moving the bike path to a different location is accommodated then the co-location option would then be viable and result in reduced cost for the project in addition to increased safety. C

The question of safety is also a significant concern for the residents of St Louis Park. The freight traffic is to be routed through a residential neighborhood on what is not a train corridor, but rather a track that is elevated above many of the homes that are adjacent to it. In the event of a derailment in St Louis Park the proximity to the homes in question as well as the elevation above those homes will result in significant residential property damage at best, and at worst the needless loss of innocent lives. The trains that will be routed through the community will be operating on blind curves at speeds that will not allow a train operator to stop the locomotive in a reasonable or safe distance should there be an emergency. The stopping distance of these trains is again is a simple matter of mathematics and physics. Longer and heavier trains moving at C C

faster speeds take longer to slow down. This is a fact that cannot be refuted. The combination of the longer stopping distances, blind curves, close proximity to residences and schools increases the risks of injury and harm to the community in general. The existing train corridor that would be used in a co-location option is not elevated above residences, it does not have blind curves, and it does not run adjacent to schools. Keeping the trains in their existing space is clearly a safer choice. C

I attended the hearing in St Louis Park with regard to the reroute and was appalled by a seemingly casual comment made by commissioner McLaughlin during the proceedings. The commissioner was asked if he had in fact seen the homes in St Louis Park that would be affected by this reroute and he indicated that he had biked some of the route. I am sure that he may have seen photographs of the area, etc. but I wonder how a person who is responsible for this process advocate for the LPA without even personally viewing the affected areas in St Louis Park. I appreciate his honest response to the question but I do believe if you are purporting this as the best option available the community at the very least deserves the measure of respect of the commissioner taking the time to view the affected areas from a perspective on the ground, eye level, feet on the ground. I hardly think this is too much to ask given that St Louis Park is no more than a 15 minute car ride from the commissioners office.

In summary the LPA as I see it is a more expensive option for the people of Hennepin County, a less safe option for the people of St Louis Park and an action that will if adopted compromise the livability and quality of life for residents in St Louis Park forever. I do not find many of the conclusions of the DEIS to be factual, so I am left to speculate with regard to why the LPA is the 'best' choice. The facts are that the LPA costs more, is less safe, and takes the trains out of an affluent area and relegates the unwanted freight traffic to a working class neighborhood. The rerouting of the freight traffic is definitely a 'not in my backyard' issue for both communities. I am saddened by the fact that once again the most affluent elements of our communities are provided with what would seem to be better representation within the political process. I appreciate your consideration in this matter, and am looking forward to your acknowledgement. C

Michael Pliner
2752 Alabama Ave S
St Louis Park, MN 55416
(952) 797-6891

Jake Beek
<jakeanthonybeek@gmail.com>
12/11/2012 10:53 PM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us
cc
bcc
Subject southwest transit system

Is there a EIS no action plan for the new light rail going through Golden Valley? is so were or how can find it?

V

RECEIVED
DEC 11 2012
BY:

To whom it may concern:

I am writing in response to the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) – Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) published in regard the SWLRT which includes the proposed freight rail re-route in St. Louis Park, Minnesota.

The current SWLRT-DEIS has significant flaws and the planned re-route idea either needs to be dropped completely or a great deal more study must be done. C

Besides my general concerns about the SWLRT-DEIS, I am particularly concerned with Chapter 12 (Public and Agency Coordination and Comments). NEPA 1500.2(d) states that the leading agency must "encourage and facilitate public involvement in decisions which affect the quality of the human environment." This regulation was clearly ignored in regards to the potential freight rail re-route issue. Hennepin County did not "encourage and facilitate" public involvement concerning this issue. In fact, Hennepin County refused attempts for public comments and concerns regarding the freight rail issue at all of the outreach meetings listed in table 12.1-1 and all of the community events listed in table 12.1-2. Public comments regarding the freight issue were denied at the 2008 Oct 7, 14, and 23 scoping meetings and the comment period that followed as listed in section 12.1.3.1. Public comments regarding the freight issue were refused at the 2010 May 18, 18 and 20 open houses. Most importantly, public comments regarding the freight issue were denied during the entire LPA section process. This included all of public hearings listed in section 12.1.4.1. In summary, all public comments regarding the freight rail issue were denied at all of SWLRT's major milestones leading up to the DEIS. Worse, the public was not made aware of the significant environmental impacts caused by SWLRT and the potential freight re-route because the freight issue was not discussed at any of the SWLRT meetings leading up to the DEIS. The only opportunity the public was given by Hennepin County to discuss the freight rail re-route was at the PMT meetings discussed in section 12.1.5. However, any discussion of possible alternatives to the re-route (co-location) or the freight re-route's connection with SWLRT was strictly forbidden at these PMT meetings. Lastly, the DEIS fails to mention the 2011 April 17 and 28 freight re-route listening sessions that were held by the city of St. Louis Park. Hundreds of St. Louis Park residents voiced their opposition to the freight re-route. Because those opposed to the re-route have been denied comment during the entire SWLRT planning process leading up to the DEIS, the freight rail issue needs to be dropped or significant more work needs to be done on the alternative studies and public outreach. L2

Thank You,

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Telephone: 952-920-9833 E-Mail: zinaida.kecman@centurylink.net

SOUTHWEST transitway

Fold here

Zinaida Kecman
2814 Blackstone Ave.
St. Louis Park, MN 55416-1808

MINNEAPOLIS MN 559
10 DEC 2012 PM 7 L

Happy Holidays from the USPS
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Hennepin County
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55415$1843 C089

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December 6, 2012

Hennepin County Housing, Community Works & Transit
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Minneapolis, MN 55415

RECEIVED
DEC 11 2012
BY:

RE: Southwest Transitway Draft Environmental Impact Statement

We are 24 year residents of St. Louis Park. From our home we can hear the trains that use the tracks that go by St. Louis Park High School and that pass along Highway 7 (near Wooddale and Louisiana Avenues). Walking 3-4 blocks in either direction we can also see the trains. While no major train accidents have happened there is always a concern that they will happen, whether it is with freight rail or light rail.

Looking over the DEIS it does not appear that concerns from the residents of St. Louis Park have been taken into consideration when it comes to rerouting the freight rail. When one of our residents contacted one of the signers of the DEIS they did not even know St. Louis Park residents had major concerns about the freight reroute. We, along with other St. Louis Park residents, have addressed the concerns for many years only to be told that it was not the right time C, L2

In the DEIS it is recommended that freight rail be rerouted onto the MN & S (Dan Patch) track. This track was originally planned as the Dan Patch Line by a private developer many years ago just for electric passenger trains. In addition to its many curves and crossings it is very near school buildings and resident homes. It is a track that was never intended for heavier, faster, coal or ethanol freight trains. C

Have you ever visited the tracks or looked at a map that shows how close the tracks are to homes? If not, I highly recommend it. Also, picture yourself or your loved ones in one of these homes, your children or grandchildren playing in the yards and attending the schools. Picture the teenager who is late for an event at the high school and has chosen to take the chance to cross the tracks, slips and can't get back up. With the curves in the tracks the train conductor can't see them in time to slow down and/or stop. Blowing the horn is not going to help going to help someone get up if they have hit their head or broken a leg. You have a heart attack and call for help. Help is delayed as there is a train blocking the quickest way and a detour has to be taken. Those few seconds and minutes matter. It hasn't happened yet, but the chances are always there and will increase with an increase in freight trains.

To make this area safer, mitigation would have to be done. Some of this would include: the purchase of homes along the rails, building over or under-passes for safe vehicle and pedestrian traffic so that there is a single grade level crossing per one mile of track, track enhancements, pollution control , and installation of landscaping barriers.

The DEIS does not address the topic of mitigation. Who is going to pay for it? Will it be guaranteed? What are the railroads comments on this? C T2

The alternative is to co-locate the tracks in the Kenilworth Corridor. That area already has room and there would be much less mitigation. Have you visited the area? We believe that the only reason this area is not the recommended route is because many years ago the Minneapolis residents in Kenwood were promised that the rail traffic would be rerouted out of the Kenilworth Corridor. C

Please take the time to read and listen to all the concerns of the St. Louis Park residents. Picture yourself in one of their homes. Include the costs of mitigation in the plan. Compare the costs, with mitigation in each of the areas. Add the recommendations of the railroad authority. Then look at the plan again, are you being fair and just to all?

Sandy Kline & Leslie Olson
3364 Zarthan Ave S
St. Louis Park

Sandra Kline
3364 Zarthan Ave. S.
Minneapolis, MN 55416-2065

RECEIVED
DEC 11 2012
BY:

Hennepin Co. Housing, Community Works + Transit
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RECEIVED
DEC 11 2012
BY:

December 10, 2012

Hennepin County: Housing, Community, Works, and Transit
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701 Fourth Avenue South
Suite 400
Minneapolis, MN 55415

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in response to the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) - Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) published in regard the SWLRT which includes the proposed freight rail re-route in St. Louis Park, Minnesota.

The current SWLRT-DEIS has significant flaws and the planned re-route idea either needs to be dropped completely or a great deal more study must be done. As this action is proposed and described in Chapter 1, Section 1.3.2.3 as rebuilding a little known, lightly used spur line into a main freight rail line, which will initially allow a 788% increase of rail car traffic. What the SWLRT-DEIS does not address, but should, are the real world impacts of this action on the affected area. C

Besides my general concerns about the SWLRT-DEIS, the portion of the report dealing with Safety (3-132 and 133) causes me the greatest concern. Only a passing reference to safety and the proposed re-route is mentioned in the SWLRT-DEIS; however there are many features about the MN&S, which make it undesirable as a freight, rail main line. The reasons the MN&S is an unsafe main rail line include, but are not limited to the following:

- Multiple grade level crossings
- Proximity to St. Louis Park schools, homes and businesses - many are closer than the length of a rail car C
- Number of pedestrians who transverse crossing every day
- Permeable soil under MN&S
- Medical emergency response hindered when crossings are blocked - only one fire station has emergency medical response (page 80)
- Tight Curves. Derailments are more likely to occur on curves than on straight track
- Hazardous materials are being carried on the rail line without sufficient right of way.

None of the mitigation requested by the City of St. Louis Park on behalf of her residents is being considered. This mitigation is not frivolous; it is necessary to maintain the safety, livability and property values for the residents of St. Louis Park. C

Yours truly,

Phil Freshman

Phil Freshman
3912 Natchez Avenue South
St. Louis Park, MN 55416

Phil and Wendy Freshman
3912 Natchez Avenue South
St. Louis Park, MN 55416

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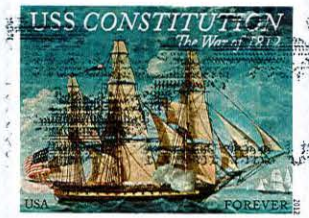

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DEC 11 2012
BY:

Hennepin County: Housing, Community, Works, and Transit
ATTN: Southwest Transitway
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Minneapolis, MN 55415
5541516430O

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RECEIVED
DEC 11 2012
BY:

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in response to the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) – Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) published in regard the SWLRT which includes the proposed freight rail re-route in St. Louis Park, Minnesota.

The current SWLRT-DEIS has significant flaws and the planned re-route idea either needs to be dropped completely or a great deal more study must be done. As this action is proposed and described in Chapter 1, Section 1.3.2.3 as rebuilding a little known, lightly used spur line into a main freight rail line, which will initially allow a 788% increase of rail car traffic. What the SWLRT-DEIS does not address, but should, are the real world impacts of this action on the affected area. C

Riddled with phantom assumptions, unsubstantiated assertions, and inexplicable omissions, the DEIS is not a serious attempt to consider the effect of the proposed re-route.

Chapter 1 of the DEIS states that without the re-route the TC&W's only options for moving its freight will be to access the MN&S tracks by use of the notorious switching wye in St. Louis Park, or to transfer cargo from railcars to highway trucks. The unstated assumption behind this statement is that the current route used by the TC&W will be severed. Presenting the either/or assumption for the switching wye or highway trucks creates the illusion of a fait accompli, when in fact the TC&W's current route through the Kenilworth corridor is a viable alternative. C

Unsubstantiated assertions include the depiction in the DEIS that the historical character of the Kenilworth corridor (Chapter 3, page 58) would be compromised by its continued use for freight train traffic. The Kenilworth corridor was the home to not just railroad tracks, but an entire railroad yard for over one hundred years, beginning long before the current homes in the area were built. C

Inexplicably omitted from the DEIS is how the re-route would be funded (Chapters 5 and 8). The re-route must be considered as part of the SWLRT and even without mitigation construction of the interconnect and upgrading the tracks on the MN&S to handle the heavier traffic is estimated to cost $125,000,000, money that was not originally included in the projected cost of the SWLRT, but the projected budget for the SWLRT has not been adjusted to recognize the added expense. Also, missing from the cost estimates are the costs for maintaining the interconnect structure after it is built. C

None of the mitigation requested by the City of St. Louis Park on behalf of her residents is being considered. This mitigation is not frivolous; it is necessary to maintain the safety, livability and property values for the residents of St. Louis Park. C

Name: ZINAIDA KECMAN and VLADO KECMAN
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Telephone: 952-920-9833 E-Mail: zinaida.kecman@centurylink.net

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transitway

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Happy Holidays from the USPS
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Zinaida Kecman
2814 Blackstone Ave.
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Housing, Community Works & Transit
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55415$1843 C063

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RECEIVED
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Besides my general concerns about the SWLRT-DEIS, the portion of the report dealing with Safety (3-132 and 133) causes me the greatest concern. Only a passing reference to safety and the proposed re-route is mentioned in the SWLRT-DEIS; however there are many features about the MN&S, which make it undesirable as a freight, rail main line. The reasons the MN&S is an unsafe main rail line include, but are not limited to the following: C

- Multiple grade level crossings
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Name: ZINAIDA KECMAN and VLADO KECMAN
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Fold here

5541581843 C063

RECEIVED
DEC 11 2012
BY:

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I am writing in response to the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) – Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) published in regard the SWLRT which includes the proposed freight rail re-route in St. Louis Park, Minnesota.

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Besides my general concerns about the SWLRT-DEIS, the portion of the report dealing with freight rail noise and safety at the High School (Chapters 3, 4, and 9) causes me the greatest concern. The unique noise and safety issues associated with locating main line freight within 35 feet of the High School parking lot and 75 feet from the building are not adequately discussed. When the High School is mentioned the information is dismissive. At no point in the SWLRT –DEIS are the negative impacts the extra freight trains will have on the learning environment and safety of the students at St. Louis Park High School. Before the proposed re-route should even be considered the cost of sufficiently mitigating the impact to St. Louis Park High School need to be evaluated. C
Examples of concerns include but are not limited to the following:

- A plan for emergency evacuation of the school should evacuation be necessary when a train is passing
- How will the many classrooms affected by train noise be sound proofed C
- How will the students who want to use the new rail bridge to cross Hwy. 7 on their way to school be kept off the bridge.
- How will the added vibration of longer, heavier and more frequent trains be mitigated to the investment the school makes in technology is not lost. C
- How will the safety hazards of blind crossings, curves and hundreds of teenagers in close proximity be eliminated C
- How will a derailment be prevented so our children's lives are not at risk

None of the mitigation requested by the City of St. Louis Park or the St. Louis Park School Board on behalf of her residents is being considered. This mitigation is not frivolous; it is necessary to maintain the safety, livability and property values for the residents of St. Louis Park. C

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SOUTHWEST
transitway

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MINNEAPOLIS MN 554

10 DEC 2012 PM 1 L

Justice
FOREVER

Zinaida Kecman
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Hennepin County

Housing, Community Works & Transit
ATTN: Southwest Transitway

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Minneapolis, MN 55415

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RECEIVED
DEC 11 2012
BY:

I am writing in response to the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) – Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) which includes the proposed freight rail re-route in St. Louis Park, Minnesota.

The proposed action of re-routing freight is described in Chapter 1, Section 1.3.2.3. The MN&S Spur tracks are a lightly used spur line within a high density urban, residential setting and directly adjacent to the St Louis Park Senior High. The current freight occurs five days a week, Monday- Friday, during normal business hours. The proposed action of re-routing freight would introduce mainline traffic and the community, residents, and students will be exposed to longer, heavier trains during weekends, evenings, and nighttime. In detail, the re-route will allow a 788% increase of rail cars traffic. The increase of freight exposure will directly and negatively impact the community health and cohesion of the neighbors adjacent to the tracks. In addition, there will be negative impacts to the school system and educational quality within St Louis Park, including the decreased safety of students at the High School. C

Besides my general concerns about the freight rail re-route, the section of the SWLRT DEIS that describes the noise and vibration has flawed methods and conclusions. The vibration and the noise measurements were done with current MN&S traffic. It is important to note that the re-routed freight will be longer, more frequent, and include more locomotives per train. C

Vibration, Chapter 4.8.4: The conclusion that vibration will have no significant impacts is incorrect Vibration impacts will be longer in time and the total amount will increase with the heavier freight and additional locomotives. C

Noise, Chapter 4.7.5:

Quiet zones: The DEIS fails to describe the real world issues with the quiet zone. The SLP Senior High is both bookended by two blind curves and has athletic facilities on both sides of the tracks. The operating rail company, TC&W, has stated in a public document that it has safety concerns with a quiet zone due to the proximity of the tracks to schools, residents, and businesses. It will be impossible to design a quiet zone that will be both safe for the area while maintaining access for the adjacent Senior High school and local businesses. The quiet zone is listed as mitigation for noise impacts but it is a mitigation that is not supported by the neighborhoods, school board, or the operating rail companies. C

A quiet zone will not eliminate all noise impacts and the assessment fails to measure other sources:

a. the rail to wheel curve squeal from the tight interconnect curve
b. the additional noise of the locomotives as it throttles up both the southern interconnect ramp and grade change at the northern connection, C
c. trains traveling west will need to use their brakes to maintain a slow speed going down grade and through curves
d. diminished livability from the introduction of night freight traffic
e. the amount of time exposed to the noise impacts of the stationary crossing bells will increase significantly due to increase in train numbers.

The re-routing of freight will negatively impact the safety, livability, and community cohesion of residents, students, and communities. The SWLRT DEIS does not adequately describe the impacts and as such, the freight reroute should not be given any further consideration as an option. C

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SOUTHWEST transitway

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Happy Holidays From the USPS

Freedom FOREVER 2012

Hennepin County

Housing, Community Works & Transit
ATTN: Southwest Transitway

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See Comment #226 for Theme Delineations

MINNEAPOLIS PUBLIC SCHOOLS
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Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board

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BY:

JOINT COMMISSION

Administrative Break-out Group Summary – 11-19-2012

Community Members: Cassie Guzman, Steve Hirsch, Egan Haugesag, Dean Campbell
Staff members: Ginger Cannon, Aaron Flanders, Paul Jaeger (MPRB), Clyde Kane, Jack Tamble, John Washington (MPS)

I. Administrative (Bylaws, Agreements, Finances, Scheduling) Staff Recommendations For Joint Commission Meeting
   a. Scheduling – No recommendations.
   b. Finance – Establish a common rental fee structure for similar fields e.g. Washburn and Parade synthetic turf fields.
   c. Agreements/Bylaws – Establish a joint task force in order to simplify current shared use agreements. Personnel should include, at a minimum, legal, facility staff, and program users as needed. Community members will be invited into the process once specific site scheduling is involved e.g. Windom community contributed Neighborhood Revitalization Program funds to gain access for specific community needs.

Proposed Administrative Action Steps

Phase 1: For spring 2013

1. Physical Inventory of parks & schools owned facilities and amenities
   a. Master facility lists (what's being offered currently; MPRB & MPS)
   b. Community access to the master facility lists
2. Outline facilities and amenities by what is owned by both agencies with definitions of each facility and amenity
   a. Layout an inventory for community to receive feedback on how the agencies should operate their facilities and amenities
3. Capture sports participation data & analyze this data in order to jointly coordinate and offer correct youth sports offerings according to historical perspective over time
4. Create public survey regarding two systems of two agencies
   a. K-8th grade –MPRB
   b. 8th grade and higher – MPS

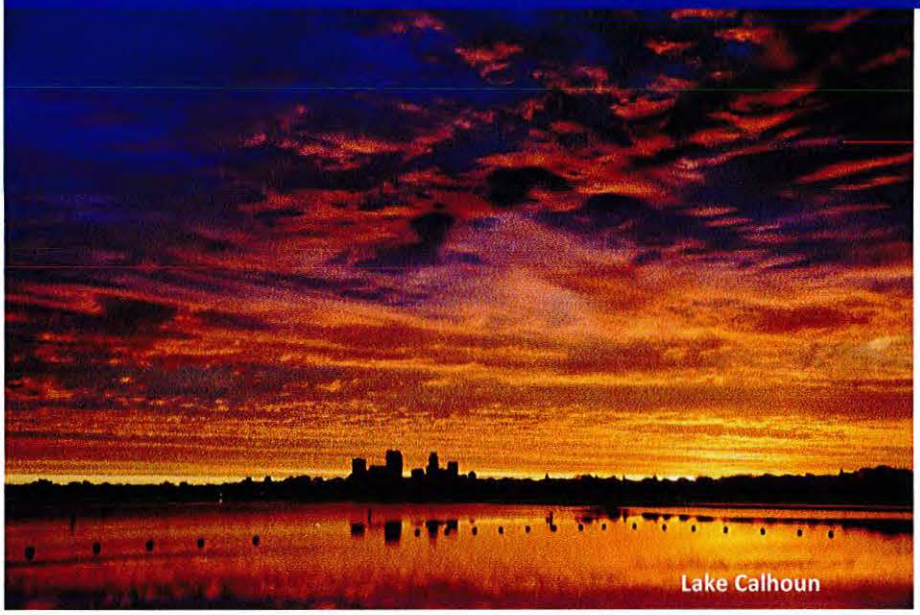
Phase 2:

1. Streamline technology between both agencies; reservations, programs, etc. are under seamless system for both agencies (BOARD ACTION REQUIRED)
2. Create a field hierarchy and have premier fields used exclusively for games, playoffs, and tournaments – needs further discussion
3. Streamline MPS student ID cards with MPRB (BOARD ACTION REQUIRED)
4. Clarify joint agreements & ensure that they are equitable to all parties – needs further discussion
5. Create one "Minneapolis" system (combine MPRB & MPS K-12th grade) – needs further discussion

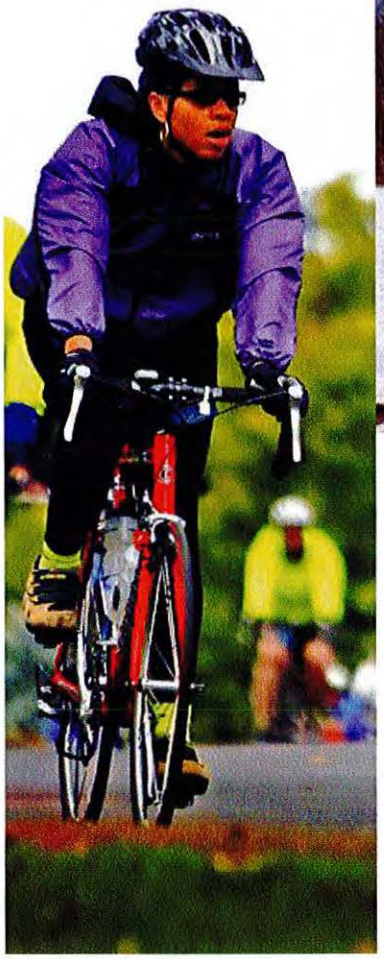
Potential barriers to enhance progress:

1. MPS and MPRB support separate technologies for youth sports registration and administration that do not house the same data on facilities, are not technologically compatible, and require extensive training to operate on an administrative level.
2. How are the neighborhood sports councils or for-profit youth sports groups that heavily utilize MPS/MPRB facilities being included in this discussion of one "Minneapolis" system?

Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board
Southwest Transitway DEIS Comment Letter


Lake Calhoun

Cedar Lake



Lake of the Isles

Lake of the Isles

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Transmittal Letter **1**
Introduction **3**
MPRB Community Advisory Committee 3
Comment Letter Structure 4
Corridor and Comment Location Map 5
Co-Location Alternative **6**
1 Entire Corridor **7**
1.1 Location and Description 7
1.2 Issue: Section 4(f) analysis 7
1.3 Issue: Design character 8
1.4 Issue: Trail access, use, and maintenance 9
1.5 Issue: Noise and Vibration 10
1.6 Issue: Visual appeal 11
1.7 Issue: Safety 12
1.8 Issue: Construction 12
2 Linden Avenue **14**
2.1 Location and Description 14
2.2 Issue: Access, flow 14
3 Luce Line Regional Trail Junction **15**
3.1 Location and Description 15
3.2 Issue: Access, flow 15
4 Spring Lake Trail Junction **16**
4.1 Location and Description 16
4.2 Issue: Access, flow, and connectivity 16
4.3 Safety 16
4.4 Issue: Comprehensive approach 16
5 Bryn Mawr Meadows Park **17**
5.1 Location and Description 17
5.2 Issue: Access and safety 17
5.3 Issue: Visual appeal 17
5.4 Issue: Comprehensive approach 17
6 Cedar Lake Regional Trail and LRT Crossing Area **18**
6.1 Location and Description 18
6.2 Issue: Safety, use, access, connectivity 18
6.3 Issue: Environmental protection 19
7 Intersection with West 21st Street **20**
7.1 Location and Description 20
7.2 Issue: Park access 20
7.3 Issue: Safety 20
7.4 Issue: Aesthetics, noise 20
8 Kenilworth Channel, Bridge **22**
8.1 Location and Description 22
8.2 Issue: Historic character, aesthetics, tranquility 22
8.3 Issue: Connectivity and recreational use 23
8.4 Issue: Safety 23
9 Cedar Lake Parkway-Grand Rounds **24**
9.1 Location and Description 24
9.2 Issues: Integrity, flow, and access 24

9.3 Issue: Safety 25
9.4 Issue: Noise and air quality 26
10 Park Siding Park 27
10.1 Location and Description 27
10.2 Issue: Access and safety 27
10.3 Issue: Visual appeal 27
10.4 Issue: Noise 27
11 Trail Access at Abbott Avenue S (by new West Lake Station) 29
11.1 Location and Description 29
11.2 Issue: Park and trail access 29
12 Northwest Corner of Lake Calhoun Area 30
12.1 Location and Description 30
12.2 Issue: Park and trail access 30
13 Appendix A – Cedar Lake Parkway/ Southwest Transitway 32

Transmittal Letter

December 5, 2012

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Housing, Community Works & Transit
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701 Fourth Avenue South, Suite 400
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Re: Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board Comments on the Southwest Transitway Draft Environmental Impact Statement

Dear Project Manager:

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) welcomes this opportunity to comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Southwest Transitway (LRT) project. In collaboration with its appointed Community Advisory Committee, the MPRB prepared the following comment letter for Segment A of the Locally Preferred Alignment (LPA) for the project. It contains the MPRB's desired outcomes for the project relative to historical, cultural, visual, recreational, social, environmental, and safety impacts on the park and recreation resources it owns, manages, or maintains.

In 1883, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board was created by an act of the Minnesota State Legislature and a vote of Minneapolis residents. It serves as an independently elected, semi-autonomous body responsible for governing, maintaining, and developing the Minneapolis park system. The MPRB's mission is as follows:

> The MPRB shall permanently preserve, protect, maintain, improve, and enhance its natural resources, park land, and recreational opportunities for current and future generations.
>
> The MPRB exists to provide places and recreation opportunities for all people to gather, celebrate, contemplate, and engage in activities that promote health, well-being, community, and the environment.

The MPRB is also one of 10 regional park implementing agencies. It works with the Metropolitan Council to acquire and develop regional parks and trails to protect natural resources and provide outdoor recreation for public enjoyment in the Metropolitan Area. In 2011, based on Metropolitan Council annual use estimates, the regional parks and trails that are impacted by this alignment received over 6 million visits.

President
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Scott Vreeland
M. Annie Young
Superintendent
Jayne Miller
Secretary to the Board
Michael P. Schmidt

Accredited CAPRA 2010-2015

The MPRB is obligated to ensure that parks and trails and the interests of current and future park and trail users are not substantially impaired by the project. It is within this context that the MPRB makes the comments contained in this letter. There are several overarching messages the MPRB wishes to express regarding the Southwest Transitway:

- MPRB, in general, is supportive of light-rail transit.
- Current development and public use of the corridor within Minneapolis has an open and natural character that includes portions of the Minneapolis Chain of Lakes Regional Park, Grand Rounds National Scenic Byway, Kenilworth Regional Trail, and Cedar Lake Regional Trail. Park design in this area focuses on serenity, habitat restoration, minimal development, and passive recreation. To retain the area's character the water table levels and quality, cultural landscapes, habitat, and open space must be protected and preserved.
- Several topics of keen interest to the MPRB, including noise, vibration, and visual impacts, are noted in the DEIS as requiring further analysis during preliminary engineering. To monitor and protect the parks, trails, and recreation areas of this project that are within its jurisdiction, the MPRB expects to have a central role in the design of Segment A.
- MPRB does not support the co-location alternative.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the DEIS for the LRT. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Jennifer Ringold, Manager of Public Engagement and Citywide Planning, at 612-230-6464 or jringold@minneapolisparks.org.

Sincerely,

John Erwin
President, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board

Introduction

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB), a semi-autonomous government agency, was established in 1883 by the Minnesota State Legislature. It owns, operates, or maintains park land within the cities of Minneapolis, Golden Valley, Richfield, Robbinsdale, Saint Louis Park, and Saint Anthony. The MPRB is also one of 10 regional park implementing agencies that works with the Metropolitan Council to acquire and develop parks and trails to protect natural resources and provide outdoor recreation for public enjoyment in the Metropolitan Area.

In 2013, the MPRB will celebrate 130 years of providing outstanding park and recreation services to residents and visitors of Minneapolis. In citywide surveys, residents often remark that the Minneapolis park system is essential to their quality of life and to the identity of the city. Founders of the system, such as H. W. S. Cleveland and Theodore Wirth, understood the role parks play in a healthy, livable, and balanced city. They made preserving land for future generations a priority. Their success shaped the character of Minneapolis and continues to improve people's lives.

Segment A of the Locally Preferred Alterative (LPA) of the Southwest Transitway (LRT) and its station areas include, cross, and are adjacent to neighborhood and regional parks and regional trails that are owned or maintained by the MPRB. These include the following (see map below):

- Minneapolis Chain of Lakes Regional Park
    - Cedar Lake Park
    - Cedar Lake
    - Kenilworth Channel
    - Lake of the Isles
    - Lake Calhoun
    - Cedar Lake Parkway and Trails (bicycle and pedestrian)
    - Dean Parkway and Trails
- Grand Rounds National Scenic Byway
- Kenilworth Regional Trail (bicycle and pedestrian)
- Cedar Lake Regional Trail (bicycle and pedestrian)
- Park Siding Park

With its extensive land holdings and maintenance responsibilities, the MPRB is obligated to identify the historical, cultural, visual, recreational, social, environmental, and safety issues and impacts related to Segment A of the LPA and ensure that these parks, trails, and the current and future interests of park and trail users are protected.

MPRB Community Advisory Committee

On 1 September 2010, the MPRB approved the following charge for the appointed Community Advisory Committee (CAC):

> Prepare recommendations to the Board on the contents of a formal Comment Letter in response to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed Southwest Light Rail Transit Alternative 3A. The recommendations of the CAC shall focus on desired outcomes relative to historical, cultural, visual, recreational, social, environmental, and safety issues as they relate to lands owned or managed by the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board.

Appointers and CAC members are below:

Appointing Person or Group	Appointee
Board President John Erwin	Scott Neiman, Chair
MPRB Commissioner Anita Tabb, District 4	Eric Sjoding
MPRB Commissioner Brad Bourn, District 6	Kendal Killian
MPRB Commissioner Annie Young, At-large	Caitlin Compton
MPRB Commissioner Bob Fine, At-large	Matt Perry
Bryn Mawr Neighborhood Association	Barry Schade
Cedar-Isles-Dean Neighborhood Association	John Erickson
Cedar Lake Park Association	Brian Willette
Kenwood Isles Area Association	Jeanette Colby
Lowry Hill Neighborhood Association	George Puzak
West Calhoun Neighborhood Council	Meg Forney
Harrison Neighborhood Association	Maren McDonell
Hennepin County Commissioner Dorfman	Tim Springer
Council Member Goodman – Ward 7	Neil Trembley
Council Member Tuthill – Ward 1	D'Ann Topoluk
Council Member Hodges – Ward 13	Ben Hecker
Council Member Samuels – Ward 5	Vicki Moore
Mayor of Minneapolis R.T. Rybak	Jerry Van Amerongen

Supported by MPRB staff lead Jennifer Ringold and consultant Anne Carroll (Carroll, Franck & Associates), the CAC began meeting in September 2010, suspended work for most of 2011 with the DEIS delays, and scheduled their 2012 meetings to coincide with the anticipated DEIS release. Working from comprehensive background information and their own knowledge and community connections, the CAC generated an increasingly detailed set of issues and preferred MPRB outcomes. Once the DEIS was released in October 2012, the CAC created a "crosswalk" connecting DEIS contents with their issues and outcomes, which was then converted to this Comment Letter. This final version of the Comment Letter was formally approved by the MPRB Board on *December 5, 2012.*

Comment Letter Structure

Beginning with the entire corridor, the content of this comment letter is organized by location from north to south as shown in the Table of Contents and on the map below.

The first section presents MPRB's adopted opposition to the co-location alternative. The remaining sections focus on the locations where the MPRB has an interest in the design and implementation of the LRT project, they include the following subsections:

- **Location and Description**: This describes the location and why it was selected by the MPRB for DEIS comments.
- **Issues**: The issue and why it is important at the particular location is described. For each issue, the MPRB then provides one or more of the following:
  - Outcomes: Critical *outcomes* that the MPRB has adopted and must be addressed in the FEIS and preliminary engineering.
  - Statements: MPRB's adopted positions on critical issues or processes that must be resolved, reconciled, reevaluated, or otherwise included in near-term design work and decision-making.
  - Corrections: Identified errors in the DEIS that must be corrected for the FEIS and subsequent work.

Images are courtesy of MPRB unless otherwise noted; specifically, most aerials and maps are from Google and current to 2012, and are cited.

Corridor and Comment Location Map

Co-Location Alternative

According to the Section 4(f) review of the co-location alternative in the DEIS, this alternative will result in permanent loss of park land and impairment to MPRB properties and uses.

Below is the statement that the MPRB has adopted regarding co-location.

Statement: The MPRB opposes the co-location alternative and supports the co-location findings presented in the DEIS regarding Section 4(f) and Section 106 impacts to lands owned or maintained by the MPRB. Based on a review of the documents, the permanent loss of park lands, impacts to regional trail functionality and capacity, and harm to the Grand Rounds Historic District (eligible for the National Register of Historic Places) cannot be mitigated within the corridor.

1 Entire Corridor

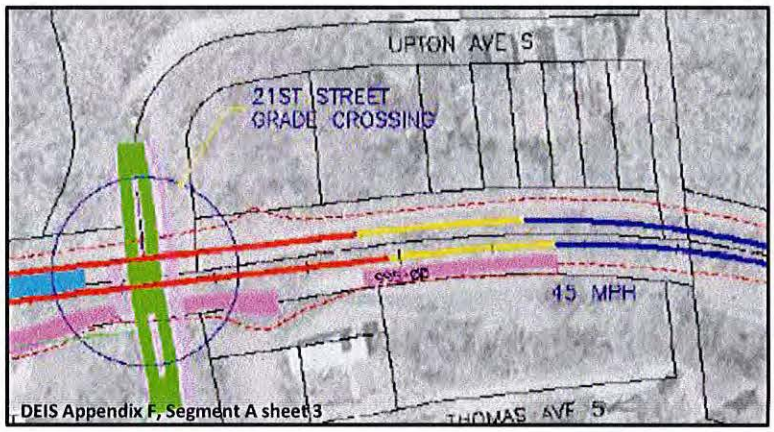
1.1 Location and Description

This section includes issues and outcomes that apply to all or most of the corridor. The sections that follow this focus on issues and outcomes that are specific to certain locations. See map above.

1.2 Issue: Section 4(f) analysis

A primary concern for the MPRB is protecting park land and recreational opportunities within and adjacent to the corridor for current and future generations. Chapter 7 of the DEIS contains the Section 4(f) evaluation of the project. It identifies potential permanent use, temporary use, and constructive use of park land for the project. For Segment A of the LPA it shows that 0.016 acres may be a potential temporary use and does not identify any potential permanent or constructive uses.

Permanent and Temporary use: Within an urban setting continuous park land and linear corridors are critical to habitat management and connectivity for park users. According to the Appendix F *LRT Alternative Segment Plan and Profile STA: 972+00 -1023+00* preliminary concepts for the area near 21st Street, additional park land may be needed to accommodate the westernmost LRT track. The analysis of park lands that are covered by Section 4(f) regulations in the DEIS does not account for this land.



DEIS Appendix F, Segment A sheet 3

Constructive use: The DEIS articulates (7.1) that "use" of a Section 4(f) resource occurs when, among other things, "There is no permanent incorporation of land, but the proximity of a transportation facility results in impacts so severe that the protected activities, features, or attributes that qualify a resource for protection under Section 4(f) are substantially impaired (e.g., 'constructive use')." Based on this definition, the MPRB anticipates that park land and park users may experience long-term impacts of the LRT due to noise, vibration, visual impacts, and safety. Park lands that are eligible for the National Register of Historic Places are considered especially vulnerable to these impacts. Depending on final design, these impacts may be so severe that they would constitute a *constructive use* of protected properties under Section 4(f) regulations.

Below are the critical statements and outcomes that the MPRB has adopted and must be addressed in the FEIS and preliminary engineering.

1.2.1 **Statement:** Park lands near 21st Street that are shown as being used for the LRT track in the conceptual designs must be reevaluated under Section 4(f) to identify all permanent and temporary uses.

1.2.2 **Statement:** As the design progresses, park lands must be evaluated under Section 4(f) to identify all permanent and temporary uses.

1.2.3 **Statement:** As the design progresses, park lands must be reevaluated under Section 4(f) to determine whether there are constructive uses of park land due to long-term noise, vibration, and visual impacts.

1.2.4 **Statement:** As the design progresses, park lands must be reevaluated under Section 4(f) to determine whether there are constructive uses of park land due to long-term impacts on parks that are considered eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

1.2.5 **Outcome**: Park land along the corridor is preserved in the same or better condition.

1.2.6 **Outcome**: Park property is not used permanently as part of LRT development.

1.3 Issue: Design character

Aside from Park Siding Park, the park land the MPRB owns, manages, and maintains adjacent to the corridor is classified as a regional park. A regional park according to the Metropolitan Council's 2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan is "area of natural or ornamental quality for nature-oriented outdoor recreation such as picnicking, boating, fishing, swimming, camping, and trail uses." Park Siding is considered a neighborhood park by the MPRB which means it is a block or less in size and provides basic facilities within a neighborhood.

The MPRB recognizes that current development and public use of the corridor within Minneapolis from the St. Louis Park boundary to the Penn Station has an open and natural area character that includes portions of the Minneapolis Chain of Lakes Regional Park. Portions of this area are within the Grand Rounds Historic District that is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places and are included within an Important Bird Area as designated by the National Audubon Society. Park design in this area focuses on serenity, habitat restoration, minimal development, and passive recreation. Minimizing impacts to water table levels and quality, cultural landscapes, habitat and open space will be critical to retaining this area's character. LRT and station area design that is sensitive to these issues is essential to protect the activities, features, and attributes of the park land in this corridor.

The DEIS makes several references to this issue, including the following:

- 4.1.3.6 Groundwater Sensitivity, page 4-19: Several areas in the study area lie within zones of very high sensitivity to pollution of the water table system...Portions of the land between Cedar Lake and Lake of the Isles....
- 4.1.4.2 Groundwater, page 4-21: The Build Alternatives may have long-term impacts on groundwater if a permanent water removal system (dewatering) is required. Permanent water removal is anticipated where the cut extends below the water table. There is a probable need for permanent water removal at one cut on both Segment 1 and Segment 3, and possible needs on Segment A and at a second cut along Segment 3, because of shallow groundwater. Evaluations and associated impacts of permanent water removal at the major excavations are summarized in Appendix H.
- 4.3.3.1 Riparian Habitat Areas, page 4-50: The LRT 3A (LPA) passes over several riparian areas that are associated with Purgatory Creek, South Fork Nine Mile Creek, Nine Mile Creek, Minnehaha Creek and the unnamed channel [Kenilworth Channel] between Lake of the Isles and Cedar Lake. The alternative would impact native wetland or riparian habitats, which are typified by non-native woody wetland habitat, non-native emergent wetland habitat or open water habitat (MLCCS 2008). The development of linear ROW along portions of this alignment has fragmented many wetland habitats on both sides of these features. Development of this alternative would likely increase the fragmented nature of wetland and riparian habitats.
- 3.1.2.4, Land Use and Socioeconomics, page 3-16: .... Northwest of Lake Calhoun and between Cedar Lake and Lake of the Isles the city has established the Shoreland Overlay District that specifies development guidelines within a half-mile radius around each of these lakes. Although the ordinance does not prohibit

transportation uses or facilities, it does specify guidelines for controlling both point source and non-point source pollutant discharge within the Shoreland Overlay District.

Below are the critical outcomes that the MPRB has adopted and must be addressed in the FEIS and preliminary engineering.

1.3.1 **Statement:** MPRB insists that stormwater impacts to Minneapolis water bodies result in no increased volume of runoff and no increased pollutant loads.

1.3.2 **Outcome:** Minneapolis Chain of Lakes Regional Park and adjoining park land remains a quiet, tranquil, and natural park destination.

1.3.3 **Outcome:** The area between Lake Street and I-394 is naturally beautiful and serene.

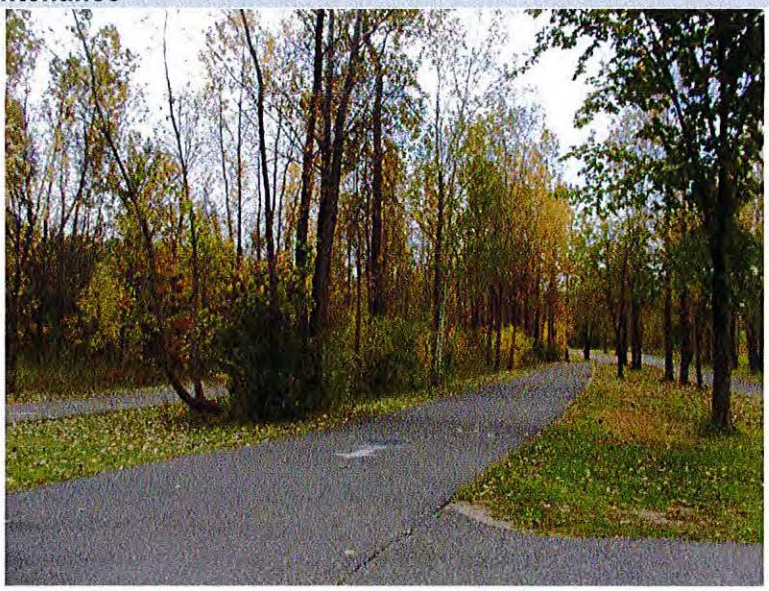
1.3.4 **Outcome:** Natural wildlife habitat and serenity of the trail and park land are maintained.

1.3.5 **Outcome:** Any permanent dewatering methodologies applied to the corridor protect water table levels and quality, and habitat within the park lands that is dependent on those water levels.

1.3.6 **Outcome:** Permeable paving materials are incorporated to reduce stormwater impacts to park land when hard surfaces are added by the project.

1.3.7 **Outcome:** The Chapter 551, Article VI Shoreland Overlay District of the City of Minneapolis' Code of Ordinances is followed to preserve and enhance the environmental qualities of surface waters and the natural and economic values of shoreland areas within the city.

1.4 Issue: Trail access, use, and maintenance



The MPRB owns or maintains trails that are within or cross the LPA Segment A corridor. The MPRB is concerned that the LRT frequency and speed will impact these trails and users by reducing access to the trail from local neighborhoods and park lands, inhibiting flow and speed, adding time delays, introducing use/user conflicts and safety problems, and making the trails more difficult to maintain year-round. The MPRB is concerned that the full cost of reconstructing and resurfacing these federally funded trails will not be included in the project budget.

The DEIS makes several references to the importance of retaining the trails. It also mentions the anticipated increased use that will result from population increases and transit development. The references include:

- 10.5.3.1 Improved Multimodal Environment, page 10-18: Transitway project will improve the existing pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure along the alignment, and improve the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists through implemented design guidelines. All pedestrian facilities will be designed in accordance with current design standards and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements to ensure access and mobility for all.
- 9.6.6.3 Anticipated cumulative impacts, page 9-23: The urban and suburban areas along the Southwest Transitway, as in the entire Twin Cities area, are expected to continue to develop and become denser. The Southwest Transitway's proposed stations in combination with RFFAs- especially residential projects – will

be part of this trend. Because fully developed urban areas typically have little opportunity for the creation of new parks and recreation areas, the existing parks are likely to become more crowded and intensely used.

- Appendix F, Legend for Plan, page 5: The grading for the trails shown will be included in the project cost, however the surfacing for the trails will not be included with the project costs. Trail surfacing must be performed at the expense of others.

Below are the critical outcomes that the MPRB has adopted and must be addressed in the FEIS and preliminary engineering.

1.4.1 **Statement:** As the implementing agency of regional parks and trails in the City of Minneapolis, the MPRB insists that the full cost of reconstructing and resurfacing trails that are impacted by the project is borne by the project budget.

1.4.2 **Statement:** The project should further examine the advantages and disadvantages of the trail being aligned on the west or east side of the LRT. The route analysis should consider the number of times the trail must cross the LRT, changes in trail length, trail connections, trail access points, and park land access.

1.4.3 **Outcome:** There is adequate access to the Kenilworth Regional Trail from both sides of the LRT tracks, and access points are a reasonable walking distance apart.

1.4.4 **Outcome:** The trail alignment minimizes the number of times that the trail crosses the LRT, optimizes trail connections, maintains similar travel distances, provides sufficient access points, and ensures access to park lands.

1.4.5 **Outcome**: Bike and pedestrian trails remain with the same or better design quality and width as current trails; these include those that run along and across the corridor, as well as access trails.

1.4.6 **Outcome:** The trail design meets the needs of current and projected users.

1.4.7 **Outcome:** The trail is designed for a 20 mph design speed (including straight-line ascents and descents at bridges).

1.4.8 **Outcome:** Bicycle and walking trail users have a positive, linear park-like experience, including being free of obstructions, having a 2-foot or greater buffer on each side of all trails, and retaining a sense of connection to open space.

1.4.9 **Outcome:** All trail connections are maintained or improved.

1.4.10 **Outcome:** At all points along the corridor, and especially at the narrowest locations, sufficient space remains for trails, trail users, and year-round maintenance vehicles and crews.

1.5 Issue: Noise and Vibration

The MPRB is concerned about the LRT noise and vibration impacts on park lands and park and trail users due to the high number of trains that will travel through the corridor daily. An increase from a few freight trains per day to hundreds of LRT trains will dramatically increase the amount of time that park and trail users are exposed to noise and vibration. This could substantially diminish the park and recreation experience for park and trail users.

For noise, the MPRB is particularly concerned that park lands in the corridor are erroneously classified as a Category 3 land use. In FTA's land use categories for Transit Noise Impact Criteria, Category 3 is most commonly associated with institutional land uses and can be used for some types of parks. By contrast, Category 1 is for tracts of land where quiet is an essential element in their intended purpose. This category includes lands set aside for serenity and quiet, and such land uses as outdoor amphitheaters and concert pavilions, as well as National Historic Landmarks with significant outdoor use. Category 1 is more closely aligned with the regional park classification that applies to the majority of park land in the area.

The DEIS makes several references to this issue, including the following:

- 4.7.3.5 Assessment, page 4-92: There is one moderate impact to a Category 3 land use. The impact is due to very low ambient background noise levels found in the walking trails of the Cedar Lake portion of the Minneapolis Chain of Lakes Regional Park combined with close proximity to the tracks and bell use at grade crossings and crosswalks. This may not apply to the entire Cedar Lake portion of the park, especially in areas where park-goers themselves create higher noise levels, and area of the park farther from the tracks.
- 4.8.6 Mitigation, page 4-118: Detailed vibration analyses will be conducted during the Final EIS in coordination with Preliminary Engineering. The Detailed Vibration Assessment may include performing vibration propagation measurements. These detailed assessments during the Final EIS/preliminary engineering phase have more potential to reduce project-related effects than assessments of mitigation options at the conceptual engineering phase of the project. Potential mitigation measures may include maintenance, planning and design of special trackwork, vehicle specifications, and special track support systems such as resilient fasteners, ballast mats, resiliently supported ties, and floating slabs.

Below are the critical statements and outcomes that the MPRB has adopted and must be addressed in the FEIS and preliminary engineering.

1.5.1 **Statement**: Category 1 is most consistent with the type of parks and open space the MPRB owns or maintains adjacent to or within the corridor. Noise impacts on park lands and users must be reevaluated under the standards set for Category 1 land uses.

1.5.2 **Outcome:** The vibration impacts are minimized for park and trail users.

1.5.3 **Outcome**: The noise impacts are minimized for users of parks and trail and park users and do not exceed the noise standards set for Category 1 in adjacent park land and along the trail.

1.5.4 **Outcome**: Technologies are incorporated that reduce track noise and vibration.

1.5.5 **Correction**: In 4.7.3.5 page 4-92, it appears that Segment 4 is referenced instead of Segment A.

1.6 Issue: Visual appeal

The MPRB is concerned about the impacts on park land and users of the parks and trails by visual impacts of the LRT. These concerns include the impacts on view sheds within and outside of the parks, especially those that are part of the Grand Rounds Historic District, which is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

The DEIS makes several references to this issue, including the following:

- 3.6.3.3 Visual impacts, page 3-115: The proposed alignment is on a bridge over Cedar Lake Parkway. Visual impacts on sensitive receptors adjacent to the corridor in the multi-family residential parcel and Cedar Lake Parkway could be substantial.

Below are the critical outcomes that the MPRB has adopted and must be addressed in the FEIS and preliminary engineering.

1.6.1 **Outcome:** The visual impact of the LRT and related infrastructure is minimized for trail and park users and honors the historic character of the Grand Rounds when it crosses Cedar Lake Parkway and the Kenilworth Channel.

1.6.2 **Outcome:** The train lights have minimal visual impacts on trail users.

1.7 Issue: Safety

Safety of park and trail users is a critical objective for the MPRB. This includes using design to reduce risks from user conflicts or unexpected hazards and ensuring adequate access to park facilities when the LRT is in operation. Delays in fire, police, and emergency medical response to park facilities, especially beaches, may result from the high number and frequency of trains that are projected to travel through the corridor.

Below are the critical outcomes that the MPRB has adopted and must be addressed in the FEIS and preliminary engineering.

1.7.1 **Outcome:** Adequate fire safety infrastructure exists within or proximate to the corridor such that fire suppression and response times meet relevant laws and standards.

1.7.2 **Outcome**: Fire, police, and emergency medical personnel and equipment are able to access park lands adjacent to the corridor and provide response times that meet relevant laws and standards.

1.7.3 **Correction:** The Minneapolis Park Police should be included in the references to police agencies related to the corridor.

Timely public safety access is essential

1.8 Issue: Construction

The MPRB recognizes that Minneapolis has become one of the top bicycling communities in the country. As such, trail users rely on high quality trail facilities year round for recreation and commuting. A detour that requires significant rerouting of trail users or an extended closure of a trail will be a barrier to trail users on the western side of Minneapolis and the metro area.

Construction can result in extensive damage to vegetation and trees through removals and introduction of invasive species. The former results in a diminished quality of the park and recreation experience for trail and park users, the later results in long-term habitat management issues for MPRB staff. Additionally, construction can result in the altering the ground and surface water levels and quality if Best Management Practices (BMPs) are not implemented.

The DEIS makes several references to this issue, including the following:

- 6.3.3.1 page 6-60: Short-term construction effects to bicyclists and pedestrians are also anticipated in all Build Alternatives. In Segments 1, 4, A, and C, some disruptions to the existing regional trails are anticipated during construction. The extent to which the trails would be available for use throughout the process of relocation will be determined during Preliminary Engineering. Disruptions to the existing sidewalk network are anticipated in all Build Alternatives.

Below are the critical outcomes that the MPRB has adopted and must be addressed in the FEIS and preliminary engineering.

1.8.1 **Outcome:** Surface and groundwater quality is protected during construction.

1.8.2 **Outcome:** Reasonable and safe alternative routes are provided for trail users when sections are closed

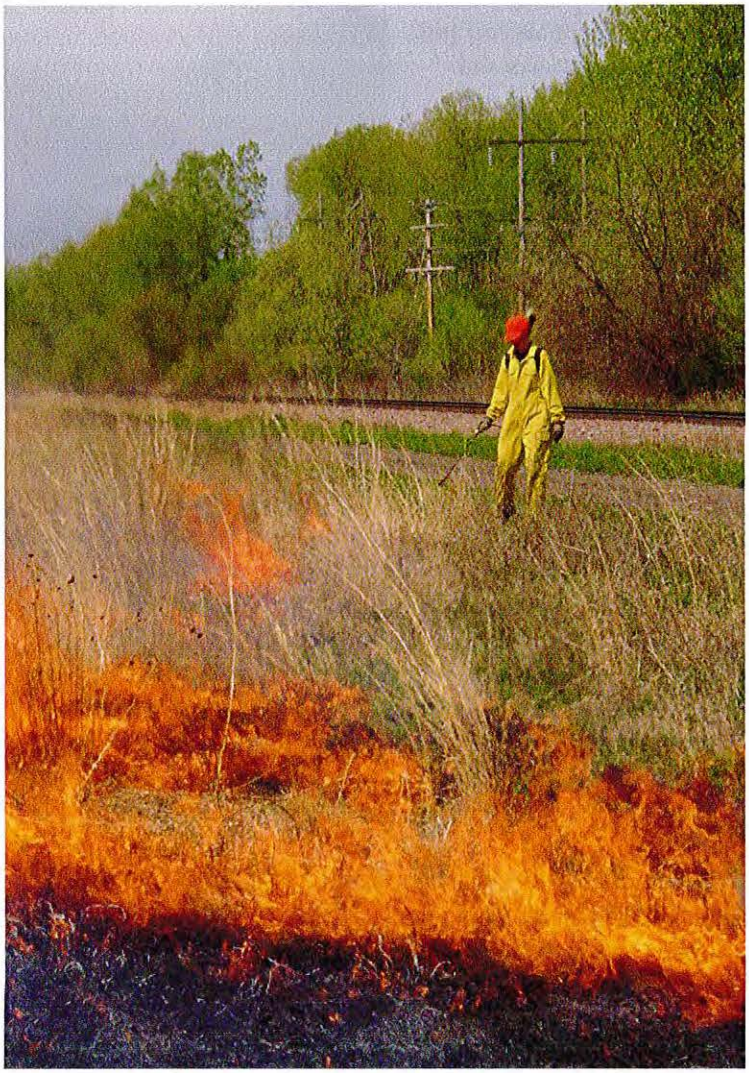
during construction.

1.8.3 **Outcome:** Any flora that is lost to construction or LRT use is replaced with flora that is in accordance with MPRB plans, with monitoring through a plant survey and replacement for five (5) years after construction is complete.

1.8.4 **Outcome:** Soils and slopes are stabilized during construction.

1.8.5 **Outcome:** Construction dewatering protects water table levels and habitat within park lands that is dependent on those water levels.

1.8.6 **Outcome:** Construction practices prevent introduction of new invasive species to park lands and waters.



MPRB Prairie Maintenance near Cedar Lake Park

2 Linden Avenue

2.1 Location and Description

Linden Avenue serves as an informal trail access point, as it is used primarily by city maintenance vehicles to access the asphalt and concrete recycling facility. Trail users at this access point regularly deal with high vehicular traffic with the nearby entrance to I-394. At this location, the LRT line and trail separate from MPRB-owned land.

2.2 Issue: Access, flow

The MPRB is concerned that all future work in this area be based on a comprehensive design and coordinated approach. This location requires formal and safe trail access, and cyclists need continuous flow and speed on the federally funded Cedar Lake Regional Trail.

Below are the critical outcomes that the MPRB has adopted and must be addressed in the FEIS and preliminary engineering.

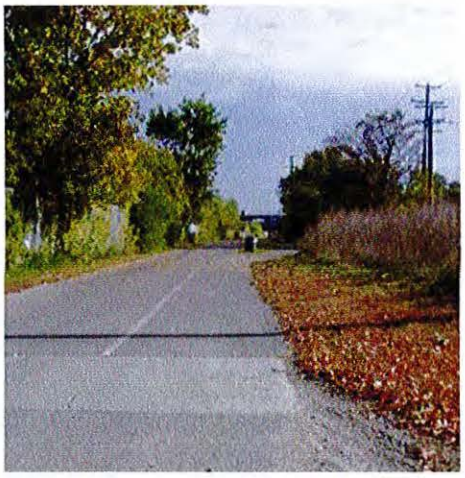
2.2.1 **Outcome:** Trail users easily and safely access the Cedar Lake Regional Trail.

2.2.2 **Outcome:** Bicyclists in this area maintain continuous flow and speed.

2.2.3 **Outcome:** Trail development is coordinated with rail, residential and commercial development in the area.

2.2.4 **Outcome:** The federally funded, nonmotorized Cedar Lake Regional Trail is fully functional, with uninterrupted flow and speed.

From Linden Avenue junction, looking southwest along Cedar Lake Regional Trail

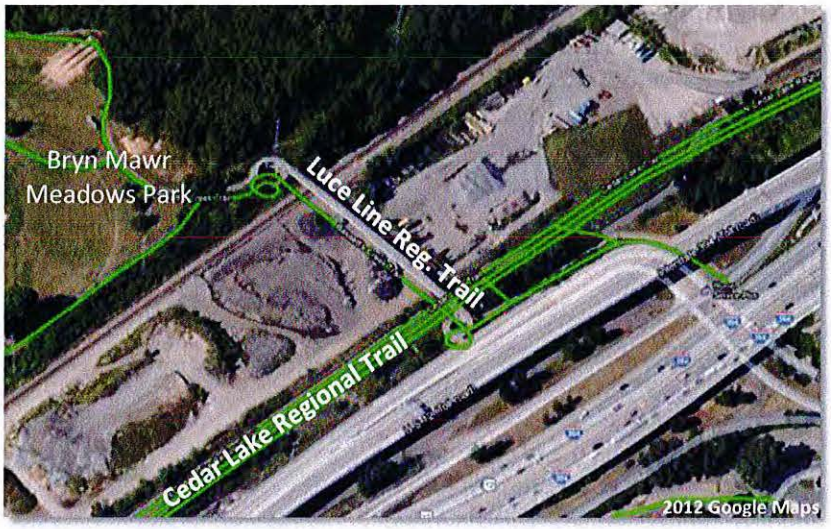


From Linden Avenue junction, looking northeast along Cedar Lake Regional Trail

3 Luce Line Regional Trail Junction

3.1 Location and Description

At this location the Luce Line Regional Trail intersects with the Cedar Lake Regional Trail, currently via a bridge over the industrial area and freight rail line, and spiral ramps at each end.



This is a critical connection in the regional trail system, and also provides access to Bryn Mawr Meadows Park.

3.2 Issue: Access, flow

The MPRB is concerned that all future work in this area be based on a comprehensive design and coordinated approach so that trail and park access be maintained, as well as flow and speed on the regional trails.

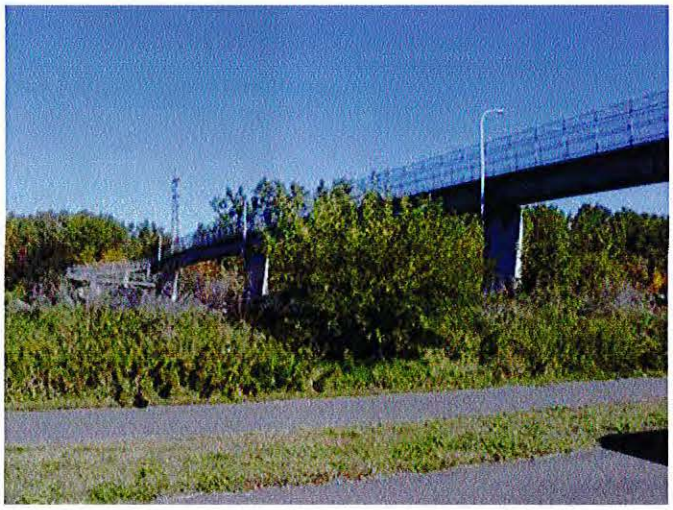
Below are the critical outcomes that the MPRB has adopted and must be addressed in the FEIS and preliminary engineering.

3.2.1 **Outcome:** Trail users easily and safely make connections between Bryn Mawr Meadows Park, the Luce Line Regional Trail, and the Cedar Lake Regional Trail.

3.2.2 **Outcome:** Bicyclists in this area maintain continuous flow and speed.

3.2.3 **Outcome:** Trail development is coordinated with rail, residential and commercial development in the area.

3.2.4 **Outcome:** The federally funded, nonmotorized Cedar Lake Regional Trail is fully functional, with uninterrupted flow and speed.



Luce Line Regional Trail crossing to connect with the Cedar Lake Regional Trail

4 Spring Lake Trail Junction

4.1 Location and Description

At this location Cedar Lake Regional Trail users pass under I-394 and easily connect to the nearby parks and trails including Spring Lake, Kenwood Parkway, and Parade Stadium, and travel beyond to the Minneapolis Sculpture Garden, Loring Park, and the Grand Rounds National Scenic Byway.

4.2 Issue: Access, flow, and connectivity

As a critical access point to MPRB park lands and the Grand Rounds, the MPRB is concerned that safe and easy access and connectivity is retained. Below are the critical outcomes that the MPRB has adopted and must be addressed in the FEIS and preliminary engineering.

4.2.1 **Outcome:** Cedar Lake Regional Trail users easily and safely connect to Spring Lake Park, Grand Rounds, other parks, parkways, and Van White Boulevard.

4.2.2 **Outcome:** Bicyclists in this area maintain continuous flow and speed.

4.2.3 **Outcome:** The design prioritizes connectivity to neighborhoods and natural amenities.

From junction, looking southeast toward Spring Lake

4.3 Safety

In this small space under I-394, the MPRB is concerned about public safety and emergency vehicle access. Below are the critical outcomes that the MPRB has adopted and must be addressed in the FEIS and preliminary engineering.

4.3.1 **Outcome:** Fire, police, and emergency medical personnel and equipment can access the trail and Spring Lake and provide response times that meet relevant laws and standards.

4.4 Issue: Comprehensive approach

As with many locations along the LRT, this area will likely be subject to future development. The MPRB is concerned about protecting the integrity and natural features of Spring Lake and full functionality of the Cedar Lake Regional Trail. Below are the critical outcomes that the MPRB has adopted and must be addressed in the FEIS and preliminary engineering.

4.4.1 **Outcome:** Spring Lake and the area's natural features are preserved and protected.

4.4.2 **Outcome:** The federally funded, nonmotorized Cedar Lake Regional Trail is fully functional, with uninterrupted flow and speed.

4.4.3 **Outcome:** Trail development is coordinated with rail, residential and commercial development in the area.

5 Bryn Mawr Meadows Park

5.1 Location and Description

Bryn Mawr Meadows Park is an active neighborhood park with citywide appeal. Amenities include ball fields, tot-lots, wading pools, and tennis courts. The park is adjacent to the Cedar Lake Regional Trail and LRT line. Currently parks users are connected to the Cedar Lake Regional Trail via a bridge over the industrial area and freight rail line, and spiral ramps at each end.

5.2 Issue: Access and safety

The MPRB is concerned about ensuring that people from throughout the community can access both this heavily used park *and* the Cedar Lake Regional Trail from this area, and that the trail remains fully functional.

Below are the critical outcomes that the MPRB has adopted and must be addressed in the FEIS and preliminary engineering.

5.2.1 **Outcome:** Communities on both sides of the LRT safely and easily access the Cedar Lake Regional Trail and Bryn Mawr Meadows Park.

5.3 Issue: Visual appeal

The MPRB is concerned that this large and active park retain its open and natural feel. Below are the critical outcomes that the MPRB has adopted and must be addressed in the FEIS and preliminary engineering.

5.3.1 **Outcome:** The LRT blends in visually with the natural setting of the area.

5.4 Issue: Comprehensive approach

The MPRB is concerned that all future work in this area be based on a comprehensive design and coordinated approach.

5.4.1 **Outcome:** The federally funded, nonmotorized Cedar Lake Regional Trail is fully functional, with uninterrupted flow and speed.

5.4.2 **Outcome:** Trail development is coordinated with rail, residential and commercial development in the area.

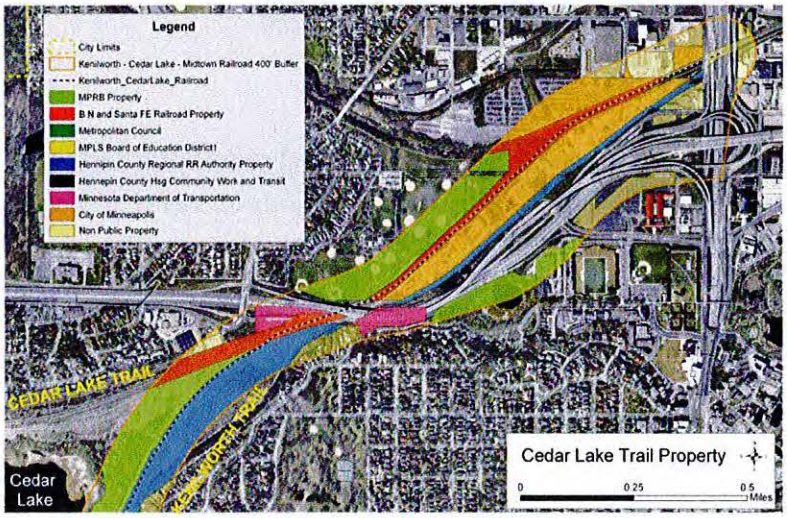
Bryn Mawr Park, looking south from Morgan Avenue

6 Cedar Lake Regional Trail and LRT Crossing Area

6.1 Location and Description

The federally funded Cedar Lake Regional Trail carries commuter and recreational bicyclists and pedestrians between downtown Minneapolis and the western suburbs.

At this location the trail junctions with the Kenilworth Regional Trail and the LRT follows the Kenilworth alignment south. In this area the bike trails are separated into north- and south-bound, and there is a separate pedestrian trail. The land in this area is owned by the County and the MPRB. Per agreement, all of the trails are maintained by the MPRB.



Into this already complex area the LRT brings dramatically increased challenges (6.3.2.4).

6.2 Issue: Safety, use, access, connectivity

In 2011, according to the Metropolitan Council's annual visit estimates, Kenilworth Regional Trail had approximately 624,400 visits and the Cedar Lake Regional Trail had 381,400 visits. The MPRB is very concerned about retaining safe and high-quality use and access to these regional trails in this area for all users and from designated access points.

Below are the critical outcomes that the MPRB has adopted and must be addressed in the FEIS and preliminary engineering.

6.2.1 **Outcome:** Walkers, runners, bicyclists, and other nonmotorized trail users safely and efficiently get from one side of the LRT tracks to the other, year-round and without interruption.

6.2.2 **Outcome:** The federally funded, nonmotorized Cedar Lake Regional Trail is fully functional, with uninterrupted flow and speed.

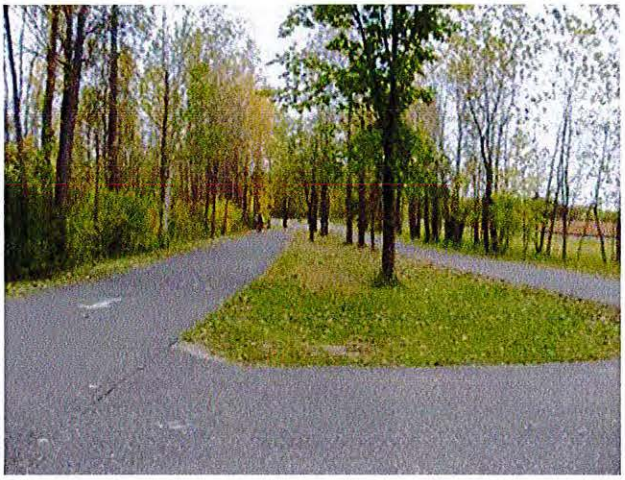
6.2.3 **Outcome:** All users have adequate access to the trails.

6.2.4 **Outcome:** All trail connections are safe and easy to navigate, and space is allowed for future expansion to meet demand.

6.2.5 **Outcome:** The Cedar Lake Regional Trail meets commuter bicycle standards of 20 mph design speed.

6.2.6 **Outcome:** Communities north of the LRT easily access the Cedar Lake Regional Trail, Cedar Lake, and Cedar Lake Park.

At junction of Kenilworth Regional Trail (center left) and Cedar Lake Regional Trail (top left and bottom right)



At junction, looking west along divided Kenilworth Regional Trail

6.3 Issue: Environmental protection

The MPRB park lands in this area bring significant benefits to park and trail users, support native plant species, and are serve as important wildlife habitat.

Below are the critical outcomes that the MPRB has adopted and must be addressed in the FEIS and preliminary engineering.

6.3.1 **Outcome:** Park lands retain their natural character.

6.3.2 **Outcome:** Wildlife habitat supports local and migratory fauna.

Cedar Lake Park and Cedar Lake Regional Trail - Prairie

7 Intersection with West 21st Street

7.1 Location and Description

The intersection of the Kenilworth Regional Trail and 21st Street is a proposed station location. The station would sit on Hennepin County property, however the west side of the rail line is MPRB property, Cedar Lake Park.

At 21st Street, Cedar Lake has a very popular beach and provides access to a trail network as well as informal foot paths.

7.2 Issue: Park access

At intersection, look west into Cedar Lake Park

This location is the sole access point for Cedar Lake Park and beach. Visitors arrive at this pristine area on foot, by bicycle, and using motorized vehicles, and via 21st Street, the Kenilworth Regional Trail, and in the future the LRT. Given that "Implementation of LRT service and stations along the Segment A alignment would likely result in some land use changes surrounding the stations..." (3.1.5.1), the natural character of this area and clear access must be ensured.

Below are the critical outcomes that the MPRB has adopted and must be addressed in the FEIS and preliminary engineering.

7.2.1 **Outcome:** Access to Cedar Lake Park at West 21st Street is attractive, natural, and welcoming.

7.2.2 **Outcome:** People on the east side of the corridor safely and easily access park lands on the west side.

7.3 Issue: Safety

With thousands of park and park land users and multiple modes of transport across and along the corridor at this point, safety is of utmost importance. Below are the critical outcomes that the MPRB has adopted and must be addressed in the FEIS and preliminary engineering.

7.3.1 **Outcome:** All Cedar Lake Park users have safe and pleasant access to and from the park, regardless of mode of transport.

7.3.2 **Outcome:** Station design *enhances* safety and access for Cedar Lake Park users.

7.4 Issue: Aesthetics, noise

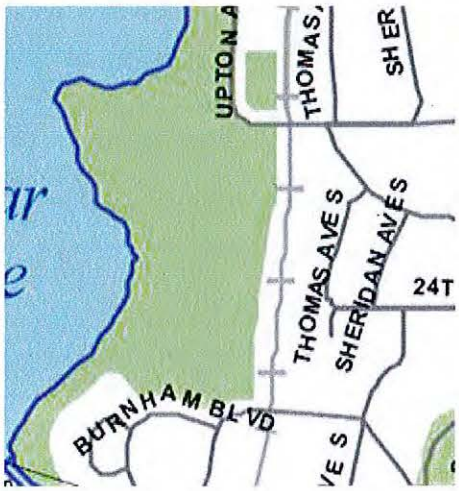
The MPRB is concerned that the anticipated 1,000+ daily LRT boardings (Appendix F, Transit Effects, Figure 2) at

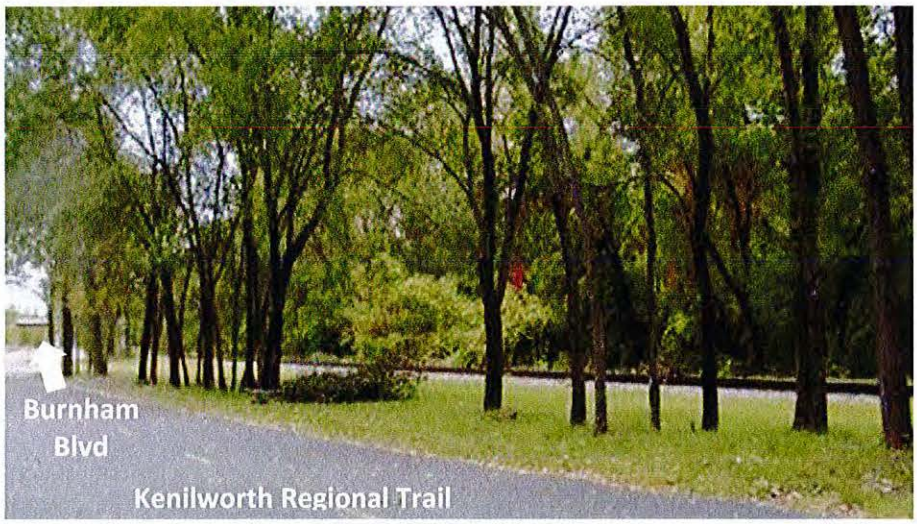
this location would seriously compromise the quality of experience for users of this secluded park area.

Below are the critical outcomes that the MPRB has adopted and must be addressed in the FEIS and preliminary engineering.

7.4.1 **Outcome:** Cedar Lake Park remains a quiet, tranquil, and natural park destination.

7.4.2 **Outcome:** The area between Burnham Boulevard and 21st Street is naturally beautiful and serene.





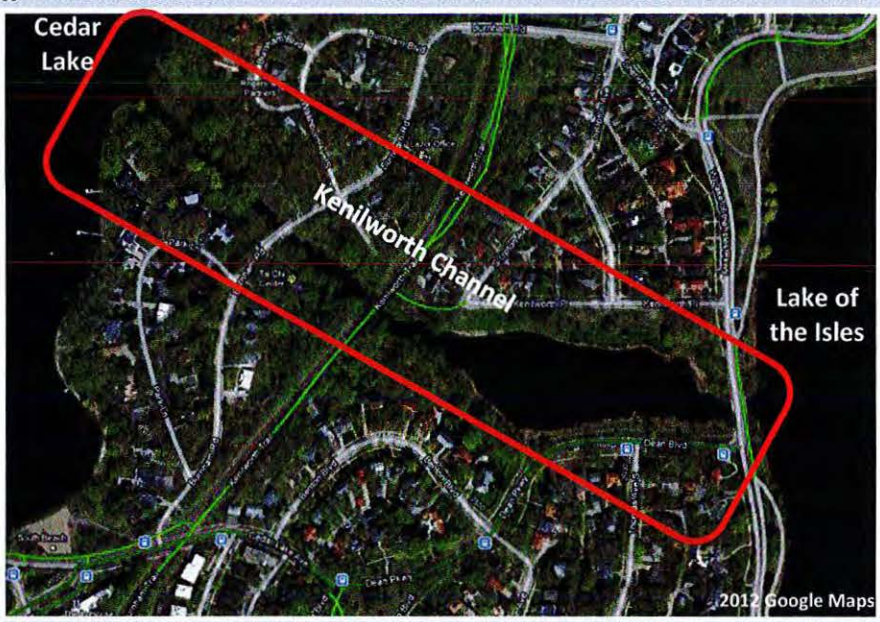
Looking SW from 21st Street

8 Kenilworth Channel, Bridge

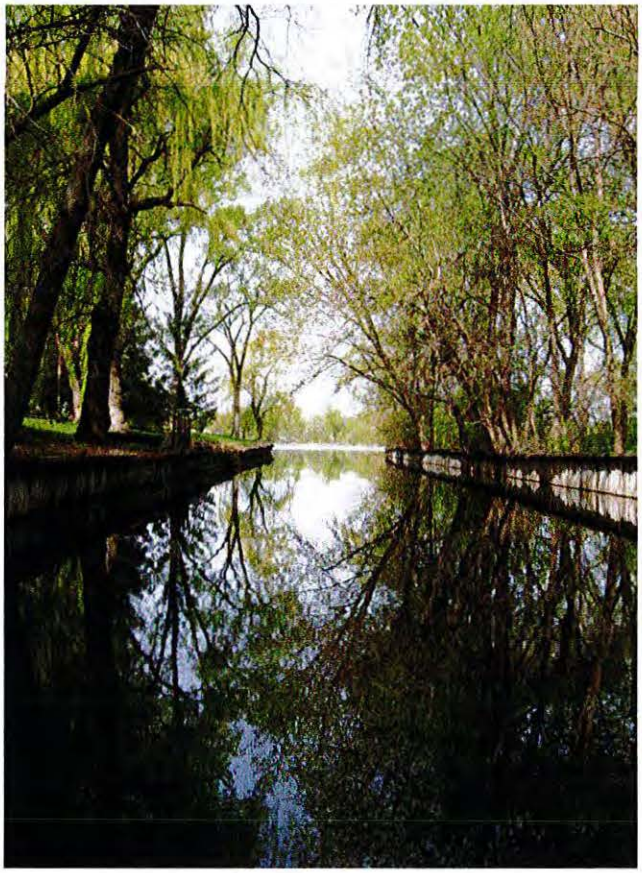
8.1 Location and Description

The proposed alignment of the LRT crosses the Kenilworth Channel, a body of water constructed in 1913 to connect Cedar Lake and Lake of the Isles to form the Minneapolis Chain of Lakes. The Channel has year-round recreational use, from boaters in the summer to skiers and skaters in the winter.

The Channel also provides access for wildlife. The bridge over the Channel for the existing freight tracks and trails is narrow and relatively low to the water.



8.2 Issue: Historic character, aesthetics, tranquility



Kenilworth Channel

The MPRB is concerned about preserving the historic character of the 1913 Kenilworth Channel in its critical role within the Minneapolis Chain of Lakes Regional Park. The channel is part of the Grand Rounds Historic District that is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

According to the DEIS (3.6.3.3) ...the bridge design, bank treatment, and aesthetics for the new facility and the potential replacement or modification of the existing pedestrian bridge would have a substantial effect on this historic landscape... In addition, (3.4.5.3) ...Potential long-term effects may occur at the following properties: Kenilworth Lagoon/Channel, Grand Rounds (potential effects of the construction of new bridge structures within the historic district; the design and footprint of these structures may affect the banks of the historic channel and may affect the district's overall feeling and setting).

While the DEIS notes that these issues will be addressed during preliminary engineering, the MPRB is concerned that they receive the most serious attention very early in the process. Below are the critical outcomes that the MPRB has adopted and must be addressed in the FEIS and preliminary engineering.

8.2.1 **Outcome:** Support and safety structures are harmonious, beautiful, and both historically and context sensitive.

8.2.2 **Outcome:** The Kenilworth Channel retains its natural beauty and serenity and historic character.

8.3 Issue: Connectivity and recreational use

The Kenilworth Channel was central to creating the Minneapolis Chain of Lakes and provides a critical connection between Cedar Lake and Lake of the Isles. Trail access is necessary for people as is year-round channel access for both people and wildlife. It is also a critical link in the City of Lakes Loppet (winter ski race) and City of Lake Tri-Loppet.

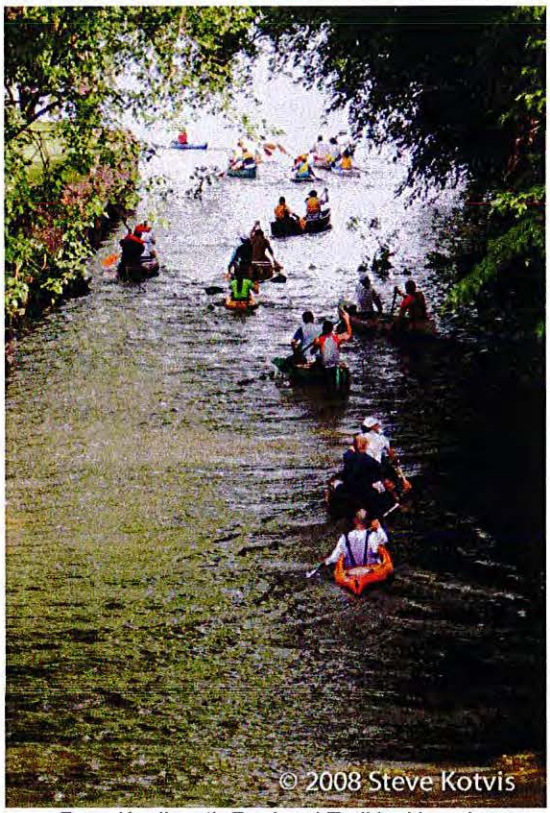
Below are the critical outcomes that the MPRB has adopted and must be addressed in the FEIS and preliminary engineering.

8.3.1 **Outcome:** Users have access to the Kenilworth Regional Trail, Cedar Lake, and Lake of the Isles from both sides of the LRT/Kenilworth Regional Trail.

8.3.2 **Outcome:** People and wildlife on both sides of the LRT/Kenilworth Regional Trail have access to and along the undeveloped channel shoreline.

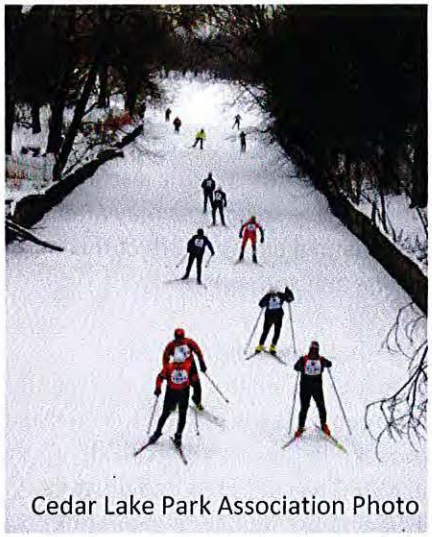
8.3.3 **Outcome:** Users have unfettered, year-round passage along the channel (in the water/on the ice) between Lake of the Isles and Cedar Lake.

8.3.4 **Outcome:** The historic water connection between Cedar Lake and Lake of the Isles remains a defining characteristic of the Minneapolis Chain of Lakes Regional Park.



From Kenilworth Regional Trail looking along Kenilworth Channel – City of Lakes Tri - Loppet

8.4 Issue: Safety



From Kenilworth Regional Trail looking along Kenilworth Channel – City of Lakes Loppet

The MPRB is concerned about protecting the safety of land and water users of the Kenilworth Channel and shoreland.

Below are the critical outcomes that the MPRB has adopted and must be addressed in the FEIS and preliminary engineering.

8.4.1 **Outcome:** Year-round channel users are safe from falling debris and ice.

9 Cedar Lake Parkway-Grand Rounds

Cedar Lake Section of Grand Rounds

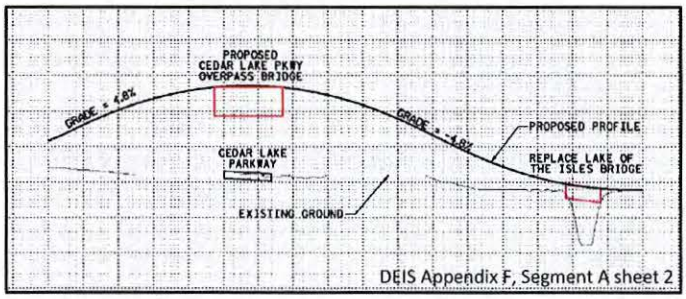
9.1 Location and Description

At this location the LRT intersects with actively used Cedar Lake Parkway, which is an essential section of the Grand Rounds National Scenic Byway (see Grand Rounds map) and within the Minneapolis Chain of Lakes Regional Park (Cedar Lake Beach, Parkway, and Trail). Directly to the west of this location is Cedar Lake South Beach.

The MPRB is concerned about LRT impacts on the Kenilworth Regional Trail and Chain of Lakes Regional Park users and properties that contribute to the Grand Rounds Historic District. In 2011, according to the Metropolitan Council's annual visit estimates, Kenilworth Regional Trail had approximately 624,400 visits and the Chain of Lakes Regional Park had 5,122,900 visits (Chain of Lakes estimate does ***not*** include motorized or nonmotorized traffic counts on the parkway). Cedar Lake Parkway, as part of the Grand Rounds Historic District, is considered eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (7.4.1.4 page 7-20).

9.2 Issues: Integrity, flow, and access

The MPRB is concerned that adding LRT into this intersection could result in frequent delays of parkway and trail users along or parallel to Cedar Lake Parkway, and create visual obstructions. The MPRB finds that both of these impacts would significantly diminish the quality of experience for parkway, park, and trail users. Further, such impacts are inconsistent with one of the basic design characteristics of the Grand Rounds: a continuous recreational driving experience.



The MPRB is also concerned that the proposal to elevate the LRT above the parkway at this intersection (see image above) will increase noise and create visual impacts that will significantly diminish the quality of experience for parkway, park, and trail users of a property that is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

The anticipated frequency of trains along the corridor will also increase potential conflicts between the trains and users of the trail parallel to Cedar Lake Parkway, thus raising serious safety concerns.

The DEIS makes several references to this issue, including the following:

- 7.4.1.4 Section 4(f) Properties Potentially Used by the Project, page 7-20: Cedar Lake Parkway and the Cedar Lake-Lake of the Isles Channel have been determined eligible for inclusion on the NRHP as part of the Grand Rounds Historic District.
- 3.4.5.3 Cultural Resources, page 3-79: Potential long-term effects may occur at the following properties: Cedar Lake Parkway, Grand Rounds (potential effects of the changes to the intersection of the LRT corridor with the historic parkway, including the LRT overpass bridge, and, under the co-location alternative, the effects of widening the trail/rail corridor; these changes may affect the parkway itself and may alter its setting.)

Below are the critical statements and/or outcomes that the MPRB has adopted and must be addressed in the FEIS and preliminary engineering.

9.2.1 **Statement:** The MPRB conducted a preliminary feasibility study of a grade-separated crossing at this intersection, which revealed that lowering the tracks and trail, and bridging portions of the parkway would allow the train and trail to travel beneath the parkway (see Appendix A for illustrations). The MPRB recommends further exploration of this type of integrated solution that significantly reduces safety hazards, noise impacts, visual impacts, and delays for motorized and nonmotorized vehicles.

9.2.2 **Outcome:** The Grand Rounds (eligible for National Register of Historic Places) fully retains its integrity and intention.

9.2.3 **Outcome:** Motorized and nonmotorized vehicles and pedestrians along the trail parallel to Cedar Lake Parkway experience continuous and safe flow.

9.2.4 **Outcome:** Trail users have direct access to the trails and trail connections that are currently provided at this location.

9.2.5 **Outcome:** Recreational and commuter trail traffic on both the Kenilworth Regional Trail and the trail parallel to Cedar Lake Parkway follows substantially the same route as at present.

On Cedar Lake Parkway-Grand Rounds; at junction looking SW along Kenilworth Regional Trail; Cedar Lake and beach at right

9.2.6 **Outcome:** The view of and from Cedar Lake and surrounding parkland is preserved.

9.2.7 **Outcome:** The parkland around Cedar Lake remains a natural visual buffer between Cedar Lake and the LRT corridor.

9.3 Issue: Safety

Safety of park and trail users is a critical objective for the MPRB. This includes using design to reduce risks from user conflicts or unexpected hazards, and ensuring adequate access to park facilities when the LRT is in operation.

Delays in fire, police, and emergency medical response to park facilities, especially beaches, may result from the high number and frequency of trains that are projected to travel through the corridor. Due to the proximity of South Cedar Lake Beach, timely emergency medical access across this intersection is critical.

Below are the critical outcomes that the MPRB has adopted and must be addressed in the FEIS and preliminary engineering.

9.3.1 **Outcome:** Fire, police, and emergency medical personnel and equipment can access South Cedar Lake beach and provide response times that meet relevant laws and standards.

9.4 Issue: Noise and air quality

The MPRB is concerned about the noise and air quality impacts of LRT at this intersection due to the high frequency of trains that will cross here. For an at-grade crossing, high levels of track, bell, and whistle noise would significantly diminish the quality of experience in adjacent parkland and along the trails. Noise generated by a flyover condition is also a concern. Frequent traffic delays for train crossings are expected to diminish air quality for park and trail users.

Below are the critical outcomes that the MPRB has adopted and must be addressed in the FEIS and preliminary engineering.

9.4.1 **Outcome:** LRT and crossing-related noise does not diminish the enjoyment and use of the trails, adjacent park land, and Grand Rounds National Historic Byway.

9.4.2 **Outcome:** Air quality at this location meets state and federal standards.

At junction, looking NE along Kenilworth Regional Trail

From Kenilworth Regional Trail looking toward Cedar Lake, Grand Rounds

10 Park Siding Park

10.1 Location and Description

The MPRB owns Park Siding Park, a small neighborhood park, which is immediately adjacent to the LRT corridor and an access point to the Kenilworth Regional Trail. With play equipment as well as formal gardens, it is actively used by children and adults from neighborhoods on both sides of the corridor.

10.2 Issue: Access and safety

Although the DEIS commits to improving the pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure along the alignment and improving the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists through implemented design guidelines (10.5.3.1), the MPRB has particular access and safety concerns at this location. Park visitors, including small children, come from both sides of the corridor as well as from the Kenilworth Regional Trail. This is also a popular bicycle and pedestrian trail ingress and egress point.

Below are the critical outcomes that the MPRB has adopted and must be addressed in the FEIS and preliminary engineering.

10.2.1 **Outcome:** All users have formal and safe access to the park from both sides of the LRT.

10.2.2 **Outcome:** As an important trail access point, the trail design accommodates a safe ingress and egress.

10.2.3 **Outcome**: Trail users have safe access to and from the park.

10.3 Issue: Visual appeal

This small neighborhood park provides play equipment for children and formal gardens for adults. The heavily planted berm between Dean Court and the Kenilworth Regional Trail currently provides a visual screen, but the MPRB is concerned with ensuring that during and after construction there is a strong visual barrier that remains compatible with this important neighborhood park.

Below are the critical outcomes that the MPRB has adopted and must be addressed in the FEIS and preliminary engineering.

10.3.1 **Outcome:** The LRT's visual impact does not disrupt park visitors' enjoyment, nor detract from the park's character.

10.4 Issue: Noise

The MPRB is deeply concerned about the impact of LRT noise on Park Siding visitors, especially the very young children who frequent this neighborhood park.

Below are the critical outcomes that the MPRB has adopted and must be addressed in the FEIS and preliminary engineering.

10.4.1 **Outcome:** Park users, especially young children, are not subject to LRT noise levels that exceed the noise standards set for Category 1 land uses.

Park, looking SE from Kenilworth Regional Trail access

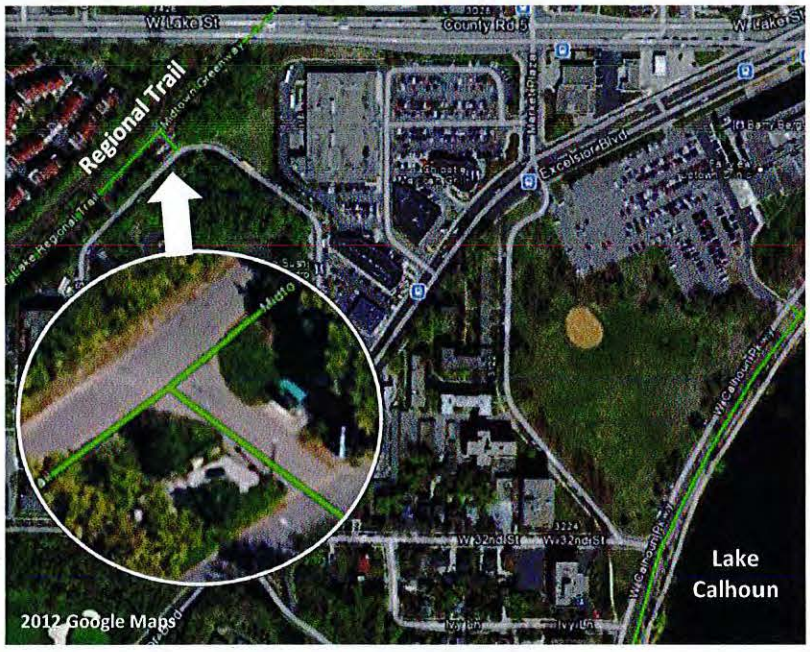
Kenilworth Regional Trail access, looking toward corridor

A heavily landscaped berm between Dean Court and the corridor provides a safety and visual barrier for Park Siding users

11 Trail Access at Abbott Avenue S (by new West Lake Station)

11.1 Location and Description

This is an actively used trail access to the to the Kenilworth Regional Trail and Midtown Greenway and is the closest access point to the Chain of Lake Regional Park. West Calhoun Neighborhood Association contributed park-like features to this location including a kiosk, picnic table, bike racks, decorative fencing, and a drinking fountain.



11.2 Issue: Park and trail access

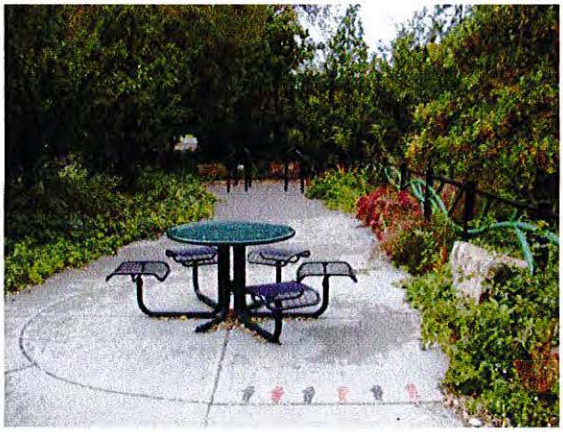
The MPRB is committed to preserving this important trail access, ensuring safe and convenient wayfinding between the trail and nearby Lake Calhoun, and advocating for sufficient bicycle parking for all visitors to the area. The access was originally designed with input from Hennepin County to accommodate future LRT.

Below are the critical outcomes that the MPRB has adopted and must be addressed in the FEIS and preliminary engineering.

11.2.1 **Outcome:** West Lake station users and all other users have safe and convenient access to and from Lake Calhoun and the Kenilworth Regional Trail.

11.2.2 **Outcome:** Wayfinding is provided between the West Lake station and Lake Calhoun and the trails.

11.2.3 **Outcome:** Safe and adequate bike parking is provided for recreational and commuter users of the trail and for Lake Calhoun visitors.



12 Northwest Corner of Lake Calhoun Area

12.1 Location and Description

This location within the Minneapolis Chain of Lakes Regional Park is the closest major park land to the proposed West Lake station. It is a primary visitor portal to the Grand Rounds National Scenic Byway. The Calhoun Executive Center parking lot next to Lake Calhoun sits on land that is partially owned by the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board as part of the Minneapolis Chain of Lakes Regional Park. On weekends and weekday evenings, visitors use this area for parking and to access the regional park and the Grand Rounds.

12.2 Issue: Park and trail access

Millions of annual park visits to this area originate by foot, bicycle, motorized vehicle, and in the future the LRT.

Traffic patterns altered by the addition of a West Lake station will have a direct impact on the park visitor experience and all modes of traffic on Lake Calhoun Parkway and Dean Parkway. The MPRB is concerned that the introduction of the high-volume West Lake station increases the complexity of this area and is committed to ensuring that all visitors have a positive, easy, and safe experience accessing and using the park lands and trails in this area.

Below are the critical outcomes that the MPRB has adopted and must be addressed in the FEIS and preliminary engineering.

12.2.1 **Statement:** Multimodal traffic patterns in a roughly 1/2-mile radius of the West Lake station must be studied in partnership with the street/trail property owners (Hennepin County, City of Minneapolis, MPRB). Deliverables of the study should include traffic volume and flow projections, and recommendations for 1) long-term street/trail network modifications and 2) short-term network modifications to be implemented with station development.

12.2.2 **Outcome:** LRT and West Lake station area design decisions for this area are based on design recommendations from a comprehensive and multimodal (bicycle, pedestrian, transit, vehicle) circulation analysis that addresses impacts to the Grand Rounds parkways and trails.

12.2.3 **Outcome:** The design of this area makes clear that it is a "gateway" to the Minneapolis park system.

12.2.4 **Outcome:** A safe, free-flowing pedestrian and bicycle route with exceptional wayfinding exists between the LRT station area and Lake Calhoun and adjacent park land.

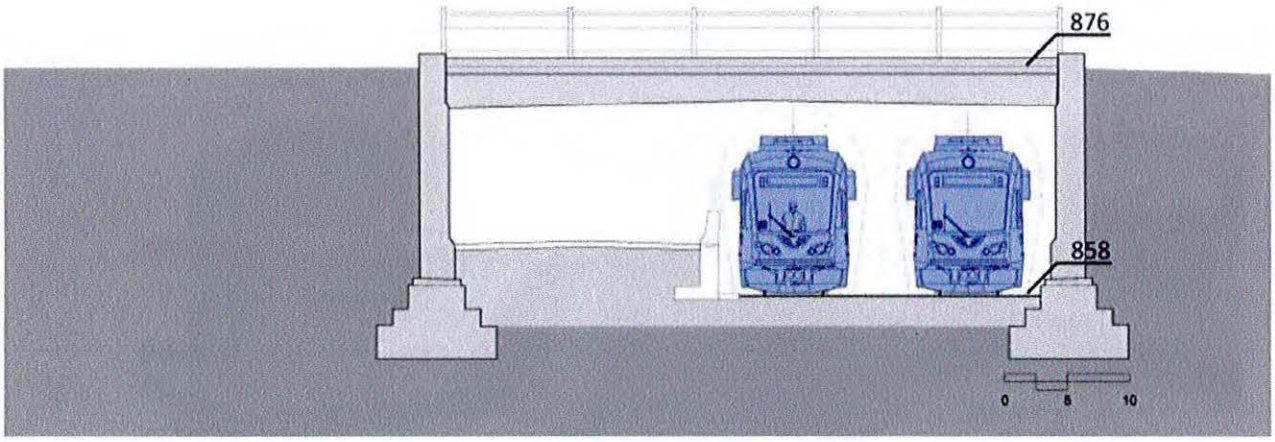
12.2.5 **Outcome:** There is no loss of vehicle parking for park and trail users.

12.2.6 **Outcome:** Greenspace at the northwest corner of Lake Calhoun is preserved for park visitors and recreational purposes.

13 Appendix A – Cedar Lake Parkway/ Southwest Transitway

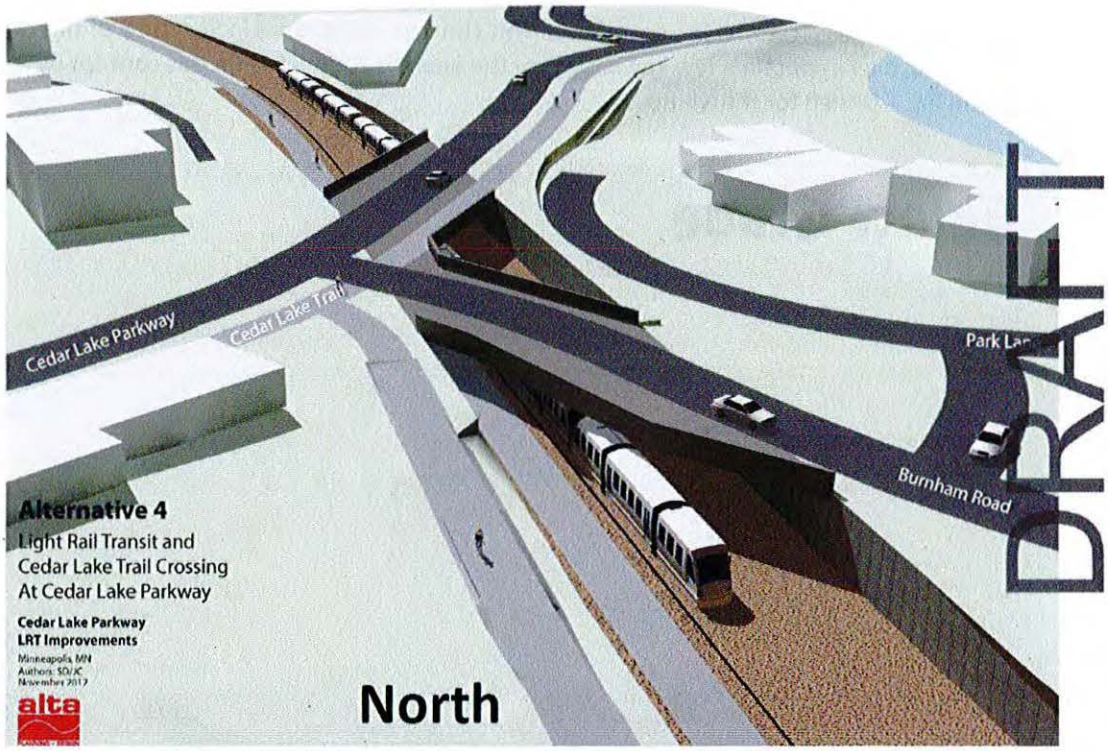
Appendix A is intended to illustrate the concept of lowering the train and trail and bridging Cedar Lake Parkway at the Cedar Lake Parkway/Southwest Transitway intersection. This concept is discussed in Section 9 of this comment letter. The following pages contain a few key images of the analysis conducted on this concept by Steve Durrant of Alta Planning + Design for the MPRB.

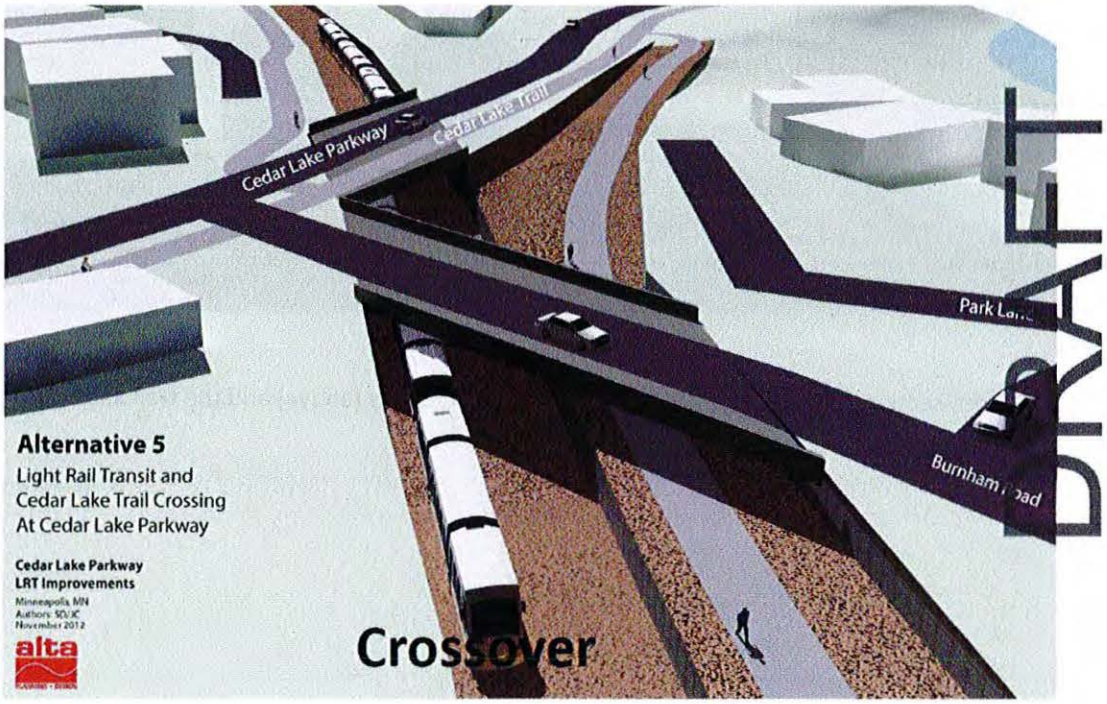
Below Grade



Above is a potential cross-section showing elevations for Cedar Lake Parkway (above) and the trail and train.

These are examples of grade separated crossings with trail on east (North version) or west (Crossover version) side of tracks. These are provided to illustrate the concept, not to provide a complete overview of the feasibility study.





Nick Shuraleff
<shuraleff@gmail.com>
12/12/2012 08:29 AM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us
cc
bcc
Subject Southwest Transitway

Dear Sirs;
Attached is a letter voicing my concerns about the SW LRT.

Yours truly,
Dr. Nicholas Shuraleff, II

December 11, 2012

Housing, Community Works, and Transit
Att: Southwest Transitway
701 Fourth Avenue South, Suite 400
Minneapolis, MN 55415

Dear Sirs:

What does it take to slow an onrushing train?

The evidence for either putting the West Calhoun LRT station underground or in a trench below grade seems overwhelming. Whichever way you look at the issue, be it noise, safety, surface traffic flows, vibration damage to surrounding structures, or aesthetics, an elevated station leaves a permanent scar on a noble LRT venture. I2

On behalf of myself and especially future Minneapolitans, I beg you to rethink the design of the West Calhoun station and put it below grade. I2

Dr. Nicholas Shuraleff, II
3134 Dean Court
Minneapolis, MN 55416

Mary Shuraleff
<shuraleff@yahoo.com>

12/12/2012 09:50 AM

Please respond to
Mary Shuraleff
<shuraleff@yahoo.com>

To "swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us"
<swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>
cc
bcc
Subject Light Rail

E0, E2

The forward thinking of the Hennepin County Transit Department regarding public transportation is to be commended! The forward thinking of our park board, from the earliest of days, is also to be commended. It's crucial that Minneapolis maintain it's exemplary Kenilworth bike and walking trails. Please consider placing the LRT below grade level with a ditch and enclosed sound level. We can achive both – good light rail transportation and our much envied peaceful and pastoral section of the Minneapolis park system.

Thank you for your consideration,

Mary Shuraleff
3134 Dean Ct
Minneapolis, MN 55416
612-414-9486

"Louise Delagran"
<delag002@umn.edu>
12/12/2012 12:52 PM

To <swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>
cc
bcc
Subject DEIS comment

Hello:
I have attempted to make sense of the DEIS, but it is not a user-friendly document. So I am commenting on some key points that I have about routing light-rail along the east side of Cedar Lake in Minneapolis.

1) Freight rail: from the beginning we have been told that the light rail would only go through our neighborhood if the freight rail moved. This is a fragile, beautiful natural area and having both will have a huge negative impact on the ecology and our enjoyment of it. It is completely unfair to ask one neighborhood to have to endure both simply because we don't have the same political pressure as the suburbs. D

2) The bike trail needs to stay. Biking is the most environmentally friendly travel option there is, and it is completely hypocritical and counterproductive to eliminate this option with light rail. Many people use this trail to commute to work. P9,D

3) Bridges. These will have a negative impact on the neighborhood and our enjoyment of Cedar Lake. Instead, the LRT should be buried from just north of Lake street to 394. This will minimize traffic issues, allow for the bike and walking paths, enhance safety, and preserve our natural beauty. D

4) Park and ride. There should not be a lot at 21st under any circumstances. The city of Minneapolis told us we would not have a park and ride, as it was against city policy and against the whole point of a light rail—which is that people take it instead of drive their cars. People should walk to a stop at 21st street (or take the 25L bus), and we should not encourage driving to it in any way. What will happen with a lot is that people will drive in from the suburbs so they can get free or cheap parking and our neighborhood will not only suffer the impact of the light rail, but much increased traffic. We should also make sure that it is resident only parking for at least a mile around the light rail stop to prevent people parking on our streets. D, I2

5) If one of the goals of light rail is to reduce pollution, then again, it would be completely hypocritical to pollute Cedar Lake and environment as a result of the light rail. No federal, state, or municipal environmental protection laws or guidelines should be broken or even bent for the sake of getting this light rail through. D

Louise Delagran
2456 W 24th St.
Minneapolis

Steven Goldsmith
<sgoldsmith.md@gmail.com>
12/12/2012 05:52 PM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us
cc
bcc
Subject DEIS

Attached please find an individual response to the DEIS
--
Steven R. Goldsmith, M.D.
Professor of Medicine, University of Minnesota
Director, Heart Failure Program, Hennepin County Medical Center
Director, Minnesota Heart Failure Consortium
(p) 612-873-2875
(f) 612-904-4224

Response to the DEIS for the proposed SWLRT

Steven R. Goldsmith, MD
2216 Kenwood Parkway
Minneapolis
MN 55415
612 377 8940

DISCLAIMER: I am a 25 year resident of Kenwood but own no property whose value is likely to be affected by Route 3a for the SLWRT. I write this as a concerned citizen who believes the true "cost" to this project, as proposed, is too high given the impact it would have on our community.

The language used throughout the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) to characterize the impact of the proposed route for the SWLRT as it passes from Lake St to Penn Ave in Minneapolis is very typical of this type of document. Repeatedly the document cites 'visual impacts', 'noise' and 'vibration' as likely negatives to surrounding properties and park users. While of course technically accurate, such dry, clinical language utterly fails to capture what the true 'environmental impact' of this route would be. The actual "environmental impact" of this plan would be to destroy this environment, or at least to degrade it to such a degree that it would no longer be a desirable place to live, commute on one's bicycle, or simply enjoy nature in the midst of a major city.

E0, N2

Currently the area between Lake St and Penn Ave is a largely quiet residential area filled with homes ranging from the modest to the very expensive, combined with a lovely, pastoral strip of parkland running along the east border of Cedar Lake after passing across the Kenilworth Bridge connecting Lake of the Isles and Cedar Lake. In the midst of this urban green oasis run critical segments of the Minneapolis Commuter Bike Trail System, the Kenilworth and Cedar Lake Trails, used by hundreds of commuters and recreational bikers every day for much of the year. This area has grown up for decades in relative harmony with the remnants of a once busier freight rail corridor. The current daily handful of slow diesel trains poses little real disturbance to the area since the total time in which train noise and vibration are present is perhaps an hour a day, at most. The infrastructure to support the freight line is minimal. This would all change radically if the SWLRT route is implemented as currently planned, either at grade, or with an enormous "fly-over" bridge through part of the area. The implementation of this route as currently envisioned would irrevocably shatter the entire character of this lovely neighborhood and park.

E2, E4, E8, E7 N1

The infrastructure for an electrically powered LRT would permanently deface the entire corridor. This is not an industrial area, or one adjacent to a major highway or commuter route (like the Hiawatha and Central Corridor LRT routes) where such installations are less intrusive. This is an area of trees, grass and shrubs encompassing both a neighborhood and a park. Installing the infrastructure for LRT

E4, N2

would therefore permanently ruin the overall aesthetic of the area as it now exists. This is not a subjective matter – there is no doubt that masses of electrical overhead lines, support towers, safety barriers etc would be incompatible with the current, essentially park-like ambience. Mentioning this obvious and substantial harm should be very much within the purview of an environmental impact statement, but the sanitized language in the current DEIS does not even attempt to capture this first and basic problem with the proposed route.

E2
N2

Running more than 250 trains each day from before dawn until after midnight through this corridor at grade or in part over a huge, totally site-inappropriate fly-over bridge, would permanently diminish the desirability this area as a place to live. Property values would fall dramatically and tax revenue from the area would drop accordingly. Comparative studies showing that property values increase with LRT are not relevant to this project since for very good reasons LRT is not typically put in the midst of highly developed residential and recreational areas. The environmental impact of this line is therefore likely to be economically catastrophic for one of the loveliest established neighborhoods in the city of Minneapolis. Simply referring to noise and vibration and visual impact is hardly an accurate assessment of the true economic impact of this proposed route on those who live near it, nor to the city as a whole.

O1,
O4

E4,
N2

Running more than 200 trains a day alongside one of the critical links in the Commuter Bike Trail system is also likely to significantly diminish the use of this vital route for commuting and recreational bicyclists. There is little mention of this in the DEIS but certainly, confronted with the noise and vibration and even danger of frequent fast trains and the presence of ugly electrical infrastructure the Kenilworth and Cedar Lake Trails will become much less attractive places for cyclists. Ironically in the context of a mass transit project, many who use the Bike Trails for commuting might elect to drive instead, and those who use the area for recreation will simply go elsewhere. These again are legitimate concerns for a DEIS when analyzing the total impact of a new project on the current usage patterns of the area in question, as well as the more purely aesthetic and environmental factors, but not much is said about this.

E2,
P9

A station at 21st street makes no sense at all since this is not an easy or convenient place to access, 'park and ride' lots are fortunately contrary to Minneapolis policy, local residents can currently get to town for work or play far more quickly and conveniently than they would by train, other than perhaps for Target Field and Target Arena. It is completely unclear why riders coming from the suburbs toward town would have any interest in getting off at 21st St. The projected daily use of this station is a pure fantasy. What is not a fantasy would be the extremely disruptive sound pollution to residential streets, Cedar Lake Park and bike paths from the more than 250 warning bells or horns each day, each in excess of 100db, which would be required as trains approached this station. Safety concerns dictate that this cannot be mitigated if the trains are at grade. This aspect alone of the 21st St Station renders is unacceptable and it should be stated as such.

E4
E0
E10,
P9

Fundamentally, the relevant sections of this DEIS grossly understate the total impact of the proposed LRT Route on the area from Lake St. to Penn Ave. Words such as 'ruin', 'destroy', and 'irrevocably degrade' would be far more apt than clinical commentaries on 'likely noise, visual impacts and vibration'. In effect the DEIS looks at details, at the 'trees' -- and utterly misses the 'forest'. Because of this failure the relative benefits of the proposed line seem greater than they really are, or at least could be considered to be. (The complete failure of the Northstar Commuter line to meet its projected ridership should, independent of the environmental impact of the SWLRT, give considerable pause to the proposed cost-benefits of SWLRT). Add in the legitimate concerns of St. Louis Park due to required re-location of freight, and those germane to the businesses and traffic around a West Lake Street station and you have not just a series of minor, manageable problems, but rather a potentially catastrophic impact on a mature and highly desirable part of Hennepin County which encompasses homes, schools, businesses and parkland. This would be the true cost of the route as currently proposed. It is this cost and not what is stated so 'clinically' in the DEIS which should be weighed in the balance before deciding that this route has trade-offs which are acceptable.

E4 E2, O1

I2

There is a solution, or at least a partial solution. Trains must be significantly below grade from Lake St to Penn Ave. Elevating them is no solution – an enormous fly-over bridge would be completely foreign to the surroundings, and would actually magnify the visual intrusiveness and noise of the route itself. It is deeply disturbing that anyone with any knowledge of the area could seriously propose such a structure. Rather, the trains must be buried, preferably in a tunnel, or at least in a deep trench. This is the only way to at least attempt to preserve the essential aesthetic character of the corridor as it currently exists. A final EIS should insist that this be a cardinal feature of a final design, regardless of cost – and make it clear that the current proposal limited to at- or above-grade alternatives is simply unacceptable. SWLRT should serve the needs of the entire area, without significantly harming a large part of it. The final EIS should support what should be this obvious necessity. And if this goal cannot be met for either financial or logistical reasons, the alternative should not be to move ahead in spite of the problems, but rather to return to first principles and use a different route. This type of project, if it is pursued, will only happen once and the citizens of Hennepin County will live with the consequences for decades. The community as a whole deserves a design which benefits the entire region, without the degree of compromise inherent in what is currently proposed. And if the project is to be implemented as proposed, the community deserves fair warning of what will be sacrificed. The DEIS does not come remotely close to providing such warning.

E8 E4 N2

E8

E0, N2

Fran Schmit
<schmfran@hotmail.com>
12/12/2012 09:55 PM

To <swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>
cc
bcc
Subject Co-Location

Minneapolis (?) declares CO-Location to be Un-acceptable!
NO-NO!! It is not Mpls that is declaring against co-location, it is the folks who live in Kenilworth who are making that declaration. Guess what? These are the same privileged folks who originally invented the RE-LOCATion story. We are now back to ground zero. 'Kenilworth' declared the re-route 4 years ago and we have been holding up the STOP sign, declaring CO-LOCATE, since then. The only thing new is now they are saying the same thing along with a many-millions-of-dollars price tag …….to be paid by Hennepin County taxpayers. You'd think they could come up with a better story after four years of browbeating. The freight train that was there when they built "close to the tracks", will be there many years from now - - along with the co-located Light Rail tracks that we all want.
Let's get this CO-location bandwagon rolling and build the SouthWest Light Rail! Fran Schmit

C

C

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DEC 12 2012
B.G.

Draft Environmental Impact Statement Comment Form

Southwest Transitway Project

Federal and state environmental rules require that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) be prepared for the proposed Southwest Transitway project. The EIS process includes the preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), which must be made available for public review and comment.

The DEIS discusses: (1) the purpose and need for the project; (2) the alternatives considered; (3) the impacts of these alternatives; and (4) the agencies and persons consulted.

Comments on the DEIS will be accepted through December 11, 2012. All comments must be received by that date. Please include a return mailing address with all comments.

Public hearings on the DEIS will be held in November 2012. To learn more about the hearings, please visit www.southwesttransitway.org

I live at 1730 Kenwood Pkwy. Any illumination or sound (dinging trains at stops) would not be acceptable behind my house. It would transform my tranquility to a scene out of Close Encounters of the Third Kind with lights and sound. N2, O1, D

I do not mind the sound of the freight trains a few times a day. D

Name: Thos Rand

Address: 1730 Kenwood Pkwy

City/State/Zip: Mpls, MN 55405

Telephone: 612-803-9888 Email: RANDGAARDT@YAHOO.COM.

Thank you!

SOUTHWEST transitway

Fold here

Tom Pangaard
1730 Kenwood Pkwy
Mpls, MN 55405

Hennepin County

Housing, Community Works & Transit
ATTN: Southwest Transitway

701 Fourth Avenue South, Suite 400

Minneapolis, MN 55415

55415$1643 C069

Fold here

RECEIVED
DEC 12 2012
BY:

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in response to the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) – Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) published in regard the SWLRT which includes the proposed freight rail re-route in St. Louis Park, Minnesota. C

The current SWLRT-DEIS has significant flaws and the planned re-route idea either needs to be dropped completely or a great deal more study must be done. As this action is proposed and described in Chapter 1, Section 1.3.2.3 as rebuilding a little known, lightly used spur line into a main freight rail line, which will initially allow a 788% increase of rail car traffic. What the SWLRT-DEIS does not address, but should, are the real world impacts of this action on the affected area.

Besides my general concerns about the SWLRT-DEIS, the portion of the report dealing with freight rail trains blocking street crossings (6-38 and 39) causes me the greatest concern. In the SWLRT-DEIS we are told the blocked crossings will not cause significant travel or safety issues. To the consultant sitting miles away the increase may seem insignificant, but to residents who must travel the area and rely on quick responses from emergency vehicles the 580% increase in blocked crossing time is unacceptable. C

A supposed benefit of the proposed re-route is explained in chapter 1, pages 11 and 12 of the SWLRT-DEIS. According to the document Twin City and Western (TCW) freight trains will regularly travel north of St. Louis Park into Golden Valley, Crystal and New Hope. When the trains travel north they will have to cross Cedar Lake Road, however, no data is given for the impact of this blocked crossing. C

Issues about blocked crossings not dealt with in the SWLRT-DEIS include, but are not limited to the following:

- Effects of multiple blocked crossings on residents' ability to move freely about their neighborhood
- Amount of time it takes congestion to clear once a train has passed.
    - Making turns from one street to another with backed up traffic
    - Pedestrian safety as traffic clears
- Possibility that trains will be going slower than the "worst case scenario" in the EAW – Trains often stop at McDonald's for train crews to have a break. When they resume travel they will NOT be going 10 mph.
- Medical response times can be affected
    - Narrow side streets will be blocked with waiting automobiles
    - Only one fire station has medical response
- When train volumes increase what will be done to alleviate auto traffic congestion

C

None of the mitigation requested by the City of St. Louis Park on behalf of her residents is being considered. This mitigation is not frivolous; it is necessary to maintain the safety, livability and property values for the residents of St. Louis Park. C

Name: Corinne Egan
Address: 3021 Jersey Ave S
City/State/zip: St Louis Park, MN 55426
Telephone: 612-749-2117 E-Mail: corinne.egan12@gmail.com

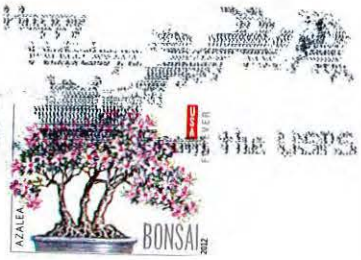
SOUTHWEST transitway

Fold here

MINNEAPOLIS MN 554

11 DEC 2012 PM 2 L

Corinne Egan
3021 Jersey Ave S
St Louis Park, MN 55426



Hennepin County
Housing, Community Works & Transit
ATTN: Southwest Transitway
701 Fourth Avenue South, Suite 400
Minneapolis, MN 55415

5541518430O

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DEC 12 2012

St. Louis Park 11/14/12

Draft Environmental Impact Statement Comment Form

Southwest Transitway Project

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Public hearings on the DEIS will be held in November 2012. To learn more about the hearings, please visit www.southwesttransitway.org

It is time to reinforce the Minneapolis policy of "no park and rides within the city limits"; it is time to re-state the good policy of not allowing Suburbanites to park their cars for free or low cost lots within the City to avoid costs of parking downtown. Park and ride at the West Lake LRT station will create traffic congestion far behond current traffic levels on W. Lake St. and Excelsior Boulevard. it will add more air pollution within the city limits; it will strangle three thriving and livable Minneapolis neighborhoods.

I1, I2, N9, M1

Name: C. Dreher
Address: 3029 Lake Shore Drive
City/State/Zip: MPLS MN 55416
Telephone: 612-929-5092 Email: coledreher@comcast.net

Thank you!

transitway

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MINNEAPOLIS MN 554

11 DEC 2012 PM 7 L

Dreher
~~3029 Lake Shore Drive~~
Minneapolis, MN 55416

Hennepin County

Housing, Community Works & Transit
ATTN: Southwest Transitway

701 Fourth Avenue South, Suite 400

Minneapolis, MN 55415

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Draft Environmental Impact Statement Comment Form

Southwest Transitway Project

DEC 1 2 2012

Federal and state environmental rules require that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) be prepared for the proposed Southwest Transitway project. The EIS process includes the preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), which must be made available for public review and comment.

The DEIS discusses: (1) the purpose and need for the project; (2) the alternatives considered; (3) the impacts of these alternatives; and (4) the agencies and persons consulted.

Comments on the DEIS will be accepted through December 11, 2012. All comments must be received by that date. Please include a return mailing address with all comments.

Public hearings on the DEIS will be held in November 2012. To learn more about the hearings, please visit www.southwesttransitway.org

1) Relocate freight rail - supported — D
2) chapter 3 p 3-115 - oppose bridge !! — D, E8
3) chapter 4 p 4-84 - noise & train reduction Essential — E4
4) chapter 3 p 3.34 - preserve existing parkland and citizen use of lia — N1, E2, D
5) Chapter 4 p 453 - protect wildlife
6) chapter 2 - p 2.32 - No Station ! — D, E10, I2
7) chapter 2 - p 2.32 - No Park & Re — E10, I1, D
8) chapter 3 - p 3-115 - Plan must include a landscapi
9) chapter 3 - p3.123 - No light pollution — N2, E4, D
10) Chapter 3 p3.129 - 3.131 - Hidden beach is known problem - don't make it worse — N9, E10, D
11) Chapter 4 - p 4.19, 4.21, 4.29 - No pollution

Name: Sandra Dowzer

Address: 2415 Sheridan Ave South

City/State/Zip: Minneapolis MN 55405

Telephone: Email:

Thank you!

SOUTHWEST transitway

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SANDRA J. DOWER
2415 SHERIDAN AVE SO.
MINNEAPOLIS, MN 55405

MINNEAPOLIS MN 554

11 DEC 2012 PM 5 L

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55415184300

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DEC 1 2 2012

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in response to the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) – Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) published in regard the SWLRT which includes the proposed freight rail re-route in St. Louis Park, Minnesota.

The current SWLRT-DEIS has significant flaws and the planned re-route idea either needs to be dropped completely or a great deal more study must be done. As this action is proposed and described in Chapter 1, Section 1.3.2.3 as rebuilding a little known, lightly used spur line into a main freight rail line, which will initially allow a 788% increase of rail cars traffic. What the SWLRT-DEIS does not address, but should, are the real world impacts of this action on the affected area. C

Besides my general concerns about the SWLRT-DEIS, the portion of the report dealing with loss of property value in the re-route area should be in Chapter 9: Indirect Impacts, but it is not, and this causes me great concern. The SWLRT-DEIS does not mention the impact of re-routed freight trains from a main line fright corridor to a bridge line on property values of the re-route area. Freight rail re-routes are not exclusive to Minnesota and the cost of the re-routes to residents has been documented. For example, according to an article in a 2001 issue of The Appraisal Journal bringing additional freight rail traffic to an area will negatively affect properties 250' feet from the rail tracks by 5-7%. All of the properties along the MN&S are well with in 250'. Based on this article one can conclude that property values along the MN&S will drop more than 7%. Two major questions arise that are not addressed in the SWLRT-DEIS. First, what happens to the tax base of St. Louis Park when the drop in value is realized? Second, how are property owners who lose value because of this government action going to be compensated for their loss? It is unreasonable for the Hennepin County to ask any resident to pay a higher price for the benefits of light rail than others. C C

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814

Egan
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55426

11 DEC 2012 PM 4 L

Hennepin County
Housing, Community Works, & Transit
Attn: Southwest Transitway
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Minneapolis, MN 55415

55415184300

Anne Lindell Selbyg
<wonderfun@gmail.com>
12/13/2012 09:01 PM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us
cc
bcc
Subject SWLRT-DEIS

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in response to the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) – Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) published in regard the SWLRT which includes the proposed freight rail re-route in St. Louis Park, Minnesota.

The current SWLRT-DEIS has significant flaws and the planned re-route idea either needs to be dropped completely or a great deal more study must be done. As this action is proposed and described in Chapter 1, Section 1.3.2.3 as rebuilding a little known, lightly used spur line into a main freight rail line, which will initially allow a 788% increase of rail car traffic. What the SWLRT-DEIS does not address, but should, are the real world impacts of this action on the affected area. C

Besides my general concerns about the SWLRT-DEIS, the portion of the report dealing with Safety (3-132 and 133) causes me the greatest concern. Only a passing reference to safety and the proposed re-route is mentioned in the SWLRT-DEIS; however there are many features about the MN&S, which make it undesirable as a freight, rail main line. The reasons the MN&S is an unsafe main rail line include, but are not limited to the following: C

- Multiple grade level crossings
- Proximity to St. Louis Park schools, homes and businesses – many are closer than the length of a rail car
- Number of pedestrians who transverse crossing every day
- Permeable soil under MN&S
- Medical emergency response hindered when crossings are blocked – only one fire station has emergency medical response (page 80)
- Tight Curves. Derailments are more likely to occur on curves than on straight track
- Hazardous materials are being carried on the rail line without sufficient right of way.

None of the mitigation requested by the City of St. Louis Park on behalf of her residents is being considered. This mitigation is not frivolous; it is necessary to maintain the safety, livability and property values for the residents of St. Louis Park. C

Anne Selbyg
2917 Hampshire Ave S
St. Louis Park MN 55426
952-285-5683

wonderfun at gmail.com

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DEC 13 2012
BY:

HENNEPIN COUNTY
COMMISSIONER
DEC 11 REC'D
Peter McLaughlin

Frank B. Freedman
2530 Pennsylvania Avenue South
St. Louis Park, MN 55426

Two Pages

December 7, 2012

Hennepin County Housing, Community Works and Transit Authority
Attention: Southwest Transitway
701 Fourth Avenue South, Suite 400
Minneapolis, MN 55415

See Comment #264 for Theme Delineations

Subject: Comments for Southwest Transitway Draft Environmental Impact Statement

I request that this Statement be updated to include these concerns about the proposed re-routing:

1. Noise and Vibration: It simply does not seemed appropriate to extrapolate data taken during use of the existing spur line and determine that noise and vibration won't be excessive with re-routing. Freight trains that use this spur line travel much slower and have far fewer cars than would re-routed freight trains. If these studies were conducted during warmer temperatures, then the accuracy of this extrapolation is still further reduced.
2. Safety: There is little margin of safety for higher speed freight trains to pass so close to our high school, through numerous blind intersections, within 34-50 feet of many houses Making the track bed higher and/or carrying hazardous materials poses still further safety concerns that dangerous derailed freight cars will roll down into homes or into our high school. Freight train accidents happen, including one in St. Louis Park recently.
3. Traffic Flow: Cedar Lake Road is becoming congested during the morning (and evening) rush hours. A re-routed freight train of 100 cars or more could easily tie up this important east-west thoroughfare for 10 minutes or more, thereby backing up traffic for at least one mile. Any emergency vehicle stuck at this intersection would lose at least 5-7 minutes getting around this bottle-neck. At least one other key intersection in St. Louis Park would experience such traffic delays.
4. Mitigation: Other than the types of rails proposed for the re-routing, no budget, source of funding, plan or even mention of mitigation appears in this document.
5. Quality of Life: It's hard to imagine that the quality of life for those living in hundreds of homes near the proposed re-route wouldn't be anything but "miserable." Thousands of other St. Louis Park residents would merely be inconvenienced and disturbed about living in a "railroad town."
6. Property Values: I estimate a $5,000,000 total loss of property values for homes located near the proposed re-route. Within a few years, I estimate the total loss of property value will be at least $100,000,00 due to the re-route, when word gets out about how high school classes are disrupted and the inconvenience of travel in our city due to re-routing.
7. Fairness: The most troubling concern I have is about fairness, specifically a seemingly imbalance of factors considered in the Statement. The Statement noted that Kenwood residents were concerned are about the how the "character of the Kenwood neighborhood..." might change due to co-location of freight and light rail trains. While removal of several dozen Kenwood homes might be needed, noise, vibration and safety were not raised as concerns. Hundreds of

Frank B. Freedman
2530 Pennsylvania Avenue South
St. Louis Park, MN 55426

Two Pages

St. Louis Park residents, city leaders and school officials were extremely concerned, since re-routing would directly and very adversely affect them. An alternative routing study and proposal offered by St. Louis Park was not accepted for consideration. No concern was deemed substantial enough to warrant any special attention in this Statement.

While this probably is not the intent, re-routing (versus co-location) simply means that a relatively large number of blue collar working folks will have to suck it up for the benefit of relatively few well-to-do Kenwood residents.

Please consider my concerns and provide a more balanced Statement, one recognizing all shortcomings of the first draft. Thank you kindly.

Frank B. Freedman
2530 Pennsylvania Avenue South
St. Louis Park, MN 55426
952.545.7980

C: Senator Amy Klobuchar
Senator Al Franken
Congressman Keith Ellison
Commissioner Peter McLauglin
Commissioner Gail Dorfman
Thom Miller, Safety In The Park
City of St. Louis Park, Mayor and Council Members

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BY:

I am writing in response to the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) – Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) which includes the proposed freight rail re-route in St. Louis Park, Minnesota.

The proposed action of re-routing freight is described in Chapter 1, Section 1.3.2.3. The MN&S Spur tracks are a lightly used spur line within a high density urban, residential setting and directly adjacent to the St Louis Park Senior High. The current freight occurs five days a week, Monday- Friday, during normal business hours. The proposed action of re-routing freight would introduce mainline traffic and the community, residents, and students will be exposed to longer, heavier trains during weekends, evenings, and nighttime. In detail, the re-route will allow a 788% increase of rail cars traffic. The increase of freight exposure will directly and negatively impact the community health and cohesion of the neighbors adjacent to the tracks. In addition, there will be negative impacts to the school system and educational quality within St Louis Park, including the decreased safety of students at the High School.

Besides my general concerns about the freight rail re-route, the section of the SWLRT DEIS that describes the noise and vibration has flawed methods and conclusions. The vibration and the noise measurements were done with current MN&S traffic. It is important to note that the re-routed freight will be longer, more frequent, and include more locomotives per train. C

Vibration, Chapter 4.8.4: The conclusion that vibration will have no significant impacts is incorrect Vibration impacts will be longer in time and the total amount will increase with the heavier freight and additional locomotives. C

Noise, Chapter 4.7.5:

Quiet zones: The DEIS fails to describe the real world issues with the quiet zone. The SLP Senior High is both bookended by two blind curves and has athletic facilities on both sides of the tracks. The operating rail company, TC&W, has stated in a public document that it has safety concerns with a quiet zone due to the proximity of the tracks to schools, residents, and businesses. It will be impossible to design a quiet zone that will be both safe for the area while maintaining access for the adjacent Senior High school and local businesses. The quiet zone is listed as mitigation for noise impacts but it is a mitigation that is not supported by the neighborhoods, school board, or the operating rail companies. C

A quiet zone will not eliminate all noise impacts and the assessment fails to measure other sources:

a. the rail to wheel curve squeal from the tight interconnect curve
b. the additional noise of the locomotives as it throttles up both the southern interconnect ramp and grade change at the northern connection,
c. trains traveling west will need to use their brakes to maintain a slow speed going down grade and through curves
d. diminished livability from the introduction of night freight traffic
e. the amount of time exposed to the noise impacts of the stationary crossing bells will increase significantly due to increase in train numbers.

The re-routing of freight will negatively impact the safety, livability, and community cohesion of residents, students, and communities. The SWLRT DEIS does not adequately describe the impacts and as such, the freight reroute should not be given any further consideration as an option. C

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SOUTHWEST
transitway

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MINNEAPOLIS MN
12 DEC 2012 PM

Mr. Richard D. Dworsky
2904 Alabama Ave. S.
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Freedom
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Hennepin County

Housing, Community Works & Transit
ATTN: Southwest Transitway

701 Fourth Avenue South, Suite 400

Minneapolis, MN 55415

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SCOTT COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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JOSEPH WAGNER, DISTRICT 1
TOM WOLF, DISTRICT 2
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DEC 13 2012

December 11, 2012

Hennepin County
Housing, Community Works & Transit
ATTN: Southwest Transitway
701 Fourth Avenue South, Suite 400
Minneapolis, MN 55415

See Comment #277 for Theme Delineations

Re: Southwest Transitway Draft Environmental Impact Statement

On behalf of the Scott County Board of Commissioners, I am hereby submitting the following comments regarding the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Southwest Transitway Light Rail Transit (LRT) line. Scott County supports the continued analysis and implementation of the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) to provide a regionally significant transit corridor for residents and businesses in the southwest metropolitan area.

The 2030 Transportation Policy Plan has a 2030 goal of doubling transit ridership and a 2020 goal of a 50% ridership increase. The implementation of the Southwest Transitway will provide a significant investment to improve ridership opportunities and make transit more attractive for travelers in the southwest metropolitan area. However, we find that there are some additional opportunities not discussed in the DEIS that could further increase ridership and meet regional transportation policies of providing an integrated transit network. We are concerned that LRT connections to express bus service along TH 169 have not been fully addressed. In addition, the document does not discuss any future connections or impacts to the potential Dan Patch commuter corridor between Minneapolis and Northfield. Please consider the following comments regarding these concerns.

- The DEIS does not reference any recommended connections of the Southwest Transitway LRT to TH 169, an Express Bus Corridor with Transit Advantages. There are five proposed stations in the vicinity of TH 169 (Golden Triangle, City West, Opus, Downtown Hopkins, Blake Road) that could be accessed by express bus service along TH 169. All five LRT stations are planned to include Park and Ride facilities. However the DEIS does not identify which stations, if any, would be utilized for express bus service connections along TH 169.

- The DEIS also does not mention any transit advantage opportunities along TH 169 to provide quick access for express buses to and from any of the LRT stations. LRT station locations and arterial road connections (such as TH 169) should be evaluated to determine efficient routing of transit service from the TH 169 corridor.

- The proposed relocation of freight rail traffic to the CP MN & S and BNSF Wayzata rail lines would redirect freight rail traffic to the Dan Patch Line commuter corridor. The Dan Patch Line is a 40-mile corridor from downtown Minneapolis in Hennepin County, through the west and south suburbs of Hennepin, Scott and Dakota Counties, to the city of Northfield in northern Rice County. In the 1990s the Dan Patch Commuter Rail project was identified in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Commuter Rail System Plan as a Tier 1 Corridor. The DEIS does not evaluate the impacts of an increase in freight rail activity on any future commuter rail opportunities along the CP MN & S and BNSF Wayzata rail lines (Dan Patch Line). The DEIS also does not evaluate opportunities for intermodal connectivity between the Southwest LRT Transitway and the future commuter rail corridor near the planned Louisiana and Wooddale LRT stations.

Providing efficient connections between transit services will ensure that the overall regional transit system functions as a seamless and user-friendly regional network (2030 TPP Strategy 13a). This will help the region achieve its goals in increasing transit ridership. We thank you for your attention to these comments, and welcome your interest in addressing the concerns of Scott County.

Sincerely,

Tom Wolf
Chair, Scott County Board of Commissioners

SCOTT COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
GOVERNMENT CENTER
200 FOURTH AVENUE WEST
SHAKOPEE, MINNESOTA 55379-1220

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701 Fourth Avenue South, Suite 400
Minneapolis, MN 55415

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Draft Environmental Impact Statement Comment Form

Southwest Transitway Project

Federal and state environmental rules require that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) be prepared for the proposed Southwest Transitway project. The EIS process includes the preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), which must be made available for public review and comment.

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To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in response to the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) - Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) which includes the proposed freight rail re-route in St. Louis Park, MN.

The proposed action of re-routing freight is described in Ch. 1, Section 1.3.2.3. The MN&S Spur tracks are a lightly used spur line within a high density urban, residential setting and directly adjacent to the SLP Senior High. The current freight occurs five days a week, Mon.-Fri., during normal business hours. The proposed action of re-routing freight would introduce mainline traffic and the community, residents, and students will be exposed to longer, heavier trains during weekends, evenings, and nighttime. In fact, the re-route will allow a 7887% increase in the number of rail car traffic in this area. The increase of freight exposure will directly and negatively impact community health, cohesion of the neighborhoods adjacent to the tracks and educational quality within all St. Louis Park schools. In addition, cont. →

C

Name: Lisa M. Yepes

Address: 2733 Brunswick Ave. S.

City/State/Zip: St. Louis Park, MN 55416

Telephone: 612-718-4873 Email: yepes.lisa@gmail.com

Thank you!

Cont. from previous page...
there will be negative impacts to the community at large. These impacts include but are not limited to, increased noise and vibration, increase in diesel fumes from laboring locomotives, loss of mobility when multiple crossings are blocked simultaneously, decreased safety for home owners and students at the High School, decreased access to small businesses and a decrease in tax base caused by lower property values in the affected area.

I oppose the freight rail re-route as outlined in the SWLRT DEIS. I believe it will create an unsafe and unlivable situation for our school children, our local businesses, and our residents. C

Thank you,

Lisa M. Yepes
2733 Brunswick Ave. S.
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SOUTHWEST transitway

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Hennepin County

Housing, Community Works & Transit
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Minneapolis, MN 55415

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Draft Environmental Impact Statement Comment Form

Southwest Transitway Project

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Chapter 2 page 2-32 Parking
I object to a large parking lot in the area around hidden beach. (21ST st proposed station). I1,I2

N1

Environmental Impacts Chapter 4 pgs 4-19 4-21
Protect the trees + Park + natural land
Minneapolis is a great city in part due to its unique green spaces. We need to preserve these priceless green spaces. If the rail must go thru the Cedar Lake Park/Kenilworth corridor, please let us protect the environment as much as possible. Seriously, I can't believe in this day + age, with access to nature so precious that we are endangering this area. All of the planners should be required to ~~drive~~ take a hike or paddle a canoe there before they do anything to ruin ~~it~~ it. N1 E2

Name: Angela M Erdrich
Address: 2217 Oliver Ave S
City/State/Zip: Mpls MN
Telephone: 612 377 5632 Email:

Thank you!

Angela M. Erdrich
P.O. Box 3955
Minneapolis, MN 55403-0955

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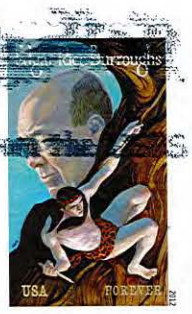
12 DEC 2012 PM 2 L



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BY:

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St. Louis Park 11/14/12

Draft Environmental Impact Statement Comment Form

Southwest Transitway Project

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In regard to the Draft Env. Impact Statement for the proposed freight rail reroute from the SW Transitway Project, I find no justification for moving existing heavy freight traffic from an at-grade, mainline rail corridor with adequate width to narrow, curving, elevated, above-grade spur line through residential area and schools. There is no reason given for this expensive re-route of an existing rail corridor, which if carried out, would include construction of a new rail bridge over Hwy 7. This proposed construction is not discussed nor are estimated costs or consequences given for such a large project. C

There is no standard for widths of rail corridors, so the existing freight line corridor is more than wide enough for the addition of a light rail transit line. Nowhere is there given a reason for not putting the two rail lines together in the wide, existing rail corridor. No reason is given, either, for rerouting freight trains in greater numbers, lengths, and speeds to a narrow rail spur ~~corridor~~ line not designed for them. C C

Name: JAMES HEINTZMAN

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City/State/Zip: ST LOUIS Park MN 55416

Telephone: 952.922.3023 Email:

Thank you!

transitway

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Mr. James J. Heintzman
2701 Yosemite Ave. S
Minneapolis, MN 55416

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12 DEC 2012 PM 7 L

Hennepin County

Housing, Community Works & Transit
ATTN: Southwest Transitway

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Minneapolis, MN 55415

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DEC 13 2012
BY:

To whom it may concern:

I am writing in response to the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) – Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) published in regard the SWLRT which includes the proposed freight rail re-route in St. Louis Park, Minnesota.

The current SWLRT-DEIS has significant flaws and the planned re-route idea either needs to be dropped completely or a great deal more study must be done. C

Besides my general concerns about the SWLRT-DEIS, I am particularly concerned with Chapter 12 (Public and Agency Coordination and Comments). NEPA 1500.2(d) states that the leading agency must "encourage and facilitate public involvement in decisions which affect the quality of the human environment." This regulation was clearly ignored in regards to the potential freight rail re-route issue. Hennepin County did not "encourage and facilitate" public involvement concerning this issue. In fact, Hennepin County refused attempts for public comments and concerns regarding the freight rail issue at all of the outreach meetings listed in table 12.1-1 and all of the community events listed in table 12.1-2. Public comments regarding the freight issue were denied at the 2008 Oct 7, 14, and 23 scoping meetings and the comment period that followed as listed in section 12.1.3.1. Public comments regarding the freight issue were refused at the 2010 May 18, 18 and 20 open houses. Most importantly, public comments regarding the freight issue were denied during the entire LPA section process. This included all of public hearings listed in section 12.1.4.1. In summary, all public comments regarding the freight rail issue were denied at all of SWLRT's major milestones leading up to the DEIS. Worse, the public was not made aware of the significant environmental impacts caused by SWLRT and the potential freight re-route because the freight issue was not discussed at any of the SWLRT meetings leading up to the DEIS. The only opportunity the public was given by Hennepin County to discuss the freight rail re-route was at the PMT meetings discussed in section 12.1.5. However, any discussion of possible alternatives to the re-route (co-location) or the freight re-route's connection with SWLRT was strictly forbidden at these PMT meetings. Lastly, the DEIS fails to mention the 2011 April 17 and 28 freight re-route listening sessions that were held by the city of St. Louis Park. Hundreds of St. Louis Park residents voiced their opposition to the freight re-route. Because those opposed to the re-route have been denied comment during the entire SWLRT planning process leading up to the DEIS, the freight rail issue needs to be dropped or significant more work needs to be done on the alternative studies and public outreach. L2

Thank You,

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City/State/zip: ST LOUIS PK MN 55416

Telephone: E-Mail: RDworsky@comcast.net

SOUTHWEST transitway

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12 DEC 2012 PM 4 L

Happy Holidays from the USPS

USA

Equality FOREVER

USA

Mr. Richard D. Dworsky
2904 Alabama Ave. S.
Minneapolis, MN 55416

Hennepin County
Housing, Community Works & Transit
ATTN: Southwest Transitway
701 Fourth Avenue South, Suite 400
Minneapolis, MN 55415

554151 84300 Fold here

"Jim Smart"
<smart@smart-associates.com>
12/14/2012 09:00 AM

To <swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>
cc
bcc
Subject Today's opinion in the Strib

Greetings,

While we don't consider ourselves "NIMBYs," and have tried to stay informed and optimistic about the new rail corridor, I'll have to say that Dr. Goldsmith's piece in today's Star Tribune makes a lot of sense. It really has been bothering us, of late, as we stroll that beautiful stretch between the Kenilworth Channel and 21st Street and think about the total disruption of that peaceful area. The idea of combining the existing freight rails along with the light rail is absurd, and we've been assuming that would not happen, but then we've not heard anything to the contrary. For certain, the bike and walking trails would be gone, or most certainly rendered unusable.

D

P9

I think the overriding fact is that the people who really need a ride from their homes to work, whether it's in Eden Prairie or Downtown Minneapolis or St. Paul, are the folks who live along the areas adjoining the 29th Street Corridor. How strange that the route that was chosen, because it was cheaper, was the one that travels through the most unneeded neighborhood for transportation. I have often thought of that line from the Watergate era, "follow the money!"

Thank you,

Jim Smart

P Before printing this e-mail, think if it is necessary. Think Green.

Nathan Jorgenson
<njorgenson@gmail.com>
12/14/2012 12:23 PM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us
cc
bcc
Subject Alignment Concerns

Greetings,

I am excited as any for fulfilling the Twin Cities need for more and better transit alternatives. I personally cannot wait for the SW corridor to become a reality. I personally don't see, however, how using the Kenilworth trail can possibly benefit the Twin Cities in any way other than an initial cost savings. I cannot believe that a station at Van White and Penn (not far from future Bottineau stations) as well as the stations at 21st and Royalston could possibly outperform stations in uptown (so needing of better connections to DT), whittier, stevens community, near the convention center, MIA, and nicolet mall. Stations like Royalston have great potential but why cater to areas of the city that haven't proven themselves, or taken shape. South Minneapolis needs and deserves this connection. 10 years from now the cost per ride would definitely have paid for itself as a stop in uptown could probably out perform 21st and penn by itself. I don't think Minneapolis or The west metro needs their next light rail line to be a glorified electric commuter rail serving a rail corridor and major corps vying for stops. The people deserve better planing that is for the future and people not for the dollar. I implore that those of you working on the SW corridor to reconsider redirecting through the more populous and needing areas than the open and natural areas used so much for recreation, and lacking in population density. Much has changed in even the last few years since major planning has happened for this line, re-urbanization is happening, lets make sure the planning is done well so we can have the best possible line for the most potentials users. Thank you for all your hard work making our town on the prairie a great place.

D

D

G1

D

Nathan Jorgenson
Exterior Designer
2537 Colfax Avenue S
Minneapolis, MN

"Kirsch, Kevin" <Kevin.Kirsch@cliftonlarsonallen.com>
12/14/2012 12:42 PM

To "swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us" <swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>
cc
bcc
Subject I really like the plan!

A

I like the route and the approach.

Thank you for working through these details with a disparate group of stakeholders!

Kevin Kirsch, Marketing Communications
CliftonLarsonAllen LLP
Direct 612-376-4656
kevin.kirsch@cliftonlarsonallen.com
Main 612-376-4500, Fax 612-376-4850
220 South Sixth Street, Suite 300, Minneapolis, MN 55402-1436
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To ensure compliance imposed by IRS Circular 230, any U. S. federal tax advice contained in this communication (including attachments) is not intended or written to be used, and cannot be used by any taxpayer, for the purpose of avoiding penalties that may be imposed by governmental tax authorities.

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CliftonLarsonAllen LLP

Bob Sherman
<sherman@tcq.net>
12/14/2012 02:16 PM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us
cc
bcc
Subject Comment on the proposed route of the SW LRT

December 14, 2012

Dear People:

I have reviewed much of the planning material and the proposals for the SW LRT from the perspective of a forty-five-year resident of the Kenwood area of south Minneapolis. Although the material is voluminous, detailed, and shows evidence of careful professional consideration of alternatives, I disagree with their recommendation concerning the 1.5 mile routing of the LRT down the Kennilworth Corridor. D

First of all, it is clear that the LRT-C route (down the depressed 29th Street rail line to Nicollet Avenue, then north down Nicollet on the surface) is the far superior route for its catchment area of potential riders (lower income and without cars) and business destinations. I do not think this route been properly considered. While the mile and a half Kenilworth Corridor might *appear* to be a cheaper route, it is almost barren of passenger prospects or destinations. The LRT-C route is almost solid with business and dense transit-needing population, and includes a mile of established rail-ready depressed right-of-way. I note in passing that this right-of-way also extends to Hiawatha, which might have future utility. I urge a careful re-review of the LRT-C choices. D

Second, should the Kenilworth corridor be retained, a 21st street station is an unwanted and needless element. Its location would generate few users among Kenwood residents, and if it attracted many park-and-riders a highly valued quiet residential neighborhood would be degraded. I2

Finally, the Kennilworth Corridor route would have serious adverse impact on the beauty of the treasured green space near Cedar Lake, and the usability of the quiet walking and bicycle paths. If these are lost they are irretrievable. It also seems likely that frequent fast trains would create a safety issue, and this would probably result in barrier fences. The noise and visual distraction are easily imagined. Adequate mitigation of these problems seems unlikely. D E2

Sincerely,

Robert E. Sherman
2421 Sheridan Avenue So.
Minneapolis, MN 55405

Andrew Dipper
<adipper@givensviolins.com>

12/14/2012 04:15 PM

To "swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us"
<swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>
cc
bcc
Subject light rail

It would make more sense from a social engineering point of view to bring the light rail into Minneapolis via Chicago Avenue. This route would allow transport to local hospitals, the metrodome, etc and fuel redevelopment and boost tax revenue. It could use the existing cross town trench as a route. Anyone can see that the Cedar lake route was a bad idea from the start and only gets worse with analysis.

D G2

Andrew Dipper

katysemail@aol.com
12/14/2012 04:28 PM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us
cc
bcc
Subject Kennilworth LRT

To whom it may concern,

I am concerned about many things involving the LRT. First, that area is a beautiful peaceful place that people have enjoyed
for years wether it be on a bike or just walking. The park and rec has done such an amazing job keeping it such a great
place. Second, I am concerned about the traffic jam this LRT is going to create along Dean Parkway, especially during the summer
months. It can be a nightmare to use during rush hour already. Let alone having to deal with a LRT going through. Imagine if you lived near there, you would never be able to get home.
The small hill off of Dean Parkway going towards Cedar Lake can be very difficult during peak hours and when the weather conditions
are tough, you slip and slide going up and down the hill.
I know there are a lot of people who think this is a wonderful idea. But please consider the people who live near there and the impact it
will have on them.
Put it along France Avenue in St. Louis Park. It makes more sense to put it where cars already go not people.

D
D G2

Thank you,

K.

"Olaf Lukk"
<olukk@msn.com>
12/14/2012 06:28 PM

To <swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>
cc
bcc
Subject cedar lake corridor

D

D

D I2

I fully agree with the commentary in today's Star Tribune; "Light Rail Will Ruin a Quiet Area". I have lived near the west side of Cedar Lake for almost thirty years, and have taken full advantage of the trails (and the lake) for walking, biking, running and swimming. The NOISE POLLUTION ISSUE should trump the "convenience" of this route. Being subjected to day long bells and horns- with sounds of 100 deccibel bells and horns carrying across the lakes- will cause irrevocable harm to the ambience of what is supposedly the crown jewel of the Minneapolis Park System: The Chain of Lakes. I have tried to keep current on this topic,and have been astounded by the lack of attention to this issue, which frankly, should be a dealbreaker. At the very least, eliminate the 21st St. station so that the only sound is the low rumble of the trains- not the bells and horns which will keep the entire neighborhood awake until midnight- and awake us again at 6:00 a.m.

Mary Smith
<csmith@cord.edu>
12/14/2012 08:48 PM

To "swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us"
<swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>
cc
bcc
Subject SW corridor project

To Whom It May Concern;
I would like my voice to be heard in support of the SouthWest Corridor project. I am very excited about the possibility of such direct access to the city area without the need to drive. We need to minimize our reliance on individual cars and make living without a car a viable option for some suburban residents. A few years back a student at the U of M needed to come to our area to observe our schools. Figuring out public transportation to our area is EXTREMELY limited. We need more options. SW Transit Bus in not enough. It only works for commuters that work traditional hours. I believe strongly that once the corridor is in place, more people will take advantage of it than planned. Thanks for listening. Sincerely, Cathy Smith

A

19057 Pleasantview Rd.
Eden Prairie, MN 55346

Ritasjoberg
<rita.sjoberg@gmail.com>
12/14/2012 09:02 PM

To "swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us"
<swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>
cc
bcc
Subject southwest route lrt

G2

Why aren't you building the route to run along I394? The route you are building won't get the ridership an I 394 route would produce. 394 is a parking lot at 5:00 every day and LRT would have been a welcome alternative.

I am also befuddled about why the ride between Mpls and St Paul will take 40 minutes. You'll get no working people to ride if takes that long.

I drive 394 to St Paul daily and was looking forward to LRT. I road the bus (two transfers) for a while but it is an hour fifteen to get to work and 1:45 home so I gave it up. Light rail looks to be a bust too so I am stuck driving.

It is a shame that my sister can get from her home in Brooklyn to New Jersey in half the time it takes me to get from St Louis Park to St Paul. We have one of the worst commutes in the country here and sad to say LRT is not helping because of poor routing.

David Buran
<burandavid@gmail.com>
12/14/2012 09:37 PM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us
cc
bcc
Subject Impact on the Cedar Lake, Isles area by the proposed LRT

A

E1, E10

Greetings:
I bought my first home in this neighborhood in 1966. The question of a possible "Southwest Diagonal" was presented by my realtor at that time and now the issue is again front and center. The expansion of public transit in our community should be a priority, but it needs to be done very carefully with great attention to the side effects to the neighborhoods and citizens.
The negative impact on our immediate neighborhood could be immense.
Ridership from this area will not be significant as compared to the Uptown area. The traffic patterns very difficult unless the trains are routed through a tunnel or below grade passages.
Unless this is looked at carefully I think we will look back on the effects on a fine neighborhood with regret.
Cost is a factor, but was also a factor when the Park Board bought land around the lakes years ago, and how forward looking that decision was.
A concerned and loyal resident.

David Buran
3423 W. 28th St.
Minneapolis, MN 55416
612-926-3434

RECEIVED
DEC 14 2012
BY:

Draft Environmental Impact Statement Comment Form

Southwest Transitway Project

Federal and state environmental rules require that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) be prepared for the proposed Southwest Transitway project. The EIS process includes the preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), which must be made available for public review and comment.

The DEIS discusses: (1) the purpose and need for the project; (2) the alternatives considered; (3) the impacts of these alternatives; and (4) the agencies and persons consulted.

Comments on the DEIS will be accepted through December 11, 2012. All comments must be received by that date. Please include a return mailing address with all comments.

Public hearings on the DEIS will be held in November 2012. To learn more about the hearings, please visit www.southwesttransitway.org

THE 260 LIGHT RAIL TRAINS WILL CREATE UNACCEPTABLE NOISE LEVELS AT MY HOUSE SINCE IT IS ON THE HILL ON KENWOOD PARKWAY. ALL EFFORTS SHOULD BE TAKEN TO PROVIDE THE BEST AND MOST EFFECTIVE SOUND MITIGATION O4 O1

THE RAILWAY SHOULD BE HELD TO THE SAME STANDARD

Name: LAWRENCE W. OLSON
Address: 1700 KENWOOD PARKWAY
City/State/Zip: MINNEAPOLIS MN 55405
Telephone: 612 747 3728 Email: LOLSON@METROPLAINS.COM

Thank you!

SOUTHWEST transitway

Fold here

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Housing, Community Works & Transit
ATTN: Southwest Transitway

701 Fourth Avenue South, Suite 400

Minneapolis, MN 55415

55415164300

Fold here

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DEC 14 2012
BY:

13 December 2012

Hennepin County, Community Works and Transit
Attn: Southwest Transitway
701 – Fourth Avenue South, Suite 400
Minneapolis, MN 55415

Dear Southwest Transitway Project:

I am writing as a citizen and homeowner in St. Louis Park with regard to the proposed Southwest Light Rail Transit (LRT) line, which includes the planned freight rail re-route through St. Louis Park.

I wish to comment on the Southwest Transitway Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), which has recently been made available for review and comment. This DEIS report grossly obfuscates the reality of the proposed Light Rail Transit line and its impact on St. Louis Park.

The DEIS report falsely leaves the reader with the impression that no one is raising serious objections to the proposed freight re-route through St. Louis Park, and that everyone who is knowledgeable about the freight proposed re-route through St. Louis Park supports it, and that there are no important or major safely concerns. But this is not true! C

In fact, there are many big problems. There are huge safely concerns:

- The freight trains will run straight through the St. Louis Park High School campus and dangerously close to many homes and businesses
- The freight trains will block many City streets and pedestrian walkways everyday
- Medical emergency response teams, as well as police and fire emergency first responders will be hindered when crossings are blocked C
- The proposed freight rail route includes tight curves in the RR track, where derailments are more likely than they would be on a straight RR track
- Hazardous materials can be carried on the rail line without sufficient right-of-way.

There are livability and property value concerns for the residents of St. Louis Park:

- Greatly increased noise levels
- Much more vibration-related community damage, which has *not* been studied along the freight re-route C
- Freight trains that are re-routed through St. Louis Park can be a mile long and simultaneously block six road crossings, several times a day; it may take one train ten minutes or more to clear an intersection.

There are financial concerns:

C

- The proposed freight train re-route costs $123 million more than co-location according to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)—or, was that a typo in the DEIS as some people are now saying?
- The DEIS does not include any mitigation for the people who live and work and play in St. Louis Park.

Richard Earle
2628 Florida Avenue South
St. Louis Park, MN 55426

Telephone: 952.929.6943
Email: richard_earle@msn.com

RICHARD ...
2628 FLORIDA AVENUE SOUTH
MINNEAPOLIS, MN 55426

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Hennepin County, Community Works and Transit
Attn: Southwest Transitway
701 Fourth Avenue South, Suite 400
Minneapolis, MN 55415

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Achieving success, one student at a time.

St. Louis Park Public Schools
District Offices
6425 West 33rd Street
St. Louis Park, Minnesota 55426-3498
952.928.6000 phone
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www.slpschools.org

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BY:

December 11, 2012

Hennepin County
Housing, Community Works & Transit
ATTN: Southwest Transitway
701 Fourth Avenue South, Suite 400
Minneapolis, MN 55415

To whom it may concern,

This letter serves to provide notice of Independent School District No. 283's concerns and comments regarding the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) prepared for the Southwest Transitway project published on October 12, 2012. The Saint Louis Park Public Schools Board of Education and administration recently reviewed the DEIS and noted that there are several issues that must be addressed during the EIS process that is underway.

On July 21, 2010, the school board unanimously passed a resolution fully supporting the City of Saint Louis Park's resolution 10-70 which, in summary, stipulate certain concerns related to the proposed re-route of freight rail traffic on the current Bass Lake Spur (BLS) alignment to the Minnesota, Northfield and Southern (MNS) tracks which run adjacent to several school district facilities, including our high school. In addition, the school board supported city resolution 10-71 that requests a fair and balanced evaluation of the proposed re-route to the MNS and the co-location of freight and light rail in the Kenilworth corridor. As part of our review of the DEIS, we anticipated an objective comparison of the two freight routes as directed by the Federal Transit Authority in its letter to the Metropolitan Council on September 2, 2011. We are disappointed to see that the criteria used to evaluate the two options were generally not equal and on several key points absent. These items will be covered in our comments below. C L4

A member of the school board represented the district on Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority's Project Management Team (PMT), a group whose stated goal was to study the freight rail re-route and develop the Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW). The PMT met multiple times over 12 months and while the intent of this group was to provide input and guidance, we believe the process failed to achieve any collaboration or agreement on mitigation of the MNS re-route of traffic from the Bass Lake Spur. In fact, there were no actionable agenda items at all, not a vote or informal poll. The PMT did not have the opportunity to review draft versions of the EAW prior to its release. Continuing to use that information as the basis of the DEIS' study on the L4

C

re-route is suspect. We ask that the environmental effects of the potential increase in freight traffic on the MNS tracks be studied in greater detail. Our concerns in this area are also covered in our comments.

We note that DEIS chapter 10 regarding **Environmental Justice** fails to recognize both St. Louis Park Senior High and Peter Hobart Elementary schools as having significant minority and low-income populations well in excess of the stated Hennepin County average. We feel this is worthy of further study and possible engagement as directed by FTA Circular 4703.1.

Most of our concerns relate to our Senior High School's proximity to the MNS tracks. We have broken our concerns up into five areas: safety, noise, vibration, operations and air quality.

I. Safety

The proposed upgrade of the MNS track to FRA Class 2 (and its 25 mph maximum speed) coupled with the restricted view the train engineer will have around the curves as the train approaches the Dakota Ave and Library Lane crossings will limit the time and distance available for stopping the train in the event of an emergency situation. The existing Right of Way (ROW) limits the view the engineer has of the intersections at Dakota Ave. and Library Lane. For this reason we request that the proposed action include the following mitigations:

A. Grade Separated Pedestrian Crossing at Dakota Avenue.

The DEIS does mention that the MNS separates the high school and the athletic field, however, it fails to note the existence of a McDonald's restaurant directly across the MNS tracks at Dakota Ave. A large number of our students, staff and community frequent this McDonalds.

B. Widen the Right-of-Way (ROW) Along the Track Curves East and Southwest of the High School.

Widening the ROW gives the train operating personnel more time to react to potentially dangerous situations at the Dakota Avenue and Library Lane crossings of the MNS.

C. Below Grade Pedestrian Crossing at 27th Ave.

In addition , we need a safe crossing for students near Peter Hobart Elementary School at the north end of the Freight Re-route study area, This below grade crossing would provide a safe, direct route for students who live east of the MNS track.

II. Noise

DEIS Section 4.7.5 starting on page 4-99 regurgitates the information from the vacated EAW.

C

While the addition of Quiet Zone (QZ) crossings at the Dakota Ave and Library Lane intersections and welded rail will theoretically reduce noise, the reality of the quiet zones with their blind corners and higher speed trains adjacent to the High School, train engineers will choose to sound the horn.

Completely missing in the DEIS analysis are calculations for the noise generated by more frequent, longer, heavier trains (assumptions, page 4-99) using multiple locomotives at increased throttle climbing the projected .86% grade (east bound) or 1.2% grade (west bound).

Table 4.7-14 indicates that there will be a net gain in noise based on just the combined traffic of the current CP and TCW operations, where on page 4-99 the DEIS states it is a conservative estimate. This does not take into account any growth in either of these companies' operations. Any prediction for future operational levels would likely indicate growth. We need to see future noise estimates with 10 and 20 year projections of future rail operations to make reasonable judgments about noise impact.

Average noise over a 24 hour period is not what brings the learning process in a classroom to a complete halt. It is the intermittent noise of train for extended periods of time that would affect the classroom work. For this reason, we desire the following mitigations considered as part of the proposed action:

A. Eight New Classrooms on North Side of Existing High School Building

Due to increased noise and its impact on the learning process replacing the classrooms that face south towards the MNS that are most affected by the train noise with classrooms along 33rd St would alleviate any pressure to use these rooms as classrooms. We anticipate growth due to the success of our innovative programs.

B. New Windows and Air Conditioning Throughout High School

This mitigates the increased noise for the rest of the high school.

C. Create Southbound Connection from BLS to MNS

This eliminates the need to use the area adjacent to the high school as a de facto wye for westbound trains on the BLS headed south.

D. Railroad Construction only during the Summer Months

Restricting heavy construction to summer months when school is not in session would eliminate additional classroom disruptions.

III. Vibrations

C

Currently, we experience problems with recently installed, ceiling mounted projection equipment in classrooms in the south part of the high school due to vibrations from passing trains. We anticipate greater problems with the increased frequency of longer, heavier trains. We look forward to further detailed analysis of vibration during the Preliminary Engineering phase of the project mentioned on page 4-118 and working to minimize the impacts at the High School site. We recommend the following mitigations for vibrations as part of this project:

A. Replace or Upgrade Projection Equipment in Affected Classrooms

B. Concrete Ties, Rubber Boots and Pads for MNS Track

IV. Operations

We anticipate that the proposed action will cause several operational difficulties. Our current bus movements between the High School and Park Spanish Immersion (PSI) School as described in detail on page 6-38 are part of a tiered busing schedule that uses the same buses multiple times each morning and afternoon with a tight time schedule. In the description, the author uses the fact that in the afternoon 30 buses load at PSI and then all travel to the High School, crossing Lake Street and the MNS on Library Lane to determine the queuing of vehicles on Lake Street while a police officer stops traffic. There is then discussion of the traffic volumes during a potential 12.5 minute train blockage. This completely misses the point that a train blocking our bus movements at that time of day would severely delay our bus transportation for not only those students, but the delays would ripple through the rest of the schedule.

We suggest the following mitigations be implemented to minimize impacts to our daily operations:

A. North Highway 7 Frontage Road Below Railroad Bridge Over Hwy 7

This creates a path for current afternoon bus traffic to cross under the MNS line regardless of train operations.

B. Restrict Railroad Operations During AM and PM Bus Times

A one hour window in the morning and a 30 minute window in the afternoon would enable busses, students and staff to move efficiently to and from schools.

C. Quiet Zones Designed to Allow Un-restricted Access to our South Parking Lot

We require vehicle access to our South Parking Lot remain as it is today with access from northbound and southbound Dakota Avenue to and from the lot and similar access on Library Lane.

C

V. Air Quality

The DEIS included no evaluation of Air Quality on the re-route segment for a variety of reasons explained on page 4-72. We still anticipate issues with multiple locomotives pulling extended trains up the steep grades proposed on the MNS re-route creating temporary air quality issues in our high school building which is located just 75' from the MNS tracks. Mitigation for this issue would be the same items A & B covered under section II. Noise: new windows and air conditioning.

We certainly look forward to "further discussion" as mentioned frequently throughout the DEIS and would welcome a presentation by the Met Council regarding the project and freight rail issue. We have serious concerns regarding this project and expect the aforementioned mitigations are put into place if the project proceeds with the re-route.

Sincerely,

ST. LOUIS PARK BOARD OF EDUCATION

James A. Yarosh

James A. Yarosh
Chair, Board of Education
Independent School District 283
St. Louis Park, MN

Debra Bowers

Dr. Debra Bowers
Superintendent
Independent School District 283
St. Louis Park, MN

cc: Jeffrey Jacobs, Mayor, St. Louis Park
Tom Harmening, City Manager, St. Louis Park
Jim Brimeyer, Representative, Met Council
Jennifer Munt, Representative, Met Council
Gail Dorfman, Commissioner, Hennepin County
Steve Simon, Representative, MN House
Ryan Winkler, Representative, MN House
Ron Latz, Senator, MN Senate
Keith Ellison, Representative, US House
Amy Klobuchar, Senator, US Senate
Al Franken, Senator, US Senate

St Louis Park Public Schools

Achieving success, one student at a time.

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District Offices
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St. Louis Park, MN 55426-3498

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December 11, 2012

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See Comment #321 for Theme Delineations

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DEIS Section 4.7.5 starting on page 4-99 regurgitates the information from the vacated EAW.

While the addition of Quiet Zone (QZ) crossings at the Dakota Ave and Library Lane intersections and welded rail will theoretically reduce noise, the reality of the quiet zones with their blind corners and higher speed trains adjacent to the High School, train engineers will choose to sound the horn.

Completely missing in the DEIS analysis are calculations for the noise generated by more frequent, longer, heavier trains (assumptions, page 4-99) using multiple locomotives at increased throttle climbing the projected .86% grade (east bound) or 1.2% grade (west bound).

Table 4.7-14 indicates that there will be a net gain in noise based on just the combined traffic of the current CP and TCW operations, where on page 4-99 the DEIS states it is a conservative estimate. This does not take into account any growth in either of these companies' operations. Any prediction for future operational levels would likely indicate growth. We need to see future noise estimates with 10 and 20 year projections of future rail operations to make reasonable judgments about noise impact.

Average noise over a 24 hour period is not what brings the learning process in a classroom to a complete halt. It is the intermittent noise of train for extended periods of time that would affect the classroom work. For this reason, we desire the following mitigations considered as part of the proposed action:

A. Eight New Classrooms on North Side of Existing High School Building

Due to increased noise and its impact on the learning process replacing the classrooms that face south towards the MNS that are most affected by the train noise with classrooms along 33rd St would alleviate any pressure to use these rooms as classrooms. We anticipate growth due to the success of our innovative programs.

B. New Windows and Air Conditioning Throughout High School

This mitigates the increased noise for the rest of the high school.

C. Create Southbound Connection from BLS to MNS

This eliminates the need to use the area adjacent to the high school as a de facto wye for westbound trains on the BLS headed south.

D. Railroad Construction only during the Summer Months

Restricting heavy construction to summer months when school is not in session would eliminate additional classroom disruptions.

III. Vibrations

Currently, we experience problems with recently installed, ceiling mounted projection equipment in classrooms in the south part of the high school due to vibrations from passing trains. We anticipate greater problems with the increased frequency of longer, heavier trains. We look forward to further detailed analysis of vibration during the Preliminary Engineering phase of the project mentioned on page 4-118 and working to minimize the impacts at the High School site. We recommend the following mitigations for vibrations as part of this project:

A. Replace or Upgrade Projection Equipment in Affected Classrooms

B. Concrete Ties, Rubber Boots and Pads for MNS Track

IV. Operations

We anticipate that the proposed action will cause several operational difficulties. Our current bus movements between the High School and Park Spanish Immersion (PSI) School as described in detail on page 6-38 are part of a tiered busing schedule that uses the same buses multiple times each morning and afternoon with a tight time schedule. In the description, the author uses the fact that in the afternoon 30 buses load at PSI and then all travel to the High School, crossing Lake Street and the MNS on Library Lane to determine the queuing of vehicles on Lake Street while a police officer stops traffic. There is then discussion of the traffic volumes during a potential 12.5 minute train blockage. This completely misses the point that a train blocking our bus movements at that time of day would severely delay our bus transportation for not only those students, but the delays would ripple through the rest of the schedule.

We suggest the following mitigations be implemented to minimize impacts to our daily operations:

A. North Highway 7 Frontage Road Below Railroad Bridge Over Hwy 7

This creates a path for current afternoon bus traffic to cross under the MNS line regardless of train operations.

B. Restrict Railroad Operations During AM and PM Bus Times

A one hour window in the morning and a 30 minute window in the afternoon would enable busses, students and staff to move efficiently to and from schools.

C. Quiet Zones Designed to Allow Un-restricted Access to our South Parking Lot

We require vehicle access to our South Parking Lot remain as it is today with access from northbound and southbound Dakota Avenue to and from the lot and similar access on Library Lane.

V. Air Quality

The DEIS included no evaluation of Air Quality on the re-route segment for a variety of reasons explained on page 4-72. We still anticipate issues with multiple locomotives pulling extended trains up the steep grades proposed on the MNS re-route creating temporary air quality issues in our high school building which is located just 75' from the MNS tracks. Mitigation for this issue would be the same items A & B covered under section II. Noise: new windows and air conditioning.

We certainly look forward to "further discussion" as mentioned frequently throughout the DEIS and would welcome a presentation by the Met Council regarding the project and freight rail issue. We have serious concerns regarding this project and expect the aforementioned mitigations are put into place if the project proceeds with the re-route.

Sincerely,

ST. LOUIS PARK BOARD OF EDUCATION

James A. Yarosh

James A. Yarosh
Chair, Board of Education
Independent School District 283
St. Louis Park, MN

Debra Bowers

Dr. Debra Bowers
Superintendent
Independent School District 283
St. Louis Park, MN

cc: Jeffrey Jacobs, Mayor, St. Louis Park
Tom Harmening, City Manager, St. Louis Park
Jim Brimeyer, Representative, Met Council
Jennifer Munt, Representative, Met Council
Gail Dorfman, Commissioner, Hennepin County
Steve Simon, Representative, MN House
Ryan Winkler, Representative, MN House
Ron Latz, Senator, MN Senate
Keith Ellison, Representative, US House
Amy Klobuchar, Senator, US Senate
Al Franken, Senator, US Senate

St Louis Park Public Schools

ess, one student at a time.

'ark Public Schools
fices
t 33rd Street
Park, MN 55426-3498

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Southwest Transitway

Hennepin County
Housing, Community Works & Transit
Attn: Southwest Transitway
701 Fourth Avenue South, Ste 400
Minneapolis, MN 55415

Bill Lewis
<billtlewis@hotmail.com>
12/15/2012 11:04 AM

To "swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us" <swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>
cc
bcc
Subject SW LRT DEIS Feedback

Hello:

Our names are Bill Lewis & Lynda Borjesson. We've owned and lived at our home at 2530 Upton Ave S for 25+ years, and our property is directly adjacent to the Kenilworth Corridor. While we fully support the LRT project, we are writing to provide feedback and express our deep concerns regarding the Southwest LRT and the DEIS. Our key concerns are:

1. That the freight rail line must be relocated so that the Kenilworth Corridor and bike/walk trail are completely preserved and areas near the corridor are not compromised. This trail is a significant asset to the neighborhood and our city. We are strong bicycle advocates and commuters/riders, so the preservation of this critical trail is very important to us and many other citizens. D P9

2. That LRT noise is mitigated very effectively. Our backyard is within 200 feet of the proposed LRT lines. With LRT trains passing through our neighborhood backyards 260 times per day, we are very concerned about the ambient noise of trains passing by and of the possibility of trains beginning to sound their horns near the Burnham Bridge as they approach a 21st LRT Street Station. We would request that train noise be mitigated as much as possible with natural methods such as berms, trenching, evergreens, etc. We would strongly urge that horn blowing be mitigated, or that only a LRT bell be used, at the 21st Street Station. D O1, O3, O9

3. The Cedar Lake Park and the surrounding nature area is a critical piece of property and a significant asset to the neighborhood and all citizens who enjoy the quiet and beauty of this city property and lake. Measures must be taken to reduce impact and noise near this nature area when the LRT passes near the Cedar Lake Park and surrounding areas. E2, E4

4. A creative, effective and low-impact solution must be developed where the LRT crosses Cedar Lake Road. The proposed LRT bridge over Cedar Lake Road does not fit with the character of the surrounding area. E8

5. There is a "unofficial" neighborhood park/play area and gardens on the east side of the Kenilworth Trail just south of the Burnham Bridge. Neighborhood children and adults frequently utilize this gathering space. Engineering plans which include retaining freight rail would destroy this long-standing neighborhood space. We would hope that impact and encroachment into this wonderful public space be mitigated. E2 M3

Thanks for your attention...

Bill Lewis & Lynda Borjesson
2530 Upton Ave S

Minneapolis, MN 55405

Toni Dufour
<tonidufour@comcast.net>
12/15/2012 02:42 PM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us
cc
bcc
Subject Kenwood Resident concern regarding proposed Southwest Light Rail

To Whom It May Concern:

As a Kenwood homeowner whose property abuts the proposed light rail corridor, I would like to express my concerns about several issues related to the LRT.

First is my concern about the possibility of keeping both the current freight rail line and the proposed LRT running together in the Kenilworth Corridor. This would result in an unacceptable increase in noise level as well as loss of the existing trails, placing the trains mere feet from my backyard. I support relocating the existing freight lines to minimize the destruction of the greenway and to preserve as much of the green space as possible. I also strongly encourage trenching the LRT to mitigate the inevitable noise from 260 trains a day. D D

Second, I am strongly against the proposed bridge over the Cedar Lake Parkwa Kenilworth Trail intersection. This is an inappropriate and very unattracti solution. E8 D

Third, I feel that 21st Street is a poor location for a proposed Park-And-Ride. This will block access to a popular public beach on Cedar Lake and lead to traffic congestion in a neighborhood that is already difficult to get into and out of due to one- way traffic on the Burnham Road Bridge and around the lake. I2

Please consider how current plans for the LRT will impact the quality of life in this neighborhood.

Toni DuFour
Kenwood Homeowner
2544 Upton Ave S

David Ruebeck
<ruebeck@att.net>
12/15/2012 04:43 PM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us
cc
bcc
Subject DEIS

Hello,

I would like to record my opposition to the freight/light rail co-location option. I also oppose an at-grade crossing at Cedar Lake Avenue as well as a fly-over bridge.

I would prefer a below-grade crossing such as a tunnel or deep trench.

I am concerned about noise, visual disruption, and traffic congestion.

Thank you,

David Ruebeck
2741 Drew Ave S
Minneapolis

D
E8
O1 N2
P4

William Ehrich
<ehrich@mninter.net>
12/15/2012 06:07 PM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us
cc
bcc
Subject LRT environmental impact

I grew up in Philadelphia where trolley cars, trams, were and are taken for granted. They are fast, safe, unobtrusive, and quiet in town and in residential suburbs. The Minneapolis St Paul LRT is pretentious, noisy, and disruptive with no apparent compensating advantages. It doesn't need to be. Simple express trams running in dedicated roadways can be just as fast. K0

All those bells and horns are useless noise which will continue to annoy long after people have become used to and ignore them. O5

The elaborate and too rare stations seem to serve no purpose beyond ticket sales and control. I2

Perhaps you could send someone to Philadelphia or Geneva etc to see how much nicer a simpler and much cheaper system can be. K0

-- William Ehrich
Edina

louann lanning
<louannl@hotmail.com>
12/16/2012 06:19 PM

To "swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us"
<swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>
cc
bcc
Subject Reconsider Southwest Light-rail Corridor between the Lakes

This is my public written comment for the proposed Southwest Light-rail route.

I am completely opposed to the plan as it stands because of the impact on the east side of Cedar Lake. The area between Lake Street and Penn Avenue begins as a quiet residential neighborhood on either side of the Kenilworth Channel between Lake of the Isles and Cedar Lake. This gives way to parkland along the east side of Cedar Lake. In the middle of this urban oasis runs a critical segment of the Minneapolis system of bicycle trials, used by hundreds of commuters and recreational bikers every day for much of the year. The lake is also home to swimmers and city dwellers who seek the peace of this green space and water. B E0

If the light rail is built as proposed the segment of the light-rail route on the east side of Cedar Lake will fundamentally and irrevocably alter the character of this beautiful, precious, and irreplaceable urban green space. The infrastructure for electrically powered light-rail transit will permanently deface the entire area. Running more than 250 trains through this corridor each day from dawn to midnight will significantly diminish its desirability as a place to live. Property values will fall; tax revenue will drop accordingly. Some studies do show increased property values in proximity to light-rail lines, but they are not relevant to this project. For good reasons, light rail is not typically put in the midst of highly developed residential and recreational areas. M2 E2

The visual impact of the needed infrastructure, combined with the noise and even the danger of more than 250 fast trains per day, would also greatly erode the attractiveness of this part of the recreational and commuter bicycle trail system. Many who now commute by bicycle might well choose to drive instead (which would be an ironic consequence of a project designed in part to reduce traffic). Recreational bicyclists will simply go elsewhere. O4 R1 E4

The project includes a station at W. 21st Street, a placement that makes no sense. This is an isolated location along parkland, not close to any major streets. It would be inconvenient to access; parking is limited, and a park-and-ride lot there would be contrary to Minneapolis policy. Serious questions have been raised about the actual use of this station, since local residents don't need it, given their proximity to downtown, and the appeal to suburban riders heading toward town is not obvious. I2

But the sound pollution it would bring to residential streets, Cedar Lake Park and the bicycle trail would be considerable. Residents and visitors would hear more than 250 warning bells or horns per day as trains approached this station, each greater than 100 decibels. The peaceful soundscape of this largely silent space would be shattered. O1

There is a partial solution, though it would significantly increase the cost of the project. Trains

must travel below grade from Lake Street to Penn Avenue, and there should be no station at 21st Street unless it is also below grade. The alternative current proposal to alleviate surface congestion -- elevating trains using a massive, 42-foot-high "flyover" bridge on part of the route -- would actually magnify visual intrusiveness and noise. It is deeply disturbing that anyone with any knowledge of the area could seriously propose such a structure.

E9
I2
E0

Rather, the trains must be buried, preferably in a tunnel, or at least in a deep trench. This is the only way to attempt to preserve the essential character of the area.
There are other major issues with this route, including the implications of relocating freight traffic within St. Louis Park, and the impact on an already congested area around Lake Street and Excelsior Boulevard. Perhaps solutions can be found to all of these problems, perhaps not. But if the Southwest line is deemed vital to the economic future of our community, the project should be done correctly. We will live with the consequences of building this route for decades.

E8
E0

If the cost of doing it correctly means that the plan is no longer economically feasible, it should be abandoned, or a new route should be chosen.

K4
E10

Sincerely,
Louann Lanning
7318 W. 22nd St.
St. Louis Park, MN 55426
952-546-0181

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- A kettle, a bell and lots of goodwill (StarTribune.com)

[?]

Matthew Alspach
<matthew.alspach@gmail.com>

12/16/2012 10:06 PM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us
cc
bcc
Subject Southwest corridor options

Hello
I wanted to voice my opinion on the preferred route. I don't live in the neighborhood, but know the area. I don't think the current preferred route makes sense.
The light rail should be connecting the commercial hubs of the metro area, of which the kenilworth trail is far from.
The area around kenilworth trail is better served by the current route 25 bus, whereas the uptown/lyndale area will be better served by light rail and hopefully take some strain off the many buses that ply the routes between uptown and downtown.
In addition, there is already an uptown transit hub situated right above the midtown corridor. What a perfect place to link the bus lines with the light rail. Besides downtown minneapolis, where else is there a concentration of transit options that makes more sense to locate together?
Regards,
Matt Alspach

E0

P1

G1

Jane Willis
<mnwrites@yahoo.com>

12/16/2012 11:44 PM

Please respond to
Jane Willis
<mnwrites@yahoo.com>

To "swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us"
<swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>
cc
bcc
Subject Cedar Lake is a beautiful place

Dear SW Corridor planners.

Cedar Lake is a much loved area of Minneapolis. People throughout the city come here to enjoy it's p

If you put a light rail bridge over Cedar Lake Parkway, it's going to degrade the character of the neighb wilderness bike trail. This area is an important and much used activity hub. A ground level cr E8 w area. It's going to be well worth the expense to preserve what we already have by running the train th

Furthermore, a train stop on the East side of Cedar Lake is ill-conceived. This is a quiet neighborhoo the Minneapolis Chain of Lakes together. There is a quiet beach right near where you would E1 s local people don't need a train stop. The area can't handle a park and ride lot, nor can it handle street an unnecessary stop on the East side of the Lake.

I live at 1449 Lakeview Avenue on the North side of the Lake. I am not directly affected by the SW Co I know the area well, having lived in the general area since 1980.

I ask you to listen to local residents so you don't wind up destroying some very positive things about ou

Best,
Jane Willis
612 374 8955

mnrealtors@aol.com
12/17/2012 08:39 AM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us, Katie.Walker@co.hennepin.mn.us
cc gail.dorfman@co.hennepin.mn.us, lisa.goodman@minneapolismn.gov
bcc
Subject Response to SWLRT DEIS

Date: December 17, 2012
To: whom it may concern
Re: response to the SWLRT DEIS
From: Paul and Cheryl LaRue
First, we would like to acknowledge your reasoning for the need for LRT and we understand that the SWLRT is an integral part of Met Council's 2030 Transportation Policy Plan, Met Council's 2030 Regional Development Framework, Hennepin County Transportation Systems Plan, Hennepin County Sustainable Development Strategy 2011, as well as The Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth.

1) One of our concerns lies with the e**nvironmental and socioeconomic impacts of a flyover bridge at Cedar Lake Pkwy**. We understand that a flyover bridge would address 'traffic congestion' at the interstection of LRT with Cedar Lake Pkwy. However, we support alternative means of addressing such issues. We support Cedar Lake Parkway crossing *OVER* LRT transit as presented by the Minneapolis Park and Rec Board and supported by the Joint Neighborhood Task Force consisting of CIDNA (Cedar Isles Dean Neighborhood Association), KIAA (Kenwood Isles Area Association), WCNC (West Calhoun Neighborhood Council), CLSHA (Cedar Lake Shores Homeowners Association), CIHA (Calhoun Isles Condos Condo Association) and CLPA (Cedar Lake Park Association). E8
A flyover works against the goals of the 2030 Regional Development Framework. Per the DEIS Appendix H - Land Use Plans, The Metropolitan Council Plans and Studies, **2030 Regional Development Framework,** page 7 of 750, item #4: "The RDF addresses four primary policies...**4) Working with local and regional partners to reclaim, conserve, protect, and enhance** the region's vital natural resources".
Per 3.6.3 Long-Term Effects, 3.6.3.3 Build Alternatives, Segment 4, page 3-115: "Although the segment is located in an existing transportation corridor (Kenilworth Regional Trail), the project *would introduce new visual elements* --the fixed guideway, including track, catenary poles, and wires--into the area. Catenary poles and wires could have *substantial visual impacts on trail users* who would share the corridor with the fixed guideway" ... "The proposed alignment is on a *bridge over Cedar Lake Parkway* . *Visual impacts* on sensitive receptors *adjacent to the corridor in the multi-family residential parcel and Cedar Lake Parkway* could be *substantial* . *Visual intrusion and privacy impacts of the project elements on the residents in units with windows facing the alignment where it is bridged* structure could be *substantial* ."
A flyover bridge, infrastructure and supporting walls, poles, and cantenary over Cedar Lake Pkwy are not compatible with current scenic views and would obstruct rather than "conserve, protect, and enhance" views in designated scenic areas at Cedar Lake and throughout Cedar Lake Regional Trail/Kenilworth Trail and the Grand Rounds as well as Park Siding Park. This drastic visual change would impact setting, integrity, and feeling of Cedar Lake and Cedar Lake Regional Trail/Kenilworth Trail, the Grand Rounds, and Park Siding Park. We support working with local partners (such as the Park Board), the residential community, and neighborhood associations to investigate alternative ways for LRT to cross at Cedar Lake Parkway. We support Cedar Lake Parkway crossing *over* transit. E8 E4
An environmental concern with a flyover bridge at Cedar Lake Parkway would be the introduction of a NEW noise source(s) at Cedar Lake, throughout the Cedar Lake Regional Trail/Kenilworth Trail and Par Siding Park, and into the Grand Rounds. Per 4.7.3.4 Project Noise Levels: "The project team measured airborne noise from the Hiawatha LRT as the basis for the sound exposure levels used in the analysis". Per table 4.7.2 the Hiawatha LRT measurements were done 'at grade'. Measurements did not include airborne noise at the various elevations of a flyover* at Cedar Lake Parkway. Recommend analysis for E4 O1 E4 O5

noise and vibration at various heights of a flyover*, taking into consideration the unique situations of Segment A, particularly between West Lake Stn. and 21st St. Stn. *Unique* situations include: A) close proximity of the flyover to Cedar Lake, a large body of water which would carry sound farther than over land or through trees, B) two 14-story high rise residential buildings with close proximity to the flyover which would reflect a new noise source throughout Park Siding Park, the Cedar Lake Regional Trail/Kenilworth Trail, and the Grand Rounds, C) most of the Xerxes Historic District multi-story residences would have an unobstructed view of the flyover, structure, catenary poles and wires, and trains; and would be directly affected by a new noise source introduced by a flyover. The Shoreland Overlay District Zoning requirements also need to be observed. E8 O1, O6

Per 3.6.5.3, Mitigation, Build Alternatives, page 3-123: "*Mitigation treatments ...would be developed...through discussion with affected communities, resource agencies, and stakeholders* . Measures would be taken to *ensure* the design and construction of the Build Alternative *considers the context of the corridor* and that sensitive receptiors receive adequate mitigation. *Possible mitigation measures* could include: A) Landscaping vegetation such as shrubs and bushes to supplement *existing* vegetation buffers, B) Evergreen vegetation screening to supplement deciduous vegetation buffers in leaf-off conditions, C) Fencing, D) *Tunneling* ." Comment: Due to the *uniqueness* of the narrow rail corridor in the residential area between West Lake Stn. and Cedar Lake Parkway *existing* vegetation is minimal and supplementing it may be difficult as there is very little space to add a burm or mature landscaping. The DEIS suggestion of a tunnel as a means of mitigation needs to be studied as a viable means of mitigation. We do not support taking of any residential properties in Segment A north of West Lake Stn. E4 N2 E0 N2

*Per Appendix H-1, page 204, Table: Aweighted Sound Levels (FTA): Rail transit horn 89 dBA, rail transit on modern concrete aerial structure 84 dBA. These dBA corresponded on the same table to sounds similar to an outdoor concrete mixer and jack hammer. Comment: A flyover would introduce these NEW sounds, and these sounds would not "conserve and enhance" the region's vital natural resources. Therefore, we support Cedar Lake Parkway crossing *over* transit. E8 O1

*Per Appendix H-1, page 201, The FTA Transit and Noise Vibration Impact Assessment indicates, "Reflections off topographical features or buildings (structures) can sometimes result in higher noise levels...than would normally be expected. Temperature and wind conditions can also diffract and focus a sound wave to a location at considerable distance from the noise source. As a result of these factors, the existing noise environment can be highly variable depending on local conditions." Again, we support Cedar Lake Parkway crossing *over* transit. E4 O1

2) Our second concern is regarding **mitigation for the Impacted Land** (Units) from LRT in **Segment A, in particular the residential area between West Lake Stn. and 21st St. Stn.** Of the LRT Segments in the preferred alignment 3A, Segment *A has the lowest ambient noise** of Segments 3, 4, and A (per 4.7.3.5). Segment *A also has the highest percentage of Severe Land Impact*** (Units) (*91.0% of the total* for alignment 3A as per tables 4.7-3 and 4.7-8), in particular the area ***between West Lake Stn. and 21st St. Stn. (87.6% of the total Severe Land Impact units*** *for all of alignment 3A*). Segment A consists mainly of residential/multi-family residential, whereas Segments 3 and 4 consist mainly of commercial properties (table 3.2-2). LRT Sound Exposure Levels (per table 4.7-2) would be in the HUD threshold for Unacceptable Housing Environment (Appendix H-1, "Odors, Noise, and Dust), above the MN Noise Pollution Control Limits (Apendix H-1, Table 9), and above Federal Noise Abatement Criteria***. Given that the area between West Lake Stn. and 21st St. Stn. has 87.6% of the Severe Land Impact properties, mitigation by fencing or landscaping alone would have minimal mitigation effect. Additionally, on its own, barriers would not seem to provide adequate mitigation. Per Appendix H-1, Mitigation: "Noise barriers would not be as effective at reducing noise...since there are physical limitations on barriers which would only potentially reduce noise by a small amount...". Mitigation such as cut'n'cov or tunnel have *not* been addressed by the DEIS for Segment A; and should be thoroughly studied as a viable means for mitigation, particularly in the area between West Lake Stn. and 21st St. Stn. A flyover bridge over Cedar Lake Parkway would NOT mitigate Severe Land Impact properties. A flyover would introduce NEW airborne noises. We support Cedar Lake Parkway crossing over transit. We support working with local partners, the residential community and neighborhood associations to investigate and coordinate ways to minimize the noise, vibration, and visual impacts of LRT rail cars, infrastructure and supporting walls, poles and catenary. We do not support taking of any residential properties in Segment A E4 O1 E0 O1 E4 O1 N2

north of West Lake Stn.
Data supporting the above is as follows:
As stated in Chapter 4, page 4-7 FTA Noise Impact Thresholds, as well as in Appendix H, Odors, Noise, and Dust: There are two levels of impact included in the FTA criteria...Moderate Impact and Severe Impact. Project-generated noise in the severe impact range can be expected to cause a significant percentage of people to be highly annoyed by the new noise and *represents the most compelling need for mitigation* ...

O1, O5, O6, O7, O12

*Per 4.7.3.5 Assessment. "Ambient noise is measured by what is present in existing conditions. Low ambient noise levels cause the impact threshold (the point at which there is an impact) to be lower. Ambient noise levels were as low as 55 dBA on an Leq basis and 56 dBA on an Ldn basis for Segment 3; 56 dBA on an Leq basis and 54 dBA on an Ldn basis for Segment 4; **44 dBA on an Leq basis and 52 dBA on an Ldn basis for Segment A* ; and 58 dBA on an Leq basis and 58 dBA on an Ldn basis for egment C".
*Appendix H-1, Southwest Transitway Ambient Noise Table, page 5, Segment A: "Site #31 (3427 St. Louis Ave.) for a 24-hour period the Leq was 59 dBA and Ldn 60 dBA (Footnote 'c' for that table notes that noise monitoring data for Site #31 *included* noise from existing freight train operations). *Natural sounds and recreational activities are the dominant noise sources* , with lesser noise contributions from Lake St. traffic. This location is representative of noise-sensitive land use at the south end of the Kenwood Neighborhood, within earshot of Lake St." Comment: Site #31, 3427 St. Louis Ave., is a residential property adjacent to the current TC&W rail line and located inbetween the West Lake St. Stn and Cedar Lake Parkway. Given the Sound Exposure Levels in table 4.7-2 of LRT pass-bys 81-84 dBA, signal 106 dBA, warning signal 88 dBA, warning horns 99 dBA, LRT curve squeal 114 dBA, mitigation requirements need to include keeping the ambient noise levels (on a constant and frequent basis) consistent with current Leq and Ldn dBA...particularly at nighttime. Mitigation must preserve and maintain as dominant sounds of the portion of Segment A in between West Lake Stn. and Cedar Lake Parkway that of *natural sounds and recreational activities* . Fencing or landscaping alone would not achieve such mitigation. Barriers only reduce noise by a small amount (per Appendix H-1: Mitigation). Mitigation such as cut'n'cover or tunnel have not been addressed by the DEIS for Segment A; and should be thoroughtly studied as a viable means of mitigation, particularly in the area between West Lake St. Stn. and 21st St. Stn. Note: noise monitoring data for Site #31 was collected *prior to* the replacement of old, frequent weld TC&W rails with new continuous rails in September/October 2012 (per rail engineers, up to 1/3 quieter and less vibration).

E4

E0

**In Segments 3 and 4 (the preferred alignment 3A) running from Mitchell Rd. to the West Lake Station the LRT touched almost ALL commercial properties (per engineering and conceptual designs from Appendix F as well as table 3.2-2 Summary of Neighborhood...Cohesion Impacts...Segment 3 "mostly commercial"). Per table 4.7-3, Noise Impact Summary Table, the preferred alignment 3A had a total of 201 (520) Severel Impact Land (Units) for Category 2 (residential). Per table 4.7-5, Noise Impacts Segment 3, Segment 3 had 18 Severe Impact Land (Units). Per table 4.7-6 Noise Impacts Segment 4, Segment 4 had no Severe Impact Land (Units). Per table 4.7-8 Impacts Segment A, Segment A had 183 (406) Severe Impacts Land (Units). In summary, *Segment A has 183 (406) of the total 201 (520) or 91.0% of the* Severe Impact Land in alignment 3A...with 176 (399) between West Lake Stn. and 21st St. Stn. (table 4.7-8). In other words...*176 (399) of the total 201 (520) or 87.6% of the total Severe Impact Land for alignment 3A were in the very small stretch between W. Lake and 21st St. Stations* as compared to the miles and miles of LRT in Segment 3 and 4 which only had 18 of 201 (table 4.7-5) or 9.0%. Note: percentages are rounded. Note also: Segment A has a situation *unique to Segments 3 and 4 and to Hiawatha LRT* in that some of the residential/multi-family residential properties are located 20' or less from the rail tracks, including a 14 story high rise condominium with balconies facing the rail tracks.

O1, O5, O6, O7, O12

Table 4.7-2 LRT Sound Exposure Levels used in the Noise Analysis...LRT pass-by 81-84 dBA, signal 106 dBA, warning signal 88 dBA, warning horn 99 dBA, LRT curve squeal 114 dba.Appendix H-1, page 50 of the section addressing "Odors, Noise and Dust - Noise Basics, Exhibit 1, Outdoor Noise Exposure for a Residential Environment (according to U.S. Federal agency criteria) states the ambient close to Urban Transit is 85 Ldn. *The HUD threshold for Unacceptable Housing Environment is 75 dBA* Ldn, the HUD limit for normally acceptable housing environment is 65 dBA Ldn, and the EPA ideal residential goal is 55 dBA Ldn. This section also states Category 2 are residences and buildings where

people normally sleep. This category includes residences...where nighttime sensitivity is assumed to be of utmost importance.

O5, O8

***Appendix H-1, Table 9, Minnesota Noise Pollution Control Limits, indicates that Chapter 7030 of the Minnesota Administrative Rules has set a series of noise limits that can be applied to projects such as...rail study. The limit for MN category 1 (residences, churches, schools, and other similar land uses) in the daytime is between 60-65 dBA and nighttime 50-55 dBA.

***MnDOT for the Trunk Hwy 41 river crossing project, Chaska, indicates Federal Noise Abatement criteria for Category B (residential and recreational) is 70 dBA. For every increase of 10 dBA is heard twice as loud.

Appendix H-1, FTA Noise Impact Criteria, page 50: "Although higher rail noise levels are allowed in neighborhoods with high levels of existing, smaller increases in total noise exposure are allowed with increasing levels of existing noise".

3) Our third concern is regarding **mitigation** in Segment A, particularly the residential area between West Lake Stn. and 21st St. Stn., from the substantial increase in the ***frequency*** **of LRT pass-bys**. The DEIS considers **current TC&W pass-bys to be infrequent**, and that LRT will more than double the amount of train pass-by events*. Current TC&W pass-bys are 21.5 per week daytime and .5 per week or less nighttime**. LRT projected are 2326 per week with 420 in the nighttime***. In other words LRT pass-bys would create a *drastic change* for Segment A from a periodic, infrequent heavy use corridor *to a constant, frequent* heavy use corridor. *Noise, vibration, and visual impacts* in *Segment A, particularly in the residential area between West Lake Stn. and 21st St. Stn. would* ***change from current*** *periodic,* ***infrequent*** *noise, vibration, and visual impacts 21.5 times per week and .5 or less times per night* ***to constant*** *noise, vibration, and visual impacts 2326 times per week, with a disruptive increase at nighttime of 420 per night...****from current 3 times per day and less than .5 nighttime per 'week' to LRT every 7.5 - 10 minutes per day and LRT every 30 minutes each night*** (these daily LRT pass-bys are per the SWLRT website).

O1, O4

LRT would introduce a NEW *privacy impact* both in the *daytime and nighttime.* Per 3.6.3 Long-Term Effects, 3.6.3.3, "Visual intrusion and privacy impacts of the project elements on the residents in units with windows facing the alignment...could be substantial." Comment: The new privacy impacts would not only affect the residential properties, but persons using the Cedar Lake Regional Trail/Kenilworth Trail, Park Siding Park, and the Grand Rounds. These *privacy impacts do not currently exist;* therefore, mitigation needs to address respect of privacy resulting from LRT pass-bys. Mitigation by fencing or landscaping alone would have minimal and seasonal mitigation effect. Additionally, on its own, barriers may not provide adequate mitigation in screening privacy impacts, particularly at elevations of a flyover. Mitigation such as cut'n'cover or tunnel should be thoroughly studied as a viable means for mitigation, particularly in the area between West Lake Stn. and 21st St. Stn. A flyover would not mitigate privacy impacts. A flyover would introduce additional new privacy impacts at a higher elevation.

E4

E8

Nighttime LRT pass-bys will also introduce a NEW *visual nighttime impact of LRT headlights as well as intrusion of lights from inside train cars which would be passing through 420 times per week* as *compared to current .5 or less* headlight (only) light intrusion *per week.* Fencing and landscaping will not mitigate the new nighttime visual light impacts. Barriers may mitigate the new nighttime headlight visual impact and partially mitigate light intrusion from inside train cars; however, would *not* be adequate to mitigate the *extreme increase* in *frequency* of visual light impacts resulting from more than double the amount of train pass-by events*****. Mitigation such as cut'n'cover or tunnel have not been addressed by the DEIS for Segment A, and should be studied as a viable means for mitigation, particularly in the area between West Lake Stn. and 21st St. Stn. A flyover bridge over Cedar Lake Parkway would NOT mitigate the new *increased frequency* of daytime and nighttime visual impacts. A flyover bridge would introduce NEW visual impacts at an elevation higher than 'at grade'.

O5, O6, O7, O12

E0

*Comment: The DEIS statement 'more than double the amount of train pass-by events' is **extremely understated. Per the SWLRT website, train pass-bys would *dramatically* increase *from the current* 3 times in the daytime *to LRT* every 10 minutes during the daytime and early evenings--even more frequently during peak hours *to* LRT every 7.5 minutes. The nighttime pass-bys would be even more substantially increased from 'on occasion' .5 per 'week' to LRT every 30 minutes nighttime.**

The LRT pass-bys are constant 7 days per week, 20 hours per day. These **LRT frequencies would change the residential corridor** in Segment A between West Lake St. and 21st St. Stn. **from 'domina noise sources being that of natural sounds and recreational activities'** ***to constant*** *new* ***noise sources*** from the LRT rail squeals and horn or bells (with noise decibals increasing from current ambient 59-60 dBA (Site #31) to between 81-114 dBA. Such **drastic changes to the environmental and socioeconomic** elements of the residential corridor warrant serious mitigation of noise as well as visual impacts. Fencing and landscaping alone would not mitigate the dramatic increase in *frequency* of noise nor the increase in noise decibals. Barriers would only reduce noise by a small amount (per Appendix H-1: Mitigation), and would not address the dramatic increase in *frequency* of noise. Mitigation such as cut'n'cover or tunnel have not been addressed by the DEIS for Segment A, and should be studied as a viable means for mitigation, particularly in the area between West Lake Stn. and 21st St. Stn. A flyover would not mitigate *increased frequency* of noise. A flyover would introduce NEW as well as increased frequencies of noise carrying at an elevated level.

E4 O4

E0 O1

Data supporting the above is as follows:

*Per Appendix H-1 as well as 4.8.2, Existing Conditions: "Existing rail operations in Segmnt 4 include approximately 3 freight pass-by events per day. *TC&W locomotve pass-by events* are less than 5 per day; therefore, *are considered infrequent* ...The *build alternatives will more than double the amount of train pass-by events* ..."

**Per chapter 4, page 91, Segment A: West Lake Station to Intermodal Station. "Under Build Alternatives LRT 1A and LRT 3A existing TC&W traffic on the Kenilworth Corridor would be relocated to the MN&S Spur. (Freight rail traffic o the Spur would be the existing traffic in the Kenilworth Corridor with no change in train activity, consist, etc." Calculation of existing TC&W traffic on the Kenilworth Corridor per 4.7.5 MN&S Freight Rail Relocation is as follows:

One freight train with 2-4 locomotives and 50 cars operating six days/wk (1 train x 6 days = 6/wk)
One freight 2-4 locomotives and 20 cars operating 3-4 days/wk (1 train x 4 days = 4/wk)
One ethanol train with 2 locomoties and 80 cars operating once every 2 wks (1 x .5 = .5/wk)
One coal train with 4 locomotives an 120 cars operating once every 2 wks (1 x .5 = .5/wk)
Note: the coal train only operates one direction, all others round trip.
TOTAL TC&W freight train pass-bys per wk = 21.5 (6 + 4 + .5) x 2/round trip plus .5 x 1 direction
Note: All above trains were considered in section 4.7.5 to operate during the day. The exception being one coal train operating once every 2 weeks which *could* operate either night *or* day.

***Calculation of operational assumptions of LRT per 4.7.3.4, Chapter 4, Environmental Effects, page 4-84:

198 trips during the day (198 x 7) (assumed) = 1386/wk****
16 trips/hr between 6-9 am and 3-6:30 pm (16 x 6.5 x 5) (assumed 'peak hrs' means 5 days/wk) = 520/wk****
60 trips during the night (60 x 7) = 420/wk****
TOTAL LRT Pass-bys per week = approximately 2326****
****Note: There is no mention in the DEIS information if these are 'one direction' trips or 'round trips' and should, therefore, be multiplied by 2 as per the calculation of the existing TC&W.

You will note in Chapter 4, pages 4-92, Segment A...Under Build Alternatives...the DEIS states, "Airborne-noise impacts associated with Segment A (with freight rail relocation) were calculated based on existing noise exposure (including existing TC&W freight rail traffic) and account for the 'decrease' in sound level which would occur due to the absense of freight pass-by events". Comment: The DEIS calculations represents an 'average' of the LRT noise impacts for a 24-hour period. In actuality, the LRT will introduce noise impacts in the 81-114 dBA range 'extremely frequently and nearly constant' throughout the daytime and nighttime in Segment A. Whereas the current TC&W noise impacts have been very infrequent during the dayttime and nearly non-existent in the nighttime. In addition, the **DEIS has not measured the noise level of the TC&W with the *new continuous rails installed September/October 2012* in Segment A**, particularly the portion between West Lake Stn. and 21st St. Stn.

O1, O11

E4

4) Our fourth concern is regarding **mitigation for the (long-term) visual effects** of LRT for **Segment A** in particular the residential area between West Lake Stn. and 21st. Stn. This section is *unique* to Segment 3, 4 and Hiawatha LRT given the close proximity of residential and high rise residential to the LRT as well as the close proximity of Cedar Lake, Cedar Lake Regional Trail/Kenilworth Trail, Park Sidin Park, and the Xerxes Historic District multi-story residences to an *unobstructed visual* of LRT structure,

E4 E2 N2

catenary and poles.
Per Chapter 3, Social Effects, 3.6.6, Summary, page 3-125, the DEIS points out a situation *unique* to Segment A in the 3A alignment: "Further, LRT 3A (LPA) would have possibly substantial effects on the visual quality of one of its three segments, which includes sensitive receptors in the residential land uses adjacent to the segment (A) where the alignment is on a bridge".
3.6.3 Long-Term Effects, 3.6.3.3 Build Alternatives Segment 4, page 3-115: "Visual impacts may be substantial where the alignment is not screened by vegetation. *Visual intrusion and privacy impacts of the project elements* on the sensitive receptors may be *substantial where views from the alignment into previously private spaces are created*. *Visual intrusion and privacy impacts on the outdoor living areas of residential properties could be substantial* where vegetation or landscape buffers do not exist". .... "The proposed alignment is on a *bridge over Cedar Lake Parkway*. *Visual impacts* on sensitive *receptors adjacent to the corridor in the multi-family residential parcel and Cedar Lake Parkway could be substantial*. *Visual intrusion and privacy impacts* of the project elements on the *residents in units with windows facing the alignment* where it is bridged structure could be substantial". Comments: Given the narrow space of the rail corridor between West Lake Stn. and Cedar Lake Parkway, fencing and imature landscaping alone would not mitigate the visual intrusion and privacy impacts, and would be a 'seasonal' mitigation. A barrier alone would introduce a NEW visual impact where there were prior unobstructed views of parks and trees and sense of 'open space'. A barrier would only mitigate a portion of the visual intrusion of rail cars. A barrier would not mitigate the visual intrusion of poles and catenary. Mitgation such as cut'n'cover or tunnel have not been addressed by the DEIS for Segment A, and should be studied as a viable means for mitigation, particularly in the area between West Lake Stn. and 21st St. Stn. A flyover bridge over Cedar Lake Parkway would not mitigate visual intrusion and privacy impacts. A flyover Cedar Lake Parkway would introduce NEW visual intrusions. We support Cedar Lake Parkway crossing over transit. We do not support taking of any residential properties in Segment A between West Lake Stn. and 21st. St. Station. We agree, per 3.6.5.3, Mitigation: "Mitigation treatments for visual impacts would be developed...through discussion with affected communities, resource agencies, and stakeholders."

E4 N2

E0 N2

4) An additional **socioeconomic and environmental** concern is the **preservation of the Kenilworth Trail as a pedestrian and bicycle trail, and insuring that the trail receives proper mitigation**. Per the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board Community Advisory Committee, "the Kenilworth Trail received 617,000 visits in 2009, and use has only gone up since then". Per 3.6.6, Summary, page 3-125: "LRT 3A (LPA) would have the second highest effects on visual quality in the project area because of *substantial impacts on sensitive receptors located on trails*, which are present in three (4, A, and FRR) of the alignment's segments."

E2 N2 P9

Per the DEIS Appendix H - Land Use Plans, 2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan, page 7 of 750: "The Regional Parks Policy Plan lays out the goals for the expansion and management of the Twin Cities regional park system, and the strategies designed to meet those goals. Of particular note for Southwest Transitway is the policy on regional trails, new trails, or trail segments, that serve regional users are considered a significant priority for the regional parks system. The plan states that selection, development and operation of bicycle transportation arteries are covered as a component of the Council's transportation plan. Examples of existing regional trails that provide multiple benefits include...Southwest LRT Regional Trails, Cedar Lake Regional Trail, the Mississippi River Regional Trail..."

M1

Per the Three Rivers Parks website, there are two regional bike paths passing by Cedar Lake...the North Cedar Lake Regional Trail and the Cedar Lake Regional Trail. Both go from downtown to Hopkins and connect with other trails in the city and Western suburbs. The Cedar Lake Regional Trail follows through the Kenilworth corridor (the Kenilworth Trail), crosses the rail tracks at Cedar Lake, and continues to Hopkins. The North Cedar Lake Regional Trail splits from the Cedar Lake Regional Trail near Bryn Mawr, and travels past the Northern tip of Cedar Lake then proceeds West to Hopkins. Per the DEIS the freight rail tracks in Kenilworth are owned by Hennepin County; however, the Cedar Lake Regional Trail and Kenilworth Trail are maintained by the Parkboard and receive Federal and local funding (Appendix H-1, page 47). The Cedar Lake Regional Trail and Kenilworth Trail are the major *connective routes* to the Grand Rounds, Southwest LRT Regional Trails, and the Mississippi River Regional Trail. Both are located adjacent to LRT Segment A, and need to be preserved as viable pedestrian and bicycle routes. Mitigation for noise, vibration, visual, and privacy impacts as well as safety measures (including safety measures for those pedestrians and bicyclists using the trails at night) should include discussion and coordination with affected communities, resource agencies, and stakeholders.

E2 E7 N2 O1 P9 L4

5) Our final concern is that of **mitigation during construction**, particularly the residential area in Segment A between West Lake Stn. and 21st. Stn. This rail corridor is *unique* to Segment 3, 4, and Hiawatha LRT due to the narrow width and close proximity of residential, high-rise residential, Xerxes Historic District properties, and Cedar Lake/Beach to LRT. Suggest construction mitigation treatments for visual, noise, and vibration impacts be developed through discussion and coordination with affected communities, resource agencies, and stakeholders and per implementatin of BMP's. In addition, in Segment A north of West Lake Stn. there are multiply entries to Cedar Lake Regional Trail/Kenilworth Trail (which connect the area to the Grand Rounds, Southwest LRT Regional Trails, and the Mississippi River Regional Trail) and Park Siding Park. Mitigation measures need to insure continued and safe entry to these trails and parks during construction (both daytime and nighttime). M1

In summary, the **OUTCOMES** we would like to see achieved, in particular Segment A between West Lake Stn. and 21st St., are: A) Mitigation that maintains the current ambient noise levels close to existing 59-60 dBA (Site #31) and that maintains the current ambience of 'natural sounds and recreational activities', quiet, and tranquility for the residential areas, bicycle/pedestrian trails, and parkland adjacent to LRT. B) Mitigation to drastically minimize the new and and constant noise, vibration, visual, and privacy impacts that LRT will introduce to the current infrequent rail use corridor. This includes supporting MPRB's presentation of LRT going under Cedar Lake Pkwy. C) Mitigation that maintains the current 'unobstructed views' and 'sense of open space' for the residential areas, bicycle/pedestrian trails, and parkland adjacent to LRT.

Additionally, we agree with the Minneapolis Park and Rec Board (MPRB) DEIS response as follows: A) We do not support freight co-location. B) We support further study of Cedar Lake Parkway crossing over LRT. C) We support maintaining bike and pedestrian paths' 'park-like setting' and 'sense of open space'. D) We support bike and pedestrian paths free from obstructions and adequate buffer on each side of all trails so that park users are not subject to LRT noise levels that exceed standards set for category 1. E) We support bike and pedestrian trails remaining the same or better quality and width as current trails. E) We support Minneapolis Chain of Lakes Regional Park and adjacent parkland remaining quiet, tranquil, and a natural setting. D E2 E0 N1 O1 P9 N2

We hope you take serious consideration of the facts and comments above, and look forward to your response.

Cheryl and Paul LaRue
CIDNA homeowners
LRT riders and bicyclists
contact info: mnrealtors@aol.com or 612-759-3011

"Gaines, Jason L"
<Jason.Gaines@allina.com>
12/17/2012 11:47 AM

To "swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us"
<swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>
cc "'Jason Gaines' (gaines408@gmail.com)"
<gaines408@gmail.com>
bcc

Subject Southwest Corridor Opposition

G2

The proposed SW light rail route, passing through Theodore Wirth Park, and other Minneapolis green space, should be reconsidered. If you can step back from this decision-making process, and carefully scrutinize the end goal of this project, a clarity exists that cannot be denied. If this project intends to alleviate the environmental impact caused by Minneapolis area commuters, please recognize the irony in permanently damaging the ecosystem of the city's most significant park to achieve this. I simply ask that economic considerations not be the primary variable considered for this decision. If we cannot afford to locate the light rail in an area where it makes the most sense, then the process should be delayed.

Thank you.

Jason Gaines
1207 Washburn Ave. N.
Minneapolis, MN 55411
612.578.8635

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Molly Gaines
<mollygaines@yahoo.com>

12/17/2012 12:37 PM

Please respond to
Molly Gaines
<mollygaines@yahoo.com>

To "swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us"
<swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>
cc
bcc
Subject Opposition to lightrail through Theo Wirth

G2

To Whom This May Concern:

I am writing to voice strong opposition to running the lightrail line down what is sure to be the cheapest, but the worst possible route for Golden Valley and, in particular, North Minneapolis.

First, this line all but circumvents the people of north Minneapolis who most need public transportation. This is a huge point. It is not within walking distance for these residents. It is not convenient, and it is a lightly populated area that is very residential. There is no chance for surrounding businesses in north Minneapolis to prosper as their are virtually none in the area. This decision would leave north Minneapolis, once again, disconnected from the rest of the city.

Secondly, it will destroy the peace and quiet of one of our city's most important outdoor areas: Wirth Park. It would be loud, with constant whistling, and scare away the area wildlife, as well as people who use the park. Wirth is prime -- if not already -- to become the city's top silent sports destinations. Hard to imagine how light rail would not completely destroy the beauty of this incredible area.

The choice of this route is simply bizarre. Other then financial, there are no good reasons for choosing a route that runs through our city's most precious park land, skirting around the areas that are most densely populated and most reliant on public transportation.

Sincerely,
Molly Gaines
1207 Washburn Ave. N.
Minneapolis, MN 55411

"Paul Krawczyk"
<paulk@amecinc.org>
12/17/2012 12:39 PM

To <swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>
cc
bcc
Subject I oppose the route through Theo Wirth Park vs. other possible options for the route

Good Day,

N1

As a north Minneapolis resident, avid Wirth Park user and public transit user, I am oppose the proposed light rail route, passing through Theodore Wirth Park. If this project intends to alleviate the environmental impact caused by Minneapolis area commuters, it seems less than well thought out to me to damage the ecosystem of the city's most significant park to achieve this goal. In addition to the impact on the park, the more obvious fact that public transit is designed and invested in to help move the masses, it seems avoiding North Minneapolis is unfortunate. North Minneapolis would be losing out on transportation and commerce associated with a project like this. I my opinion the research has been solely economically driven as opposed to what our city really needs to make a positive transportation impact. Running the transit through the park and avoiding the north residences is a waste of money to the tax payers and avoids the majority of the potential users.

Paul Krawczyk
1223 Washburn ave N
Minneapolis MN. 55411
612-929-7758 Phone

_____ Information from ESET NOD32 Antivirus, version of virus signature database 7809 (20121217) _____

The message was checked by ESET NOD32 Antivirus.

http://www.eset.com

<Cindy.Marsh@pdinh.com>
12/17/2012 03:24 PM

To <swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>
cc
bcc
Subject Southwest LRT DEIS

Dear Sir/Madam,

As a resident of the Kenwood neighborhood, my husband and I attended every meeting about Southwest LRT in our community; I do not feel our concerns were heard. We now have several concerns about the DEIS. Overall, **we support the response from the Kenwood Isles Area Association (KIAA)**. We live along the Kenilworth bike trail/existing railroad tracks.

Specifically, the following are our concerns:

Noise: Ours is a beautiful and very quiet neighborhood. I do not feel the noise mitigation proposed is adequate; we deserve the best mitigation possible. (chapter 4, page 4 – 84). O1, E4

Vibration: We insist that detailed vibration assessments be done as early as possible to determine adequate mitigation measures (chapter 4, page 4 -118). O5, O6 E4

Relocation of Freight Rail: If the light rail is to go through the Kenilworth Corridor, the DEIS supports moving the freight trains that use the corridor now. We also support freight rail relocation. Co-location would mean the destruction of 60 homes, the taking or parkland, the elimination of trails and other adverse impacts. D

Station at 21st Street: We need a study of traffic impacts and problems should be addressed to neighborhood satisfaction (chapter 2 page 2 -32). I2

Park and Ride: The DEIS projects a surface parking lot for 100 cars at 21st Street. Consistent with City of Minneapolis policy and KIAA, we oppose this park and ride (chapter 2, page 2 -32). This is not needed and will significantly deteriorate our neighborhood. I1

Bridge over Cedar Lake Parkway: The DEIS proposes a large cement bridge over Cedar Lake Parkway where the Kenilworth Trail crosses it. We think a bridge like this would be ugly , noisy and totally inappropriate for the area KIAA is requesting a feasibility study of trenching or tunneling the LRT at this intersection (chapter 3, page 3 – 115). E8

Preservation of Cedar Lake Park and the Kenilworth Trail. These are highly used, vibrant and valuable regional assets. We oppose land use changes beyond what is necessary for the LRT; existing park, trail and open green space should be preserved to the greatest extent possible (chapter 3, page 3 – 34). E2

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Cynthia E. Marsh, PH.D.

Wendell Vandersluis

2588 Upton Ave South
Minneapolis, MN 55405

612.377.6789

Confidentiality Notice: All information in this communication, including any files or attachments, is intended for the sole use of the individual or entity to which it is addressed and may contain information that is confidential, proprietary and/or trade secret information entitled to protection and/or exempt from disclosure under applicable law. If you are not the intended recipient, you are hereby notified that any dissemination, distribution, or copying of this communication is strictly prohibited. If you have received this communication in error, please notify the sender by return email and delete this communication from your system. Thank you for your cooperation.

CIDNA Neighborhood
<info@cidna.org>

12/17/2012 03:31 PM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us

cc Art Higinbotham <ahiginbotham@msn.com>, Edward Ferlauto <slfelicity@aol.com>, Craig Westgate <cwreg@msn.com>

bcc

Subject Southwest Transitway DEIS response

Attached please find the response to the Southwest Transitway DEIS from a joint neighborhood task force representing three of the most heavily impacted Minneapolis neighborhoods (West Calhoun, Cedar-Isles-Dean and Kenwood) along the “Locally Preferred Alternative” 3A route of the proposed transitway, as well as the citizen-run Cedar Lake Park Association.

Thank you,

Monica Smith
Coordinator
CIDNA
612-821-0131
info@cidna.org

Southwest Transitway Draft Environmental Impact Statement Comments

Submitted by the joint neighborhood task force:

Sponsor- Cedar Isles Dean Neighborhood Association (CIDNA)

West Calhoun Neighborhood Council (WCNC)

Kenwood Isles Area Association (KIAA)

Cedar Lake Park Association (CLPA)

Calhoun Isles Condominium Association (CICA)

Cedar Lake Shores Townhome Association (CLSTA)

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Volunteers Who Reviewed the DEIS

Ed Ferlauto, Leader	CIDNA
Norma Adams	CICA
Ed Bell	CIDNA
Kathy Cobb	WCNC
Jeanette Colby	KIAA
John Erickson	CLSTA
Meg Forney	WCNC
Ryan Fox	CIDNA
Stephen Goltry	CIDNA
Nancy Green	CICA
Rosanne Halloran	CIDNA
Art Higinbotham	CIDNA
Cheryl LaRue	CLSTA
Richard Logan	WCNC
Keith Prussing	CLPA
David Shirley	CIDNA
John Shorrock	CICA
Craig Westgate	CIDNA

Abbreviations

CIDNA	Cedar Isles Dean Neighborhood Association
CICA	Calhoun Isles Condominium Association
CLPA	Cedar Lake Park Association
CLSTA	Cedar Lake Shores Townhome Association
KIAA	Kenwood Isles Area Association
WCNC	West Calhoun Neighborhood Council

Table of Contents

Chapter	Page
Introduction	4
Chapter 2 Alternatives Considered and Chapter 11 Evaluation of Alternatives	6
Chapter 3 Social Effects	10
Chapter 4 Environmental Effects	22
Chapter 5 Economic Effects	30
Chapter 6 Transportation Effects	33
Chapter 7 Section 4(F) Evaluation	36
Chapter 8 Financial Analysis	41
Appendix 1: Environmental Effects of Aerial Bridge	42
Appendix 2: ESI Engineering Report	53

Introduction

The joint neighborhood task force represents the residents and homeowners of the three most heavily impacted Minneapolis neighborhoods along the "Locally Preferred Alternative" 3A route of the proposed Southwest Transitway, as well as the citizen-run Cedar Lake Park Association.

We speak on behalf of the Kenilworth Corridor where vibrant bicycle and pedestrian trails pass by wooded lakes and quiet residential areas and continue on to access lively business and recreational districts. Fast, frequent rail transit in the Kenilworth Corridor will bring change to this much-loved place, and we call on Southwest Transitway designers and engineers to keep the change from degrading our area. We ask them to plan to protect and enhance our area's vital natural and recreational resources, our existing housing stock (much of which is "smart development"), and our local businesses services. E2

Our primary concerns relate to noise, aesthetics, traffic, safety, and wildlife impacts. These impacts come together particularly around the following issues:

1) Freight Rail Relocation

The joint neighborhood task force welcomes the DEIS finding that freight trains currently using the Kenilworth Corridor should be relocated to accommodate light rail. Freight and light rail are not compatible in this area. D

2) Southwest Transitway Intersection with Cedar Lake Parkway

In addition to being part of the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board's (MPRB) Historic Grand Rounds, Cedar Lake Parkway is one of only two roads that allow east-west travel for motorized vehicles between much of the Cedar Lake and Lake of the Isles areas and points west.

The DEIS proposes a bridge over the Parkway to address the problems that would be caused by frequent LRT crossings. Such a bridge, however, would create enormous vibrations, noise, and visual impacts for area residents and park and trail users, only some of which the DEIS documents. Townhomes and condominiums abut the narrowest part of the Kenilworth Corridor where the increased noise would greatly affect the residents' quality of life. A massive elevated structure with catenary poles and wires simply does not fit with the area's look and feel; it would violate the Minneapolis Shoreline Overlay District zoning code and damage our neighborhoods and parks. (See Appendix 1 for photos and architect's renderings.) E8 O1 E8 N2

While we agree that grade separation at Cedar Lake Parkway is essential to solving some of the problems caused by the introduction of light rail, an aerial overpass would create even more

problems. In November 2012, the MPRB conducted an initial examination into the feasibility of creating a tunnel or underpass for the LRT. We strongly support this approach and urge the Met Council to work closely with the MPRB through Preliminary Engineering to address this intersection. A tunnel or underpass at Cedar Lake Parkway would best meet the needs of our neighborhoods and the goals of the Southwest Transitway project. E8

3) Station Areas

The two proposed station areas of greatest concern in our area are the West Lake Station and the 21st Street Station. These station areas share a number of concerns, though they manifest differently since the first is in a heavily populated housing and commercial district and the second is in a low-density residential area next to a park. The DEIS documents some impacts, but is silent on others of critical importance. I2

The DEIS describes some of the noise and visual impacts that will occur at LRT stations; these are especially great at 21st Street where very low ambient noise level and wooded surroundings are found. These impacts must be mitigated to the satisfaction of the community. Refer to Appendix 2 - ESI Engineering Report. E4 O1

LRT stations will also bring increased traffic, parking demands, and public safety pressures. Without proper planning, this will create problems for the quiet residential area around 21st Street and could be a calamity for the already saturated West Lake area. We urge the Metropolitan Council to work cooperatively with the City of Minneapolis, the MPRB, and adjacent neighborhood associations to undertake a comprehensive circulation study that includes emergency vehicle, automobile, bicycle, and pedestrian needs in the proposed West Lake Station vicinity. L1 P4, P9 R2 R3

4) Parks and trails

Without excellent design, the heavily used trails and parks adjacent to the proposed Southwest Transitway will be seriously impacted by noise, visual impacts, and light pollution, especially near station areas. The DEIS does not document all the impacts, and the joint neighborhood task force insists that the quality of park and trail space be protected to the greatest extent possible during construction and operation of the LRT. This includes preserving or enhancing wildlife habitat, including at such locations as Cedar Lake Park and Park Siding where mature trees and shrubs provide shelter for migrating birds. E2 N1 N2 N8

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Southwest Transitway Draft Environmental Impact Statement. We look forward to a continuing relationship with the Metropolitan Council as the Southwest Transitway project advances.

Chapter 2 Alternatives Considered and Chapter 11 Evaluation of Alternatives

The DEIS considered the co-location alternative as indicated in Chapter 2, Section 2.1 Alternatives Considered and is described in detail on pg. 2-41 LRT 3A-1 (Co-location Alternative). It is concluded in the final paragraph of Chapter 11, pg. 11-11, 11.2.5 Evaluation of Alternatives that this alternative does not meet the project's purpose and need and is not a practicable alternative. It is not recommended as the environmentally preferred alternative.

The joint neighborhood task force agrees with this conclusion and offer our reasons to reject the 3A-1 Co-location Alternative. The Segment A in the 3A-1 Co-location Alternative between the West Lake Street Bridge and Cedar Lake Parkway is undesirable because of a number of factors. First, it currently has potential noise problems attributable to wheel squeal (114 db) and bell noise approaching the West Lake Station (90 db) and approaching the narrowest portion of the Kenilworth Trail. This condition would be exacerbated with the introduction of freight trains (estimated 4 to 8 per day) and LRT (on a high frequency schedule) and is not tolerable to the many residential dwellings in close proximity to the Kenilworth Trail.

D

O1 E4

In addition, reference is made to the R.L. Banks & Associates report of December 2010, which cited that there is insufficient space within the existing right of way (ROW) to accommodate both freight and LRT at grade level. In consideration of seven different scenarios reviewed in that document, one option would require acquisition of between 33 and 57 housing units and disruption of an entire townhouse community. Another option considered re-routing the Kenilworth Trail outside the Kenilworth Corridor, which eliminates a link in the commuter bicycle trail and would require the acquisition of up to 117 housing units.

It is evident from these reviews that the conclusion recorded in 11.2.5 that the 3A-1 Co-location is rejected is proper and is supported by the joint neighborhood task force.

D

Furthermore, the following analysis of Chapters 3, 4, and 5 of the DEIS supports freight rail relocation:

Section 3.1.3 Land Use Plans contains a Table 3.1.2 listing Hennepin County plans, including an HCRRA Staff report on Freight Rail Relocation, August 2011, which "concludes that the most viable and therefore preferred route for freight rail is the MN&S line in St. Louis Park and that the preferred location of LRT is in the Kenilworth Corridor along with the Kenilworth Bike Trail without freight rail." Co-location is the least desirable of the two freight rail options considered for Segment A for reasons enumerated in the rest of this commentary. Table 3.1-3 lists the co-location option as incompatible with Hennepin County Transportation Systems plans. However,

the Metropolitan Council should re-open the study of other freight rail alternatives, as neither relocation nor co-location has acceptable social, environmental, or economic effects for the Southwest Transitway proposal. G2

Section 3.2.2.6 Community and Neighborhood Cohesion states on pg. 58 that "with the co-location alternative, the largest disruption in community cohesion would be the acquisition of 60 housing units." These are mostly in the Cedar Lake Shores Townhome Association, but also include residences to the northeast of Cedar Lake Shores Townhome Association up to the Burnham Boulevard bridge and a multi-story apartment building on Sunset Boulevard at Cedar Lake Parkway. As stated in Table 3.2-2, "The presence of freight rail in...Segment A may limit land use change to TOD [Transit Oriented Development]. The acquisition of 57 multi-family housing units for placement of the freight rail line near the West Lake Street Station will diminish TOD potential for the West Lake Street Station area and is inconsistent with local and regional plans which promote TOD including multi-family residential in proximity to LRT stations." In addition, these additions will reduce the property tax base for the City Of Minneapolis and reduce its tax revenue by over $400,000 per year. M1 M3 M4 E10 I2

Section 3.3.3 Long-Term Effects shows the property acquisitions required (Table 3.3-1). Co-location will require acquisition of 72 commercial/industrial, 67 residential and 3 government properties, while freight relocation will require acquisition of 79 commercial/industrial, 11 residential and no government properties. These properties and their value have not been defined, but the impact of acquisition will be clearly more costly for co-location. D

Section 3.5.4 Temporary and Long-Term Impacts compares the potential park and conservation area impacts (Table 3.5-4). Co-location will take 1.12 acres of land compared to 0.23 acres for freight re-location, which means that there will be a more significant reduction of potential and existing parkland along the Kenilworth Corridor. "Mature vegetation buffers the corridor for the length of the segment (A), screening views to/from residential areas and parklands," per Section 3.6.2.4. This provides a habitat for migratory birds and other wildlife. E2

Section 3.6.6 shows an example of a bridge type for a proposed overpass for the LRT at Cedar Lake Parkway. The DEIS does not describe the configuration of this intersection if freight rail and the LRT are co-located on the Kenilworth Corridor, along with bike and pedestrian trails. Not only is such a bridge in violation of the Minneapolis City Ordinance Shoreline Overlay District, for this bridge will rise 46 feet above grade including train and catenary, whereas the ordinance restrict such heights to 35 feet, but the increased width of the intersection for co-location has not been addressed in the DEIS report. The report also does not address the increased width for multiple bridges over the Cedar/Isles Channel for the co-location alternative. E8

Section 3.7.1 Legal and Regulatory Review states that "a distance of 50 feet has been used to assess the proximity of habitable, or dwelling, structures to the centerline of the tracks," based on other rail studies. For co-location, the closest of the freight rail or the LRT track centerline to the Calhoun Isles Condominium grain elevator tower, where the corridor is now only 62 feet wide, would only make 12 feet of the existing corridor available for tracks, assuming the acquisition and demolition of the Cedar Lake Shores Townhomes. This same safety consideration would apply to Park Siding Park, where children at play will be within 50 feet of the tracks. E9 R2

Other safety considerations are covered in Section 3.7.3, including derailments. Since there is no cap on how many trains TC&W railroad can route on the corridor; a derailment of ethanol and other toxic or flammable chemicals cars when LRT trains are running side-by-side on co-located freight and LRT tracks becomes ever more hazardous to the neighboring community as well as to passengers on the LRT. The increase in the use of biofuels mandated by the federal government is likely to add to ethanol car traffic on the corridor and increase the risk of fatalities, fires, spills, and safety of adjacent neighborhoods. E9 R1

The DEIS fails to analyze the effect of co-location on station design and costs, station safety, or station access at Wooddale, Belt Line, West Lake, W. 21st., or Penn Avenue. This needs to be addressed before a Met Council decision on relocation vs. co-location is made. I2

Section 4.3.2.4 Migratory Birds. This section states that the Minnesota Ornithologists Union's checklist for Hennepin County contains 353 species. Many of these species are evident seasonally along the Kenilworth Corridor, and would be more heavily affected by co-location of freight rail and the LRT than with relocation of freight. The Hennepin County Park list published by the United States Geological Survey of United States Bird Checklists contains 280 bird species observed within the Park Reserve since 1968. The habitat codes shown for designation "S" (shrubs, small trees-fencerows, forest edges, overgrown fields) during the spring season show 16 species that are abundant or common in all the Hennepin County Parks. These species exist within the Chain of Lakes corridor and constitute a rich natural entity that merits preservation in this environment. N8

Section 4.6 Air Quality. This section fails to deal with the increase in air toxics that will result from increased traffic congestion in and around the West Lake Station, where traffic is already at saturation with 39,500 vehicles daily on the W. Lake St./Excelsior Boulevard corridor. Increased vehicle traffic to the West Lake Station from Uptown, Linden Hills, and Edina, and increased vehicle idling will add to air pollution around the station. N9

Section 4.7 Noise. This section does not deal with the simultaneous passage of freight and LRT trains for the co-location alternative. Sound exposure due to adding light rail vehicle warning E4 O1, O11

horns (99dBA) and light rail vehicle curve squeal (114dBA) needs to be estimated for simultaneous passage.

Section 4.8 Vibration. The cumulative vibrational impacts for the simultaneous passage of freight trains and the LRT under the co-location alternative has not been assessed and needs to be. E4 O1, O5

Chapter 5 Economic Effects cites the total cost comparison of Routes 3A (with relocated freight) and 3A (with co-located freight and LRT); the first alternative will have capital costs of $1.295 billion vs. $1.289 billion for the co-location alternative, a minimal $6 million difference. D

Chapter 3 Social Effects

Page 3-16

3.1.2.4 Segment A [LRT 1A, LRT 3A (LPA), and LRT 3A-1 (co-location alternative)]

In addition to the specified zoning districts for individual parcels or areas, Minneapolis has adopted several overlay zoning districts in which Segment A would be located. Northwest of Lake Calhoun and between Cedar Lake and Lake of the Isles the city has established the Shoreland Overlay District that specifies development guidelines within a half-mile radius around each of these lakes. Although the ordinance does not prohibit transportation uses or facilities, it does specify guidelines for controlling both point source and non-point source pollutant discharge within the Shoreland Overlay District.

Comment: *Excelsior Blvd/West Lake Street/Dean Parkway/West Calhoun Parkway is the highest traveled highway corridor in Hennepin County with counts of 39,500 cars. Run-off would potentially increase in this vicinity. Further in-depth environmental analysis is required for projected future use of this confluence within the half-mile radius of the West Lake Station.* E3 N6

Page 3-17

3.1.2.5

In addition to the general zoning districts established adjacent to Segment C-1, zoning overlay districts have been established for specified regions. East of the West Lake Station, an alignment following Segment C-1 would cross through a Pedestrian Overlay District (PO) established by the City of Minneapolis for the Uptown region.

Comment*: A Pedestrian Overlay District is needed to connect station users to the Historic Grand Rounds at Lake Calhoun to promote street level activity by creating a pleasant and unique pedestrian environment.* P9

Page 3-20

3.1.3 Land Use Plans

Table 3.1-2 Summary of Local and Regional Comprehensive Plans and Studies

Plans and Studies	Available at Project Website	Date adopted	Summary
METROPOLITAN COUNCIL			
Metropolitan Council 2030 Regional Development Framework	http://www.metrocouncil.org/planning/framework/documents.htm	2004 2006 2012	Addresses regional growth in transportation, housing, and employment. Identifies Southwest Transitway as LPA.

***Comment**: The joint neighborhood task force feels strongly that Southwest Transitway plans need to work in harmony with the Regional Development Framework and other local planning documents. For example, see excerpt below from Appendix H-1 (pg. 7), which cites Land Use Plans, The Metropolitan Council Plans and Studies, 2030 Regional Development Framework (RDF) adopted in 2004:* M1

Appendix H-1, Page 7

The RDF addresses four primary policies:

1. Working with local communities to accommodate growth in a flexible, connected, and efficient manner;
2. Planning and investing in multi-modal transportation choices, based on the full range of costs and benefits, to slow the growth of congestion and serve the region's economic needs.
3. Encouraging expanded choices in housing location and types, and improved access to jobs and opportunities; and
4. Working with local and regional partners to reclaim, conserve, protect, and enhance the region's vital natural resources."

Page 3-33

3.1.5.1 Effects to Land Use and Socioeconomics

Accessibility is an important consideration when making development decisions for various types of land use, including residential, office and retail commercial, health and community services, and recreation facilities. Improved accessibility will help the study area become more attractive to business and residential development opportunities, especially when linking major employment centers with rapid transit.

***Comment**: Due to existing parking saturation in the West Lake Station area, we expect that parking will be mitigated in order to accommodate the addition of projected transit riders who will drive to the station in order to board the LRT.* I2 E10 P10

People on foot must have ready and safe circulation in and around Calhoun Village, Calhoun Commons, Market Plaza, and the West Lake Station.

Page 3-34

Segment A

In Minneapolis, land use changes are anticipated along each of the planning segments. Residential land uses surrounding the Segment A alignment are mainly low- to medium-density, single-family detached housing near Cedar Lake and Lake of the Isles. […] Implementation of LRT service and stations along the Segment A alignment would likely result in some land use changes surrounding the stations, particularly north of the lakes where tracts of undeveloped land are being considered for development.

***Comment**: While we support consideration of redevelopment within the Basset Creek Valley area, the respondents express concern that existing park, trail, and open green space in the Kenilworth Corridor between Lake Street and I-394 be preserved to the greatest extent possible. The existing land use represents an important neighborhood, city, and regional amenity. The City of Minneapolis' Resolution 2010R-008 by Minneapolis City Council Member, Sandy Colvin* E2 N1

Roy, titled "Supporting the Southwest Transitway Locally Preferred Alternative" reflects this priority:

> *"Be It Further Resolved that the current environmental quality, natural conditions, wildlife, urban forest, and the walking and biking paths be preserved and protected during construction and operation of the proposed Southwest LRT line.*
>
> *Be It Further Resolved that any negative impacts to the parks and park-like surrounding areas resulting from the Southwest LRT line are minimized and that access to Cedar Lake Park, Cedar Lake Regional Trail, Kenilworth Trail and the Midtown Greenway is retained."*

E2 N1 N8

Zoning in the area should remain R1 and R2, with the exception of the R4 and R5 areas south of Cedar Lake Parkway, and Shoreland Overlay District restrictions should be respected.

M1

Page 3-38

3.1.7 Mitigation

Short-term construction effects can be mitigated by using standard construction best management practices (BMPs) such as the use of construction staging, dust and erosion control, proper mufflers on equipment, restricted construction times, optimum traffic re-routing measures, minimization of lane, sidewalk, or trail closures during construction, and maintenance and timely removal of temporary traffic control devices. Although specific plans for maintaining access and construction BMPs are not yet established, it is expected that a BMP construction plan will be developed prior to construction. This plan will specify construction staging and treatments to minimize impacts. The BMPs could include working with residents and merchants to provide alternative access to their neighborhoods, properties, and businesses, providing advance notice of construction plans and phasing, maintaining access to bus stops and school routes, and alerting the public to road, sidewalk, and trail closures and detour routes. […] Businesses and residences may experience difficulties with accessibility at certain times of day during the construction of the project, and minor detours for through traffic might be required. In general, these effects will not change the land use of the area during construction, but may affect the number of people using area businesses directly affected by access or construction traffic issues.

***Comment**: Due to the particularly challenging proposed location of the West Lake Station, mitigation during construction to the business area and adjacent residential properties is needed.*

I2 P5

Pages 3-49

3.2.2.1 Neighborhoods

Minneapolis

Each Build Alternative would operate through several geographically defined neighborhoods in the City of Minneapolis.

***Comment**: While the proposed LRT 3A (LPA) route would travel through the defined boundaries of nine Minneapolis neighborhoods, it will have the greatest impact on Kenwood, CIDNA, and*

West Calhoun due to the geography and existing land use of the area. The Kenilworth Trail and Cedar Lake Park – vital local and regional amenities – are both part of the Kenwood neighborhood, with the Kenilworth Trail continuing through CIDNA and West Calhoun. M3 E1 N1

Page 3-52

West Calhoun: The West Calhoun neighborhood sits between Minneapolis' border with St. Louis Park and Lake Calhoun. The neighborhood is principally residential, although the commercial region of West Lake Street has developed into a thriving shopping area. The Grand Rounds Scenic Byway, encircling Lake Calhoun, is a heavily used parkway road system that includes the off-street trails of a portion of the Minneapolis Chain of Lakes Regional Park. In addition to Lake Calhoun and the interim use trails and park space, the neighborhood is also home to the Bakken Museum and the Minikahda Club golf course.

***Comment**: The Calhoun Commons business area is newly developed. There is concern about curb cut onto Market Plaza, which slows traffic flow. Increased traffic at the West Lake Station could exacerbate the situation. A traffic study in this area is required.* E10 P4 I2

In building Calhoun Commons, the street was vacated and is now private parking. In-depth study of access routes to the station is needed, including the feasibility of reopening the vacated street.

The Fire Station at Market Plaza will be impacted by its proximity to the West Lake Station. W request a Fire Department analysis of accessibility at Market Plaza. E9 P4 R3

The West Lake Station will serve as the gateway to the City of Minneapolis and the Grand Rounds and the Chain of Lakes. User counts on the Chain of Lakes are the second highest in th state of Minnesota; the count is 1.3 million at Lake Calhoun. Further in-depth analysis of traffi flow and linkages to and from these two assets and the station is required. Safety and connections should be enhanced. Most recent data shows the daily traffic count on Lake Street to be 39,500 cars. P4 I2 R2

Page 3-58

3.2.2.6 Neighborhoods and Community Cohesion

Segment A [LRT1A and LRT 3A (LPA)] and Freight Rail Relocation

However, the operation of LRT service along Segment A is not anticipated to adversely affect community cohesion because Segment A is currently bisected by a freight rail line and adding LRT service does not alter the existing barrier. […] The operation of LRT service along Segment A is not anticipated to adversely affect community cohesion.

***Comment**: The infrequency and slow speeds of the current freight trains means tracks are easily crossed, as evidenced by the many informal pathways across the tracks that provide access from residences to parks, trails, and retail stores. LRT, on the other hand, would run every 7.5 minutes in each direction at high speeds. This change clearly alters the existing linkages within and among neighborhoods. Also, the Kenilworth Trail now functions as a community connector where neighbors meet in a recreational context. So while the joint neighborhood task force* E1 M3

agrees that new transit services and linkages would become available to neighborhood residents, we disagree that there would be no impact on community cohesion. We urge Southwest Transitway designers to consider a full range of measures, in consultation with the community, to mitigate this impact. E1

At the West Lake Station, there is high-density residential housing adjacent to the proposed line. Casual walking connections need attention to safety measurements for pedestrians on either side of the tracks and enhanced connections to new or existing service, activity centers, or social amenities (parks and open spaces) in the study area. Barriers should not impede safe pedestrian circulation. R2 M3

Page 3-64

3.2.2.8 Community Facilities and Resources: Places of Worship, Schools, and Public Housing

Summary of Potential Impacts to Community Facilities by Build Alternative

The study area contains several community facilities and neighborhood amenities that provide public services (see Summary Table of Potential Impacts). These facilities include law enforcement, fire stations, public health, education, recreation, libraries, post offices, community facilities, and religious institutions. Implementation of any of the Build Alternatives considered would improve access to community facilities and resources, places of worship, schools, and public housing in the study area.

***Comment**: We request more information about the access to the Fire Station at Market Plaza. Further in-depth analysis is required to evaluate the impact of West Lake Station on the response time to emergencies. In addition, the effects of increased traffic on Excelsior at the Fire Station ambulance entrance needs to be studied.* E9 P4 R3

Page 3-66

3.2.5 Summary

Table 3.2-2. Summary of Neighborhood, Community Services, and Community Cohesion Impacts by Build Alternative

Environmental Metric	Build Alternative				
	LRT 1A	LRT 3A (LPA)	LRT 3A-1 (Co-location)	LRT 3C-1 (Nicollet Mall)	LRT 3C-2 (11th/12th Street)
Connections or movement between land uses maintained	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Neighborhood character maintained	Yes: Segment 4 follows HCRRA ROW. No: Segment 1 High intensity, high density station areas and park-and-ride lots in residential areas of Segment 1 could change character.	Yes: Segment 3 is mostly commercial and industrial. Yes: Segment 4 follows HCRRA ROW. No: Segment A May have aesthetic and traffic impacts in historic areas.	Yes: Segment 3 is mostly commercial and industrial. Yes: Segment 4 follows HCRRA ROW. No: Segment A May have aesthetic and traffic impacts in historic areas.	Yes: Segment 3 is mostly commercial and industrial. Yes: Segment 4 follows HCRRA ROW. Yes: Segment C: High density land uses are compatible along this segment.	Yes: Segment 3 is mostly commercial and industrial. Yes: Segment 4 follows HCRRA ROW. Yes: Segment C: High density land uses are compatible along this segment.

***Comment**: Mitigation for the aesthetic and traffic impacts in the historic area is needed.*

In Table 3.2.2., we disagree with the conclusions of both environmental metrics as they affect Segment A. The table asserts that connections or movement between land uses will be maintained. The table also indicates that neighborhood character will be maintained, with the exception of some aesthetic and traffic impacts to historic areas. It strains belief that such unremarkable outcomes are possible when two tracks of LRT will travel through this corridor at, roughly, 7.5 minute intervals, permanently severing communities on either side of the corridor. This is not the case today, as the freight trains are few and infrequent. E1 N2

Not only will the neighborhood character be impacted by sheer number and frequency of trains, but Segment A should also be given extremely high consideration for mitigation of noise. The section of LRT between West Lake Station and 21st Street Station has 87.5% of the total properties severely impacted by noise on the entire LRT line. E4 O1 I2

These are but two of the destructive impacts to this residential area that leads the joint neighborhood task force to suggest tunneling as the only means of mitigation in Segment A. E0

Page 3-70

3.3.3.3 Build Alternatives

LRT 1A has would require the least number of parcels of all of the Build Alternatives. LRT 3A would require almost twice the number of parcels LRT 1A. LRT 3A-1 (co-location alternative) would require almost three times the number of parcels as LRT 1A.

***Comment**: The joint neighborhood task force requests that the 79 individual commercial and 11 residential properties proposed for acquisition be identified. The joint neighborhood task force opposes the taking of Cedar Shores Townhomes and other Minneapolis residences for the co-location alternative.* M4 E10

Page 3-79

3.4.5.3 Build Alternatives

Segment 4 [LRT 1A, LRT 3A (LPA), LRT 3A-1 (Co-location), LRT 3C-1(Nicollet Mall), and LRT 3C-2 (11th/12th Street)]

Other potential effects to historic properties in Segment 4 relate to station area development in the Hopkins, Wooddale, and West Lake Station areas, access issues, and potential vibration issues.

[…]

Segment A [LRT 1A, LRT 3A (LPA), and LRT 3A-1 (Co-location)]

Architectural properties in Segment A which are listed in or eligible for the National Register include seven individual properties and five historic districts. The segment also includes three individual architectural properties and one historic district which are under evaluation for eligibility. […]

Potential long-term effects may occur at the following properties:

- Cedar Lake Parkway, Grand Rounds (potential effects of the changes to the intersection of the LRT corridor with the historic parkway, including the LRT overpass bridge, and, under the co-location alternative, the effects of widening the trail/rail corridor; these changes may affect the parkway itself and may alter its setting)

- Kenilworth Lagoon/ Channel, Grand Rounds (potential effects of the construction of new bridge structures within the historic district; the design and footprint of these structures may affect the banks of the historic channel and may affect the district's overall feeling and setting)

Other potential effects to historic properties in Segment A relate to station area development in the West Lake, 21st Street, Penn, and Van White Station areas, traffic issues and potential noise and vibration issues.

***Comment**: Kenwood Isles Area Association looks to participating as a consulting party to the Section 106 Review process. We urge Southwest Transitway designers and engineers to adopt the highest design standards to protect our local, regional, and national cultural assets including, but not limited to, Cedar Lake Parkway and the Historic Grand Rounds. We expect that these critical urban resources will be honored and preserved for future generations.*

S4

Page 3-85

3.5.3 Existing Conditions

Public parks, conservation areas, and recreation areas are owned and maintained by the municipalities in which they are located. In the City of Minneapolis, these properties are owned and maintained by the independent Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board.

and

Pages 3-91 and 3-92

Section of Table 3.5-1. Public Parks, Recreation Areas, and Conservation areas within the Study Area by Segment

Park Name	Jurisdiction or Ownership	Segment	Park Resources
Lake of the Isles segment of the Minneapolis Chain of Lakes Regional Park	Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board	A and C	Lake with 2.86 miles of shoreline, bike path, display fountain, fishing dock, hockey rink, ice rink, , soccer field, walking path, wells, off-leash recreation area
Kenwood Parkway	Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board	A	Parkway, open space
Bryn Mawr Park	Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board	A	50.84-acre park; 2 baseball fields, biking path, 2 broomball rinks, cricket field, ice rink, 10-table picnic area, restroom facilities, soccer field, 11 softball fields, sports facility, tennis court, tot lot/playground, wading pool, and walking path
Dean Parkway segment of the Minneapolis Chain of Lakes Regional Park	Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board	C	Parkway with 17.5 acres of parkland, 0.6 mile of bicycle and walking paths
Lake Calhoun Parkway segment of the Minneapolis Chain of Lakes Regional Park	Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board	C	Parkway; scenic drive that circles Lake Calhoun; beach, boat dock, eatery/concessions, fishing dock, picnic area, restroom facilities, soccer field, walking path
Lake Calhoun segment of the Minneapolis Chain of Lakes Regional Park	Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board	C	3.2-mile bike/skate path, 3.1-mile walking path, three supervised beaches, archery, boat dock, eatery/concessions, fishing dock, parkway, picnic area, restroom facilities, soccer field, softball field, volleyball court, wells

***Comment**: Note these are all a part of the Historic Grand Rounds National Scenic Byway. These elements of the Historic Grand Rounds need to be taken into consideration when designing the Southwest Transitway and related adverse impacts.* E2

Pages 3-94 and 3-95

Segment A [LRT 1A and, LRT 3A (LPA)]
Temporary direct impacts
The conceptual engineering completed for the project identifies approximately 0.016 acre of potential temporary impact to land from Park Siding for grading associated with future trail reconstruction. However, this is not directly associated with the project, as HCRRA would not conduct the grading unless requested to do so by the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) to allow the reconstruction of the interim use trail. Completion of the trail would be conducted by MPRB or others. Should MPRB choose not to accept HCRRA's offer of grading for trail reconstruction, there would be no impact to Park Siding.

***Comment**: The joint neighborhood task force expects bicycling and pedestrian trails to remain open during construction to the largest degree possible.* E7 P9

Page 3-104

3.6.2.4 Segment A [LRT 1A, LRT 3A (LPA), and LRT 3A-1 (co-location alternative)]
Segment A is located on existing rail ROW owned by HCRRA that is currently used as a pedestrian and bike trail and parallels existing freight lines (Photo 3.6-4). The corridor travels through the Cedar-Isles-Dean and Kenwood neighborhoods, the Minnesota Chain of Lakes Regional Park, and travels between a pair of lakes (Cedar Lake and Lake of the Isles) in Minneapolis. Land uses adjacent to the segment between West Lake Street and I-394 include transportation uses for freight, parkland, and single- and multi-family residential land uses.

***Comment**: Please note the heavy use of bicycle and pedestrian trails along the Kenilworth Corridor. According to information provided to the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board's Community Advisory Committee, the Kenilworth Trail received 617,000 visits in 2009 and use has only grown since then. The Regional Park Visitor Survey 2008 indicates that 63% of these visits were non-local, meaning that more than six out of ten users came from outside Minneapolis.* E2 P8

Page 3-104

3.6.2.4 Segment A [LRT 1A, LRT 3A (LPA), and LRT 3A-1 (co-location alternative)]
[…]
Mature vegetation buffers the corridor for the length of the segment, screening views to/from residential areas and parklands. Mature vegetation exists between the parkland north of I-394 and the segment. The majority of the vegetation located along the segment is deciduous, so screening is diminished during seasonal leaf-off conditions. Freight trains of varying lengths travel in the corridor during the daytime and at night.

***Comment**: Current freight trains are infrequent and very rarely run at night.* E4

Page 3-115

3.6.3.3 Build Alternatives

Segment 4 [LRT 3A-1 (Co-location alternative)]

[…] Visual impacts on sensitive receptors located in the multi-family residential development areas on both sides of the corridor as it approaches the West Lake Station would generally not be substantial because of mature vegetation buffers and the presence of an existing freight rail corridor where the LRT, freight rail, and trail would be co-located.

Seven at-grade center-track platforms are proposed for each station in the segment, but no sensitive receptors (in addition to the trail users aforementioned) are located adjacent to the station sites; therefore no visual impacts are anticipated except at West Lake Station, where sensitive receptors in a multi-family residential tower would have views from upper floors to the station. However visual impacts would not be substantial because the proposed station would fit the current urban context.

Comment*: In paragraph two above, visual impacts to residents in West Lake Station multi-family residential towers are noted but considered as not substantial because this is a built urban environment and the proposed station would fit the current urban context. Respondents disagree on this point; there is no current equivalent to the visual impact of two tracks of light rail passing through this area every 7.5 minutes. Significant engineering and landscape design is required to mitigate the sizable visual impacts.* E4 N2 I2

Page 3-115

Segment A [LRT 1A and LRT 3A (LPA)]

The project elements in Segment A corridor would be located on HCRRA property. Although the segment is located in an existing transportation corridor (Kenilworth Regional Trail), the project would introduce new visual elements—the fixed guideway, including track, catenary poles, and wires—into the area. Catenary poles and wires could have substantial visual impacts on trail users who would share the corridor with the fixed guideway.

Visual impacts on sensitive receptors located at single-family and multi-family parcels throughout the corridor would generally not be substantial because of mature vegetation buffers and the presence of an existing freight rail corridor. Visual impacts may be substantial where the alignment is not screened by vegetation. Visual intrusion and privacy impacts of the project elements on the sensitive receptors may be substantial where views from the alignment into previously private spaces are created. Visual intrusion and privacy impacts on the outdoor living areas of residential properties could be substantial where vegetation or landscape buffers do not exist.

Comment*: The joint neighborhood task force agrees that there will be substantial visual effects on trail users and residences not screened by well-designed landscape and hardscape elements including land berms and evergreens. We agree that privacy impacts to indoor and outdoor living areas of residential properties will also be significant without excellent landscape design. We urge project engineers to employ the highest standards of creativity and design as they attempt to preserve the quality of this vital urban green space.* E4 N2

Page 115, cont. (Cedar Lake Parkway)

The proposed alignment is on a bridge over Cedar Lake Parkway. Visual impacts on sensitive receptors adjacent to the corridor in the multi-family residential parcel and Cedar Lake Parkway could be substantial. Visual intrusion and privacy impacts of the project elements on the residents in units with windows facing the alignment where it is bridged structure could be substantial.

***Comment**: The joint neighborhood task force agrees that a bridge over Cedar Lake Parkway clearly would have substantial visual impacts on residences from Lake Street to the Kenilworth Channel. (See Appendix 1.) It would also have substantial impacts on users of the Historic Grand Rounds (drivers, bicyclists, pedestrians), as well as Cedar Lake Park and beach users, a fact not mentioned in the present study. Such a bridge is also likely to violate the Shoreland Overlay District zoning requirements, which state:* E8 N2

> *"Except for structures subject to a more restrictive maximum height limitation in the primary zoning district, the maximum height of all structures within the SH Overlay District, except for single and two-family dwellings, shall be two and one-half (2.5) stories or thirty-five (35) feet, whichever is less."*
> *Source: Minneapolis, Minnesota, Code of Ordinances; Title 20 – Zoning code; Chapter 551. – Overlay Districts; Article VI. – SH Shoreland Overlay District*

E8 N2 M1

We do not see any evidence in the present study that the feasibility of trenching, tunneling, or depressing the LRT below Cedar Lake Parkway was examined. We strongly request that a thoughtful and serious study of these options be undertaken, since a bridge would have such grave quality of life impacts on area residents and users, and an at-grade crossing is likely to have significant traffic and safety impacts. KIAA also looks forward to participating as a consulting party during Section 106 consultation. E8 P4 R2

Page 3-116

A BNSF flyover bridge proposed in the conceptual engineering plans would not have impacts on any sensitive receptors.

***Comment**: The joint neighborhood task force requests information about this proposed fly-over bridge. The text on page 3-116 does not make clear what and where this would be.* E8 P4

Page 3-117

Four at-grade center-track platforms are proposed for each station in the segment. No sensitive receptors, with the exception of the aforementioned trail users, are located adjacent to the station sites; therefore no additional visual impacts are anticipated.

***Comment**: The present study indicates substantial visual effects on trail users, residential areas, and recreational users. The joint neighborhood task force agrees that this will be the case. It is also clear that the station area will also substantially affect residences near the proposed 21st Street station.* I2 E4

Page 3-123

3.6.5.3 Build Alternatives

The need for additional landscaping to mitigate potential visual intrusion/privacy impacts following clearing and grubbing activities during construction will be addressed in the Final EIS. Station design and aesthetics will be addressed during Preliminary Engineering and Final Design. Mitigation treatments for visual impacts would be developed during the Final Design process through discussion with affected communities, resource agencies, and stakeholders. Measures would be taken to ensure the design and construction of the Build Alternative considers the context of the corridor and that sensitive receptors receive adequate mitigation. Possible mitigation measures could include:

- Landscaping vegetation such as shrubs and bushes to supplement existing vegetation buffers
- Evergreen vegetation screening to supplement deciduous vegetation buffers in leaf-off conditions
- Fencing
- Tunneling

***Comment**: Appreciating the present study's approach that mitigation treatments would be developed through discussion with affected communities, the joint neighborhood task force requests definition of "measures [that] would be taken to ensure that the design and construction of the Build Alternative considers the context of the corridor and that sensitive receptors receive adequate mitigation." We assume that consideration of placement and screening/mitigation of Traction Power Substations would also be done in cooperation with affected communities and stakeholders.* L1 H3

Page 3-125

3.6.6 Summary

LRT 3A (LPA) would have the second highest effects on visual quality in the project area because of substantial impacts on sensitive receptors located on trails, which are present in three (4, A, and FRR) of the alignment's segments. Further, LRT 3A (LPA) would have possibly substantial effects on the visual quality of one of its three segments, which includes sensitive receptors in residential land uses adjacent to the segment (A) where the alignment is on a bridge.

***Comment**: We agree that LRT 3A will have huge visual quality impacts to the Segments 4, A, and FRR area. In particular, the visual impacts of the proposed aerial bridge at Cedar Lake Parkway will impact not only residents but also all users of the Historic Grand Rounds.* E4 N2

Page 3-128

3.7.1.1 Light Rail Transit

Safety and security aspects of the Southwest Transitway would be developed in accordance with the Metropolitan Council's policies and procedures. At this time, specific safety and security policies and procedures have not been developed for the Southwest Transitway; policies, procedures, and any mitigation measures required for safety and security will be specified at an appropriate level of detail in the Final EIS.

***Comment**: The adjacent neighborhoods will be stakeholders in the development of Southwest Transitway Safety and Security Policies.* L1 R1

Page 3-129

3.7.2 Existing Conditions

Public safety and security within the study area is provided by the police departments, fire departments and emergency response units of the cities of Eden Prairie, Minnetonka, Hopkins, St. Louis Park, and Minneapolis. Emergency medical services are located in each city.

***Comment**: Please note that the Minneapolis Park Police also provide service within Minneapolis. The joint neighborhood task force requests that the MPRB Police be consulted on security issues related to the impact of a proposed station at 21st Street on Cedar Beach East (Hidden Beach). In the summer 2012, Hidden Beach generated more police actions than any other park in the MPRB system. For the last several years, KIAA has provided supplementary funding to the Park Police to allow for increased patrols in this area. The neighborhood has expressed concerns that an inadequately managed station would increase opportunities for illegal behavior.*

E9 R1 I2

Page 3-129, cont.

Primary safety concerns associated with the freight rail relocation segment of the proposed project, as expressed by the community, are derailments, chemical spills, the accessibility and safety of pedestrians (particularly near schools), and vehicular and traffic safety at grade crossings. These issues are addressed in the discussion below.

C

***Comment**: Please note that residents of the co-location corridor option have no less concern about issues such as derailments, chemical spills, pedestrian and bicyclist safety, and traffic safety.*

Page 3-131

3.7.3.3 Build Alternatives

The project would be designed in a manner that would not compromise the access to buildings, neighborhoods, or roadways, and would not compromise access to the transitway in the event of an emergency.

***Comment**: Please note that operation of LRT 3A could hamper access by emergency service providers to Cedar Lake Park, Cedar Beach East (Hidden Beach), and residences in the 2000 block of Upton Avenue South. The current difficulty of access was illustrated in October 2012 when firefighters tried to access a grass fire burning in Cedar Lake Park. A freight train approached as they carried their hoses across the rails into the woods, which caused them to have to retreat. The joint neighborhood task force requests that the Minneapolis Fire Department and emergency medical responders be consulted in development of safety and security plans in our area. Furthermore, the adequacy of existing hydrants and other emergency infrastructure needs to be examined.*

R3

E9

Chapter 4 Environmental Effects

***General comment**: Presently, the LPA corridor from the West Lake Station to I 394 is a high quality residential area with many parklands that are low noise, vibration and light, and with abundant native plants including ongoing community restoration efforts such as 40+ acres of native prairie within or adjacent to the proposed rails and station. There is abundant wildlife and dark night skies. More detailed analysis of multiple variables is necessary to determine mitigation options to preserve, even enhance, the status quo.*

E2 N1 N8

***General comment**: There is no examination and discussion in this DEIS about the impact of LRT light on the corridor between the West Lake Station and the Intermodal Station. There is nothing about train light, corridor light, quantitative measurements, impacts on presently dark areas of neighborhoods and parklands. There is nothing about light scatter, color, distortion, or pollution. There is nothing about the effects of new constant and intermittent light sources on animals and people. More in-depth analysis is necessary to determine mitigation.*

E4 N1 N9 N8

Page 4-13, 4-41

Segment A (Figure 4.1-11): Concern exists for the areas near Lake Calhoun, the channel between Cedar Lake and Lake of the Isles, and the low areas beginning near the 21st Street station and extending through the areas near the Penn and Van White stations to I-94.

***Comment**: The joint neighborhood task force expects groundwater resources, wetlands, and public waters to be protected during construction and operation of the Southwest Transitway. The Southwest Transtiway project needs to conduct more detailed analysis before beginning construction and report its findings to the public.*

E3 N4 N5 N6

Page 4-55

4.3-2 Summary Table

Removes riparian habitat and unique or sensitive areas: LPA states: Least amount of impact on native habitats; already fragmented non-native habitats would be further fragmented.

Affects migratory birds: LPA states: Lack of quality habitat – no impact

***Comment**: The Minneapolis Chain of Lakes, including the LRT area south of Cedar Lake and north to I-394 is a designated Important Bird Area (IBA). See http://mn.audubon.org/important-bird-areas-3*

All along the Kenilworth Trail, there are a large number of evergreens plants (estimated 15 to 29 ft. high) and mature trees (30 to 40 feet high). This area is a stop-over for birds during the spring and fall migration periods. Preservation of existing trees and shrubs or replacement with substitutes of equivalent type and height should be part of the mitigation plan.

E2 N8

For more detail on the flora and fauna within the LRT area, including other threatened species, descriptives of the variety of ecosystems contained within the LRT area, see: http://mn.audubon.org/sites/default/files/documents/minneapolis_chain_of_lakes_theowirth_park_iba_nomination_form_biotics_version_0.pdf

E2

N8

More detailed analysis is needed for the EIS in this area.

Page 4-53

4.3.5 Mitigation

Impacts to regulated resources, such as wetlands, threatened and endangered species, and water resources/water quality, would be mitigated in accordance with the appropriate permits as discussed in other sections of this Draft EIS. This mitigation would also benefit biota and habitat.

Increased habitat fragmentation could be expected from the construction of required safety/security barriers to separate the light rail tracks from adjacent bicycle/pedestrian trails and freight rail lines. This fragmentation could be mitigated through the use of wildlife underpasses and modified bridges over water features that would allow for the movement of terrestrial species beneath the bridge.

E10

***Comment**: More detailed analysis is necessary to determine species present, movement patterns, and mitigation options.*

N8

Page 4-59

4.4.4 Long-Term Effects

Following is an analysis of potential long term effects to federal- and state-listed threatened, endangered, and special concern species that have been documented within 1 mile of the Build Alternatives

E10

***Comment**: This analysis is shallow, incomplete, inconclusive, and dated. More detailed analysis is necessary.*

N8

Page 4-75

4.6.4 Long Term Effects

Queuing of vehicles when freight trains block at-grade crossings would be similar with or without the Freight Rail Relocation Segment and would not adversely affect air quality. Therefore, detailed air quality modeling using available traffic model data has not been completed at this time. The long-term effects presented in this section provide a general understanding of potential changes to traffic patterns, and a general expectation that air quality will generally improve as applicable mobile source regulations require and technology allows.

***Comment**: Freight rail passes through the corridor with approximately 2-8 trains per day (varies by season). The Southwest Transitway, at 260 trains per day, will cause increased traffic backup and idling at Cedar Lake Pkwy. The joint neighborhood task force strongly favors grade separation at this crossing.*

E8

P4

Page 4-75

4.6.4 Long Term Effects

The traffic analysis completed for this Draft EIS indicates that several intersections are anticipated to degrade to LOS D, E, or F as a result of at-grade crossings… LRT stations, specifically those with park and ride, will cause localized increases in traffic along adjacent roadways.

***Comments**: Studies have not been conducted about future traffic patterns on the already saturated streets surrounding the proposed West Lake Station. Presence of small businesses in the area as well as visitors who have a destination of Calhoun Lake Parkway and other park and trail facilities contribute to current traffic congestion and overload within the half-mile radius of the proposed West Lake Station. Please refer to the Capstone Project (online at http://pwpg.org/lake-st-excelsior-blvd/) that discusses traffic and trail usage in Minneapolis. Currently, automobile traffic is frequently gridlocked in the area surrounding the proposed West Lake Station. It is expected that the West Lake Station will attract additional automobile use in this area.* I2 E10 P4

No degree of degradation of the air quality should occur in this already saturated area as a result of the West Lake Station. We request additional study of the current traffic flow and projected traffic flow increase related to LRT use. I2 E10 N9

The 21st St. Station will also cause localized increases in traffic along residential streets in Kenwood and needs further analysis. I2

Page 4-76 through Page 4-77

4.7.1 Methodology

Airborne noise effects associated with the proposed Southwest Transitway Project were evaluated using the FTA's Detailed Noise Assessment methods (FTA 2006). The methodology included identifying noise-sensitive land uses, measuring existing outdoor noise levels in the project area, using the existing noise levels to identify noise impact thresholds, calculating project-related outdoor noise levels, and determining if project-related noise levels exceed FTA noise impact thresholds. FTA noise impact thresholds vary depending on land use and existing noise exposure. Two types of noise impacts are included in the FTA criteria. The type of impact affects whether noise mitigation is implemented.

• Severe Impact. A significant percentage of people are highly annoyed by noise in this range. Noise mitigation would normally be specified for severe impact areas unless it is not feasible or reasonable (unless there is no practical method of mitigating the impact).

• Moderate Impact. In this range, other project-specific factors are considered to determine the magnitude of the impact and the need for mitigation. Other factors include the predicted increase over existing noise levels, the types and number of noise-sensitive land uses affected, existing outdoor-indoor sound insulation, and the cost-effectiveness of mitigating noise to more acceptable levels. Refer to Appendix H for details on the noise impact criteria.

***Comment**: Noise at high frequency and high decibel levels like wheel squeal and low frequency like train movement sway and rumble are not included in Table 1 (pg. 4-78). Noise monitoring locations listed in the table on pg. 4-82 do not include study of noise levels at elevations higher* E4 O1 O5

than the ground. Residents in high-rise condos near the proposed LRT report that noise at the ground level is amplified at higher levels. Sound travels in buildings and the frequency is changed and becomes more audible. Noise monitoring locations should include higher elevations so that appropriate mitigation can be implemented.

E4 O1 O5 O6

Noise monitoring at locations 30 and 31 (see pg. 4-82, Figure 4.7-1) is inadequate due to the complexity of our neighborhoods, especially at the narrowest point of the corridor.

Refer to Appendix 2 - ESI Engineering Report for further noise impact analysis.

Page 4-83

Figure 4.7-2 Noise Sensitive Land Use

***Comment**: Cedar Lake Parklands, directly adjacent to the LRT, have no noise-sensitive land use category. Presently, the Cedar Lake Parklands have low noise, and are prized for the quiet natural experience. More study is necessary to determine what noise levels are acceptable to maintain a high quality natural experience, and to determine what engineering solutions are necessary in the corridor to mitigate the impact of the increased noise on a 24-hour basis. More sound study locations are necessary to acquire a better understanding.*

E4 O1 O5 O6

Page 4-84

Table 4.7-2. Sound Exposure Levels used in the Noise Analysis

***Comment**: Operational assumptions include number of trips/day, speed, vehicle bells, horns, stationary bells but does not mention the long-term effect of frequency of the noise levels from, for example, high frequency wheel squeal and low frequency train rumble from train sway. When the Southwest Transitway is operational, the sound will increase from approximately one locomotive train per 8 hours to approximately 250 LRT trains per day. A final analysis of the long-term effects should include recognition and study of the effects of noise exposure from over 250 trains per day. This noise affects 520 living units (87% of these are in Segment A), some as close as 40 ft. from the current single track that are severely impacted by noise well above the 55dB.*

E4 O1

Table 4.7-2. Sound Exposure Levels used in the Noise Analysis

Airborne noise impacts were determined using Detailed Noise Assessment methods from the FTA (May 2006) guidance document. The following operational assumptions were incorporated into the assessment.

- 198 LRT trips during the day (7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.).
- 60 LRT trips during the night (10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m.).
- 16 trips during each peak hour of operation (6:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m., 3:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.).
- Three articulating cars per transit train.
- Speeds range from 20 to 50 miles per hour (mph), and vary in different segments of the project corridor.
- Light Rail Vehicle bells are used for five seconds as vehicles approach grade crossings, crosswalks and station platforms.

• Light Rail Vehicle horns are sounded at grade crossings and crosswalks where vehicle speeds exceed 45 mph (not including 45 mph).
• Stationary bells are used at preemptive grade crossings and crosswalks for five seconds at each passing of a train.
• This analysis modeled each segment-specific speed to accurately account for proposed operational conditions. Additionally, the acoustical shielding effects of intervening buildings were applied where more than one row of buildings existed. The analysis applied ground attenuation where applicable.

***Comment**: The monitoring stations were inadequately placed in their number and location relative to parklands, residences, and topographical features. More detailed analysis and mitigation is necessary.*

E4 O1 O5

Page 4-93

Table 4.7-8. Potential Noise Impacts in Segment A [LRT 1A and LRT 3A (LPA)]

Segment A with Freight Rail Co-location (LRT 3A-1): West Lake Station to Intermodal Station
Under Build Alternative LRT 3A-1 (co-location alternative) light rail and TC&W freight traffic would be co-located on the Kenilworth Corridor. Existing TC&W traffic on the Kenilworth Corridor would continue normal operations under the freight rail co-location alternative. Airborne-noise impacts associated with Segment A, with the freight rail co-location, were calculated based on existing noise exposure, including existing TC&W freight rail traffic.

Category 1
There are no noise impacts to Category 1 land uses in this segment.

Category 2
There are a total of 73 Moderate Noise Impacts and 183 Severe Noise Impacts to Category 2 land uses in this segment. The estimated number of impacted residential units is 85 Moderate and 406 Severe. Many of the impacts are due to low existing ambient noise levels combined with proximity of residential neighborhoods to the alignment and high anticipated speeds of operation. Some impacts are due to low existing ambient noise levels combined with light rail vehicle-mounted audible warning signal (bell) use at the 21st Street Station and the nearby 21st Street at-grade crossing.

Category 3
There is one moderate impact to a Category 3 land use. The impact is due to very low ambient background noise levels found in the walking-trails of the Cedar Lake portion of the Minneapolis Chain of Lakes Regional Park combined with close proximity to the tracks and bell use at grade crossings and crosswalks. This may not apply to the entire Cedar Lake portion of the park, especially in areas where park-goers themselves create higher noise levels, and in areas of the park farther from the tracks.

***Comment**: More detailed analysis is necessary to identify impacts to parklands and residences. The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board's Community Advisory Committee determined that parkland immediately adjacent to the Kenilworth corridor should be considered a Category 1 land use. The joint neighborhood task force strongly supports this position.*

E4 O1 O5

Page 4-102

4.7.6 Long-Term Mitigation

Whether mitigation is warranted is based on the severity of potential impacts. Project noise levels that result in a "Severe Impact" to a receptor pose a compelling need for mitigation. Most of the severe impacts are due to warning signals such as horns and bells near at-grade crossings, crosswalks, and stations. Use of these signals is required for safe operation of the LRT system, but this does not exclude mitigation options for these impacts.

***Comment**: The impact of noise level and noise incident frequency has not been properly assessed.*

As stated in Table 4.7-8 on pg. 4-93, noise level of the 250 LRT trains will have a severe impact on 406 living units between the West Lake Station and Penn Station, especially the concrete/stucco structures like the Calhoun Isles Towers. While most of the severe impacts will be due to warning signals associated with the West Lake Station and the 21st Street Station, noise from high frequency like wheel squeal and low frequency from train movement and sway will also contribute to the noise impact. E4 O1 O5 O6

The Kenilworth Trail is adjacent to the proposed LRT route. The Kenilworth Trail is a well-used neighborhood area that connects the Chain of Lakes and intersects with the Historic Grand Rounds. Users of Cedar Lake Park, South Beach, Hidden Beach, Park Siding, and boaters and many other recreational destinations are impacted by the noise from the LRT. No specific mitigation is listed to address this impact on the densely populated and heavily utilized area north of the West Lake Station. E2 O1

Further study needs to include mitigation such as tunneling, trenching, or a covered trench like the trench on the Hiawatha line that goes under Minnehaha Park. Neighborhood associations should be stakeholders in planning the mitigation for the severe noise levels. O1 L1

Refer to Appendix 2 - ESI Engineering Report.

Page 4-107

4.8.2 Existing Conditions

In most cases, the existing environment does not include a notable number of perceptible GBV or GBN events. The FTA methodology prescribes comparing project-related vibration to existing vibration only in those cases where the project follows an existing rail corridor with at least 5 trains per day and the proposed operational changes will not substantially increase the number of vibration events. While most of the project either is not in an active rail corridor, or is in a rail corridor with fewer than 5 trains per day; portions of the build alternatives experience vibration from existing rail corridors along the BNSF Wayzata Subdivision and Kenilworth Corridor.

Existing transit-related vibration along Segment 4 and Segment A includes current train activity operating on the Kenilworth Corridor. Existing rail operations in Segment 4 include approximately 3 freight pass-by events per day. TC&W locomotive pass-by events are less than 5 per day therefore are considered infrequent. Vibration events due to TC&W rail cars are greater than 100 per day therefore are considered a heavily used corridor. The build alternatives will more than double the amount of train pass-by events

therefore the FTA vibration criteria presented in Table 4.8-2 and Table 4.8-3 were utilized in the vibration assessment.

From Penn Avenue Station to Glenwood Avenue, the project follows the BNSF Wayzata Subdivision, which carries approximately 15 trains per day. With this number of trains, the existing train pass-by events would have to exceed 80 VdB before the project-related vibration events are compared to existing train vibration events at the two assessed receptors. Therefore the project-related vibration assessment is compared to the standard FTA vibration criteria at the vibration-sensitive land-uses.

***Comment**: The number, duration, and locations of vibration receptors through the above area are inadequate to determine a true picture of the conditions throughout the corridor as they effect residences and parklands. More study is necessary to determine the need and kinds of appropriate mitigation.*

E4

O1
O5
O6

High-rise buildings are especially vulnerable to structural damage from vibrations. Vibration studies should be performed in high-rise living units prior to construction and after construction has been completed and the trains are operational.

Page 4-118

4.8.6 Mitigation

Detailed vibration analyses will be conducted during the Final EIS in coordination with Preliminary Engineering. The Detailed Vibration Assessment may include performing vibration propagation measurements. These detailed assessments during the Final EIS/preliminary engineering phase have more potential to reduce project related effects than assessments of mitigation options at the conceptual engineering phase of the project. Potential mitigation measures may include maintenance, planning and design of special trackwork, vehicle specifications, and special track support systems such as resilient fasteners, ballast mats, resiliently supported ties, and floating slabs.

***Comment**: As design of mitigation of vibration impacts occurs, the range of frequencies must be taken into consideration. Segment A will experience high frequency vibrations, for example when brakes are applied, to low frequency as the trains rumble along the tracks' curves.*

E4

O5
O6
L1

Neighborhood associations should be included in the alternative design of this mitigation. Alternatives may include tunneling or trenching in areas with severe impact from noise and vibration.

Page 4-130

4.10 Electromagnetic Interference and Utilities

This section provides general information regarding existing electromagnetic fields (EMF), electromagnetic interference (EMI), and utilities, and identifies potential effects that may result from the proposed Southwest Transitway project.

E6

N11

***Comment**: There is no mention of potential health hazards for persons living in close proximity, that is 40 feet or less, to the exposed overhead wires. That information should be made available to the public and the potential health hazard could be avoided, for example, by using a tunnel for a shield.*

More study is necessary to determine the need and kinds of appropriate mitigation. Refer to Appendix 2 - ESI Engineering Report.

Chapter 5 Economic Effects

Page 5-15
Table 5.2-2. Short-Term Station Area Effects

Environmental Metric: Traffic
LRT 3A (LPA) Low--During construction temporary closures or rerouting of traffic from at-grade intersections will be required. The area is well served by a mature integrated network of roadways so traffic diversions should have minimal affect upon the transportation system.

P5 I2 E10

***Comment**: Accessibility and disruption of traffic around the West Lake Station will occur durin and after construction. In the planning and budgeting process, funds for mitigation need to be made available. Limited accessibility and heavy traffic loads, often approaching gridlock, already exist in this area, as several sources report.*

- *According to Hennepin County in 2011, the Lake Street/Excelsior Boulevard corridor was the busiest county state road in Hennepin County, with 39,500 cars daily.*
- *The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board has reported that the Minneapolis Chain of Lakes, including Lake Calhoun (within a half-mile radius of the West Lake Station) is the second most-visited location in Minnesota (behind the Mall of America).*
- *Capstone studies by students from the Civil Engineering Department at the University of Minnesota have assembled existing data and background information from the city, county and state, and have conducted extensive traffic counts and other observations, including using digital video: "Traffic Assessment and Recommendations for Lake Street and Excelsior Boulevard Intersection and Adjacent Intersections." See this and other student Capstone studies relating to the Lake St. and Excelsior Blvd. intersection online at www.pwpg.org/lake-st-excelsior-blvd/.*
- *A November 2012 parking study commissioned by the West Calhoun Neighborhood Council and conducted by Spack Consulting found that parking was near to or over capacity in some locations near the proposed West Lake Station. The study was conducted outside the busy lake and park recreation season on cool cloudy days. When the estimated 2,800 daily Southwest Transitway riders are added to the mix, parking spaces will be at a premium. (For the full report, go to www.westcalhoun.org.)*

Page 5-19
5.2.4 Long-Term Station Area Effects
Environmental Metric: Displacement Parking/Access Regulations
LRT 3A (LPA) Low--Parking and access to businesses along this route are unlikely to be affected. Business parking is provided off site and is not anticipated to be affected by the LRT project. Permanent access restrictions for businesses are not anticipated. 20 on-street and 11 off-street parking spaces will be eliminated.

***Comment**: Business parking is already at saturation point around the West Lake Station. See November 2012 parking study at www.westcalhoun.org and the University of Minnesota Capstone Studies at pwpg.org/lake-st-excelsior-blvd/.* P10 I2

It is essential to maintain the viability of businesses in the two shopping centers (Calhoun Village and Calhoun Commons on Lake St. and Excelsior Blvd., respectively) adjacent to the West Lake Station. The irregular configuration of streets adjacent to these commercial centers already presents some parking and accessibility problems; with the addition of the Lake Street Station those problems will be exacerbated.

In addition, residential parking is limited, especially with the addition of 187-unit Dwell apartments at 3129 Ewing, built by Bigos Development Corp., which also manages the adjacent 151-unit Calhoun Greenway Apartments. Only 322 parking stalls will accommodate this increase in residences. The complex is near the West Lake Station and will increase parking congestion.

The goal of the joint neighborhood task force is that in conjunction with the creation of the West Lake Station, parking issues in this area will be addressed to the satisfaction of the neighborhood.

Pages 5-19 and 5-20
Environmental Metric: Developmental Potential (station development potential and transportation)
LRT 3A (LPA) High--Segments 3, 4, and A all have high potential for development around station locations. The areas, with the exception of 21st Street in Minneapolis, are identified as areas for transit-oriented development consistent with the implementation of LRT.
For Segments 3, 4 and A, the expansion of the transportation system and service to areas designated for growth and redevelopment will equate to a positive economic effect in terms of development around station locations.

***Comment**: The land use around the West Lake Station includes several commercial properties, including Calhoun Village and Calhoun Commons. There are few undeveloped parcels around this station and no plans to upgrade the current commercial parcels. Traffic flows are currently at saturation and private parking is fully utilized near this station, contrary to the statements made in Section 5.2.5.2 about parking and access to businesses. Two proposals to add residential apartment buildings on land zoned as residential, namely, the Bigos proposals for the vacant Weisman property on Lake St. and for vacant property behind Calhoun Commons. Hence, the prospects for economic development near the West Lake Station are minimal. In 2009 the city of Minneapolis retained R-1 zoning for properties near the station.* M1 I2 P10

The land use around the 21st Street Station is entirely single family residential, parks and open spaces, and water features. As state in Table 5.2-4, Long-Term Station Effects, no change in land use is anticipated around this station; it will remain a low-density residential and recreational area. The joint neighborhood task force supports this approach.

Page 5-21

5.2.5.2 Mitigation for Parking and Access

Parking

Build Alternatives LRT 1A, LRT 3A (LPA), and LRT 3A-1 (co-location alternative) are all anticipated to have a relatively modest impact on parking with the removal of 20 on-street parking spaces on Royalston Avenue. Mitigation of this effect may include working with staff from the City of Minneapolis to identify needs and opportunities for providing alternative parking solutions. However, based on adjacent land uses and long-term city plans for this area, the need for alternative parking solutions is believed to be low.

Access

Build Alternatives LRT 1A and LRT 3A (LPA) are not anticipated to have any long-term effects on business access; therefore, no mitigation is required.

Comment*: While parking at Royalston Ave. is cited, there are also serious parking and access issues around the West Lake Station. With 2,800 riders predicted to enter this area daily, further study of how to mitigate these issues is requested. See below for further evidence of congestion issues that already exist.*

- *According to Hennepin County in 2011, the Lake Street/Excelsior Boulevard corridor was the busiest county state road in Hennepin County, with 39,500 cars daily.*
- *The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board has reported that the Minneapolis Chain of Lakes, including Lake Calhoun (within a half-mile radius of the West Lake station) is the second most-visited location in Minnesota (behind the Mall of America).*
- *A study by students from the Civil Engineering Department at the University of Minnesota have assembled existing data and background information from the city, county and state, and have conducted extensive traffic counts and other observations, including using digital video: "Traffic Assessment and Recommendations for Lake Street and Excelsior Boulevard Intersection and Adjacent Intersections." See this and other student Capstone studies relating to the Lake St. and Excelsior Blvd. intersection online at www.pwpg.org/lake-st-excelsior-blvd/.*
- *A November 2012 parking study commissioned by the West Calhoun Neighborhood Council and conducted by Spack Consulting found that parking was near to or over capacity in some locations near the proposed West Lake station. The study was conducted outside the busy lake and park recreation season on cool cloudy days. When the estimated 2,800 daily Southwest Transitway riders are added to the mix, parking spaces will be at a premium. (For the full report, go to www.westcalhoun.org.)*

I2

P4

Chapter 6 Transportation Effects

I2

E10

***Comment**: We have grave concerns that Transportation Effects were inadequately analyzed, especially around the West Lake and 21st Street Stations. Our concerns are outlined below:*

1. General Traffic Flow

The most important contextual factor regarding transportation in the West Calhoun and CIDNA neighborhoods is the over-saturated W. Lake St./Excelsior Boulevard vehicle corridor. This thoroughfare is the sole primary east-west route through our neighborhoods.

The W. Lake St./Excelsior Boulevard vehicle thoroughfare currently carries 39,500 vehicles per day, a number confirmed by Hennepin County at the October 9, 2012, MPRB charette on park improvements between Lake of the Isles and Lake Calhoun. This makes this corridor the most heavily traveled in Hennepin County. Capstone studies conducted by University of Minnesota Civil Engineering students in 2010 and 2011 (go to pwpg.org/lake-st-excelsior-blvd/) show that this corridor is already over-congested, requiring 2.75 minutes to traverse the section of Excelsior Boulevard between Market Plaza and W. Calhoun/Dean Parkway, giving it an "F" rating for traffic flow at evening rush hour. The studies did not include the effect of existing traffic lights at the Excelsior Boulevard/W. 32d St. intersection (the Minikahda Club intersection) and at the main Calhoun Commons entrance on Excelsior.

P4 E10

Hennepin County stated at the MPRB charette meeting that there are no plans or funds allocated to improve traffic flows on this corridor in the next five years, during which the Southwest Transitway is scheduled for construction. The W. Lake St./Excelsior corridor will remain uniquely vulnerable to any and all impediments to traffic flow, including the impact of Southwest Transitway construction near the corridor.

P5 E10

Southwest Transitway construction will surely impede traffic through the corridor. How this will be mitigated is not specifically addressed in the DEIS. We fully understand that Southwest Transitway is designed to alleviate the saturation problem that is due to heavy drive-through traffic, but this can only happen over the long run. The joint neighborhood task force is concerned with how the disruptions of transitway construction will be mitigated in the meantime. It is important to mitigate these potential problems with careful planning and involvement of neighborhood residents. In particular, we seek assurance that construction is not disruptive to the point of true gridlock. Further, any additional major construction abutting the corridor may have to be put on hold for better traffic flow and neighborhood livability.

P5

E10

NOTE: Both a fire station and an ambulance station are located on Market Plaza close to the convergence of Lake St. and Excelsior Blvd. These critical emergency services are hindered on

R3 P4

E9

occasion by the traffic congestion that exists on Lake and Excelsior. The joint neighborhood task force requests that clear steps for mitigation be outlined.

The joint neighborhood task force is disappointed that the DEIS relies on referencing "standard practices" for mitigating construction effects on parking and traffic flow (i.e. diverting traffic, mitigating parking problems, etc.). This approach is not satisfactory given the unique features of the critical W. Lake St./Excelsior corridor. It is particularly vulnerable to further impediments that would be caused by construction. There is no mention of staging out construction to assure reasonable traffic flow and adequate parking in the neighborhood for its residents. The W. 32d/Chowen/Abbott area is especially vulnerable to disruption by heavy construction traffic. Further, hundreds more people will soon be living in this area when the six-story 185-unit Dwell is completed next year. P5

2. Traffic Flow on Excelsior Boulevard
The DEIS does not comment on the effect of an additional stoplight at the proposed traffic entrance to the West Lake Station and the impact of park-and-ride or kiss-and ride vehicle traffic from Linden Hills, Edina, and Uptown on the southern entrance to the West Lake Station. Nor does it comment on how the additional boardings/disembarkations at the West Lake Station will affect traffic flow on Excelsior Boulevard. The additional traffic on Excelsior Boulevard will take an over-congested artery and transform it into a parking lot, having a negative impact on business users at Calhoun Commons and Calhoun Village, commuters who continue to use Excelsior Boulevard, park users crossing Excelsior Boulevard, and neighborhood residents. P4 I2 E10

3. Traffic Flow on W. Lake Street
The DEIS does not comment on how traffic will access the West Lake Station from the W. Lake St. bridge. By law, additional turn-out lanes on both the east- and west-bound lanes are prohibited because of reduced visibility for exiting from and merging onto Lake St.; hence, access to the West Lake Station for kiss-and-ride or park-and-ride LRT customers from the north side of Lake St. or from those coming east on Lake St. will be prohibitively restricted to using the south entrance to the station on Excelsior Boulevard, further exacerbating traffic congestion on that artery. There is no room to provide for exits and entrances to W. Lake St. without the taking of condominium property on the westerly approach to the bridge or commercial property (Calhoun Village) on the easterly approach to the bridge. E10 P4 I2

4. Traffic in Residential Neighborhoods
In addition to the busy arteries around the West Lake Station, residential streets in West Calhoun and Kenwood will be impacted by traffic. If 1,000 people per day are expected to board at the 21st Street Station, there will be significant traffic impacts that need to be mitigated. I2 P4 E10

5. Parking

The full range of parking options (and combinations thereof) need to be evaluated and openly discussed, including (but not limited to) paid district parking with validation, meters on nearby streets, residential permit parking on surrounding neighborhood streets, as well as additional structured parking (at some reasonable distance from the station platform, preferably with some ground-level commercial space). E10 P10

Given the complexity of the West Lake area, to maximize the positive influences that a new transit station can produce, it is critical that the Preliminary Engineering work (managed by the Southwest Project office) and the Transitional Station Area Action Planning (TSAAP) work (managed by Hennepin County) include well-devised and executed stakeholder involvement and public outreach. This will entail a far greater level of effort than that contemplated in the TSAAP consultant's contract. It is essential that the staff and elected/appointed officials of the various governmental entities collaborate constructively with each other in a manner that is transparent to the public. L1

Chapter 7 Section 4(F) Evaluation

***Comment**: Missing from this chapter of the DEIS:*

- *The Historic Grand Rounds is a nationally designated urban scenic byway. It appears detailed information for this area where the LRT corridor is proposed to be located has not received appropriate documentation.*
- *Concerns for placing the transit corridor in or adjacent to a nationally designated urban scenic byway to include:*
    1. *Would the area lose its designation?*
    2. *Would it cause an economic loss due to the impact of transit corridor?*
    3. *Could mitigating measures justify the location of the transit corridor in this area/corridor of the Ground Rounds and the outcome be justifiably and acceptably appropriate?*

E2

S3

Page 7 – 2

For *de minimis* findings for historic properties, FTA is required to notify Minnesota State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) of the intent to conclude that the impact to the historic property is *de minimis* and Minnesota SHPO must concur, in writing, with the Section 106 determination.

***Comment**: Because of the unique situations and conditions in this area, further in-depth analysis is needed.*

E2

S3

Page 7-3

7.1.1 Section 6(f)

In addition to the protection provided by Section 4(f), Section 6(f) of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965 (LAWCON) stipulates that any land or facility planned, developed, or improved with LAWCON funds cannot be converted to uses other than parks, recreation, or open space unless land of at least equal fair market value and reasonably equivalent usefulness is provided. Anytime a transportation project would cause such a conversion, regardless of funding sources, such replacement land must be provided. At this time, no Section 6(f) protected property has been identified within the study area. Therefore, no permanent conversion of Section 6(f) park property is proposed and a Section 6(f) review is not required.

***Comment**: The joint neighborhood task force asks that further investigation into the possible existence of Section 6(f) property in our area is needed. A number of local residents in the Calhoun Isles Town Homes in the CIDNA neighborhood observe key bird species flying in the Kenilworth Trail corridor area. It is imperative to protect the flyway and habitat. Eagles and cranes, among other birds, live in these flyways. This alternative travels through mature growth of deciduous urban woodland and large surface water acreages.*

E2

N8

The LRT trains use electrical power. Do the overhead electrical power and guide way lines negatively impact these species or any other species?

N8

Is there an electrical, magnetic, or static electrical field emitted from the system that would disturb these species' flyway and habitat pattern essential to their existence? N8

Has a detailed bird species conservation survey been conducted to substantiate which bird species may be critically impacted by the construction corridor alignment?

Has the HCRRA contacted the MN Department of Natural Resources, The State of Minnesota's Audubon Society's City Bird Conservation Program, and the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board to determine if bird species will be critically impacted or will die from the transitway's electrical field? Please see http://mn.audubon.org/sites/default/files/documents/minneapolis_chain_of_lakes_theowirth_park_iba_nomination_form_biotics_version_0.pdf

E10

It would appear the information that would answer the above questions is missing, and further in-depth analysis is needed.

N8

N11

Impacted neighborhoods and residents need to be notified how the ongoing preliminary design and engineering is incorporating these unique conditions to avoid habitat disruption in the design and construction plans for the transitway alignment.

Page 7-4

7.3.1 Project Location and Description

[…]

The Southwest Transitway would add system capacity in an area of high travel demand, respond to travel demand created by existing and planned residential and employment growth, and provide a competitive travel option that would attract choice riders[2] and serve transit dependent populations.

[2] A choice transit rider is one that has a private vehicle available to make a given trip, but chooses to take transit. The number of choice riders is increasing in and around downtown Minneapolis.

***Comment**: Re: "Choice Transit Rider." Request measured statistics to back up this definition. What are the numbers of "choice transit riders" today? What measures or influences will make the number of "choice transit riders" become regular transit riders? When will that occur? It appears this term "is a convenient variable" that may be utilized to obtain "desired outcomes" for the transitway project.* P2

Page 7-5

The Southwest Transitway would operate in a combination of environments including in abandoned freight rail right-of-way (ROW), at-grade in street and trunk highway ROW, and in new ROW that would be acquired from public and private entities. In addition, the line would operate in very limited sections of elevated structure and tunnel.

E4 O1

***Comments**: The joint neighborhood task force requests a definition of those "measured sections" so the impacts of visual and acoustical aspects of any "structures" and the passenger* N2

train cars being seen and assessed in order to determine if they are detrimental to the neighborhood and its surroundings. Standard practices are not acceptable because of the unique situations and conditions in this area; further in-depth analysis is needed. E4 N2

Key existing condition photographs have been taken on the site adjacent to and/or near the transitway proposed construction alignment where the transitway rail bridge over Cedar Lake Parkway would be constructed. See Appendix 1.

Page 7-8

Table 7.4-1. Potential Use of 4(f) Properties by Alternative

***Comment**: Cedar - Isles - Dean Neighborhood has properties of the Section 4(f) designation within 350 feet of the proposed project segment. Alternative Segment A goes through the Historic Grand Rounds.* E2 S1 S3

Park Siding Park, Cedar Lake, the historic lagoon bridge crossing, and the scenic byway and trail system within the Historic Grand Rounds are in this area of influence from the proposed transitway routing. N1

MPRB properties are within the designated width of 350 feet are referenced to Section 3.5 of the DEIS.

For additional information refer to:

- *http://www.pps.org/great_public_spaces/one?public_place_id=495 and,*
- *http://byways.org/explore/states/MN*

Diagrammatic Plan of the Grand Rounds from the above mentioned websites.

Historic properties exist along this portion of the segment routing through significant Minneapolis neighborhoods: West Calhoun, Cedar - Isles - Dean, Kenwood, and Bryn Mawr. Refer to Section 3.4; at the time of preparing these review comments, those structures and properties anticipated to be qualified for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and with the State of Minnesota SHPO need to be listed and assessed for their historical significance in this DEIS.

E2 S3 S4

Standard practices are not acceptable because of the unique situations and conditions in this area, and further in-depth analysis needed.

Page 7-7

7.4.1.2 Summary by LRT Alternative

[…]

As Table 7.4-1 shows, only direct or temporary uses are anticipated; no constructive uses of Section 4(f) properties have been identified at this time. This summary is preliminary because design is not sufficiently advanced to conclude that avoidance and minimization measures have been exhausted. Additional efforts will be made during Preliminary Engineering to avoid or minimize the use of any of these Section 4(f) properties. […]

Table 7.4-1. Potential Use of 4(f) Properties by Alternative

***Comment**: More detailed information is needed listing properties and demonstrating how they may be impacted. Overall, further in-depth analysis is needed because of the unique conditions in this area.*

E2 S1 S3

Page 7-19

7.4.1.3 Alternative LRT 1A (Segments 1, 4, A and Freight Rail Relocation

[…]

Cedar Lake Parkway and the Cedar Lake-Lake of the Isles Channel have been determined eligible for inclusion on the NRHP as part of the Grand Rounds. It should be noted that the two timber bridges across the Kenilworth Channel are listed as non-contributing elements within the Grand Rounds. The proposed removal of these non-contributing bridges would, in and of itself, not constitute an adverse effect and therefore would not be considered a Section 4(f) use.

***Comment**: The joint neighborhood task force requests that any bridge replacement be architecturally compatible with the NRHP's Historic Grand Rounds and its surrounding settings.*

E2 S3 S4

Page 7-19

The conceptual engineering completed for the project identifies the potential for a temporary use of approximately 0.016 acre of Park Siding Park for grading associated with future trail reconstruction.

***Comment**: Where does this re-grading occur in relationship to homes in the Dean Court area and/or the homes on St. Louis Avenue? Could a vegetated screen berm that borders the Kenilworth Trail/proposed transitway route be used?*

E3

Will re-grading impact the removal of a landscaped berm screen between Dean Court and the Southwest Transitway?

N2

More detail information is required here to know how this impacts the residences in this segment.

Chapter 8 Financial Analysis

T0

***Comment**: The joint neighborhood task force requests a more detailed analysis of the cost of the project elements as early as possible in the Preliminary Engineering.*

Page 8-2, Table 8.1-1 shows $218,044,000 for Guideway and Track Elements and $122,810,000 Stations, Stops, Terminals, Intermodal for LRT 3A. The video released by the Southwest Transitway entitled, "A Virtual Ride from Eden Prairie to Target Field" illustrates the following infrastructure:

I494 Flyover (at interchange with Highway 212)
Highway 212 Flyover
Highway 62 Flyover
3000 foot bridge over Minnetonka wetland
Highway 169 Underpass
T&CW Freight Relocation to St. Louis Park
W. Lake St. Station Access Roads
Cedar Lake Parkway LRT/Trail Tunnel
(Note that cut and cover tunnel is substituted for overpass)
2 New Bridges over Cedar/Isles Channel
Cedar Lake Trail Underpass
LRT Flyover of BNSF Tracks
LRT Flyover of N. 7th St.
Park and Ride Ramps (Eden Prairie/Hopkins/Wooddale/Belt Line)
15 Station Stops (W. Lake and Penn Av. @ $15 million each)
Track and Webguide (16.4 miles)
Environmental Requirements:
Safety/Security Fences
Pedestrian/Bicycle Flyovers
Noise Barriers
Vegetation Replacement
Penn Av. Station Vehicle Access
Royalston Station Commercial Offstreet Parking
Excelsior Boulevard Traffic Congestion Relief
Contingency (for Mitigation)

Based on costs of other projects, including $5.1 million for the Martin Sabo pedestrian/bicycle flyover at 29th St. and Hiawatha and $100 million for the bored tunnel underneath the airport from the VA building to the Humphrey terminal, the joint neighborhood task force believes that further work on Preliminary Engineering could result in an increase of the total project cost by up to 40%.

Environmental Effects of Aerial Bridge

***Comment**: This comment proposes that alternative plans be considered in the 3A (LPA) alternative for the aerial bridge overpass at Cedar Lake Parkway. Included in the suggested alternatives is a tunnel in the path from the Lake Street Bridge to beyond Cedar Lake Parkway or a trench for the LRT beneath Cedar Lake Parkway.* E8

While we agree that grade separation at Cedar Lake Parkway is essential to solving some of the problems caused by the introduction of light rail, an aerial overpass would create even more problems. In November 2012, the MPRB conducted an initial examination into the feasibility of creating a tunnel or underpass for the LRT. We strongly support this approach and urge the Met Council to work closely with the MPRB through Preliminary Engineering to address this intersection. A tunnel or underpass at Cedar Lake Parkway would best meet the needs of our neighborhoods and the goals of the Southwest Transitway project. E8 L1

Page 3-115

Segment A [LRT 1A and LRT 3A (LPA)]

The project elements in Segment A corridor would be located on HCRRA property. Although the segment is located in an existing transportation corridor (Kenilworth Regional Trail), the project would introduce new visual elements—the fixed guideway, including track, catenary poles, and wires—into the area. Catenary poles and wires could have substantial visual impacts on trail users who would share the corridor with the fixed guideway.

Visual impacts on sensitive receptors located at single-family and multi-family parcels throughout the corridor would generally not be substantial because of mature vegetation buffers and the presence of an existing freight rail corridor. Visual impacts may be substantial where the alignment is not screened by vegetation. Visual intrusion and privacy impacts of the project elements on the sensitive receptors may be substantial where views from the alignment into previously private spaces are created. Visual intrusion and privacy impacts on the outdoor living areas of residential properties could be substantial where vegetation or landscape buffers do not exist.

Visual impacts on sensitive receptors at Park Siding, located on the east side of the corridor, would generally not be substantial because of mature vegetation buffers and an existing freight rail corridor.

The proposed alignment is on a bridge over Cedar Lake Parkway. Visual impacts on sensitive receptors adjacent to the corridor in the multi-family residential parcel and Cedar Lake Parkway could be substantial. Visual intrusion and privacy impacts of the project elements on the residents in units with windows facing the alignment where it is bridged structure could be substantial. Photo 3.6-6 shows an example of the structure

Comment: Of concern to all of our neighborhoods is the proposal for much needed grade separation at Cedar Lake Parkway. What the HCRRA has proposed and the FTA report does not challenge is a behemoth concrete and steel overpass, which will rise 46 feet from grade. E8 P4

It will be visible to residences on Lake of the Isles and Cedar Lake (and even Lake Calhoun); it will create very significant noise and vibration, disrupting the tranquility of our neighborhoods, parks and lakes. It will rise from grade some several hundred feet (estimated 830 feet south of Cedar Lake Parkway and 880 feet north of Cedar Lake Parkway) on both sides of the crossing, blocking views from many residential properties.

O1
O5
O6
E8

Photographic Depiction of Aerial Bridge at Kenilworth Trail Crossing Cedar Lake Parkway

We have provided photos of a typical aerial bridge as depicted in Chapter 3, pg. 3-116, superimposed as a 3D model on the actual sites in the vicinity of the crossing of the Kenilworth Corridor and Cedar Lake Parkway. The bridge is scaled according to the drawing and shows views with 3-car LRT trains passing over the bridge (all elements are to scale according to HCCRA and standards described in the DEIS).

The information we have indicates it would have an overall height including rail cars and catenary poles of about 46 feet. The extent of the bridge is estimated to be 1710 feet (830 feet south and 880 feet north of Cedar Lake Parkway). The bridge is next to residences on both sides of Cedar Lake Parkway with a high density of town homes on the south side.

We object to the visual as well as noise reflections of the structure and the interference with Burnham Rd. The Park Board may address affected parkland as well as the visual effects on the Historic Grand Rounds.

There is a viable alternative: a tunnel from the Lake St. viaduct to north of the Cedar Lake-Lake of the Isles Channel that will eliminate visibility and noise issues and reduce vibration substantially. It would return the Kenilworth Corridor to almost the same pristine condition that existed before the temporary accommodation of freight rail.

E8

One of our objections is that alternatives are not cited to the aerial bridge. This would include tunneling and different aspects of a trench for LRT under Cedar Lake Parkway.

Images with Overpass at Cedar Lake Parkway and Kenilworth Trail and Aerial View Superimposed on Existing Site

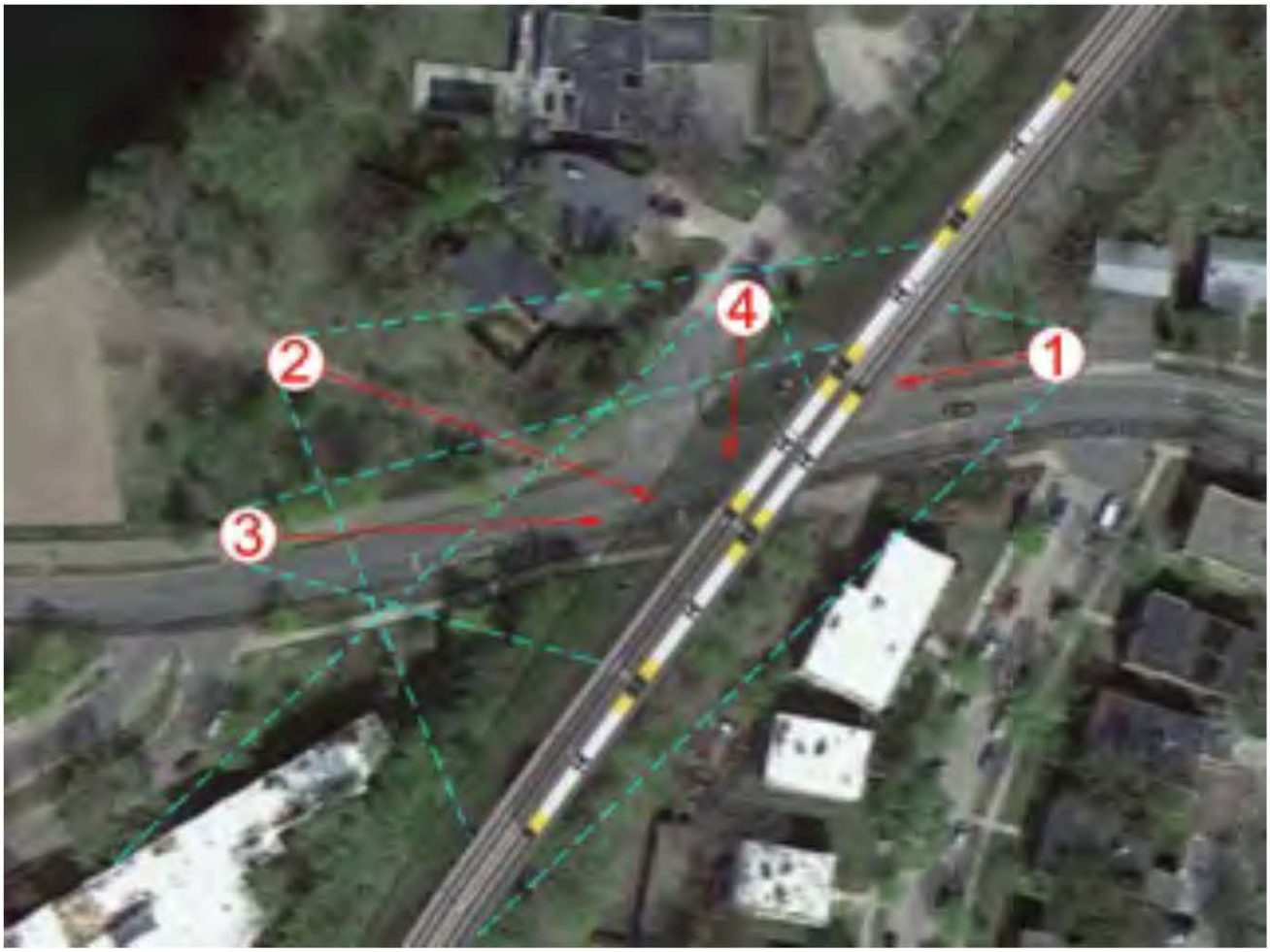

Photo of Cedar Lake Parkway and Kenilworth Trail. The number indicate the location of the photos taken around the intersection.

Existing Site View Location No. 1
View is looking west on Cedar Lake Parkway as seen from the sidewalk at the northwest corner of Benton Boulevard and Cedar Lake Parkway.

Proposed Site View Location No. 1
Aerial Bridge superimposed on view looking west on Cedar Lake Parkway as seen from the sidewalk at the northwest corner of Benton Boulevard and Cedar Lake Parkway.

Existing Site View Location No. 2
Looking southeast from Cedar Lake, South Beach. Cedar Lake Parkway on the right.

Proposed Site Location No. 2
Superimposed Aerial Bridge looking southeast from Cedar Lake, South Beach.
Cedar Lake Parkway on the right.

Existing Site View Location No. 3
Looking east to the Kenilworth Trail and railroad crossing from Cedar Lake path along Cedar Lake Parkway.

Proposed Site View Location No. 3
Aerial Bridge superimposed on view going up the path from South Beach looking easterly towards the trail, railroad and transit way crossing

Existing Site View Location No. 4
Viewing south across Cedar Lake Parkway into the Kenilworth Trail and the existing freight railroad line (a portion of Burnham Road is in the right foreground)

Proposed Site View Location No. 4
Arial Bridge superimposed on view looking south from across Cedar Lake Parkway into the Kenilworth Trail and the existing freight railroad line (a portion of Burnham Road is in the right foreground)

Aerial view of superimposed bridge on existing site

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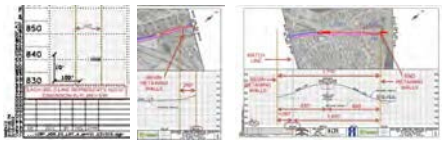
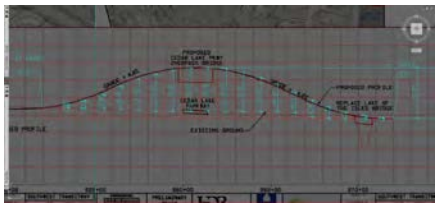
3D Visualization Process

The Following is a description of the work process employed to create the visual representations the proposed Cedar Lake Parkway overpass bridge. Nvizeon was provided with PDF copies of the Southwest Transitway Conceptual Design (LRT Alternative Segment A) Plan and Profile STA: 938+00 – 955+00 Sheet 1 of 10 and STA: 955+00 – 972+00 Sheet 2 of 10. Nvizeon was provided with (4) photographs in JPEG format representing existing conditions. Nvizeon used AutoCAD, Sketchup, and Photoshop to prepare (4) images corresponding to the (4) provided photographs and (1) aerial view illustrating the proposed bridge.

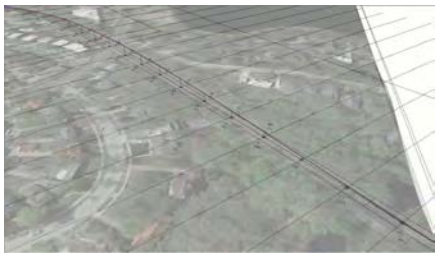


1. The horizontal and vertical scale of the concept drawings was denoted on the drawings as seen in this image and used for determining the length, height, and placement of the bridge.



2. The concept drawings were imported into AutoCAD and heights at each corresponding horizontal/vertical intersection along the proposed profile were established.

3. In AutoCAD the STA horizontal lines were drawn and extended to determine where they intersected the proposed profile path in plan. Each intersection can be given a vertical elevation above grade based on the established “Z” height or vertical height provided in the concept drawings.



4. With the “X” and “Y” (plan) path and the “Z” (height) vertical height at each node established, the profile arc can be drawn in 3D modeling software and geo-referenced to the specific geographic area. Trimble Sketchup was used to import the CAD data and the Topography of the area. The proposed profile arc was drawn and is shown in this illustration with a red dashed line.

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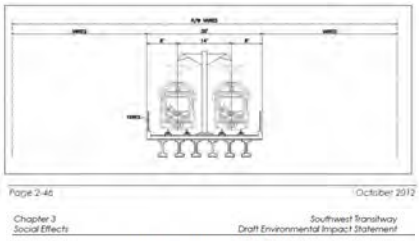
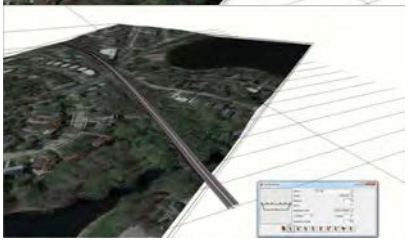


5. The next step is to model the proposed structure based on information provided in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) . On page 2-46 a section of a proposed elevated track is provided with clarifying dimensions. This drawing is used as a basis for creating the 3d profile (shape) to be extruded along the proposed profile path (red dashed line) in SketchUp.

6. Although the above section shows exposed beams the Example Bridge Type in Chapter 3 Social Effects (Photo 3.6-6) shows the structure enclosed in concrete. The type of structure shown in photo 3.6.6 was used as the basis for design for the illustrations prepared by Nvizeon.

7. The profile based on a combination of the drawings from page 2-46 and photo 3.6-6 was drawn to scale in SketchUp and positioned at the beginning of the proposed path (red dashed line)



8. The section profile is extruded along the proposed path to create the solid structure representing the elevated bridge and ground between proposed retaining wall start and end points established on the concept drawings.

9. Additional details are added to the 3D model including the retaining walls beginning and ending at the points established in the concept drawings and allowing for a bridge over Cedar Lake Parkway. A mid span support was added to resemble the design in photo 3.6-6. Electrical poles, electrical wires, trains, and fencing were added to the 3D model in SketchUp.

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10. Fencing for the 3D model was based on the illustrations provided in the DEIS shown in Elevation B.

(Before) Photograph provided by CIDNA representative (After) with proposed Cedar Lake Parkway Overpass Bridge

11. After the proposed bridge structure was built in the 3D computer model, photo matching techniques were used in the modeling software to create camera views in the 3d modeling software that were similar to each of the (4) existing conditions photographs. Images of the proposed bridge and retaining wall were exported from Sketchup and overlaid on to the existing photographs. Foreground objects like street signs, trees, telephone poles were removed from the layer representing the proposed bridge to create a representational composite image showing a proposed bridge in the context of (4) existing photographs. Scale figures and cars were added for height referencing.

In my opinion the (4) "after" images are an accurate representation of the proposed Cedar Lake Parkway Overpass Bridge, using the information contained in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement and photographs provided by CIDNA.

Phil Rader, CEO

Nvizeon, Inc.

Appendix 2

ESI Engineering Report

December 5, 2012

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Summary Report
Southwest Transitway Light Rail Noise and Vibration
Cedar-Isles-Dean Neighborhood Association – Minneapolis, Minnesota

Introduction

We understand the Cedar-Isles-Dean Neighborhood Association (CIDNA) is reviewing the Federal Transit Administrations and Hennepin County Regional Rail Authority's Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Southwest Light Rail Transit (LRT) project. The Southwest Transitway LRT is planned to operate along a 15-mile route between downtown Minneapolis and Eden Prairie. The route passes through the CIDNA neighborhoods, as shown in Figure 1 below. CIDNA has concerns about several issues related to this alignment, including the LRT noise and vibration impacts.

Figure 1 – Map showing the CIDNA neighborhood and inset of the Southwest Transitway route through the Kenilworth Corridor.

The DEIS includes an assessment of noise and vibration related to the construction and operation of the LRT system. ESI Engineering was asked to review the predicted noise and vibration impact as presented in the DEIS. This letter summarizes our findings.

The CIDNA neighborhood is in project segment A, as shown in Figure 2. Segment A is part of the "Locally Preferred Alternative", a route that is being recommended as the final alignment. Figure 3 is a compilation of drawings from the DEIS that show the preliminary plans in more detail.

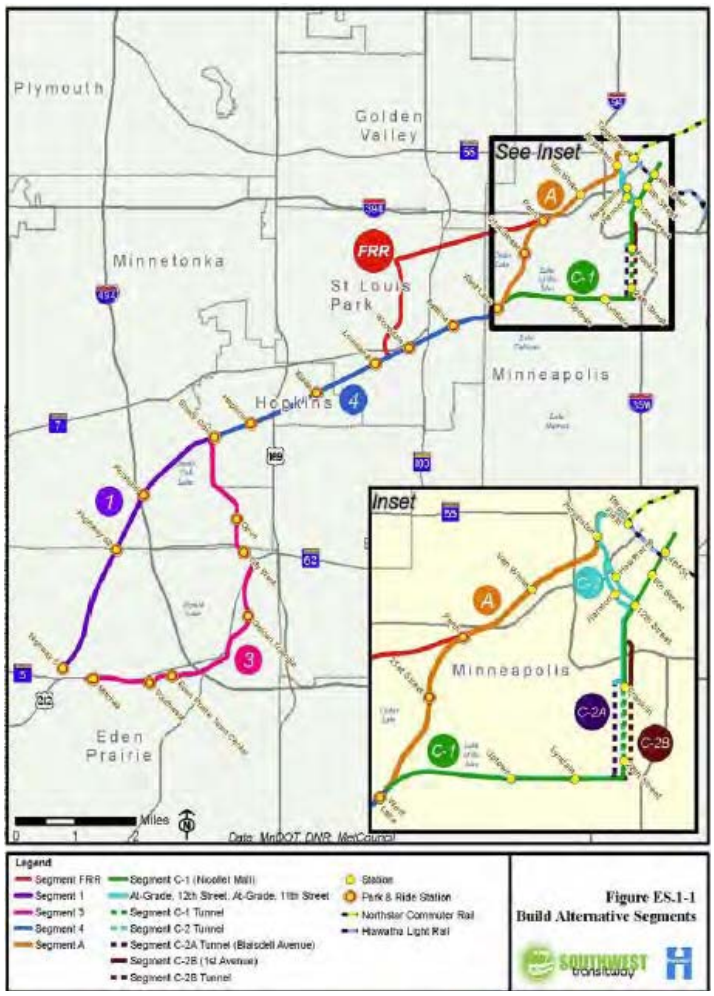


Figure 2 – Map showing project segments.

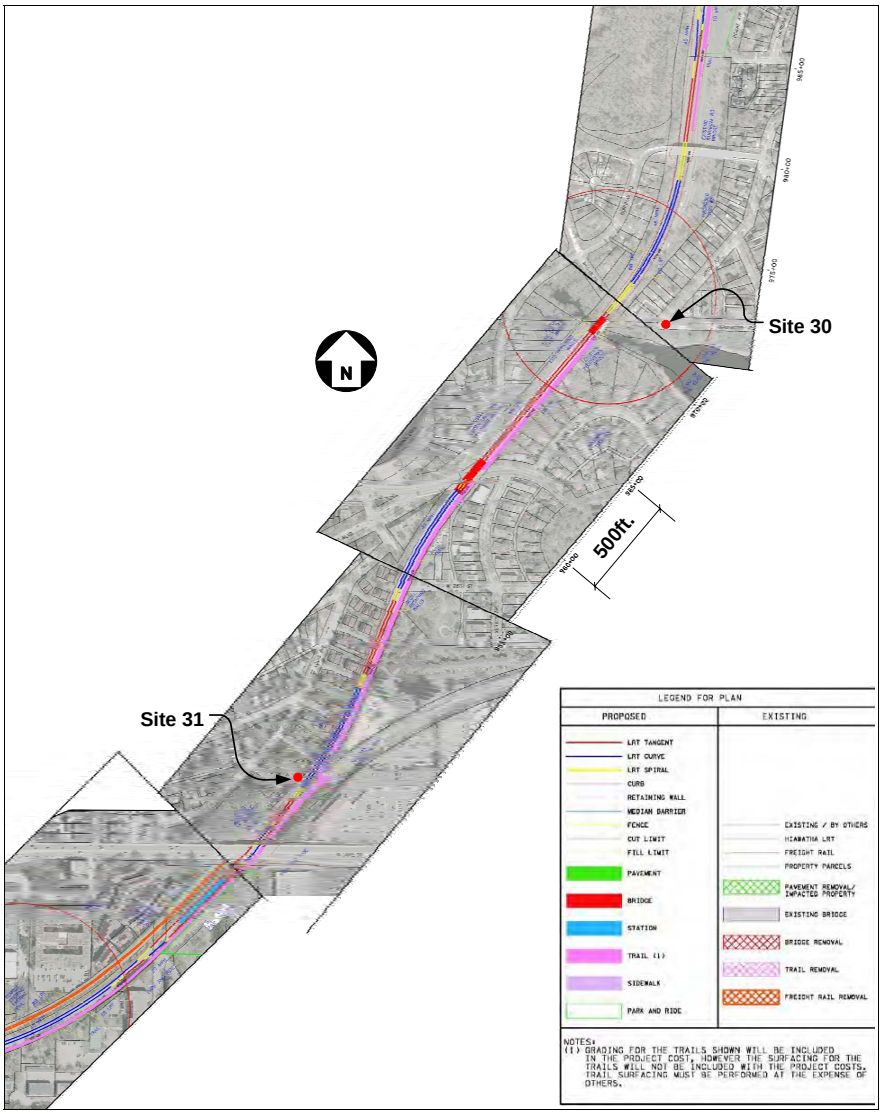


Figure 3 – Compilation of the LRT alignment through the Kenilworth Corridor.

Figure 4 is a section from the DEIS that shows the preliminary rail layout adjacent to a bike/walking trail, such as that along the Kenilworth Corridor. Figure 5 shows this section on an aerial photograph of the existing Kenilworth Corridor freight rail and bike/walking trail in an area that is very narrow. The nearest homes are approximately 30 feet from the centerline of the alignment.

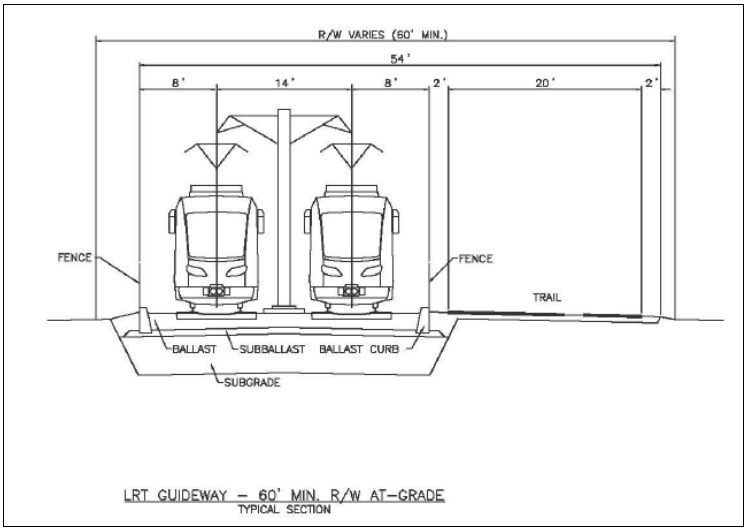


Figure 4 – A section showing the guideway adjacent to a bike / walking trail (from the DEIS).

Figure 5 – Photograph showing the proposed alignment in the Kenilworth Corridor.

Noise Impact

The FTA's Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment (FTA-VA-90-1003-06, May 2006) was used in the DEIS to evaluate noise and vibration impacts. The document, commonly referred to as the FTA manual or the FTA guidelines, defines noise and vibration impact criteria for different categories of land use. For the airborne noise impact assessment, the CIDNA neighborhoods are considered a Land Use Category 2. Further, the noise metric used is the Day-Night Sound Level, or L_{dn}. The impact criteria are defined by a set of curves, as shown in Figure 6. There are two impact levels; Severe and Moderate. Measurements of existing noise are used to determine the impact threshold per the curves in Figure 6. The method outlined in the FTA manual requires the project to calculate the LRT related noise level and compare the results with the impact thresholds.

A limited number of noise measurements are included in the DEIS. Two noise measurements were made along the Kenilworth Corridor at locations indicated in Figure 3. Site 30 is at Kenilworth Place and South Upton Avenue and Site 31 is at 3427 St. Louis Avenue.

Because there are many thousands of potential receivers that could be affected by the LRT noise, in the DEIS the various receivers were grouped into "clusters" along each segment of the alignment. There is no map showing where the clusters are located, but there is a distance given for each cluster to the track, and a train speed. This information, along with the predicted train noise impact, is given in a Noise Assessment Table included in Appendix H of the DEIS.

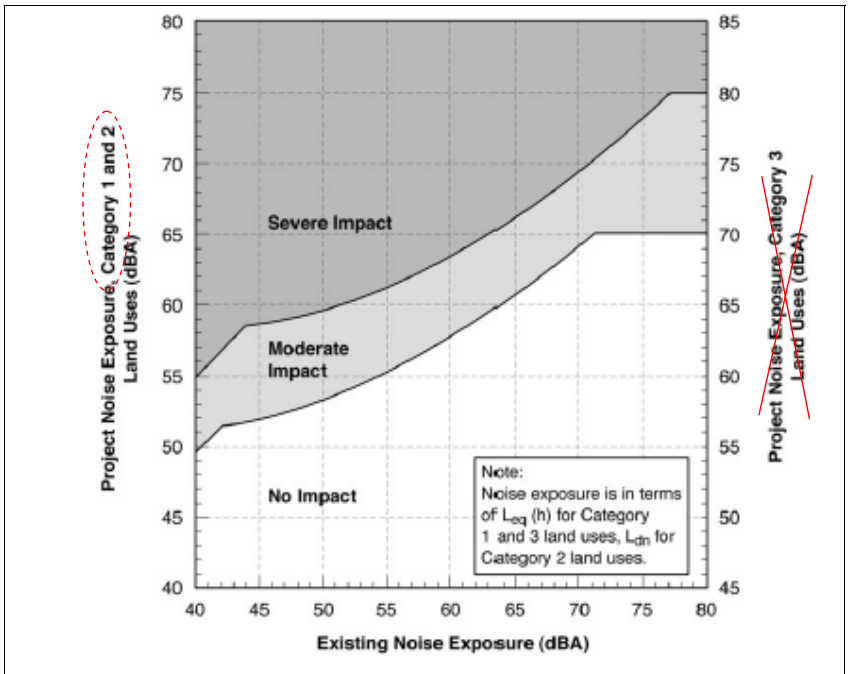


Figure 6 – The FTA's noise impact criteria.

Using the information provided, we also calculated the Noise Impact using the methods in the FTA Manual. Our calculations are summarized in a table included in Appendix A of this letter. The following summarizes the assumptions used in the calculations:

	DEIS	ESI
Cluster Identifier	A-A-WB-2-1	nearest homes
Train Sound Exposure Level	81 dBA	81 dBA
Train Speed	45 mph	45 mph
Number of Cars	3 cars	3 cars
Daytime volume	198 trains	198 trains
Nighttime volume	60 trains	60 trains
Distance to Nearest Receiver	49 ft	30 ft
Existing L_{dn} Noise Level	60 dBA	55 dBA

The differences in the assumptions are the distance to the nearest receiver and the existing noise level. The DEIS uses 49 ft as the distance to the cluster, where some homes are as close as 30 ft.

The DEIS uses the existing L_{dn} noise measurement from Site 31, which is 60 dBA, presumably because of traffic noise on Lake Street. The existing Ldn noise at Site 30 is 55 dBA, which we expect is more representative for existing noise along most of the corridor. The results of the DEIS and the ESI calculations are shown in Figure 7 below. The range for the ESI calculations includes the effects trains with bells and without bells. The DEIS calculations do not appear to include the effects of bells as the trains approach the West Lake Street Station. Further, the DEIS does not include the effects of the train horn.

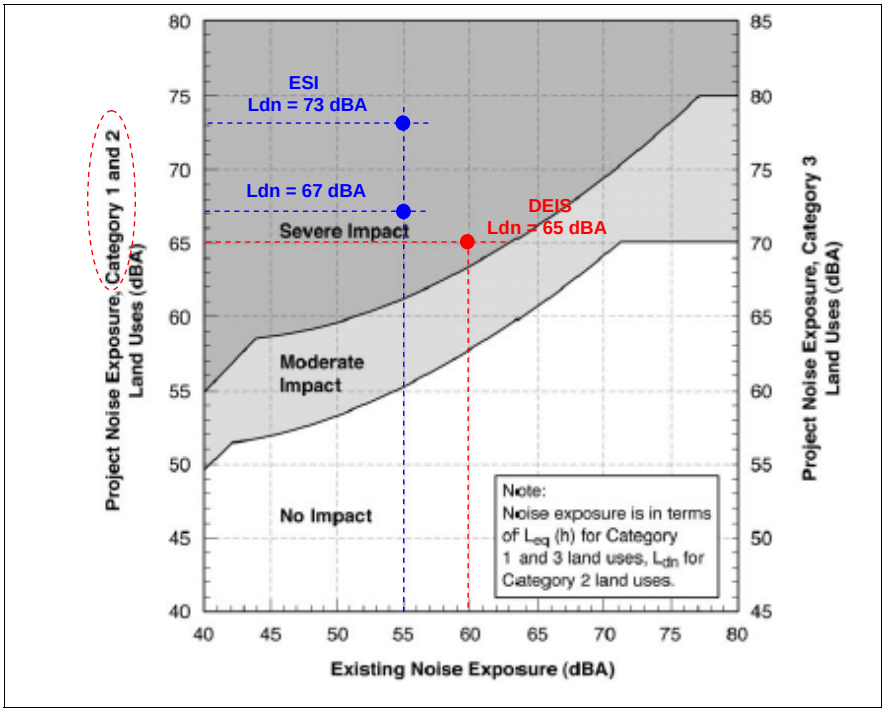


Figure 7 – A comparison of the DEIS (red) and ESI (blue) noise impact assessment.

The conclusion of both assessments is the same, that the noise impact is severe; however the ESI assessment uses a more realistic distance, existing noise exposure level and the effects of train bells. We did not find any mitigation methods in the DEIS to reduce the noise impact.

The following are additional comments on the noise impact assessment:

1. An Existing Noise Exposure level of L_{dn} = 60 dBA was assumed based on measurements near West Lake Street (Site No. 31), but we assume most of cluster A-A-WB-2-1 is located in an area similar to Site No. 30, which has an existing noise level of Ldn = 55 dBA. This reduces the impact criterion level.
2. Additional measurement of the existing noise exposure level are needed nearer the condo building more accurately evaluate the noise impact.
3. The DEIS "Noise Assessment Table - 2012 Update" uses a distance to track centerline of 49 ft for the nearest cluster, but the actual distance between track centerline and the nearest house is estimated to be about 30 ft.
4. Including bell noise traveling at 15 mph in the calculations increases the impact by about 6 dBA.
5. The DEIS "Noise Assessment Table - 2012 Update" uses the wrong moderate and severe impact levels. If the existing noise level is Ldn = 60 dBA, the impact criteria is 58 dBA for moderate and 63 dBA for severe, not 60 dBA for moderate and 64 dBA for severe as shown.
6. The impact criteria for an existing noise level of Ldn = 55 dBA (measurement Site No. 30) is 55 dBA for moderate and 61 dBA for severe.
7. The "Ambient Noise Impact Table - 2012 Updates" in Appendix H includes noise measurement results. The descriptions for Site No.'s 30 and 31 say that noise from several CT&W train events was removed. However the measurement is noted to indicate the freight train noise was included in the measurement. Which is correct?
8. The FTA manual does not have an adjustment for effects of elevation. No adjustment in the calculation for the height of the townhouses and condo buildings were included in the DEIS assessment.
9. Train horns were not used in the DEIS noise analysis. This is an issue at Cedar Lake Parkway if an at-grade-crossing is selected as an alternative to the bridge in the current design. Our calculations indicate that one train horn per hour at the Cedar Lake Parkway causes an impact that exceeds the Severe Impact criterion by 9 dBA at 50 ft.
10. If the train bells and horn are sounded from the front and rear of the 3 car trains simultaneously (as was done on the Hiawatha line), the noise exposure is greatly increased. This needs to be verified.
11. The distance from the track to the nearest cluster in the 2012 Update of the Noise Assessment Table is 49 feet. However, the nearest house is about 30 feet from the centerline of the alignment. The nearer distance increases the noise impact by about 2 dBA.
12. LRT speeds indicated on drawings in the DEIS are slower than 45 mph in much of the Kenilworth Corridor.

Vibration Impact

The FTA's Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment was also used in the DEIS to evaluate the project vibration impacts. There are three levels of assessment outlined in the FTA manual; the screen procedure, the general assessment, and the detailed analysis. The general assessment was done in the DEIS. A detailed analysis will be required in the Final EIS, and will include vibration measurements.

There are very few details in the DEIS on the general vibration assessment that was performed and what assumptions were made. Again, there are three land use categories and the residences in the CIDNA neighborhoods fall into Category 2. The vibration impact level or criterion is 72 VdB for frequent events (more than 70 per day). The ground-borne noise criterion is 35 dBA. Ground-borne noise is the noise that is caused by surfaces in a building that vibrate and create pressure waves.

Using the information provided in the DEIS, we also calculated the Vibration Impact using the methods in the FTA Manual. Our calculations are summarized in a table included in Appendix B of this letter. The following summarizes the assumptions used in the calculations:

	DEIS	ESI
Cluster Identifier	A-A-WB-2-1	nearest homes
Train Speed	45 mph	45 mph
Number of Cars	3 cars	3 cars
Distance to Nearest Receiver	41 ft	30 ft

The DEIS and our calculations show that the project generated vibration and ground-borne noise will exceed the impact criteria of 72 VdB and 35 dBA, respectively.

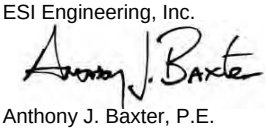
The following are additional comments on the vibration impact assessment:

1. The project generated vibration and ground-borne noise impact presented in the DEIS assumes the rails and train wheels are in perfect condition. Worn or corrugated rails and wheels with flats are know to increase vibration and ground-borne noise by as much as 10 dB.
2. The distance to the cluster A-A-WB-2-1, the nearest cluster, is shown in General Vibration Assessment Results at 41 feet vs. 49 feet in the Noise Assessment Table. This is inconsistent and there are residences that are closer than 41 feet.
3. Typically, a correction of -5 dB is added in the vibration calculations for wood framed houses. It does not appear that this correction was included in the DEIS General Vibration Assessment. The adjustment would reduce the DEIS vibration impact level from 73 VdB to 68 VdB, which is below the impact criterion of 72 VdB.
4. LRT speeds indicated on drawings in the DEIS are slower than 45 mph in much of the Kenilworth Corridor.

Please let me know if you have any questions or need more information.

Sincerely,

ESI Engineering, Inc.



Anthony J. Baxter, P.E.

	Calculations					
Assumptions	**DEIS No Bells**	**ESI No Bells**	**ESI Bells @ 45 MPH**	**ESI Bells @ 15 MPH**	**ESI Horn & Bells @ 15 MPH**	**ESI LRT @ 25 mph**
SEL_{ref}, Sound Exposure Level	81 dBA	81 dBA	81 dBA	81 dBA	81 dBA	81 dBA
N_{cars}, No. of Cars	3	3	3	3	3	3
S_C, Speed of LRT	45 mph	45 mph	45 mph	45 mph	45 mph	25 mph
V_{dC}, Daytime LRT Volume	198 ÷ 15 = 13	13	13	13	13	13
V_{nC}, Nighttime LRT Volume	60 ÷ 9 = 7	7	7	7	7	7
S_H, Speed of Horn	-	-	-	-	15 mph	-
V_{dH}, Daytime Horn Volume	-	-	-	-	1	-
V_{nH}, Nighttime Horn Volume	-	-	-	-	-	-
S_B, Speed of Bells	-	-	45 mph	15 mph	15 mph	-
V_{dB}, Daytime Bells Volume	-	-	198 ÷ 15 ÷ 2 = 7	7	7	-
V_{nB}, Nighttime Bells Volume	-	-	60 ÷ 9 ÷ 2 = 3	3	3	-
d, Distance to Track	49 ft	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft
Existing Noise Level	L_{dn} = 60 dBA (Site No. 31)	L_{dn} = 55 dBA (Site No. 30)	L_{dn} = 55 dBA (Site No. 30)	L_{dn} = 55 dBA (Site No. 30)	L_{dn} = 55 dBA (Site No. 30)	L_{dn} = 55 dBA (Site No. 30)
FTA Moderate Impact Criterion	60 dBA	55 dBA	55 dBA	55 dBA	55 dBA	55 dBA
FTA Severe Impact Criterion	64 dBA	61 dBA	61 dBA	61 dBA	61 dBA	61 dBA
Project Related Noise	L_{dn} = 65 dBA	L_{dn} = 67 dBA	L_{dn} = 70 dBA	L_{dn} = 73 dBA	L_{dn} = 75 dBA	L_{dn} = 62 dBA
Cumulative Noise Level	L_{dn} = 66 dBA	L_{dn} = 67 dBA	L_{dn} = 70 dBA	L_{dn} = 73 dBA	L_{dn} = 75 dBA	L_{dn} = 62 dBA
Increase Over Existing	+6 dBA	+12 dBA	+15 dBA	+19 dBA	+20 dBA	+7 dBA
FTA Impact Level	Severe	Severe	Severe	Severe	Severe	Severe
Exceedance Over Criterion	+1 dBA	+6 dBA	+9 dBA	+12 dBA	+14 dBA	+1 dBA

					DEIS	ESI - 1	ESI - 2	ESI - 3	ESI - 4	ESI - 5	ESI - 6
Land Use Category					2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Side of Track					WB	WB	WB	WB	WB	WB	WB
Distance from track centerline, ft					41 ft	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	45 ft	45 ft	45 ft
Speed, mph					45 mph	45 mph	45 mph	45 mph	45 mph	45 mph	45 mph
RMS Velocity level, VdB re 1 micro in./sec					74 VdB	77 VdB	77 VdB	77 VdB	74 VdB	74 VdB	74 VdB
Factors Affecting Vibration Source											
Source Factor	**Adjustment to Propagation Curve**			**Comments**							
		Reference Speed									
Speed	Vehicle Speed	50 mph	30 mph	Vibration level is approximately proportional to 20*log(speed/speedref). Sometimes the variation with speed has been observed to be as low as 10 to 15 log(speed/speedref).							
	60 mph	+1.6 dB	+6.0 dB								
	50 mph	0.0 dB	+4.4 dB								
	40 mph	-1.9 dB	+2.5 dB								
	30 mph	-4.4 dB	0.0 dB								
	20 mph	-8.0 dB	-3.5 dB		-1 VdB	-1 VdB	-1 VdB	-1 VdB	-1 VdB	-1 VdB	-1 VdB
Vehicle Parameters (not additive, apply greatest value only)											
Vehicle with stiff primary suspension	+8 dB			Transit vehicles with stiff primary suspensions have been shown to create high vibration levels. Include this adjustment when the primary suspension has a vertical resonance frequency greater than 15 Hz.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Resilient Wheels	+0 dB			Resilient wheels do not generally affect ground-borne vibration except at grequencies greater than about 80 Hz.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Worn Wheels or Wheels with Flats	+10 dB			Wheel flats or wheels that are unevenly worn can cause high vibration levels. This can be prevented with wheel truing and slip-slide detectors to prevent the wheels from sliding on the track.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Track Conditions (not additive, apply greatest value only)											
Worn or Corrugated Track	+10 dB			If both the wheels and the track are worn, only one adjustment should be used. Corrugated track is a common problem. Mill scale on new rail can cause higher vibration levels until the rail has been in use for some time.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Special Trackwork	+10 dB			Wheel impacts at special trackwork will significantly increase vibration levels. The increase will be less at greater distances from the track.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Jointed Track or Uneven Road Surfaces	+5 dB			Jointed track can cause higher vibration levels than welded track. Rough roads or expansion joints are sources of increased vibration for rubber-tire transit.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Track Treatments (not additive, apply greatest value only)											
Floating Slab Trackbed	-15 dB			The reduction achieved with a floating slab trackbed is strongly dependent on the frequency characteristics of the vibration.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ballast Mats	-10 dB			Actual reduction is strongly dependent on frequency of vibration.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
High-Resilience Fasteners	-5 dB			Slab track with track fasteners that are very compliant in the vertical direction can reduce vibration at frequencies greater than 40 Hz.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Factors Affecting Vibration Path											
Path Factor	**Adjustment to Propagation Curve**			**Comments**							
Resiliently Supported Ties	-10 dB			Resiliently supported tie systems have been found to provide very effective control of low-frequency vibration.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Track Configuration (not additive, apply greatest value only)											
Type of Transit Structure	Relative to at-grade tie & ballast:			The general rule is the heavier the structure, the lower the vibration levels. Putting the track in cut may reduce the vibration levels slightly. Rock-based subways generate higher-frequency vibration.							
	Elevated structure	-10 dB			0 dB	0 dB	0 dB	0 dB	0 dB	0 dB	0 dB
	Open cut	0 dB									
	Relative to bored subway tunnel in soil:										
	Station	-5 dB									
	Cut and cover	-3 dB									
	Rock-based	-15 dB			-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ground-borne Propagation Effects											
Geologic conditions that promote efficient vibration propagation	Efficient propagation in soil	+10 dB		Refer to the text for guidance on identifying areas where efficient propagation is possible.	-	-	-	+10 dB	-	-	+10 dB
	Propagation in rock layer	**Dist.**	**Adjust.**	The positive adjustment accounts for the lower attenuation of vibration in rock compared to soil. It is generally more difficult to excite vibrations in rock than in soil at the source.							
		50 ft	+2 dB								
		100 ft	+4 dB								
		150 ft	+6 dB								
		200 ft	+9 dB		-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Coupling to building foundation	Wood Frame Houses	-5 dB		The general rule is the heavier the building construction, the greater the coupling loss.							
	1-2 Story Masonry	-7 dB									
	3-4 Story Masonry	-10 dB									
	Large Masonry on Piles	-10 dB									
	Large Masonry on Spread Footings	-13 dB									
	Foundation in Rock	0 dB			0 dB	-5 dB	0 dB	0 dB	-10 dB	0 dB	0 dB
Predicted Vibration Level (VdB)					**73 VdB**	**71 VdB**	**76 VdB**	**86 VdB**	**63 VdB**	**73 VdB**	**83 VdB**
Impact Criterion (VdB)					**72 VdB**	**72 VdB**	**72 VdB**	**72 VdB**	**72 VdB**	**72 VdB**	**72 VdB**
Exceedance Over Criterion (VdB)					**+1 VdB**	**-1 VdB**	**+4 VdB**	**+14 VdB**	**-9 VdB**	**+1 VdB**	**+11 VdB**
Factors Affecting Vibration Receiver											
Receiver Factor	**Adjustment to Propagation Curve**			**Comments**							
Floor-to-floor attenuation	1 to 5 floors above grade:	-2 dB/floor		This factor accounts for dispersion and attenuation of the vibration energy as it propagates through a building.							
	5 to 10 floors above grade:	-1 dB/floor			-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Amplification due to resonances of floors, walls, and ceilings	+6 dB			The actual amplification will vary greatly depending on the type of construction. The amplification is lower near the wall/floor and wall/ceiling instersections.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Conversion to Ground-borne Noise											
Noise Level in dBA	Peak frequency of ground vibration:			Use these adjustments to estimate the A-weighted sound level given the average vibration velocity level of the room surfaces. See text for guidelines for selecting low, typical of high frequency characteristics. Use the high-frequency adjustment for subway tunnels in rock or if the dominant frequencies of the vibration spectrum are known to be 60 Hz or greater.							
	Low frequency (<30 Hz):	-50 dB									
	Typical (peak 30 to 60 Hz):	-35 dB									
	High frequency (>60 Hz):	-20 dB			-	-35 dB	-35 dB	-35 dB	-35 dB	-35 dB	-35 dB
Predicted Ground-Borne Noise (dBA)					**-**	**36 dBA**	**41 dBA**	**51 dBA**	**50 dBA**	**38 dBA**	**48 dBA**
Impact Criterion (dBA)					**-**	**32 dBA**	**32 dBA**	**32 dBA**	**32 dBA**	**32 dBA**	**32 dBA**
Exceedance Over Criterion (dBA)					**-**	**+4 VdB**	**+9 VdB**	**+19 VdB**	**+18 VdB**	**+6 VdB**	**+16 VdB**

Meg McMonigal <mmcmonigal@stlouispark.org>
12/17/2012 04:33 PM

To "'swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us'" <swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>
cc
bcc
Subject SW DEIS Comments

History: This message has been forwarded.

Would you please provide a copy of all of the SW DEIS comments and public hearing comments received thus far and at the end of the comment period to me at the address below?

V

Thank you!

Meg J. McMonigal
Planning and Zoning Supervisor
City of St. Louis Park
5005 Minnetonka Boulevard
St. Louis Park, MN 55416
952-924-2573
mmcmonigal@stlouispark.org

"xcoe@comcast.net"
<xcoe@comcast.net>
12/17/2012 04:56 PM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us
cc
bcc
Subject Proposed Light Rail: not a fan

As a resident who lives a block away from the Kenilworth Trail, and as someone who moved from Linden Hills to Kenwood in order to get away from airplane noise, this plan to plop an LRT right next door to me is not pleasing. The draft environmental-impact statement for this route notes many problems with this segment, yet concludes that the tradeoffs make them acceptable. Well, they may be acceptable to people who don't live here, but they're not acceptable to me. I can't see a high demand for light rail in this neighborhood: wouldn't it be more sensible to locate it in a denser neighborhood? Just because there's a freight rail there already isn't really a great reason to put the LRT there. D

D

If built as proposed the segment of the light-rail route in this corridor would destroy the quiet of this beautiful urban green space. E2

Why ruin one of the only remaining quiet areas on our Lakes? Must we always sacrifice the peace and quiet of neighborhoods so that people going through have a more convenient time of it? I live here: I work here. I need quiet to do my work here. If this light rail deal goes through, I hope my property values don't plummet. I have a lot of money invested in the house we live in here, and I pay hefty taxes, which I'm happy to do. But I'm not happy to sacrifice the quality of my life for "modest" benefits to air quality. I really hope this LRT doesn't happen this way, because it's a bad idea all around. Put it where people need it now: don't build it on the existing rail corridor for some future people. D E4

Sincerely,

Alexandra Coe
2700 Kenilworth Place
Minneapolis, MN 55405

This communication may contain confidential and/or privileged information. If you are not the intended recipient (or have received this communication in error) please notify the sender immediately and destroy this communication. Any unauthorized copying, disclosure or distribution of the material in this communication is strictly forbidden.

David Howd
<dhowd522@msn.com>
12/17/2012 05:23 PM

To Southwest Corridor <swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>
cc
bcc
Subject Suggested new alternate for St. Louis Park

Hello

My name is David Howd and I attended the public hearing held on November 14th.

Attached are 3 small pdf files with a very rough proposal for the route of the freight line through St. Louis park that was a point of concern at the meeting. G2
My proposal is to lower the line from Minnetonka Blvd to Hiway 7 into a sunken rail bed similar to what was in the location of the Midtown Greenway.
I do not consider it a comment on the DEIS but a suggested concept I developed based on the conditions of the relocation that I summarize below.

Please excuse me if you have already looked at this idea in some form or another. As an architect I did considerable site planning design work using images from Google Earth that are scaleable. The drawings may be somewhat difficult to read due to the very small scale used to make letter sized plots.
I have done this as a planning graphic exercise but feel it perhaps may be of real value if not previously considered.

LOGIC FOR LOWERED TRACK IN ST. LOUIS PARK

The reason sated for needing to relocate the freight line from the current Kenilworth location mentions that the original freight line was cut off at Hiawatha Ave. G2
I think a more informative description would be " the freight line that originally ran on the sunken rail bed that extends east to west at approximately 29th street was re-routed around downtown Minneapolis in order to create the Midtown Greenway which would provide a bike path un-interrupted by crossing streets."
Essentially the VALUE of the lowered rail line to the street level traffic was given to the bikeway. The BURDEN of the rail line crossing streets and being adjacent to residential was put onto the Kenilworth line area.

Now for the Southwest Corridor to be built the BURDEN of the rail line crossing streets and being adjacent to residential is being transferred to the folks in St. Louis Park. C
My proposal is to mitigate the BURDEN of the rail line crossing streets and being adjacent to residential by creating a VALUE of having the freight line running in a sunken rail bed through the south portion of the line in St. Louis Park particularly near the high school.

The proposed plan is very rough and may be deemed impractical by technical clearances and design factors of railroad lines and streets. It does have some details worked out if you study the small drawings closely, such as having Highway 7 go over the rail lines.

Thank you and please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.
I do not request any compensation for this planning. Please feel free to use these drawings in the best interests of the Southwest Corridor and Hennipen County.

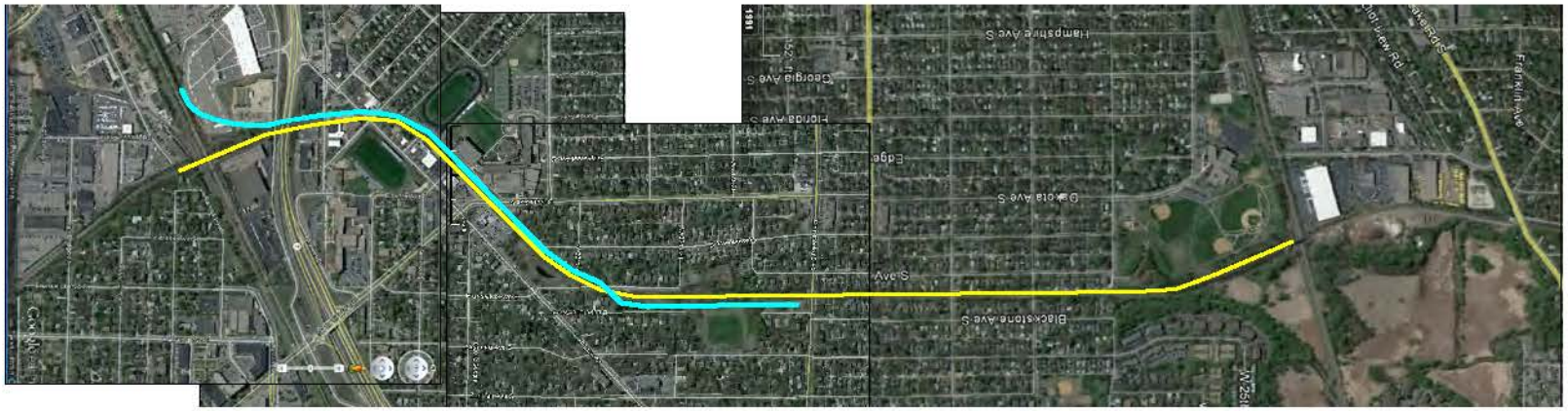
David Howd
1246 Shryer Ave W

Roseville, MN 55113

651-31-0172

Length of MN&S rail line from south to north between connecting rail lines: 9,400 ft

Proposed length of MN&S line to be sunken to allow streets to pass over: 4,900 ft



Partial plan of St. Louis Park (rotated with west to left) North →

Length of Midtown Greenway between Lake of the Asiles and Hiawatha Ave: 16,670 ft

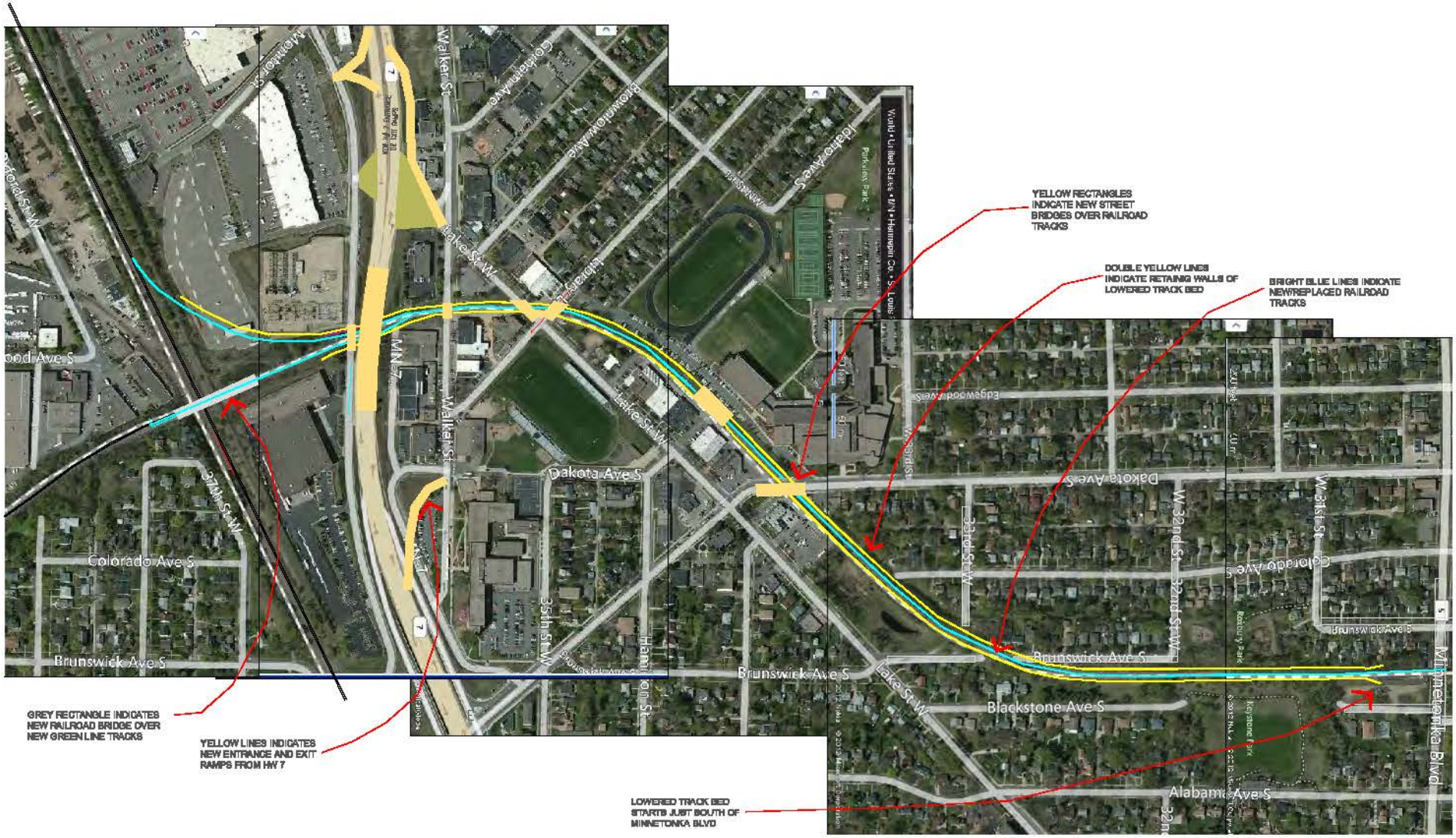
Existing length of Midtown Greenway that is sunken to allow streets to pass over: 13,350 ft

Partial plan of Minneapolis ↑ North

STUDY TO LOWER THE MN&S RAIL LINE BELOW STREET LEVEL IN ST. LOUIS PARK
Suggested proposal by David Howd

1 Mile

Date: December 17, 2010

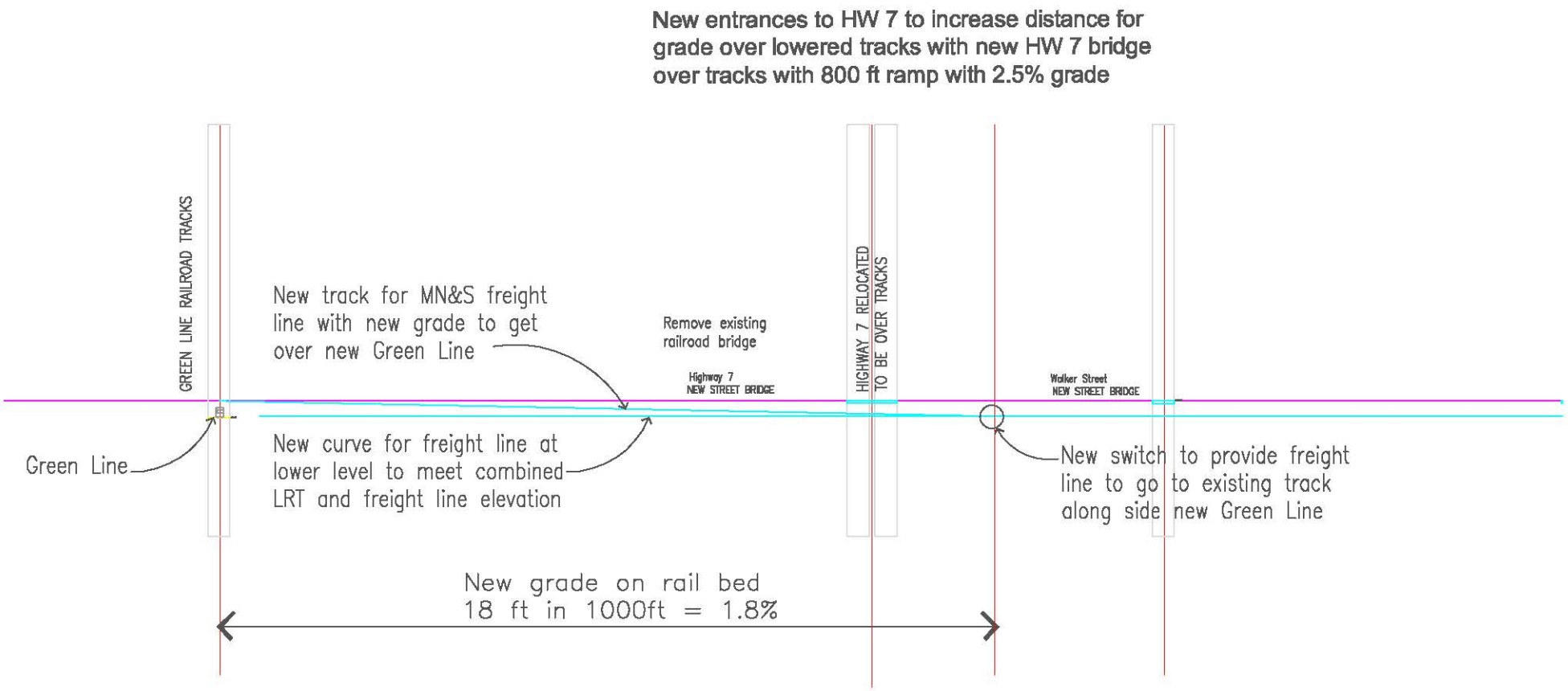


North

STUDY TO LOWER THE MN&S RAIL LINE
BELOW STREET LEVEL IN ST. LOUIS PARK
Suggested proposal by David Howd

PLAN AT HIGH SCHOOL

Date: December 17, 2012



North →

STUDY TO LOWER THE MN&S RAIL LINE BELOW STREET LEVEL IN ST. LOUIS PARK
Suggested proposal by David Howd

SECTION AT HIGHWAY #7

Date: December 17, 2012

meurban58@aol.com
12/17/2012 08:21 PM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us
cc
bcc
Subject SW light rail comment

My name is Marcia E. Urban, 3164 Dean Ct, Minneapolis, MN 55416. (meurban58@aol.com) I am a 20 year resident of this neighborhood and have lived in two home where either my back yard was the Kenilworth trail/train way or my front door.

Currently, the front door of my home faces the SW transit corridor. Trains will be running approximately two car lengths from my home. I will be greatly impacted by how the transit way will be developed.

I am a mass transit user as I take the bus to work downtown and I really appreciate the light rail to take to the airport which I do for both business and pleasure by making the connection from bus to rail. I look forward to a city with lots of options in transit, but I wish to comment on how the current proposal negatively impacts my life and my home.

First, the plan to have a fly over bridge will have the train running at my second level of my home where my bedrooms are located. There will be significant noise at this point as the is a curve in the transit way right before the bridge. This noise will severely impact my quality of life and sleep. A way to mitigate this would be to have a tunnel through this area or at least a covered trench of some sort. In addition, the vibration from the trains running every 3-1/2 to 5 minutes will impact the construction of my brick and stucco home. E8

N11

I also will be very close to where the electric wires will be above the train. This is of course because my home will be approximately 2 car lengths from the transit way. These wires will be at the level of my second story or just above the roof line due to the rise of the bridge at approximately my home. E8

This bridge will also cut the Cedar/Dean/Isles neighborhood into two pieces. Currently we have a bike path that runs along the track and that crosses this transit way a few blocks south of my home and just about a block north of my home. There are children in our neighborhood who bike and run from their homes to the Park Siding Park and this above ground train track will impact the safety of getting to and from homes to the park and cedar lake. E8

I would like to see the Met council mitigate the safety, noise and visual concerns by considering a tunnel or a trench through this very, very narrow area of the transit way not cut our neighborhood in two with a bridge in the park system. E8

I look forward to hearing more on how you plan to address these concerns.
Marcia urban

Draft Environmental Impact Statement Comment Form

Southwest Transitway Project

RECEIVED
DEC 17 2012
BY:

Federal and state environmental rules require that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) be prepared for the proposed Southwest Transitway project. The EIS process includes the preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), which must be made available for public review and comment.

The DEIS discusses: (1) the purpose and need for the project; (2) the alternatives considered; (3) the impacts of these alternatives; and (4) the agencies and persons consulted.

Comments on the DEIS will be accepted through December 11, 2012. All comments must be received by that date. Please include a return mailing address with all comments.

Public hearings on the DEIS will be held in November 2012. To learn more about the hearings, please visit www.southwesttransitway.org

The Problem at the Cedar Lake Park/Kenilworth Trail crossing has been an insurmountable problem from the beginning. The available land simply isn't wide enough to accomodate 2 train tracks and the bike trail. Tunneling is not an option due to the water table. A large long concrete bridge will destroy the aesthetics and the property values. E8 E8

This was a known problem that everyone (Especially Gail Dorfman) chose to ignore! The proper decision was to route the trail east to Lyndale then north on Lyndale - (They're going to need a "spur" there anyway and the aggregate costs are the same. Instead they chose to "cost" the present route and not include the spur to Lyndale. This entire portion of the route should be revisited. G2

Don't the people along Lyndale deserve train service? Or is this just for people who chose to live in Eden Prairie.. Why should MPLS give up a nice park and property values for them?

Name: Mike Fadlovich

Address: 1804 Oliver Av S.

City/State/Zip: MPLS

Telephone: 612/377.0602 Email: sloan and mike@earthlink.net

Thank you!

SOUTHWEST transitway

Fold here

Fadlovich/d'Autremont
1804 Oliver Ave. S.
Minneapolis, Minn. 55405

MINNEAPOLIS MN 554
15 DEC 2012 PM 5 L

Happy Holidays from the USPS
Equality FOREVER

Hennepin County

Housing, Community Works & Transit
ATTN: Southwest Transitway

701 Fourth Avenue South, Suite 400

Minneapolis, MN 55415

55415$1843 C089

Fold here

Draft Environmental Impact Statement Comment Form

Southwest Transitway Project

RECEIVED
DEC 17 2012
BY:

Federal and state environmental rules require that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) be prepared for the proposed Southwest Transitway project. The EIS process includes the preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), which must be made available for public review and comment.

The DEIS dis mpacts of these altern

Comments ed by that date. Please

Public hear lease visit www.southv

The area between Lake Street and Penn Avenue begins as a quiet residential neighborhood on either side of the Kenilworth Channel between Lake of the Isles and Cedar Lake. This gives way to parkland along the east side of Cedar Lake. In the middle of this urban oasis runs a critical segment of the Minneapolis system of bicycle trials, used by hundreds of commuters and recreational bikers every day for much of the year.

This area has coexisted for decades in relative harmony with the remnants of a once-busier freight-rail corridor. The current daily handful of slow diesel trains poses little real disturbance. If built as proposed, however, the segment of the light-rail route in this corridor would fundamentally and irrevocably alter the character of this beautiful urban green space.

The infrastructure for electrically powered light-rail transit would permanently deface the entire area. Running more than 250 trains through this corridor each day from dawn to midnight would significantly diminish its desirability as a place to live. Property values would fall; tax revenue would drop accordingly. Some studies do show increased property values in proximity to light-rail lines, but they are not relevant to this project. For good reasons, light rail is not typically put in the midst of highly developed residential and recreational areas.

E4

The visual impact of the needed infrastructure, combined with the noise and even the danger of more than 250 fast trains per day, would also greatly erode the attractiveness of this part of the recreational and commuter bicycle trail system. Many who now commute by bicycle might well choose to drive instead (which would be an ironic consequence of a project designed in part to reduce traffic). Recreational bicyclists will simply go elsewhere.

O1 O4 N2 E7 P9

The project includes a station at W. 21st Street, a placement that makes no sense. This is an isolated location along parkland, not close to any major streets. It would be inconvenient to access; parking is limited, and a park-and-ride lot there would be contrary to Minneapolis policy. Serious questions have been raised about the actual use of this station, since local residents don't need it, given their proximity to downtown, and the appeal to suburban riders heading toward town is not obvious.

E4 I1,I2

Name: Barbara Lundgren
Address: 2425 Sheridan Ave So.
City/State/Zip: Mpls. Mn. 55405
Telephone: 612-377-9078 Email: Barbaralundgren55405@Yahoo.Com

Thank you!

SOUTHWEST transitway

Fold here

Lundgren
2425 Sheridan Ave S
Minneapolis, MN 55405

MINNEAPOLIS MN 554

15 DEC 2012 PM 5 L

Happy Holidays

USPS

forever

Hennepin County

Housing, Community Works & Transit
ATTN: Southwest Transitway

701 Fourth Avenue South, Suite 400

Minneapolis, MN 55415

55415184300

Fold here

Kolean Pitner
<kpitner@comcast.net>
12/18/2012 10:34 AM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us
cc
bcc
Subject SW LRT DEIS

Hello,

I want to let you know that I wholeheartedly support the Kenwood Isles Area Association's response to the DEIS. Relocation of the freight rail; a feasibility study of trenching or tunneling of the LRT at Cedar Lake Parkway; effective noise mitigation; preservation of green space; adverse visual impact mitigation; and study of traffic impact, light pollution, vibration and public safety are absolutely necessary for the successful implementation of this project. D

I implore you to work with the KIAA to solve these issues in a positive and productive way. D

Sincerely, L1
Kolean Pitner

Kolean Pitner
2576 Upton Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55405
Home Phone: 612-377-0097
Cell Phone: 612-247-1435

"Hagen, James"
<jamesh@amerdental.com>
12/18/2012 10:52 AM

To <swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>
cc
bcc
Subject Business Owner

To Whom It May Concern:

I'm the President/Owner of American Dental Accessories in Saint Louis Park, MN. I wholeheartedly support the Southwest LRT train for myself, the office, and community. As a former resident of NYC, I fully realize the benefits of efficient public transportation, and given the climate in Minnesota we cannot rely on the current options, biking (as many of our employees do in the warmer months) and buses.

A

I'm looking forward to following the development of this project. Please let me know how I can help.

Kind regards,

James Hagen

Elise Durbin
<edurbin@eminnetonka.com>

12/18/2012 11:27 AM

To '"swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us"'
<swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>
cc
bcc
Subject DEIS comments

Attached you will find comments from the City of Minnetonka. We will also be submitting a hard copy in today's mail.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Elise Durbin, AICP
Community Development Supervisor

City of Minnetonka | 14600 Minnetonka Blvd | Minnetonka, MN 55345
p: 952.939.8285 | edurbin@eminnetonka.com

City of minnetonka
14600 Minnetonka Boulevard Minnetonka, MN 55345 952-939-8200 Fax 952-939-8244

December 14, 2012

Hennepin County
Housing, Community Works & Transit
ATTN: Southwest Transitway
701 Fourth Avenue South, Suite 400
Minneapolis, MN 55415

SUBJECT: Southwest LRT DEIS Comments

To Whom It May Concern:

The City of Minnetonka has reviewed the Southwest Transitway Draft Environmental Impact Statement. Attached you will find the city's comments and concerns regarding the Southwest LRT line.

We appreciate the opportunity to review the DEIS, to provide comments, and look forward to continuing to work with you and the Metropolitan Council on this project.

Sincerely,

Julie Wischnack, AICP
Community Development Director

Enclosure

Chapter Two: Alternatives Considered				
Page	**Issue**	**Why is this an issue**	**Proposed alterative/mitigation**	
2-32	A total of 250 surface parking spaces are shown at the Shady Oak Road Station	Varying numbers have been proposed previously, but typically it has been 350 parking stalls	More work needs to be completed to better define these numbers. Collaboration between the SWLRT project and the Community Works project needs to occur in order to make sure there is consistency among all components of the project.	P10
2-32	The park and ride locations and size of facilities need to be further explored.	The city anticipates that with the size of the park and ride at the Shady Oak station, the park and ride facility will need to be structured. Access directly off Excelsior Boulevard may cause congestions and an alternate access must be explored for consideration.	The exact location of the park and rides and potential for shared parking with the surrounding development, as well as the exact size, and whether the facility is surface or structure must be explored further as part of the project.	I1
2-50 to 2-51	Traction Power Substations, Signal Bungalows, and any other signal cabinets	Location, design, placement and screening is unknown.	The location, placement, and screening of the Traction Power Substations and other signal cabinets must be closely coordinated with the City of Minnetonka. This equipment must be located, screened, and designed as appropriate to avoid impacts to existing and future developments.	H3
2-53	No mention that Minnetonka is an opt-out community	While Minnetonka is an opt-out that utilizes Metro Transit for its service, it has a contract to do so. If the contract were to be cancelled, then the bus services may be modified.	Add language or acknowledge Minnetonka's status as an opt-out community	U

Chapter Three: Social Effects

Page	Issue	Why is this an issue	Proposed alterative/mitigation	
3-7	Land Use descriptions along the corridor	There is no mention as to when the land use plan used to describe this section was adopted.	As land use plans periodically change, it is important to note which year the plan was adopted that was used for this evaluation.	M1 U
3-23	In the City of Minnetonka Comprehensive Plan, the summary lists the Golden Triangle	The Golden Triangle is located in Eden Prairie- not Minnetonka.	The words Golden Triangle should be removed and replaced by Opus.	M1 U
3-23	Table on page 3-23	The City of Minnetonka section summary inaccurately describes the Opus area as the Golden Triangle.	Change to reflect “Opus Area”	U
Section 3.2	Neighborhood Community Services and Community Cohesion Impacts	This section contains relevant community information and data. The data is however, not translated into how any of the LRT alignments would affect local community services or cohesion. In alignment LRT 3A, the Opus and Shady Oak area, in particular, would generally be underserved but ready for additional opportunities. The LRT 1A alignment, Rowland and Highway 62 station area in Minnetonka would likely disrupt community services and cohesion. The planning for additional impacts around these stations is not planned in the City’s comprehensive plan.	Show how LRT alignments would affect local community services or cohesion.	M1 U

3-38	Mitigation during the construction period	The DEIS states that more specific plans will be developed later for mitigation for businesses and residents. Because of the length of time for construction it is important that these plans are thoroughly developed and communicated before construction begins.	As plans are developed, consult with local businesses and residents about the plans to make sure they are on track. Once plans are developed and during construction, clearly communicate them to the businesses and residents. There should be some discussion about support for businesses along the line, such as the "Open to Business" program.	M1
3-57	Segment 3, the DEIS notes that the LRT is not expected to affect community connectivity--including trails and roadway.	Opus has a pedestrian network of nearly 6 miles of trails. Appendix F shows multiple trail segments being removed as part of the project.	See comments for Appendix F.	P9
3-68	Section 3.3.1 - The last line of the paragraph and the bullet points are in this section and also in Section 3.3.5.	Exact information is duplicate. It seems more appropriate in Section 3.3.5 since 3.3.1 is about legal and regulatory review and 3.3.5 is about acquisition and relocation.	Delete the line and bullet points from section 3.3.1 and leave it in 3.3.5 where it is more appropriate.	U
3-72	Section heading does not seem appropriate or the subject matter.	While there is some discussion in the section about mitigating or lessening impacts, the main subject matter of the section is Acquisition.	Change the heading of the section to "Acquisition".	U
3-84 to 3-86	There is a Restrictive Covenant on property PID 3611722210002 which states the property must only be used for parkland and open space purposes.	The current alignment shows LRT through part of this parcel.	Appropriate approvals to have the alignment through this area will need to be obtained from the City of Minnetonka and any other relevant parties.	N1 L3
3-84 to 3-86	The city has a Declaration of Tree Preservation Easement on the property located at 5450 Feltl Road (PID: 3611722220010).	The plan appears to propose track installation and grading as well as realignment of Smetana Rd and Feltl Rd within the easement area.	Appropriate approvals to have the alignment through this area will need to be obtained from the City of Minnetonka and any other relevant parties.	U
3-84 to 3-86	The city has a Conservation Easement on the property located at 5101 Nolan Drive (PID: 2611722440106).	The plan appears to propose a bridge through the east side of the conservation easement.	Appropriate approvals to have the alignment through this area will need to be obtained from the City of Minnetonka and any other relevant parties.	N1

N2

3-112	"North of Smetana Road the alignment is on a bridge to cross over ponds and existing freight rail lines. The proposed structure, along with catenary poles and wires, could have substantial visual impacts on sensitive receptors in the multi-family residential development on the east side of the corridor."	Documents only the multi-family residential on the east side of the LRT alignment north of Smetana Road and the visual impacts to those properties. The rail line, catenary poles and wires will have a negative visual impact, in addition to potential negative environmental impacts, adjacent to the multi-family residential developments to the north (Deer Ridge Townhomes) and South (Claremont) of Smetana Road with LRT 3A. As acquisition of land will be needed to route the corridor through these residential areas, the primary viewers will be residents and Opus trail users. Adjacent to the Claremont, existing vegetation is comprised of high quality tree resources and although mostly deciduous, removal will decrease existing buffering during leaf-on conditions and provide even less buffering during leaf-off season. Although the corridor elevation is lower than the residential buildings south of Smetana Road, attention to aesthetic should not be underestimated. Generally LRT 1A would have negative visual impacts on existing single family residential neighborhoods and Minnesota River Bluffs LRT Regional Trail Users.	Mitigate the additional visual and potential impacts to residential properties.

Chapter Four: Environmental Effects			
Page	**Issue**	**Why is this an issue**	**Proposed alterative/mitigation**
4-2	Section 4.1.1 The incorrect daily amount was stated under the regulation for a waters appropriations permit.	Per the MN DNR's website Minnesota Statute 103G.265 requires the Department of Natural Resources to manage water resources to ensure an adequate supply to meet long-range seasonal requirements for domestic, agricultural, fish and wildlife, recreational, power, navigation, and quality control purposes. The Water Appropriation Permit Program exists to balance competing management objectives that include both development and protection of Minnesota's water resources. A water use permit from DNR Waters is required for all users withdrawing more than 10,000 gallons of water per day or 1 million gallons per year. There are several exemptions to water appropriation permit requirements: domestic uses serving less than 25 persons for general residential purposes, test pumping of a ground water source, reuse of water already authorized by a permit (e.g., water purchased from a municipal water system), or certain agricultural drainage systems (check with your area hydrologist for applicability).	The accurate number of gallons per day should be reflected in the final EIS.

N6

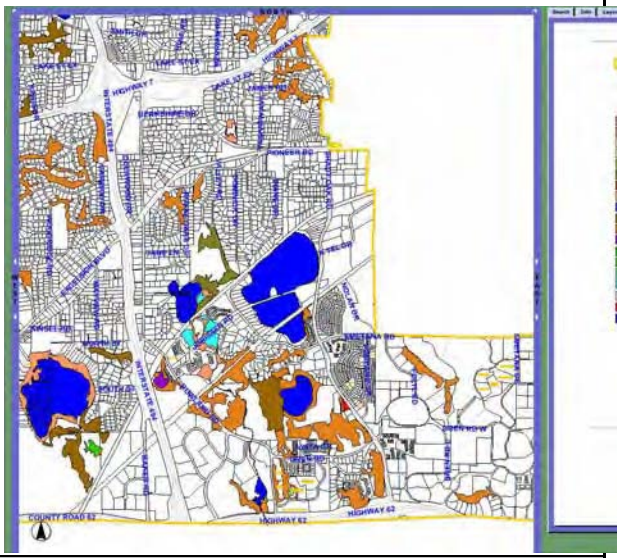
U

4-21, 4-23, 4-24 and page 196 of appendix H	Ensure that any permanent water removal does not result in negative impacts to ground water or surface waters.	Sections 4.1.4.2 - States there is a possible need for permanent water removal at both segments 1 and 3 and possibly a second area. Mitigation sections (4.1.6) lists methods to minimize impacts and Appendix H (page 196) indicates the permanent water removal or the cut below the water table will not impact wells since the closest well is at least 800 feet away. It further states that if water is diverted into or away from wetlands that the work will be engineered to minimize the impacts.	The engineering should be designed to prevent any impacts versus minimizing them.	N4
4-24 to 4-44	Section 4.2, Water Resources, does not recognize Minnetonka's ordinances or regulation as it relates to wetlands, floodplains, shorelands, storm water management or grading and erosion control except in Table 4.2-1 which identifies Minnetonka as being the LGU under the WCA and references Minnetonka's role in project review and approval. It should also be noted that the city has a tree protection ordinance.	Appropriate permits must be acquired and mitigation strategies must follow the city's rules. For example Section 4.2.2.2 on page 4-32 discusses mitigation strategies for impacts to wetlands. Since the DEIS does not recognize that Minnetonka has a wetland ordinance that requires wetland mitigation in the amount of 1:1 for any amount of wetland fill (no De minimis), wetland mitigation is not mentioned as a strategy to offset the impacts.	Section 4.2.1.5--Local: Cities (page 4-28) - speaks in detail to Eden Prairie's regulation and mentions Mpls', Minnetonka's and St. Louis Park's. This section should be more developed to recognize each community's regulation to ensure appropriate planning and compliance. For example, Minnetonka has a grading and erosion control ordinance triggered by land disturbance of area encompassing 5,000 square feet or 50 cubic yards, that requires compliance with specific standards and the installation and maintenance of best management practices. The city's floodplain ordinance does not allow compensatory water storage to be located in an area of regulated trees. The city views the removal of trees to provide compensatory water storage as a mismanagement of natural resources.	N5 N7 U

			Section 4.2.2.1 100-year Floodplain (page 4-30) and Figure 4.2-2 (page 4-31) does not recognize the city's 100-year flood areas. This is problematic if fill or alteration occurs. Figures 4.2-3 and 4.2-4 and 4.2-5 (pages 4-36 through 4-38) may not have the city's 100-year flood elevations identified. Although tree impacts are not covered in this section it should be noted that Minnetonka has a tree protection ordinance that regulates tree removal and mitigation. Section 4.2.2.2 Wetlands, Streams and Lakes (page 4-32)- Minnetonka's ordinances relating to wetlands and shorelands are not identified and therefore necessary permits at the local level may not be acquired and appropriate mitigation may not occur. As previously stated, Minnetonka has a wetland ordinance that requires any wetland fill to be mitigated at a rate of 1:1, wetland mitigation is not mentioned as a strategy to offset impacts. Table 4.2-2 (page 4-34) Minnetonka should be added as a permitting agency for wetland and floodplain areas. Section 4.2.4 Short Term Construction Effects (page 4-42) Compliance with Minnetonka's regulation and storm water regulation will be required.

U

			Section 4.2.5 Mitigation (page 4-43) Recognize local rules so appropriate permitting and compliance can be achieved.	
4-28	The City of Minnetonka requires a grading and erosion control permit for land disturbance greater than 5,000 square feet or 50 cubic yards	The City of Minnetonka has a city ordinance requiring such a permit to be obtained	Section 4.2.1.5-- Local: Cities Insert the following language into this section: "The City of Minnetonka requires a grading and erosion control permit for land disturbance activities that are greater than 5,000 square feet or 50 cubic yards."	N3 U
4-30	The City of Minnetonka's Water Resource Management Plan (WRMP) has identified and regulates additional floodplain areas, outside of FEMA floodplain	The City of Minnetonka has a Floodplain District ordinance requiring floodplain areas identified by FEMA and the city's WRMP be regulated. The ordinance requires any fill be mitigated at a one to one ratio. The 100-year floodplain areas mapped under the city's WRMP can be obtained on the city's website or via a request for the city's GIS layer	Section 4.2.2.1 100-year floodplain and Section 4.2.3.1 Floodplains Include floodplain information from the City of Minnetonka's WRMP in the analysis of floodplain impacts.	N7 U
4-31 and 4-36 through 4-38	Proper identification of forest resources on Figures 4.2-2, 4.2-3 and 4.2-4 and 4.2-5.	It does not appear that the referenced Figures accurately illustrate the deciduous forests, specifically the oak woodland, and brushland behind the Claremont Apartments just north of the proposed Opus station.	Re-evaluate the segments and identify and map the existing forest resources.	N8 U

4-47	Figure 4.3-1 - It is difficult to see if all of the Minnesota Land Cover Classification System (MLCCS) remnant communities are depicted in this map because the resolution is poor. In Minnetonka there are several areas; a tamarack swamp SE of Glen Lake, semi permanently flooded cattail marsh E of Lake Minnetoga and an oak woodland brushland SW of the Conservatory Apartments. Additionally there are several other emergent wetland communities.	If the MLCCS designated remnant communities are not included, potential impacts and restoration will not addressed.	Confirm that the MLCCS information is recorded and provide a map with higher resolution or provide maps of these communities for each city so the information can be reviewed. Attached is map reflecting Minnetonka's MLCCS for the area. 	N5 V
4-52	4.3.3.2 Native Habitats, Table 4.3-1 - In the comments under alternative 3A it is not clear if the MLCCS designation of oak woodland brushland located southwest of the Claremont Apartments and north of the Opus Station is included.	If it is not included potential impacts and restoration will not be addressed.	Confirm that it is recorded in the existing conditions.	U

4-53	Invasive species management plan mentioned in sections 4.3.3.4 Invasive Species, 4.3.4 Short-Term Construction Effects, and 4.3.5 Mitigation	Minnetonka is involved in restoration activities of natural habitats. The city appreciates the foresight in developing an invasive species management plan and would like to review the final plan.	Provide plan for city review and approval.	U L3
4-54 and 4-55	Is the summary depicting the potential impacts for Minnetonka's habitats if the city's existing MLCCS designated remnant communities are not accurately reflected in the existing conditions?	If the communities are not accurately included potential impacts and restoration will not be addressed.	Confirm that Minnetonka's MLCCS designated remnant communities are accurately recorded in the existing conditions.	N8 U
4-61	Section 4.4.4 Long-Term Effects, the tamarack swamp located SE of Glen Lake is not identified.	If it is not identified how will the impacts be evaluated?	Determine if the alignment for LRT 1A will have any potential impacts to this resource.	N5
4-103	Noise related to horns and bells at all at-grade crossings	Impacts to adjacent residents.	Quiet zones should be considered for implementation at all at-grade crossings to eliminate noise from bells and horns.	O3
4-103 to 4-104	"Construction contractors *should* be required to develop a noise mitigation plan" and discusses what should be included.	The plan MUST be developed and include requirements from the city.	City must be involved in approval of the Construction Noise Mitigation Plan steps and approvals prior to work beginning.	L3
4-118	DEIS references final EIS that is not yet completed.	Mitigation measures will be based on this document.	City needs an opportunity to review and provide input on findings.	
4-119 and 4-127	On-going maintenance practices associated with light rail.	Section 4.9 discusses Hazardous and Contaminated Materials. The collection and disposal of oils, grease and other wastes is documented in the Draft EIS. Will salt be used during winter snow removal operations? If so, how will the amounts be monitored? Both Minnehaha and Nine Mile Creek are chloride impaired so salt use may be an issue.	Address the use of salt in the final document.	N10 N6 U

Chapter Five: Economic Effects			
Page	**Issue**	**Why is this an issue**	**Proposed alterative/mitigation**
Section 5.2	Station Area Development	Environmental Metrics – Concur with the report that LRT 1A is inconsistent with the Minnetonka Comprehensive Plan. If selected, recreating transit-friendly station areas west of the Shady Oak Station would pose significant challenges given the existing land use pattern and transportation systems.	None—concur with the report.
Section 5.2	Station Area Development	Environmental Metrics – LRT 1A and 3A for Shady Oak Station Area. The Short-term impacts described in Section 5.2.2 make no mention that this station is essentially "land-locked" by private land holdings. The document does not identify in any generality how these issues impact station area development.	Access and landownership issues identified in the DEIS will need a resolution in order for the Shady Oak station to come on-line.

I2

M1

Chapter Six: Transportation Effects			
Page	**Issue**	**Why is this an issue**	**Proposed alterative/mitigation**
6-53	Figure 6.3-2 does not reflect all trails in Opus and along Shady Oak Road.	The Opus trails need to be documented as they are important for connectivity to/from the proposed station and the businesses and residential in the area. The LRT will impact some of these trails as shown in Appendix F.	Document all trails.

P9

Chapter Nine: Indirect Effects and Cumulative Impacts			
Page	**Issue**	**Why is this an issue**	**Proposed alterative/mitigation**
9-37, 9-38, 9-39	DEIS states that no mitigation is required for Transit Effects, Effects on Roadways and Other Transportation Effects including trails.	Effects to local transportation systems affected by the Southwest LRT must be included as a part of the overall study for potential improvements needed to eliminate increased congestion and impacts. DEIS states that because the indirect effects and cumulative impacts are expected to be beneficial, no mitigation is needed. Impacts could require substantial dollars for improvements.	Study area limits must be reviewed and defined with the city to determine overall impacts to local infrastructure systems.

U

Chapter Twelve: Public Agency Coordination and Comments			
Page	**Issue**	**Why is this an issue**	**Proposed alterative/mitigation**
12-4 and 12-15	Minnetonka has regulations not identified in Table 12.2-2 Preliminary List of Required Permits. These include wetland, floodplain, shoreland, erosion control, steep slope and tree protection ordinance as well as stormwater regulation.	The appropriate permits may not be acquired at the local level.	Include the above referenced Minnetonka items in the list of permits to be obtained.

N5
N7

Appendix F- Part 1: Conceptual Engineering Drawings			
Page Number	**Issue**	**Why is this an issue**	**Proposed alterative/mitigation**
38	The SWLRT alignment must go under (cut and cover) TH 62 rather than go over TH 62 as proposed.	Going over TH 62 would: 1) Limit the city's flexibility with much needed local roadway improvements and potential realignments within the Opus II Business Park. 2) Provide for a non-desirable connection and layout for the City West Station in the City of Eden Prairie due to existing topography. 3) Eliminates the opportunity to provide a trail linkage between the Opus II Business Park and the United Health Group Campus (located on the south side of TH 62). Having an elevated track through this area would preclude this opportunity.	The SWLRT alignment must go under (cut and cover) TH 62 rather than go over TH 62 as proposed.
38-39	Design refinements must shift the SWLRT alignment of the line slightly to the south/west near TH 62.	The city, MnDOT and property owners within Opus II Business Park have made significant investments in making transportation improvements to the interchange at US 169 and Bren Road. In the long term additional access into and out of the business park will be needed in order to provide acceptable Level of Service (LOS) at the existing interchange. One option suggested for consideration by MnDOT was a set of ramps from TH 62 into the Opus Business Park. The ramps would be for westbound traffic entering the site and for eastbound traffic leaving the site. The alignment shown for SWLRT in this area would preclude constructing these ramps in the future.	Shift the SWLRT alignment slightly to the south and west to allow for the ramps to be constructible in the future and not interfere with light rail operations.

J2

J2

39	Minnetonka agrees with the recommendation eliminating the trail crossing of the light rail line and Red Circle Drive south of Opus station, however the limits must be revised.	A portion of the trail located at the western edge of the property, west of the proposed alignment, must remain to maintain connectivity. Without this segment, it removes connectivity on the west side and increases the travel distance of pedestrians and bicyclists from the station to properties southwest.	Leave a portion of trail in place near Red Circle Drive currently shown for removal. It will allow construction of a parallel trail connection on the west side of the SWLRT line in the future.	J5
39	The DEIS does not indicate how the new trail segment proposed to connect Opus station to the trails west of the north-south segment of Bren Road East will cross.	With the expected increase in traffic volumes on the roadways and additional pedestrian foot traffic, the city is concerned that an at-grade crossing in this location could pose a safety challenge.	A grade separated crossing of the roadway for the trail crossing at this location, and all others must be proposed within the Opus II Business Park.	J5
39	For the trail area north of Bren Road W and the Opus station, the DEIS shows removal of trail segments west of the LRT alignment near Bren Road. The trail removal eliminates connection to properties east of the LRT line creating a gap between the underpass at Bren Road West and the trail network along Green Circle Drive.	The SWLRT project creates a trail gap without constructing a parallel north-south trail segment on the east side of the transit line. Connectivity that existed prior to the project would not be maintained.	As part of the preliminary design and FEIS, Metro Transit must replace the trail on the east side to bring more parcels and properties into a half mile walk and a two mile bike of Opus station. All trail segments proposed for removal and replacement as a part of the project must be reviewed to maintain connectivity that existed prior to the project.	J5
40	The proposed LRT crossing and intersection reconfiguration at Smetana Road and Feltl Road is not acceptable.	The proposed reconfiguration switches the through movement of Smetana Road, the higher functionally classified roadway with heavier traffic volumes, to Feltl Road, the roadway with lower functional class and lower traffic volumes. It also creates additional SWLRT crossings that could be reduced.	There are other alternatives available that would preserve the alignment and through movement of Smetana Road, yet limit the number of at-grade crossings. The city requires that the FEIS and preliminary engineering develop and evaluate other concepts for this intersection acceptable to the city.	J4

42	The curve of the alignment just west of the Shady Oak station (curve taking the alignment to the south)	The city has been informed that this curve may change in the future, which will impact redevelopment plans for the area.	Changes in the alignment from what is shown in the DEIS should immediately be discussed with the city and the city reserves the rights to provide comments on the new alignment.	L3
Appendix F page 42-43	The proposed location of the Shady Oak station platform is currently landlocked as it exists today. The city assumes that 17th Avenue in Hopkins will need to be expanded south as part of the project in order to access the station.	The city has identified secondary access points into the station area as a key issue, as one access point is likely unable to accommodate the anticipated demand of this station.	Secondary access points from 47th Street West, 5th Street/K-Tel Drive and Shady Oak Road should be considered, as well as how the reconstruction of Shady Oak Road from Excelsior Boulevard to Highway 7 will function given the proximity to the station.	J7

Appendix H – Part 1: Supporting Technical Reports and Memoranda			
Page	**Issue**	**Why is this an issue**	**Proposed alterative/mitigation**
4-21, 4-23, 4-24 and page 196 of appendix H	Ensure that any permanent water removal does not result in negative impacts to ground water or surface waters.	4.1.4.2 - States there is a possible need for permanent water removal at both segments 1 and 3 and possibly a second area. Mitigation sections (4.1.6) lists methods to minimize impacts and Appendix H (page 196) indicates the permanent water removal or the cut below the water table will not impact wells since the closest well is at least 800 feet away. It further states that if water is diverted into or away from wetlands that the work will be engineered to minimize the impacts.	The engineering should be designed to prevent any impacts versus minimizing them.

N4

"Perry, Jack Y."
<JPerry@Briggs.com>
Sent by: "Ganske, Kimberly"
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12/18/2012 11:50 AM

To "commissioner.mclaughlin@co.hennepin.mn.us"
<commissioner.mclaughlin@co.hennepin.mn.us>
cc "swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us"
<swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>
bcc
Subject Southwest Transitway DEIS

This message was sent on Jack Y. Perry's behalf. Please do not reply to this message. Please send any response to jperry@briggs.com. Thank you!

See Comment #357 for Theme Delineations

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December 18, 2012

Jack Y. Perry
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VIA E-MAIL AND U.S. MAIL

Peter McLaughlin
Chair, Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority
300 South Sixth Street
Minneapolis, MN 55487-0241

Re: Southwest Transitway DEIS

Dear Chair McLaughlin:

This letter is being sent on behalf of Costco Wholesale (Costco) and Emerson Process Management/Rosemount (Emerson). This letter is being sent to you as the Chair of the Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority (HCRRA), which is the lead state agency under the Minnesota Environmental Policy Act (MERA) for the preparation of the Southwest Transitway's (or SW LRT) October 2012 Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). This letter is also being copied to the Metropolitan Council (Met Council), which is the lead for the preparation of the SW LRT's Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS).

Costco and Emerson begin by thanking you for the opportunity to comment on the DEIS at the November 29, 2012 public hearing in Eden Prairie. And Costco and Emerson hereby submit their joint written comments on the DEIS. These written comments are consistent with their oral comments on November 29, 2012.

OVERVIEW

Other than their narrow objection to the proposed route of the SW LRT in City along Technology Drive, including the proposed location of the Eden Prairie Town Center transit station on Costco's property (Narrow Objection), Costco and Emerson are very much supportive of the SW LRT. Costco and Emerson have, in fact, been meeting with representatives of the City of Eden Prairie (City) for the past several months in order to address their Narrow Objection without compromising or delaying the success of the SW LRT. The seven-step basis for Costco and Emerson's Narrow Objection is set forth below.

City has been receptive to Costco and Emerson's Narrow Objection. Indeed City has from May 18, 2010 to the present continuously supported Costco and Emerson's Narrow Objection by requesting that HCRRA and Met Council "evaluate alternatives" to the proposed route of the SW LRT in City along Technology Drive, including the proposed location of the

Eden Prairie Town Center transit station on Costco's property. City has had periodic meetings with HCRRA and Met Council representatives, and their representatives have assured City that they would, in fact, evalute such alternatives as part of the SW LRT's Preliminary Engineering process. These assurances from HCRRA and Met Council's representatives are reflected in City's December 4, 2012 "[g]eneral [c]omments" to the DEIS. 12/4/12 City's DEIS comment letter at 1 ¶¶ 1-2 (emphasis added).

SEVEN-STEP BASIS FOR COSTCO AND EMERSON'S NARROW OBJECTION

STEP NO. 1: City **is** to have a say in the decisions regarding the proposed SW LRT which affect City.

a. HCRRA and Met Council have repeatedly and emphatically assured the six local municipalities that are being asked to "host" the proposed SW LRT (*i.e.*, City, Edina, Hopkins, Minneapolis, Minnetonka and St. Louis Park) that they are, in exchange, entitled to provide input regarding, and ultimately the discretion to approve or deny, the route for the SW LRT, including the location of the transit stations within their borders.

b. City is, more specifically, a "participating agency" in the SW LRT project.

c. And 23 U.S.C. § 139 provides that City, as a "participating agency," is permitted to (1) assist the project sponsor in determining the range of alternatives to be considered in a project's DEIS and (2) identify, as early as practicable, any issues of concern regarding the project's potential impacts.

STEP NO. 2: HCRRA and Met Council ultimately **need** City to issue the necessary local land use approvals for the route of the SW LRT in City, including the location of the transit stations within City.

a. City is statutorily charged with the responsibility to protect the public health, safety and general welfare of its citizens.

b. City thus has broad discretion to act so as to protect its citizens.

c. The location of the route of the SW LRT in City, including the location of the transit stations within City, will have a significant impact on the public health, safety and general welfare of its citizens.

d. City thus has broad discretion to approve or deny the required land use approvals for the proposed route of the SW LRT in City, including the proposed location of the transit stations within City.

STEP NO. 3: City has continuously expressed its **objection** to the proposed route of the SW LRT in City along Technology Drive, including the proposed location of the Eden Prairie Town Center transit station on Costco's property.

a. On May 18, 2010, the Eden Prairie City Council passed Resolution No. 2010-40, which (1) expressed concern regarding the potential adverse environmental and economic impact of the proposed route of the SW LRT in City along Technology Drive, including the proposed location of the Eden Prairie Town Center transit station on Costco's property, and (2) asked HCRRA and Met Council to (a) "evaluate alternatives" and (b) "find solutions for mitigating impacts of the proposed LRT on the businesses."

b. As reflected in HCRRA and Met Council's February 21, 2012 Request for Proposals (RFP), City has continued to insist that an "alternatives analysis . . . be done for the . . . Town Center station in Eden Prairie." (Emphasis added).

c. On November 20, 2012, the Eden Prairie City Council authorized its City Manager to submit City's comments to the DEIS.

d. On December 4, 2012, City's City Manager submitted, among other comments, City's following two "[g]eneral [c]omments" to the DEIS:

> 1) The City of Eden Prairie continues to support Alternative 3A as the preferred alternative as it serves the Major Center Area and Golden Triangle Area and provides the best opportunities for development, redevelopment, and economic development. Alternative 3A clearly has the highest ridership potential and the greatest positive economic impact to Eden Prairie and the region primarily due to its close proximity to existing and future job concentrations. However this alternative could be further improved in these respects by moving the Town Center Station closer to the Town Center or the Eden Prairie Center.
>
> 2) In order to better serve the Eden Prairie Town Center and Eden Prairie Center the feasibility of a more centrally located and walkable Town Center Station needs to be evaluated during the Preliminary Engineering process. Attached for reference are several concept location areas for the proposed Town Center Station that should be considered.

12/4/12 City's DEIS comment letter at 1 ¶¶ 1-2 (emphasis added).

e. In response to City's continuous insistence that an "alternatives analysis . . . be done for the . . . Town Center station in Eden Prairie," HCRRA and Met Council have through their representatives represented their willingness to evaluate, as part of the Preliminary Engineering process, alternatives to the proposed route of the SW LRT in

City along Technology Drive, including the proposed location of the Eden Prairie Town Center transit station on Costco's property.

f. As reflected in Figures 1 and 4 of the DEIS, HCRRA and Met Council have already identified and conducted some preliminary analysis of alternatives to the Town Center transit station in City.

STEP NO. 4: City has compelling **land use concerns** with the proposed route of the SW LRT in City along Technology Drive, including the proposed location of the Eden Prairie Town Center transit station on Costco's property.

a. As reflected in City's May 18, 2010 resolution and December 4, 2012 DEIS comment letter, as well as HCRRA and Met Council's February 21, 2012 RFP, the primary purpose and need for the Eden Prairie Town Center transit station is to provide transportation to transit-dependent riders and pedestrians; it is not to be designed as a park and ride.

b. The "Station Vision" for the Eden Prairie Town Center transit station is as follows:

Station Vision

- A vibrant mixed use district dominated by retail and residential uses. This idea builds on and enhances the efforts of the 2007 Major Center Area study and seeks *to create a walkable transit village that is well served by multiple modes of transit while accommodating service and personal vehicle circulation and parking.*

- Vertical mixed-use development of no fewer than 3 stories and no more than 5 stories for the majority of parcels. Rooftop decks should be allowed in excess of these heights.

- Land use near the station should be *higher density* and should include *higher-intensity multi-story mixed-use comprised* of offices and multi-family residences. Ground floor uses should be active and connected to the pedestrian environment.

(Underlining in original; italics added).

c. The proposed route of the SW LRT in City along Technology Drive, including the proposed location of the Eden Prairie Town Center transit station on Costco's property, would not serve the above-stated purpose and need for the Eden Prairie Town Center transit station; it is not near transit-dependent riders or pedestrians.

(1) Costco's property is guided and zoned as "Regional Commercial," which is defined by City as follows:

> Regional Commercial: This category is located in areas where one or more of the following characteristics are present: a) large sites are available to provide locations for major shopping centers which serve a wider region than the City itself; b) *relatively large sites for sales and service operations that are not typically found in shopping center structures and* ***attract little or no pedestrian traffic***; and c) sites to provide limited sales and service operations that are oriented and directly related to highway or freeway uses, tourists and travelers. Corresponding zoning districts are the C-Reg, C-Reg-Ser and the C-Hwy districts. Site coverage is .20-.40

(Underlining in original; bold and italics added).

(2) In contrast, the "Town Center" zone is defined by City as follows:

> **Town Center**
>
> This category designates the land use for a mixed-use downtown area to be located near the center of the Major Center Area. The 120 acre area is to be redeveloped over time into a compact, walkable, vibrant, pedestrian oriented area. The Town Center is a result of a history of planning dating back to the 1970's and the adoption of the 2006 Major Center Area (MCA) Study and Plan. The focus of the MCA Study is on ***creating a concentrated pedestrian and transit oriented development area*** *that has a supportive mix of higher intensity land uses (retail, service, office, housing, park, hospitality, and entertainment)*, consist of vertical mixed use buildings (i.e. office or housing over shops and restaurants) and the nearby housing will be higher density than typically found in other parts of the City. *Future transit services* (light rail and bus) will help ensure convenient access and mobility. Parking will be in parking structures and on-street with limited use of surface parking lots. Future buildings will front on a street with a lively and active street life. Parks, trails, landscaped streets and plazas will add green space and recreation amenities to the area. The redevelopment will be designed to support Eden Prairies' community health, active living and sustainability goals. In order to limit traffic congestion, development intensity in the balance of the MCA will be lower than in the Town Center. See the Town Center Land Use Plan and the Major Center Area Study for further information. Corresponding zoning is the TC - Town

> Center Mixed Use District. Residential is 45-75 du per acre. Commercial is .20-.40.

(Bold in original; underlining and italics added).

(3) City's "Major Center Area" is further defined as follows:

> Development patterns should continue as they have throughout most of the area abutting the outer ring road of Prairie Center Drive and Valley View Drive. A **compact, walkable Town Center** should be created that would cluster around Singletree Lane and Idlewild Lake. Eden Prairie's **highest development densities** should be found within the Town Center. Organized by a new grid system of streets and urban amenities, the Town Center should emphasize residential, retail and mixed-use development types.

(Emphasis added).

STEP NO. 5: City has compelling **economic concerns** with the proposed route of the SW LRT along Technology Drive, including the proposed location of the Eden Prairie Town Center transit station on Costco's property.

a. The proposed route of the SW LRT in City along Technology Drive, including the proposed location of the Eden Prairie Town Center transit station on Costco's property, would result in the partial taking of Costco and Emerson's property on Technology Drive, for which HCRRA and Met Council would be liable.

(1) HCRRA and Met Council will be liable to Costco and Emerson for the "fair market value" of the real estate being taken from Costco.

b. The proposed route of the SW LRT in City along Technology Drive, including the proposed location of the Eden Prairie Town Center transit station on Costco's property, would result in the Minn. Stat. § 117.186, subd. 2-defined "business destruction" of Costco for which HCRRA and Met Council would be liable for its § 117.186-provided for "loss of going concern" (*i.e.,* the "fair value" of its Eden Prairie business) and substantial adverse impact for Emerson.

(1) Per the DEIS, the proposed location of the Eden Prairie Town Center transit station on Costco's property will take numerous parking spaces from and dramatically delay the access to and from Costco's convenience-based gas station, thereby causing the complete "business destruction" of this integral component of the store. *Id.*, subd. 2.

(2) Costco's convenience-based gas station is an integral component to its entire Eden Prairie store. Indeed, 10 years ago Costco refused to build on another parcel just south of the Eden Prairie Center Mall because its convenience gas station component could not be accommodated there.

(3) HCRRA and Met Council would clearly not be able to meet one of its statutorily-prescribed affirmative defenses under § 117.186, subd. 2 — notably, the subd. 2(2)-required showing that "the loss can be reasonably **prevented** [(a)] by relocating the business . . . in [(i)] the same [(*i.e.,* 'on-site')] or [(ii)] a similar and reasonably suitable location as the property that was taken [(*i.e.,* 'off-site')] or [(b)] by taking steps and adopting procedures that a reasonably prudent person of a similar age and under similar circumstances as the owner, would take and adopt in preserving the going concern of the business." (Emphasis and bracketed information added).

(4) HCRRA and Met Council would be liable for Costco's § 117.186 "loss of going concern."

(5) Costco's "loss of going concern" would be in excess of $100,000,000.

STEP NO. 6: There appears to be **at least one alternative** to the proposed route of the SW LRT in City along Technology Drive, including the location of the Eden Prairie Town Center transit station on Costco's property, that better advances not only (1) the purpose and need for this transit station to the SW LRT but also (2) City's land use objectives without subjecting HCRRA and Met Council to such extreme statutory liability under § 117.186.

a. One alternative route for the SW LRT in City is along Singletree Lane, including the location of the Eden Prairie Town Center transit station on City owned property near the intersection of Singletree Lane and Prairie Center Drive.

b. This alternative would appear to much better serve the purpose and need for this segment of the SW LRT because it would be closer to transit-dependent riders and pedestrians.

c. This alternative would be consistent with the description of the transit station at issue as the "Eden Prairie Town Center" transit station, which came about because it was initially proposed to be located near the "Town Center."

d. This alternative would be consistent with City's land use objectives, which includes "transit facilities" within this "Town Center" designated area.

e. This alternative would minimize the takings liabilities because the transit station would be located on public property.

f. But neither this alternative route for the SW LRT in City along Singletree Lane nor any other alternative to the proposed route along Technology Drive has yet been evaluated by HCRRA or Met Council.

STEP NO. 7: There is **still adequate time** to conduct the requested alternative analysis without delaying the project.

a. HCRRA and Met Council do not anticipate completion of the requisite engineering for the Project until 2014.

b. Six months is adequate time to evaluate the above-discussed alternative routes of the SW LRT in City along, among others, Singletree Lane, including the Eden Prairie Town Center transit station near the intersection of Singletree Lane and Prairie Center Drive.

c. As has been explained by HCRRA and Met Council's representatives, the existing proposed route of the SW LRT in City along Technology Drive, including the proposed location of the Eden Prairie Town Center transit station on Costco's property, was adopted as a mere "placeholder" so that the proposal could move forward with environmental review; it was, per HCRRA and Met Council's representatives, NEVER intended to be a permanent or binding part of the overall SW LRT.

CONCLUSION

Costco and Emerson appreciate HCRRA and Met Council's consideration of their Narrow Objection. And they, as supported by City, respectfully request that HCRRA and Met Council agree to evaluate, as part of the Preliminary Engineering process, the land use and economic impacts of alternative routes of the SW LRT in City along Technology Drive, including the location of the Eden Prairie Town Center transit station on Costco's property — notably, the alternative route of the SW LRT in City along Singletree Lane, including the location of the Eden Prairie Town Center transit station on City-owned property near the intersection of Singletree Lane and Prairie Center Drive.

To the extent, however, that HCRRA and Met Council either will not look at alternatives or do so but conclude that the alternatives are inferior, Costco and Emerson have several more objections as it relates to the proposed route for the SW LRT along Technology Drive, including the proposed location of the Eden Prairie Town Center transit station on Costco's property. But they have shared those concerns with City on multiple occasions. And, out of respect for the expressed willingness from HCRRA and Met Council, through their representatives, to perform an alternative analysis for this portion of the route as part of the Preliminary Engineering process, they will not repeat those concerns here.

Please contact me (612-977-8497) or Steve Chelesnik (952-828-3303), who is the Vice President & General Counsel of Emerson Process Management, with any questions and/or concerns.

Sincerely,

Jack Y. Perry

AND

Steven Chelesnik
Vice President & General Counsel, Emerson Process Management

JYP/kg
cc: HCRRA (swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us)
Hennepin County Housing, Community Work & Transit
701 Fourth Avenue South, Ste. 400
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Susan Sanger
<suesanger@comcast.net>
12/18/2012 05:13 PM

To Katie Walker <swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>, Jim & Pam Brimeyer <brimgroup@aol.com>, steve.elkins@metc.state.mn.us
cc
bcc
Subject DEIS comments -

Attached are comments responsive to the DEIS issued for the SWLRT project.
Susan Sanger
4717 W. 28th St.
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swlrt

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES WITH SWLRT DEIS

Current status: The Draft Environmental Impact Statement recommends route 3A as the Environmentally Preferred Alternative, and route 3A-1 is the only other option receiving any consideration. Both options use the same route for SWLRT; the primary difference is that 3A requires rerouting of freight rail traffic from existing Kenilworth corridor in Minneapolis to the MNS route in St. Louis Park, while 3A-1 co-locates freight rail within the Kenilworth corridor, parallel to the LRT tracks. MNS is not a mainline freight track, but rather an old electric passenger corridor that runs among four residential neighborhoods.

Major issues: I am a strong supporter of SWLRT. However, the DEIS arbitrarily selects route 3A without addressing numerous issues, which, if analyzed, would lead to the selection of route 3A-1, the co-location route. Specifically: A

1. **The DEIS concludes that the preferred route 3-A will cost approximately $23M more to construct than route 3A-1, yet provides no explanation of why such excess expenditure should be considered acceptable to taxpayers. (Ch 8, as revised, DEIS). This estimate also understates the costs associated with route 3A – see paragraphs 3 and 4, below. This is not fiscally responsible.** T4 T0
2. **The DEIS contains only minimal review of route 3A-1.** It contains no analysis of a study prepared for St. Louis Park that demonstrates how co-location can be constructed within the Kenilworth corridor, at a savings of many millions of dollars. The DEIS contains no analysis of how co-location may be accomplished by the rerouting of a half mile of bike trail currently within the Kenilworth corridor, although it is obvious that moving a short stretch of bike trail will be much cheaper and easier than moving freight rail operations - which entails, among other identified costs, the construction of a new railroad trestle bridge over one mile long with the trains running 50+ft. high in the air, the construction of another rail interconnect, and the rebuilding of several miles of additional tracks. The DEIS appears to base its' route recommendation on a conclusion that co-location would require the use of .81 acre of parkland, which it deems unacceptable per 49 USC 303 and 23 USC 138 – even though the railroad currently uses tracks in that parkland, and has for many years. However, the DEIS fails to contain the required analysis to establish why route 3A-l would be a "feasible and prudent" alternative, as those statutes require. In fact, the statutory standards specifically include consideration of economic/financial impacts among the factors that may justify use of parkland for transportation purposes. C C
3. **The DEIS fails to include analysis of mitigating measures that would be necessary if freight rail is rerouted to the MNS route.** The only mitigating measure suggested is the establishment of Whistle Quiet Zones at at-grade roadway intersections, as a purported method to control the noise of railroad horns. However, since these intersections are closely spaced among several blind curves of track, railroad managers have already publicly stated (in their EAW comments and at a public meeting) that they would have to blow their horns for safety reasons, thus negating any possible noise mitigation benefit. No other C

mitigating measures are proposed to deal with adverse impacts from noise or vibration, for traffic difficulties at at-grade rail crossings (longer trains would simultaneously block four crossings), for safety concerns such as potential derailments of trains carrying hazardous substances or trespassers on tracks, for interruptions of classes at St. Louis Park High School (where the track is just a few feet from classrooms and snakes between the school and its' athletic field), or to create a buffer strip between the tracks and nearby homes (the tracks are adjacent to the back yards of many dozens of homes, some as close as 34 ft.) The city of St. Louis Park has provided a list of necessary mitigation measures and estimated their cost to be greater than $50M, **thus bringing the cost of route 3A-1 to be at least $73M more than the selected route 3-A. The cost of some needed mitigation measures has not yet been estimated – for example, the means of mitigating the high trestle bridge described above has not been determined, so these costs are currently unknown. The DEIS ignores or dismisses these requirements.**

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4. **The DEIS fails to consider and analyze freight railroad operational issues.** For example, if freight rail is rerouted on the MNS tracks through St. Louis Park, it would have to merge onto the busy tracks owned by another railroad (BNSF) in order to reach its' current destinations. Railroad management has already stated this is quite problematic and will cause delays. The DEIS fails to identify any practical way the trains would be able to turn south onto the MNS tracks to reach the port at Savage. The views and preferences of the railroads are not reflected in the DEIS, making it difficult to assess whether rerouted freight traffic (as part of route 3A) is feasible, practical, and desired by railroad management. **The DEIS omits any analysis of whether any of the affected railroads have agreed to these arrangements, the costs of doing so, and whether any unit of government will reimburse the railroads for these costs – thus potentially raising the cost of route 3A even higher.**

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5. **The DEIS lacks objectivity. (a)** The DEIS proposes taking/demolishing many homes in the Kenilworth corridor but does not commit to taking any homes along the MNS tracks, even though many homes along the MNS route are much closer to the tracks than those in Kenilworth. **(b)** Many subjective assessments and conclusions are made without specifying the relevant criteria, and with contradictory results. For example, disruptions to community cohesion are deemed significant in the Kenilworth corridor, due to trains dividing neighborhoods, but if the same trains are moved to the MNS route, no such disruption is predicted for the adjacent neighborhoods in St. Louis Park. No reason for this discrepancy, or many other similar comparisons, is provided.

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6. **The DEIS bases its conclusions on incorrect and incomplete data comparisons which overstate the adverse land use impacts of 3A-1 (co-location) and understate the negative impacts of 3A (reroute).** For example, in comparing land uses, including number of homes adjacent to the tracks, data for route 3A (reroute) is supplied for land uses along the north-south MNS tracks but omits data for land uses adjacent to the BNSF tracks east of the Iron Triangle, onto which the trains would merge from the MNS tracks. Conversely, land use data supplied for route 3A-1 (co-location) actually includes data not only for the

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Kenilworth corridor but also data for land uses adjacent to the BNSF tracks north and east of that corridor, stretching into downtown Minneapolis – a track segment which is common to both the 3A and 3A-1 routes.

7. **The DEIS appears to be tainted by socioeconomic/political considerations.** It describes the homes along the Kenilworth corridor as "high income" but fails to address the economic justice issues presented along the 3A route. For example, it omits mention of the number of affordable housing units and the food shelf along the MNS tracks and high proportion of students at the adjacent high school who are eligible for free/reduced lunch. C L4
8. **Hennepin County has provided inadequate public process – apparently designed to ignore the freight rail issue: (a)** The DEIS is very similar, and in places verbatim copied, from the Environmental Assessment Worksheet prepared earlier for SWLRT. The DEIS contains no analysis or response to the numerous public comments about freight rail which were submitted before the EAW was vacated, including but not limited to many comments which explained that 3A-1 (co-location) would be feasible, cheaper, and safer to construct and operate. **(b)** The DEIS includes a policy goal of facilitating smooth freight rail traffic within the metro area – a goal that was not included in any prior policy discussions or documents regarding SWLRT. This goal appears to have been inserted to "justify" moving freight rail traffic from the Kenilworth corridor, even though both routes permit through traffic. **(c)** The SWLRT Policy Advisory Committee, which selected the Locally Preferred Alternative route through the Kenilworth corridor, was prohibited by its' chair from any discussion of freight rail issues. Committee members were informed that this decision had been made by FTA staff, though no documentation was provided; thus, committee members did not have the opportunity to consider the issues noted herein in selecting among route options, several of which did not have any freight rail implications. Similarly, until recently community "open houses" about SWLRT did not contain any mention of freight rail issues, thus limiting public input. **(d)** The DEIS acknowledges that Hennepin County decided in the mid-1990's that freight trains would be rerouted to the MNS tracks, but fails to acknowledge that this decision was made without any known economic, environmental, or engineering studies and without any consultation with the city of St. Louis Park and its' residents. L2 C L4

Requested Action: In a September, 2011 letter, the FTA authorized preliminary engineering for SWLRT, specifically requiring DEIS analysis of the co-location route. As shown above, the DEIS includes almost no analysis of that route, thus appearing to violate the order. Due to the above and many other concerns, there is widespread public distrust of Hennepin County and its' DEIS preparation process, and several lawsuits have been threatened and appear imminent, which would have the unfortunate effect of delaying or preventing construction of SWLRT. I suggest that the FTA or Metropolitan Council order either (a) reopening of the LPA route selection process or (b) re-analysis and modification of the DEIS by independent experts, not previously involved in DEIS preparation, followed by another public comment period. C L4

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12/18/2012 05:35 PM

To suesanger@comcast.net, swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us, steve.elkins@metc.state.mn.us
cc
bcc
Subject Re: DEIS comments -

See Comment #346 for Theme Delineations

Is this the city position or what??

jb

In a message dated 12/18/2012 5:13:41 P.M. Central Standard Time, suesanger@comcast.net writes:

Attached are comments responsive to the DEIS issued for the SWLRT project.
Susan Sanger
4717 W. 28th St.
St. Louis Park MN 55416
952-926-4192
suesanger@comcast.net

swlrt

Susan Sanger
<suesanger@comcast.net>
12/18/2012 07:08 PM

To Katie Walker <swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>, Jim & Pam Brimeyer <brimgroup@aol.com>, steve.elkins@metc.state.mn.us
cc
bcc
Subject Fwd: DEIS comments - clarification

In case there is any confusion: these are my personal comments, not those of the City of St. Louis Park.
Sue Sanger

See Comment #346 for Theme Delineations

Begin forwarded message:

From: Susan Sanger <suesanger@comcast.net
Subject: DEIS comments -
Date: December 18, 2012 5:13:37 PM CST
To: Katie Walker <swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>, Jim & Pam Brimeyer <brimgroup@aol.com>, steve.elkins@metc.state.mn.us

Attached are comments responsive to the DEIS issued for the SWLRT project.
Susan Sanger
4717 W. 28th St.
St. Louis Park MN 55416
952-926-4192
suesanger@comcast.net

swlrt

Kate christianson
<katechristianson@comcast.net>

12/18/2012 07:33 PM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us
cc
bcc
Subject Kenwood Resident Weighs In

I'm all for streamlined access to downtown, but not at the expense the peacefulness and relaxation of the bike trail--which, in and of itself, is a major draw from throughout the metro area. I am opposed to any large-scale development project that travels through a neighborhood well-loved for its history, quiet and peacefulness.

D

Be very, very careful not to destroy the integrity of Minneapolis' most revered neighborhood. If there has to be light rail there, by all means find a way to have the trains run underground.

Thank you.

REC
DEC 18 2012
BY:

James & Mary Schwebel
4 Park Lane
Minneapolis, MN 55416-4340
Home Phone: 612-920-7537
Office Phone: 612-344-0306
Home Fax: 612-926-1286
jschwebel@schwebel.com

December 17, 2012

Hennepin County
Housing, Community Works & Transit
Attn: Southwest Transitway
701 4th Avenue S. #400
Minneapolis, MN 55415

Dear Sir/Madam:

My wife and I reside at 4 Park Lane in Minneapolis.

We certainly feel that as much as possible the light rail should be buried, or put in deep trench. The entire area which is now the Midtown Greenway was originally a deep trench constructed for trains passing through Minneapolis around the turn of the 19th Century. G2

To the extent that tunneling or trenching is not accomplished I would hope consideration would be given to state of the art acoustical barriers and berming. O5 O9

Yours sincerely,

James R. Schwebel

James R. Schwebel
4 Park Lane
Minneapolis, MN 55416-4340

RECEIVED
DEC 18 2012
BY:

Hasler
012H16208038
$00.45
12/17/2012
Mailed From 55402
US POSTAGE

Hennepin County
Housing, Community Works & Transit
Attn: Southwest Transitway
701 4th Avenue S. #400
Minneapolis, MN 55415

55415$1643 C083

Christa.Stoebner@stb.dot.gov

12/19/2012 09:35 AM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us

cc Maya.Sarna@dot.gov, Christopher.VanWyk@dot.gov, Vicki.Rutson@stb.dot.gov

bcc

Subject Comments on the Southwest Transitway DEIS

The Surface Transportation Board's comments on the Southwest Transitway DEIS are attached. We also mailed a copy of our comments to Katie Walker and Marisol Simon.

(See attached file: Dec 19 2012 Letter to Hennepin County.pdf) (See attached file: Southwest Light Rail in Minneapolis DEIS STB Comments Dec 19.docx)

Christa Stoebner
Surface Transportation Board
Office of Environmental Analysis
202.245.0299

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD
Washington, DC 20423

Office of Environmental Analysis

December 19, 2012

Katie Walker, Senior Administrative Manager
Hennepin County Housing, Community Works & Transit
Attn: Southwest Transitway
701 Fourth Avenue South, Suite 400
Minneapolis, MN 55415

RE: Comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, Southwest Transitway Project in Minneapolis

Dear Ms. Walker:

Thank you for providing the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (Draft EIS) for our review and comment. As you know, the Surface Transportation Board (Board) is currently involved as a cooperating agency in this environmental review because the Board may have a licensing role over certain aspects of the proposed Southwest Light Rail Project. Our comments on the Draft EIS are attached for your review. If you have any questions or need any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me or Christa Stoebner of my staff by telephone at (202) 245-0299 or email at christa.stoebner@stb.dot.gov. We look forward to working with you in the near future.

Sincerely,

Victoria Rutson
Director
Office of Environmental Analysis

Cc: Marisol Simon, Regional Administrator, FTA, Region V
Maya Sarna, FTA

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD
COMMENTS ON THE
SOUTHWEST TRANSITWAY PROJECT
DRAFT EIS

Board Jurisdiction

Light Rail Transit Line

The proposed construction and operation of a 15-mile light rail transit line connecting downtown Minneapolis to the cities of St. Louis Park, Hopkins, Edina, Minnetonka, and Eden Prairie would not require a license from the Board because the Board does not have jurisdiction over intrastate transportation that is not part of the interstate rail network. 49 U.S.C. § 10501(a)(2)(A); see DesertXpress Enters., LLC--Petition for Declaratory Order, FD 34914 (STB served May 7, 2010). The Board also does not have jurisdiction over mass transportation provided by a local governmental authority. 49 U.S.C. § 10501(c)(2).

Q0

Trackage Rights

Alternatives 1A, 3A, 3C-1, and 3C-2 would include the rerouting of existing Twin Cities & Western Railroad Company (TC&W) freight rail service from the Canadian Pacific's (CP) Bass Lake Spur and Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority's (HCRRA) Cedar Lake (Kenilworth Corridor) to the MN&S Subdivision and BNSF Railway Company's Wayzata Subdivision.

- **Discontinuance of Service.** In order to end freight rail service on a line, any carrier with overhead trackage rights on that line would need to seek discontinuance authority from the Board to be relieved of their common carrier obligation. Accordingly, to end its freight rail service on the Bass Lake Spur and/or the Kenilworth Corridor, TC&W would need to seek discontinuance authority by filing either a petition for exemption pursuant to 49 U.S.C. § 10502 or a full application pursuant to 49 U.S.C. § 10903. A full application is used when there are controversial issues needing Board scrutiny, and a petition for exemption may be used if there is not likely to be any controversy, as it is a more streamlined process. While there appears to be public interest and some controversy over rerouting TC&W traffic to the MN&S line that runs through the City of St. Louis Park, there does not appear to be controversy over TC&W's potential discontinuance of freight rail service over the Bass Lake Spur and/or the Kenilworth Corridor; therefore, a full application would not likely be necessary. The Board usually prepares an Environmental Assessment (EA) for a proposed discontinuance of service over a rail line (except for discontinuances of freight service under modified certificates and discontinuances of trackage rights where the affected line will continue to be operated, which are treated as categorical exclusions that do not need an EA). 49 C.F.R. §§ 1105.6(b) and (c).

Q0

- **Trackage Rights.** A rail carrier must obtain Board approval to operate over a line owned by another carrier. See 49 C.F.R. § 1180.2(d)(7). HCRRA's December 10, 2012 Memo (Southwest Transitway Draft Environmental Impact Statement Questions and Responses

for Surface Transportation Board) indicates that TC&W currently has trackage rights over CP's MN&S line. If this were not the case, then TC&W would need to obtain trackage rights authority before rerouting freight traffic to the MN&S line. Trackage rights are categorically excluded from NEPA review under the Board's environmental rules at 49 C.F.R. § 1105.6(c)(4).

Rail Line Abandonments and Discontinuance of Service

Q0

Although briefly mentioned in Appendix H on page 16, the DEIS does not appear to discuss or evaluate any rail line abandonment. However, HCRRA's December 10, 2012 Memo (Southwest Transitway Draft Environmental Impact Statement Questions and Responses for Surface Transportation Board) indicates that, if freight rail were to be relocated to the MN&S line, then HCRRA would abandon the Kenilworth Corridor tracks and CP would abandon a portion of their tracks along the Bass Lake Spur.

Board authorization is required to abandon or discontinue service over rail lines that are part of the interstate rail network, pursuant to 49 U.S.C. § 10903. Accordingly, if HCRRA and CP plan to abandon these lines, they would both need to seek abandonment authority for their respective rail lines, and TC&W would need to seek discontinuance authority from the Board pursuant to 49 C.F.R. part 1152. If abandonment authority is granted by the Board, an abandonment extinguishes the common carrier obligation for a rail line, and removes the underlying right-of-way from the Board's jurisdiction.

The Board will normally prepare an EA for a proposed abandonment and discontinuance of service over a line (49 U.S.C. § 1105.6(b)). For environmental reviews of rail line abandonments, the Board's role is limited to the anticipated impacts of the abandonment proposal before the agency: the diversion of traffic to other rail lines or transportation modes and the consequences of removing the track and related structures. Iowa Southern R. Co. – Exemption – Abandonment, 5 I.C.C.2d 496, 501 (1989), aff'd, Goos v. ICC, 911 F.2d 1283 (8th Cir. 1990). The Board's environmental and historic rules at 49 C.F.R. §§ 1105.7 and 1105.8 describe the information needed for the Board's environmental and historic review processes. If the Southwest Transitway EIS is not supplemented to include the information that the Board requires in the appropriate chapters, then the Board would conduct a separate environmental and historic review if and when a proposed abandonment is formally filed with the Board.

Improving, Upgrading, or Realigning an Existing Rail Line

Q0

Alternative 3A-1 would include the co-location of the proposed light rail line and TC&W freight rail service on reconstructed freight rail tracks on CP's Bass Lake Spur and HCRRA's Cedar Lake (Kenilworth Corridor). According to pages ES-2, ES-8, and 2-41 of the DEIS, the existing freight tracks would need to be reconstructed to meet BNSF design standards for clearance requirements.

Pursuant to 49 U.S.C. § 10901, a rail carrier must seek Board authority to construct a new line of

rail or to extend an existing line of rail. However, Board approval is not required to improve, upgrade, or realign an existing line without extending the territory or markets that the railroad serves. See Tex. & Pac. Ry. v. Gulf, Colo. & Santa Fe Ry., 270 U.S. 266, 278 (1925); BNSF Ry.—Petition for Declaratory Order, FD 35164 et al., slip op. at 8 (STB served May 20, 2009); Union Pac. R.R.—Petition for Declaratory Order—Rehabilitation of Mo.-Kan.-Tex. R.R. Between Jude & Ogden Junction, Tex., 3 S.T.B. 646 (1998); Denver & Rio Grande W. R.R.—Joint Constr. Project—Relocation Over Burlington N. R.R., 4 I.C.C.2d 95, 97 (1987). Based on the information provided, reconstructing CP's Bass Lake Spur and HCRRA's Cedar Lake (Kenilworth Corridor) would not require Board approval.

Spur, Industrial, Team, Switching, or Side Track

Board approval is not required to construct or operate spur, industrial, team, switching, or side track (known as "excepted track"), as long as the purpose and effect is not to extend the railroad's territory. See 49 U.S.C. § 10906. In addition, Board approval is not required for an acquisition, abandonment, or discontinuance of spur, industrial, team, switching, or side track. See 49 U.S.C. § 10906.

There is no single test for determining whether a particular track segment should be categorized as a line of railroad or as excepted track. Rather, the agency and the courts have adopted a case-by-case, fact-specific approach to make this determination. Primarily, the Board looks at the intended use of a track, and at a track's physical characteristics.

Connecting Track

Whether or not Board authority would be needed for construction of connecting track depends on whether the connection is proposed for operational efficiency (no authority needed) or to allow the carrier(s) to reach new markets (authority needed).

A carrier can build connecting track that falls outside the Board's jurisdiction if it is just for operational efficiency. In this scenario, constructing connecting track would be akin to double tracking or other track improvements that do not typically require Board authority. Conversely, a railroad can build connecting track that falls under the Board's jurisdiction if the connecting track would reach new markets – just as construction of a new mainline to reach new shippers would require Board authority. Board authority to construct connecting track in this circumstance can be obtained in one of two ways:

Q0

a) The class exemption at 49 CFR 1150.36, which applies if the construction is within existing right-of-way or on land already owned by the railroad.

b) A construction application under 49 U.S.C. 10901, which applies if the construction is not on an existing right-of-way or land owned by the railroad, or a party argues that the class exemption should not apply in a specific case.

If Board authority to construct the connecting track is sought, NEPA applies. For rail line construction projects, OEA may prepare an EIS, but an EA is typically prepared for construction

cases involving connecting track within existing rail rights-of-way or on land owned by connecting railroads. 49 U.S.C. § 1105.6(b)(1).

Two new connections are mentioned in the DEIS: (1) a connection between CP's Bass Lake line and the MN&S line (across the National Lead/Golden Auto Site) and (2) a connection between the MN&S line and the BNSF Wayzata line. (See pages 1-11, 1-12, 2-8, and 2-27). With regard to the connection between CP's Bass Lake line and the MN&S line, HCRRA's December 10, 2012 Memo states that "there will not be any new markets or territory served because of the reroute. TC&W currently has trackage rights on the CP-owned Bass Lake Spur and the MN&S Spur. By using the reroute, the TC&W would exercise existing rights over the MN&S line." While there currently is no direct connection between the Bass Lake line and MN&S line, there is an existing wye track that currently provides a connection from the Bass Lake line to the MN&S line. HCRRA also states that the wye track has historically been used by TC&W to access the Port of Savage. With regard to the connection between the MN&S line and the BNSF Wayzata line, the DEIS states that "the new connection would likely be used, at least in the near term, in a similar manner as the existing connection, which is to access the BNSF Wayzata Subdivision and more efficiently connect to the east side of town. However, the connection would also provide the flexibility to use other routes to get to the various connections that TC&W uses."

Based on the information provided, the connection between the Bass Lake line and the MN&S line would not require Board approval. In addition, it is not likely that Board authority would be needed for the construction of connecting track between the MN&S line and the BNSF Wayzata line, but we need the following additional information to make that determination:

- How long (in miles) would the proposed connecting tracks be?
- Would the proposed line operate in the same manner as the existing one?
- Would the track only be used for overhead traffic or also for local traffic?
- Would any other additional carriers be rerouted to the MN&S line and the proposed connecting track?
- Who owns the land where the connecting track would be constructed?
- Would the proposed connecting track enable carrier(s) to reach new markets or new competitive territory?
- The DEIS states that the connection would also provide the flexibility to use other routes to get to the various connection that TC&W uses. Please be more specific in describing those other routes.

Q0

Chapter 1: Purpose and Need for the Proposed Action

Page	Comment
1-8 and 1-9	The core purpose and need for this project is difficult for a reader to find, and is not mentioned until page 1-8. Recommend stating the purpose and need at the beginning of Chapter 1. Under 40 C.F.R. § 1502.13, an EIS shall briefly specify the proposed project's purpose and need. Even if a longer explanation follows, we recommend that the purpose and need be more clear and succinct. For example, on page 1-8, there is a paragraph that states: "The primary purpose of the proposed project, the Southwest Transitway, is to provide a high-capacity transit connection improving mobility, accessibility, and system linkages to major population and employment centers including Downtown Minneapolis, Chain of Lakes and Recreation Area, Excelsior and Grand, Downtown Hopkins, Golden Triangle Business District, Opus Business Park, and Eden Prairie Center. The proposed project would also provide a high capacity transit alternative to the traffic congestion in the study area and further the implementation of the Metropolitan Council's 2030 TPP goal to double transit ridership by 2030." If this is the core purpose and need statement, we recommend stating it on the first page of Chapter 1.

K0

Chapter 2: Alternatives Considered

Page	Comment
2-20	If TC&W's freight traffic is rerouted to the MN&S corridor, pages 2-20 and 2-27 of the DEIS state that freight traffic on the MN&S line would increase by a maximum of an additional six trains per day and a maximum of 22 additional trains per week. Freight traffic is projected to increase nationwide over the next several years, and traffic forecasts should be available from the relevant freight railroads. That information would be useful to include in the analyses of alternatives that would result in the rerouting of freight traffic over the MN&S line. If freight traffic forecasts for the reroute alternatives are not evaluated as part of the proposed project, it would seem appropriate to consider freight traffic forecasts and any potential impacts in Chapter 9, Indirect Effects and Cumulative Analysis.
2-22	HCRRA's December 10, 2012 Memo (Southwest Transitway Draft Environmental Impact Statement Questions and Responses for Surface Transportation Board) indicates that, if freight rail is relocated to the MN&S line, then HCRRA would abandon the Kenilworth Corridor tracks and CP would abandon a portion of their tracks along the Bass Lake Spur.

C

C

	For alternatives that would include the rerouting of existing TC&W freight rail service to the MN&S line and Wayzata line, please include information about any planned rail line abandonments, including the information required under the Board's rules at 49 C.F.R. §§ 1105.7(e)(1) and 1105.8.	C C

Chapter 3: Social Effects

Page	Comment	
	Abandonment and discontinuance need to be evaluated. Proposed connecting track between the MN&S line and the BNSF Wayzata line may need to be evaluated.	Q0
3-75	The Surface Transportation Board should be included as a consulting agency in the Section 106 review process.	L3
3-77 and 3-78	A Programmatic Agreement (PA) is discussed on pages 3-77 and 3-78, and it would be appropriate for the Surface Transportation Board to be involved in any revision of the PA and to become a signatory to this document.	L3

Chapter 4: Environmental Effects

Page	Comment	
	Abandonment and discontinuance need to be evaluated. Proposed connecting track between the MN&S line and the BNSF Wayzata line may need to be evaluated.	C
4-26	Under Table 4.2-1, "Permitting Agencies, Corresponding Regulatory Responsibilities, and Actions," the Surface Transportation Board should be listed as a "Permitting Agency." The Board is an economic regulatory agency that Congress charged with resolving railroad rate and service disputes and reviewing proposed railroad mergers. The Board has jurisdiction over railroad rate and service issues and rail restructuring transactions, such as mergers, line sales, new line construction, and abandonments. Board approval would be required if: • TC&W proposes to discontinue service over CP's Bass Lake Spur and HCRRA's Cedar Lake (Kenilworth Corridor); • CP proposes to abandon a portion of the Bass Lake Spur and HCRRA	Q0

	proposes to abandon the Cedar Lake (Kenilworth Corridor)); and/or • The construction of connecting track, if it is determined that the new track(s) would enable carrier(s) to reach new markets or new competitive territory. We have provided a description of the Board's jurisdiction and actions that require Board authorization with our comments.	L3
	Safety Changes in frequency, weight, speed and volume of trains on the MN&S line may increase safety risks, and there are a number of safety concerns because of sharp turns, steep grades, elevated tracks, narrow right-of-way, at-grade crossings, and schools near the line. Accordingly, it is critically important that any proposed changes to freight rail operations conform to relevant freight rail standards. In addition, increased freight rail traffic near schools and residential areas could have safety implications that warrant mitigation.	C Q0

Chapter 5: Economic Effects

Page	Comment
	No Comments.

Chapter 6: Transportation Effects

Page	Comment	
	Abandonment and discontinuance need to be evaluated. Proposed connecting track between the MN&S line and the BNSF Wayzata line may need to be evaluated.	C

Chapter 7: Section 4(f) Evaluation

Page	Comment
	The U.S. Department of Transportation regulation known as Section 4(f) is not applicable to Surface Transportation Board actions because the Board is an independent agency. Accordingly, we do not have any comments to submit on Chapter 7.

Chapter 8: Financial Analysis

Page	Comment
	No comments.

Chapter 9: Indirect Effects and Cumulative Analysis

Page	Comment
	If TC&W's freight traffic is rerouted to the MN&S corridor, pages 2-20 and 2-27 of the DEIS state that freight traffic on the MN&S line would increase by a maximum of an additional six trains per day and a maximum of 22 additional trains per week. Freight traffic is projected to increase nationwide over the next several years, and traffic forecasts should be available from the relevant freight railroads. That information would be useful to include in the analyses of alternatives that would result in the rerouting of freight traffic over the MN&S line. If freight traffic forecasts for the reroute alternatives are not evaluated as part of the proposed project, it would seem appropriate to consider freight traffic forecasts and any potential impacts in Chapter 9.

C

Chapter 10: Environmental Justice

Page	Comment
	No comments.

Chapter 11: Evaluation of Alternatives

Page	Comment
	No comments.

Chapter 12: Public Agency Coordination and Comments

Page	Comment
12-14	Under Table 12.2-2. Preliminary List of Required Permits, the Surface Transportation Board should be included in the list of "Federal Approvals" that may be required because, depending on the alternative selected, certain aspects of this proposed project may require a license from the Board. We have provided a description of the Board's jurisdiction and actions that require

Q0

U

	Board authorization with our comments.
12-16	Under the section 12.2.2 titled "Section 106 Coordination," the Surface Transportation Board should be: (1) listed as a coordinating agency and (2) included in the Section 106 process. In addition, a Section 106 Agreement is discussed on page 12-16. As a Federal agency with responsibilities under the National Historic Preservation Act (16 U.S.C. 470f), it would be appropriate for the Surface Transportation Board to be involved in the development of this agreement and to become a signatory to this document.

L3

S1

<Maya.Sarna@dot.gov>
12/19/2012 09:38 AM

To <Christa.Stoebner@stb.dot.gov>, <swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>
cc <Christopher.VanWyk@dot.gov>, <Vicki.Rutson@stb.dot.gov>
bcc
Subject RE: Comments on the Southwest Transitway DEIS

Thank you, Christa.

Have a wonderful holiday!

_____
MAYA SARNA
(d) 202.366.5811 | (e) maya.sarna@dot.gov

-----Original Message-----
From: Christa.Stoebner@stb.dot.gov [mailto:Christa.Stoebner@stb.dot.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, December 19, 2012 10:34 AM
To: swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us
Cc: Sarna, Maya (FTA); VanWyk, Christopher (FTA); Vicki.Rutson@stb.dot.gov
Subject: Comments on the Southwest Transitway DEIS

The Surface Transportation Board's comments on the Southwest Transitway DEIS are attached. We also mailed a copy of our comments to Katie Walker and Marisol Simon.

(See attached file: Dec 19 2012 Letter to Hennepin County.pdf) (See attached file: Southwest Light Rail in Minneapolis DEIS STB Comments Dec 19.docx)

Christa Stoebner
Surface Transportation Board
Office of Environmental Analysis
202.245.0299

"Nancy Newcomb" <scratchndentlady@comcast.net>
12/19/2012 11:12 AM

To <swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>
cc
bcc
Subject 2 Issues

I am small business in St. Louis Park. I am a part of the Hiway 7/Louisiana interchange coalition that is comprised of many businesses in SLP. We have resigned ourselves to the fact that LRT is coming thru, no matter what. We have a couple issues: The transportation $ could be better spent on other projects such as Hwy 10 which has had a number of fatalities. Hwy 7 has had 0. I understand that this project is being done to prepare for LRT but have you lost sight of human cost just to get the LRT thru here? The other issue is that SLP has not set aside any $ to help any of the businesses that will be in a 2-year construction zone with no access off of Hwy 7 on and off for the 2 year period and then no access at all for months at the end of the project. This is our major artery for our businesses. MNDOT has stated there is a 30-40% drop in business on this kind of project (we know that is a low estimate). Needless to say a few of us will not be able to sustain that. We are a 15 year old family business and it's sad. The city offered us low interest loans that we have to pay back, marketing/communications which we would have to pay for and free consultation. We are business people with a wealth of experience and knowledge, do you really think a government office can teach us how to prepare our business. If our revenue is down, how can we possible pay for extra costs.? Why is there $500,000 dedicated to the design and implementation of artwork for the Hwy 7/Louisiana interchange, more bicycle/pedestrian paths in a commercial/industrial zone but no money to help the businesses was set aside. All I'm asking is for a little compassion in supporting the businesses the way we have supported you all these years.

T4

M2

Nancy Newcomb | Owner
Odds and Ends Furniture Gallery
3740 Louisianna Avenue South
St. Louis Park, MN 55426
Tel: 952.924.1061 | Fax: 952.924-0567
scratchndentlady@comcast.net
www.oddsandendsfurniture.com

"Jeff Roy, Summit Hill Association"
<summithill@visi.com>
12/19/2012 01:19 PM

To <swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>
cc
bcc
Subject Letter from SLP residents re DEIS

December 19, 2012

To Whom It May Concern:

We are writing in response to the *Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)* . We whole-heartedly support the SWLRT as a system, but have many concerns regarding the proposed freight rail re-route plan in St. Louis Park. We support the co-location of freight and the SWLRT in the Kenilworth Corridor. A C

We have long been active residents in the St. Louis Park Lenox Neighborhood and in the Lenox Neighborhood Association (LNA) – recognized by the City as the citizen participation organization representing residents and businesses within our neighborhood boundaries. Jeff was the LNA President 1993 to 1998, and was deeply involved in discussions with former Mayor Gail Dorfman and city staff in the mid to late 1990's when the City was studying the proposed freight rail re-route issue. LNA was opposed to the re-route. The City Council eventually voted to oppose a proposed re-route of freight from the current Kenilworth Corridor to the MS&S spur line unless it was found unfeasible to keep it in the Kenilworth. Today, the LNA still opposes the re-route of freight rail onto the MN&S spur line and made that again official in a resolution in 2011.

The data used in the creation of the *Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)* to evaluate the proposed freight re-route does not include the studies conducted by the City of St. Louis Park or those by the citizen group Safety in the Park. These studies show that the co-location of the SWLRT and freight traffic in the Kenilworth would be the cheapest and safest alternative; and the least disruptive to the most residents and small businesses. In addition, the TC&W railroad that currently carries the freight in the Kenilworth has indicated that it does not want the re-route of freight traffic onto the MN&S. This is because the Kenilworth route is the shortest, straightest and most level route. It is clear that huge financial incentives would need to be offered to the TC&W in order for it to use the longer, more capital expensive route…and all at additional tax payer expense! C L4

The proposed re-route of freight rail traffic from the Kenilworth Corridor to the MN&S line makes no sense fiscally, environmentally, nor for the safety of homeowners, children, small businesses and motorists who would be impacted. But specifically, we here share are concerns about safety as follows: C

· There are five schools within a half-mile of the re-route (with the SLP High School building within 75 feet of the tracks!); while there are no schools along what would be the co-location route in the Kenilworth.

· The allowable speed limit for re-routed freight traffic on the MN&S would increase from current 10 mph to 25 mph. As it is, trains cannot stop on a dime for emergencies; and with the longer – up to mile-long trains that would be re-routed to this spur line, we understand it would take at least a mile to make an emergency stop (please read child or car on tracks).

· With longer mile-long trains, the re-routed freight cars would simultaneously block six crossings several times a day – taking 10 minutes or more for trains to clear an intersection. Given the curves and grades along the MS&S line, these re-routed trains would not be able to safely travel at 25 mph – thereby potentially increasing the blocking of traffic for more than 20 minutes and 10 times a day! There are four blind curves within a mile of each other on the MN&S line which adds to the potential for future train derailments – as we have seen only too much nationally – increasing with increased speed.

· The safety of thousands of school children and staff at the SLP High School are at risk with this proposed re-route and longer & more frequent trains. The track is between the High School and a McDonald's franchise, and the school's athletic field – posing a serious threat to student safety even with improved crossing arms. It is unreasonable to expect no pedestrian accidents in this area - particularly since youth can be more impulsive and risk taking.

The proposed freight re-route is a very unwise proposal. It is costly to tax payers, unsafe, and totally unnecessary as the current traffic can stay in the Kenilworth Corridor and be co-located with the proposed SWLRT traffic.

C

Sincerely,

Jeff Roy and Jeanne Stevens
3233 Florida Ave. S.
St. Louis Park, MN 55426

--

--

--- the forwarded message follows ---
----- Message from "Jeff Roy, Summit Hill Association" <summithill@visi.com> on Wed, 19 Dec 2012 13:14:25 -0600 -----
To <sw@co.hennepin.mn.us>, <jacobsjeffrey@comcast.net>, <hallfinslp@gmail.com>, <spanoslpcouncil@gm

: <suesanger@comcast.net>, <annmavityslp@comcast.net>, <susansanta@aol.com>, <juliaross.slp@gmail.c
cc: <jstevens@hclib.org>, <lapray@comcast.net>
December 19, 2012

To Whom It May Concern:

We are writing in response to the *Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)* . We whole-heartedly support the SWLRT as a system, but have many concerns regarding the proposed freight rail re-route plan in St. Louis Park. We support the co-location of freight and the SWLRT in the Kenilworth Corridor.

We have long been active residents in the St. Louis Park Lenox Neighborhood and in the Lenox Neighborhood Association (LNA) – recognized by the City as the citizen participation organization representing residents and businesses within our neighborhood boundaries. Jeff was the LNA President 1993 to 1998, and was deeply involved in discussions with former Mayor Gail Dorfman and city staff in the mid to late 1990's when the City was studying the proposed freight rail re-route issue. LNA was opposed to the re-route. The City Council eventually voted to oppose a proposed re-route of freight from the current Kenilworth Corridor to the MS&S spur line unless it was found unfeasible to keep it in the Kenilworth. Today, the LNA still opposes the re-route of freight rail onto the MN&S spur line and made that again official in a resolution in 2011.

The data used in the creation of the *Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)* to evaluate the proposed freight re-route does not include the studies conducted by the City of St. Louis Park or those by the citizen group Safety in the Park. These studies show that the co-location of the SWLRT and freight traffic in the Kenilworth would be the cheapest and safest alternative; and the least disruptive to the most residents and small businesses. In addition, the TC&W railroad that currently carries the freight in the Kenilworth has indicated that it does not want the re-route of freight traffic onto the MN&S. This is because the Kenilworth route is the shortest, straightest and most level route. It is clear that huge financial incentives would need to be offered to the TC&W in order for it to use the longer, more capital expensive route…and all at additional tax payer expense!

The proposed re-route of freight rail traffic from the Kenilworth Corridor to the MN&S line makes no sense fiscally, environmentally, nor for the safety of homeowners, children, small businesses and motorists who would be impacted. But specifically, we here share are concerns about safety as follows:

- There are five schools within a half-mile of the re-route (with the SLP High School building within 75 feet of the tracks!); while there are no schools along what would be the co-location route in the Kenilworth.

- The allowable speed limit for re-routed freight traffic on the MN&S would increase from current 10 mph to 25 mph. As it is, trains cannot stop on a dime for emergencies; and with the longer – up to mile-long trains that would be re-routed to this spur line, we understand it would

take at least a mile to make an emergency stop (please read child or car on tracks).

- With longer mile-long trains, the re-routed freight cars would simultaneously block six crossings several times a day – taking 10 minutes or more for trains to clear an intersection. Given the curves and grades along the MS&S line, these re-routed trains would not be able to safely travel at 25 mph – thereby potentially increasing the blocking of traffic for more than 20 minutes and 10 times a day! There are four blind curves within a mile of each other on the MN&S line which adds to the potential for future train derailments – as we have seen only too much nationally – increasing with increased speed.

- The safety of thousands of school children and staff at the SLP High School are at risk with this proposed re-route and longer & more frequent trains. The track is between the High School and a McDonald's franchise, and the school's athletic field – posing a serious threat to student safety even with improved crossing arms. It is unreasonable to expect no pedestrian accidents in this area - particularly since youth can be more impulsive and risk taking.

The proposed freight re-route is a very unwise proposal. It is costly to tax payers, unsafe, and totally unnecessary as the current traffic can stay in the Kenilworth Corridor and be co-located with the proposed SWLRT traffic.

Sincerely,

Jeff Roy and Jeanne Stevens
3233 Florida Ave. S.
St. Louis Park, MN 55426

--

"PAUL LEUTGEB"
<PAULLEUTGEB@COMCAST.NET>
12/19/2012 05:05 PM

To <swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>
cc
bcc
Subject Southwest Light Rail

Dear Sir/Madam:

I am enclosing my comment on the EIS by attachment which contains my letterhead including full name and address and telephone number.

Let us hope that this massively expensive and ill conceived disaster can somehow be averted.

B

Sincerely yours,

Paul F. Leutgeb
2536 Burnham Road
Minneapolis, MN 55416
(612) 377-2847

PAUL F. LEUTGEB
DIANE J. CAMP, M.D.
2536 BURNHAM ROAD
MINNEAPOLIS, MN 55416

TELEPHONE/FAX (612) 377-2847

December 19, 2012

SWCORRIDOR@CO.HENNEPIN.MN.US

Re: Environmental Impact Statement for Southwest Rail

Dear Sir/Madam:

The exceptional article by Dr. Goldsmith in the Star Tribune last Friday was perfectly on point in stating that the environmental impact of running the proposed light rail trains about 100 yards from our home will be to destroy our neighborhood. Dr. Goldsmith's larger concern was that the trains would destroy the wilderness area as a recreational site enjoyed by so many for walking and bicycling between our home near Cedar Lake and downtown Minneapolis.

My major concern is that by running the proposed rail line through a nature preserve, the fundamental purpose of light rail, which is to provide mass transportation, is completely vitiated. Building an expensive rail station in the woods where no one will get on or off the train is an exercise in utter lunacy. It simply mystifies me to learn that the train will be run where no passengers will have any need or opportunity to get on or off as they will be riding in the beautiful and picturesque setting of a nature preserve. Would it not make more sense to run the trains down the 29th street rail corridor, through the uptown area and into downtown on Hennepin or Nicollet or some other major street where thousands of potential passengers would have access to mass transportation? I have heard the laughably dismissive argument that those potential passengers can ride the bus for mass transit. *Now the same issues are coming up in Golden Valley with another proposed light rail line that planners want to run through a nature preserve rather than route the trains through north Minneapolis where passengers would have access and ability to use mass transit.* E0 E10

I understand that the fundamental flaw in planning projects like southwest light rail is that the vast majority of the money comes from the federal government and is viewed as "free money," by the planners. It makes it possible to ignore common sense principles like running the trains where a maximum number of potential passengers can have access to mass transportation. Instead, the trains get run where the suburban passengers can have a picturesque trip and the fundamental purpose of light rail, to provide mass transportation, is completely ignored and totally avoided while the "free money," from our federal government gets shamefully wasted. None of this touches on principles of common sense and good judgment and ignores long established practical experience which confirms that not one of these light rail lines is capable of producing sufficient revenue from rider fees to be self supporting. Every one of the lines has to be subsidized by the taxpayers on an annual basis forever. Running the trains through the woods just makes the revenue picture even more dismal than it would otherwise be. T1

Sincerely yours,

Paul F. Leutgeb

RECEIVED
DEC 19 2012
BY:

December 7, 2012

Hennepin County
Housing, Community Works & Transit
ATT: Southwest Transitway
701 Fourth Avenue South, Suite 400
Minneapolis, MN 55415

Re: Calhoun Isles Condominium Association Comments on the Southwest Transitway Draft Environmental Impact Statement

Dear Project Manager;

Calhoun Isles Condominium Association is located north of the future location of the West Lake Street station and abuts the south-east side of the present Kenilworth bike and walking trails, which is the present freight line right-a- way. Our complex consists of 109 high-rise condos and of 34 town homes. The condo construction uses 11 inch concrete for walls and floors rising 12 floors. The railroad right-a-way at this point is directly adjacent to our Condominium Association.

CONCERNS

A comprehensive review of the DEIS has shown the particular importance of the following issues:

- Noise
- Vibration
- Electromagnetic Interference and live exposed wires
- Safety
- Visual Effects

O1 N2 R1

NOISE

O1 O5 O11 E4

` DEIS data indicates the Leq ambient noise level in the Calhoun Isles area to be 44dB[1]. This data does not include the freight train traveling this track at 5 MPH two or maybe three times over a 24-hour period. With a 90 ton LRT traveling these tracks every 3 ½ minutes at 30 to 40 MPH, with brake and wheel squeal, with the warning bells at the station, the (SEL) sound level will reach 114 dB as also shown by DEIS data[2]. This is "severe impact"[3]. The tracks at this area are on a curve, guaranteeing wheel squeal. Further the stop at the West Lake Street station guarantees brake squeal. The FTA charts use Leq , cumulative noise exposure over one hour, with only 12 LRTs per hour at a distance of 50 feet. Our area will have 17 LRTs per hour at a distance of approximately 20 feet from a two track LRT. *There are no charts covering such extreme conditions.* This does not take into account the noise amplification that occurs in the upper floors of the high rise or that 17 times an hour we shall experience (SEL) noise levels of

[1] DEIS Appendix H Part 1, page 215 and page 217 for footnotes description.
[2] DEIS 4.7.3.4 Table 4.7-2
[3] DEIS Appendix H Part 1, page 207 and FTA Manual page 49, Figure 3-1.

114 dB[4]. On the log scale **this does not appear excessive, but on a normal linear scale this is an increase over the ambient of three thousand times in intensity**! From universal data, this sound level is similar to live rock music or an auto horn at one meter distance. E4

An additional source of noise would occur with a LRT bridge over Cedar Lake Pkwy. The LRT would begin its rise and complete its drop close to the Calhoun Isles complex and thus expose its excessive track noise more easily to the trail and the surrounding homes. O1

VIBRATION

Vibration from the LRT will be at a higher frequency than that experienced with the freight train and thus more in the audible range as it dampens. There is concern about the long range effects, both on the concrete condominium and the structure of the town homes construction With the schedule of the LRT this vibration will occur every 3.5 minutes compared to every 8 to 12 hours as previously. Thoughts of the collapse of the Sabo Bridge, caused by stress fractures, come to mind. E4 O1 O5

ELECTROMAGNET INTERFERENCE

With fully exposed overhead wires and arcing, significant concern exists about the health of the occupants of the nearby housing units. The DEIS did not reference any effects on people[1]. The total distance across the right-a-way from condo to condo is only 60 feet. This would put some of the condo units within about 15 to 20 feet of the LRT. E6 N11

Exposed overhead LRT high voltage wires are deadly to birds and kill them en-masse, especially migrating birds. The DEIS dismissed as unlikely any effects on migrating birds[2]. Calhoun Isles and the Park are on a migrating path. The DEIS has not performed any studies on this, therefore more data is required as part of the mitigation process.

SAFETY

Park Siding Park is a playground just across a single lane street from the Kenilworth trail and right a way. There is significant safety concerns about a children's park so close to a fast LRT. Again, there is the noise, vibration, and an environment of a fast train running every few minutes very close to a playground. R2 E7 E9

The Kenilworth biking and walking trail crosses the LRT tracks at three locations: just south of the West Lake Street station, the Cedar Lake Pkwy, and just north of the 21st Street station where the North Cedar Lake Trail and the Kenilworth trail meet. The concern is whether these crossings will remain safe and convenient. The actual location of the bike and walking trail alongside the LRT was not specified in the DEIS.

VISUAL EFFECTS

The Kenilworth bike and walking trail is a peaceful and pastoral section of the Minneapolis system. To place a fast LRT train, running every 3 ½ minutes, with its catenary poles and wires through this area would have a negative effect on the park. Clearly, local residents wish to retain the environment for the bikers and walkers who use this trail. To the Met Council this area may be seen as a "right-a-way" but, to thousands of Minneapolis residents our park system "is the jewel in the crown" envisioned by those E4 E8 N2

[4] DEIS page 4-84 Table 4.7-2.
[1] DEIS 4.10.3 page 4-132
[2] DEIS 4.3.2.4 page 4-49

having the foresight to establish this park system. We realize Light Rail is important, but do not wish to destroy the environment. A surface LRT would destroy this.

SUGGESTED MITIGATION ALTERNATIVES

Placing the LRT below grade level would significantly reduce our concerns noted above. This could be accomplished with a tunnel or, more economically, with ditch and fully enclosed sound barrier. Sound barriers, by themselves, would not control the sound amplified to the upper floors of the high rise. Therefore, the sound barriers must be enclosed. Such a system would also ease the problem of the Cedar Lake Blvd intersection, allowing the road to be a grade bridge over the LRT track. Live overhead wires would be shielded from migrating birds, some rare such as Eagles and Cranes.

O1 N8 E4 E10

We value the opportunity to comment on the DEIS for the SWLRT, and we expect to have a role in the mitigation process regarding the concerns addressed above.

L1

Sincerely,

Nancy Green President

Nancy Green

Calhoun Isles Condominium Association

CALHOUN ISLES CONDOMINIUM ASSOCIATION

RESPONSE TO

DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

ISSUE NOISE AND VIBRATION

4.7.1 Methodology pg4-76-77

Airborne noise effects associated with the proposed Southwest Transitway Project were evaluated using the FTA's Detailed Noise Assessment methods (FTA 2006). The methodology included identifying noise-sensitive land uses, measuring existing outdoor noise levels in the project area, using the existing noise levels to identify noise impact thresholds, calculating project-related outdoor noise levels, and determining if project-related noise levels exceed FTA noise impact thresholds. FTA noise impact thresholds vary depending on land use and existing noise exposure. Two types of noise impacts are included in the FTA criteria. The type of impact affects whether noise mitigation is implemented.

- Severe Impact. A significant percentage of people are highly annoyed by noise in this range. Noise mitigation would normally be specified for severe impact areas unless it is not feasible or reasonable (unless there is no practical method of mitigating the impact).
- Moderate Impact. In this range, other project-specific factors are considered to determine the magnitude of the impact and the need for mitigation. Other factors include the predicted increase over existing noise levels, the types and number of noise-sensitive land uses affected, existing outdoor-indoor sound insulation, and the cost-effectiveness of mitigating noise to more acceptable levels.

Refer to Appendix H for details on the noise impact criteria.

TRACK AND BIKE/WALKING TRAILS

COMMENT: The information detailed in this section is so severe that mitigation is imperative. The standard in the FTA Manual for noise is for a distance of 50 feet and 12 passes per hour. At our location the distance from a two track LRT to the condo complex will be approximately 20 feet and the hourly trips will be 17. There are no charts that even come close to these extreme conditions. The ambient Leq noise measured is 44 dB while the LRT noise SEL, from the Hiawatha Line, will be 114 dB. That is an extraordinary increase in noise that will occur 17 times every hour. This is not only true for the residents of the Calhoun Isles Condominium Association, but also for those at Park Siding playground and the Kenilworth biking and walking trail. Presently, residents of Calhoun Isles Condominium Association, who live in the upper floors of the towers and in line of sight of the

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freight train wheels, report the noise at ground level is amplified at levels above ground. For the vast majority of time, the residents, who live in the tower facing Cedar Lake, experience low levels of noise (the aforementioned 44 dB). These noise levels are so low, in fact, that some of the residents can regularly hear ducks quacking and/or geese honking on Cedar Lake. Noise monitoring locations should include higher elevations so that appropriate mitigations can be implemented.

Based on the ESI Engineering Report (Appendix) the following are additional comments on the noise impact assessment:

1. An Existing Noise Exposure level of L_{dn} = 60 dBA was assumed based on measurements near West Lake Street (Site No. 31), but we assume most of cluster A-A-WB-2-1 is located in an area similar to Site No. 30, which has an existing noise level of Ldn = 55 dBA. This reduces the impact criterion level.
2. Additional measurement of the existing noise exposure level are needed nearer the condo building more accurately evaluate the noise impact.
3. The DEIS "Noise Assessment Table - 2012 Update" uses a distance to track centerline of 49 ft for the nearest cluster, but the actual distance between track centerline and the nearest house is estimated to be about 30 ft.
4. Including bell noise traveling at 15 mph in the calculations increases the impact by about 6 dBA.
5. The DEIS "Noise Assessment Table - 2012 Update" uses the wrong moderate and severe impact levels. If the existing noise level is Ldn = 60 dBA, the impact criteria is 58 dBA for moderate and 63 dBA for severe, not 60 dBA for moderate and 64 dBA for severe as shown.
6. The impact criteria for an existing noise level of Ldn = 55 dBA (measurement Site No. 30) is 55 dBA for moderate and 61 dBA for severe.
7. The "Ambient Noise Impact Table - 2012 Updates" in Appendix H includes noise measurement results. The descriptions for Site No.'s 30 and 31 say that noise from several CT&W train events was removed. However the measurement is noted to indicate the freight train noise was included in the measurement. Which is correct?
8. The FTA manual does not have an adjustment for effects of elevation. No adjustment in the calculation for the height of the townhouses and condo buildings were included in the DEIS assessment.
9. Train horns were not used in the DEIS noise analysis. This is an issue at Cedar Lake Parkway if an at-grade-crossing is selected as an alternative to the bridge in the current design. Our calculations indicate that one train horn per hour at the Cedar Lake Parkway causes an impact that exceeds the Severe Impact criterion by 9 dBA at 50 ft.
10. If the train bells and horn are sounded from the front and rear of the 3 car trains simultaneously (as was done on the Hiawatha line), the noise exposure is greatly increased. This needs to be verified.
11. The distance from the track to the nearest cluster in the 2012 Update of the Noise Assessment Table is 49 feet. However, the nearest house is about 30 feet from the centerline of the alignment. The nearer distance increases the noise impact by about 2 dBA.

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12. **LRT speeds indicated on drawings in the DEIS are slower than 45 mph in much of the Kenilworth Corridor.**

4.7.3 Long Term Effects pg 4-84

Table 4.7-2 Sound Exposure Levels used in the Noise Analysis. Operational assumptions include # trips/day, speed, vehicle bells, horns, stationary bells

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COMMENTS; Operational assumptions include # trips/day, speed, vehicle bells, horns, stationary bells but does not mention the long term effect of frequency of the noise levels from for example, high frequency wheel squeal and low frequency train rumble from train sway. When the LRT is operational, the sound will increase from approximately one locomotive train per 8 hours to approximately 250 LRT trains per day. A final analysis of the long term effects should include recognition and study of the effects of noise exposure from over 250 trains per day. Calhoun Isles Condominiums will be exposed to noise from five of the six noise sources listed in table 4.7-2 including Sound Level Exposure of 106 decibels from stationary crossing signal and 114 decibels from vehicle curve squeal. This noise affects all the residents of Calhoun Isles Condominium Association with some as close as 40 feet from the current single track who will be severely impacted by noise well above the 55dB.

4.7.6 Mitigation pg4-102

Project noise levels that result in a "Severe Impact" to a receptor pose a compelling need for mitigation. Most of the severe impacts are due to warning signals such as horns and bells near at-grade crossings, crosswalks and stations. Use of these signals is required for safe operation of the LRT system, but this does not exclude mitigation options for these impacts .

LOOKING DOWN FROM 3151 TOWER

COMMENT: As stated in Table 4.7-8, Noise level of the250 LRT trains will have a severe impact on 406 living units between West Lake Street Station and Penn Station, especially given the concrete/stucco towers and townhomes structure of the Calhoun Isles Condominium Association. The West Lake Street station is less than 1 city block from the Calhoun Isles Condominiums; this area will be plagued with the bell noise as well as the brake squeal as the LRT approaches the station. The brake squeal will be particularly loud, louder than the 114 dB, as trains travel down the Cedar Lake Pkwy bridge ramp into the West Lake Street station. Calhoun Isles Condominiums are also on a curve of the tracks. This factor also guarantees significant wheel squeal. Another source of wheel squeal will occur when the 90 ton trains accelerate from a stopped position at the station and proceed to downtown Minneapolis or to Eden Prairie. Based on multiple observations that have been made at various points on the Hiawatha LRT, the bell noise will be as obnoxious as the noise from the wheel squeal. The Kenilworth trail is adjacent to the proposed LRT route. Kenilworth Trail is a well -used neighborhood area that connects the Chain of Lakes and intersects with Historic Grand Rounds. Users of Cedar Lake Park, South Beach,

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Hidden Beach, Park Siding, boaters and many other recreational destinations are impacted by the noise from the LRT. No specific mitigations are listed to address this impact on the densely populated and heavily utilized area north of the West Lake Street Station. Calhoun Isles Condominium Association requests additional study of the noise impact on the neighborhood and asks for consideration of mitigations for the area between West Lake Street Station and Cedar Lake Parkway that includes tunneling, trenching or a covered trench such as the trench on the Hiawatha line that goes under Minnehaha Park. We think that virtually all the bell noise can be eliminated by employing a less invasive warning signal, such as flashing lights, instead of the bells at the West Lake station. The SWLRT will not encounter any cross streets between the Belt Line Highway and 21st street. Enclosing the SWLRT in a tunnel or a covered trench will allow the bike and walking paths to be segregated from the tracks. Hence, using the flashing lights at the West Street station will provide adequate warning to the riders. The bells and/or horns can be used, if an emergency situation arises. We believe that the elimination of the bells will solve a major noise issue for the entire CIDNA neighborhood south of Cedar Lake. Neighborhood associations should be stakeholders in planning the mitigations for the severe noise levels. We respectfully request that the comment period for 4.7.6 be extended until completion of additional study and/or compilation of specific proposed mitigations.

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PARK SIDING PLAYGROUND & TRAIN

L1

4.8.2.1 Vibration-Sensitive Land Uses pg 4-108
The FTA vibration screening distances for LRT projects are 450 feet, 150 feet, and 100 feet for land use categories 1, 2, and 3 (as described in Section 4.8.1.1) respectively. These distances were used to determine if any vibration sensitive land uses exist within the screening distances adjacent to each of the alternative alignments. These are illustrated in Figure 4.8-2. Table 4.8-2 summarizes the number of vibration sensitive land uses found within the vibration screening area.

COMMENT: Continuous road and train vibrations from 250 trains per day can damage existing structures as demonstrated with the collapse of the Sabo Bridge from stress fatigue. Construction vibrations can also result in structural damage. Living units in close proximity to the proposed LRT route such as the Calhoun Isles Condominiums which exhibit frequency change as the vibration wave travels should have vibration studies performed in the units prior to construction and after construction has been completed and the trains are operational.

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The following are additional comments as noted in the ESI Engineerg Consultant's Report contained in the Appendix on the vibration impact assessment:

1. **The project generated vibration and ground-borne noise impact presented in the DEIS assumes the rails and train wheels are in perfect condition. Worn or corrugated rails and wheels with flats are know to increase vibration and ground-borne noise by as much as 10 dB.**

2. **The distance to the cluster A-A-WB-2-1, the nearest cluster, is shown in General Vibration Assessment Results at 41 feet vs. 49 feet in the Noise Assessment Table. This is inconsistent and there are residences that are closer than 41 feet.**

4.8.6 Mitigation pg 4-118
Detailed vibration analyses will be conducted during the Final EIS in coordination with Preliminary Engineering. The Detailed Vibration Assessment may include performing vibration propagation measurements. These detailed assessments during the Final EIS/preliminary engineering phase have more potential to reduce project related effects than assessments of mitigation options at the conceptual engineering phase of the project. Potential mitigation measures may include maintenance, planning and design of special track work, vehicle specifications, and special track support systems such as resilient fasteners, ballast mats, resiliently supported ties, and floating slabs .

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E4
OVERLOOK

COMMENT: **Potential mitigation for vibration at high frequency for example when brakes are applied to low frequency when 90 ton trains move and rumble along the track's curves like the one approaching the West Lake Street Station, are not included in the DEIS. Neighborhood associations should be included in the alternative design of these mitigations. Alternatives may include tunneling or trenching in areas with severe impact from noise and vibration.**

ISSUE: LAKE STREET STATION: connectivity, parking, safety

2.3.3 LRT 3A (Locally Preferred Alternative) / page 2-31
Stations are proposed at Mitchell Road, Southwest Station, Eden Prairie Town Center, Golden Triangle, City West, Opus, Shady Oak Road, downtown Hopkins, Blake Road, Louisiana Avenue, Wooddale Avenue, Beltline Boulevard, West Lake Street, 21stStreet, Penn Avenue, Van White Boulevard, and Royalston Avenue.
4.6 Air Quality 4.6.1.3 Traffic Analysis Air quality data summarized in Tables 406-2 to Table 4.6-4indicate compliance with standards for air pollutants. 4.6.4 Long Term Effects The traffic analysis completed for this DEIS indicates that several intersections are anticipated to degrade to LOS D,E, or F as a result of at grade crossings, LRT stations, specifically those with park and ride , will cause localized increases in traffic along adjacent roadways.

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I2

Comment: The West Lake Street Station will be located within a half mile radius of Excelsior Blvd/West Lake Street/Dean Parkway/West Calhoun Parkway. This is the highest traveled highway in Hennepin County with counts of 39,000 cars. Please refer to the Capstone Project conducted at the University of Minnesota that discusses traffic and trail usage in Minneapolis. http://pwpg.org/lake-st-excelsior-blvd/. **Currently, automobile traffic is frequently gridlocked in the area surrounding the proposed West Lake Street Station. It is reasonable to expect that the West Lake Street Station will increase the number of cars utilizing these streets. Neighboring communities such as Calhoun Isles Condominium Association would be adversely affected by emissions from the increased number of automobiles.** E10 I2 P4

No degree of degradation of the air quality should occur in this already saturated area as a result of the West Lake Street Station. Request additional study of the current traffic flow and projected traffic flow increase related to LRT use based on studies of the Hiawatha line ridership characteristics for traveling to the LRT stations. These studies should then be used as the basis for planning the design of the West Lake Street Station. N9

3.1.5 Long-Term Effects

3.1.5.1 Effects to Land Use and Socioeconomics / Page 3-33

Accessibility is an important consideration when making development decisions for various types of land use, including residential, office and retail commercial, health and community services, and recreation facilities. Improved accessibility will help the study area become more attractive to business and residential development opportunities, especially when linking major employment centers with rapid transit.

5.2.5.2 Mitigation for Parking and Access Parking
Build Alternatives LRT 1A, LRT 3A (LPA), and LRT 3A-1 (co-location alternative) are all anticipated to have a relatively modest impact on parking with the removal of 20 on-street parking spaces on Royalston Avenue. Mitigation of this effect may include working with staff from the City of Minneapolis to identify needs and opportunities for providing alternative parking solutions. However, based on adjacent land uses and long-term city plans for this area, the need for alternative parking solutions is believed to be low.
Build Alternatives LRT 1A and LRT 3A (LPA) are not anticipated to have any long-term effects on business access; therefore, no mitigation is required.

Comment: Due to existing parking saturation at the lots adjacent to the proposed West Lake Station area, it is reasonable to expect that there will indeed be a need for alternative parking solutions. The need for additional parking should be mitigated in order to accommodate the increased demand from projected transit riders who will drive to the station in order to board the LRT. E10 I1 P10

Residents of Calhoun Isles as well as other residents in the neighborhoods surrounding the proposed West Lake Street Station location utilize the trails to access neighborhood amenities such as stores as

well as recreational activities at the Lakes and in the parks. Both pedestrians and bikers must have ready and safe circulation in and around Calhoun Village, Calhoun Market Plaza and the West Lake Station as well as safe access to the Grand Rounds and other bike and hiking trails.

Request an analysis of multimodal (car, bicycle, pedestrian) traffic flow and linkages to and from these various destinations and the station. Safe and free flowing bicycle and walking paths must be maintained during construction as well as being integrated into the final design. Resident input should be considered in the design of the safe passage ways. E7 P9

Calhoun Isles Condominium Association respectfully requests that the comment period for 5.2.5.2 be extended until such time that all studies of traffic and future parking needs are identified and/or specific mitigations have been proposed. L1

ISSUE: VISUAL EFFECTS

Segment A [LRT 1A and LRT 3A (LPA)] / Page 3-115

The project elements in Segment A corridor would be located on HCRRA property. Although the segment is located in an existing transportation corridor (Kenilworth Regional Trail), the project would introduce new visual elements—the fixed guideway, including track, catenary poles, and wires—into the area. Catenary poles and wires could have substantial visual impacts on trail users who would share the corridor with the fixed guideway

.

SCENIC ALONG TRAIL

Visual impacts on sensitive receptors located at single-family and multi-family parcels throughout the corridor would generally not be substantial because of mature vegetation buffers and the presence of an existing freight rail corridor. Visual impacts may be substantial where the alignment is not screened by vegetation. Visual intrusion and privacy impacts of the project elements on the sensitive receptors may be substantial where views from the alignment into previously private spaces are created. Visual intrusion and privacy impacts on the outdoor living areas of residential properties could be substantial where vegetation or landscape buffers do not exist .

COMMENT: There will be substantial visual impacts and effects on residents particularly along Segment A north of West Lake Street Bridge and south of Cedar Lake Parkway where the Calhoun Isle Condominium Association and the Cedar Lake Shores Condominiums are currently separated by less E4 N2

than 65 feet of right of way. The current landscaping of mature tree and evergreens on the berms helps to screen the tracks on each side. On page 2-46 in Figure 2.3-10 LRT Guideway, a typical section at grade is shown to have a 100-foot right of way with the tracks and trails requiring 58 of the 100 feet. In Appendix F Part 1, page 53 the right of way is located adjacent to the edge of the tower at 3151 Dean Court. The bicycle and pedestrian trails or the tracks, depending on the design of the corridor, will be less than a foot from the current living units in Calhoun Isles Condominiums and Cedar Lake Shores Condominiums. Visual impact as well as privacy impacts to indoor and outdoor living areas of both condominiums associations will be significantly affected. E4 N2

There are a large number of evergreens plants (estimated 15 to 29 feet high) and mature trees (30 to 40 feet high) all along the Kenilworth trail. This area is a stop- over for birds during the spring and fall migration periods. Preservation of existing trees and shrubs or replacement with substitutes of equivalent type and height should be part of the mitigation plan. Project engineers should employ the highest standards of creativity and design as they attempt to preserve the quality of this vital urban green space. Residents of Cedar Lake Shore Condominiums and Calhoun Isles Condominiums should be included in planning the mitigations for visual impact. N2 L1

FROM 3151 CONDO TO TRAIL & TRACK

Page 115, cont. (Cedar Lake Parkway) The proposed alignment is on a bridge over Cedar Lake Parkway. Visual impacts on sensitive receptors adjacent to the corridor in the multi-family residential parcel and Cedar Lake Parkway could be substantial. Visual intrusion and privacy impacts of the project elements on the residents in units with windows facing the alignment where it is bridged structure could be substantial.

COMMENT: A bridge over Cedar Lake Parkway clearly would have substantial visual impacts on residences of Calhoun Isles Condominiums as well as other residents from Lake Street to the Kenilworth Channel. It would also have substantial impacts on users of the Historic Grand Rounds (drivers, bicyclists, pedestrians), as well as Cedar Lake Park and beach users, a fact not mentioned in the present study. E8 N2

There is no evidence in the present study that the feasibility of trenching, tunneling, or depressing the LRT below Cedar Lake Parkway was examined. Another consideration not mentioned is to utilize the current design of a single bi-directional track perhaps in combination with tunnel or trench. We strongly request that a study of this possibility be undertaken, since a bridge would have such grave quality of life impacts on area residents and users, and an at-grade crossing is likely to have significant traffic and safety impacts. E8

3.6.5.3 **Mitigation**, Build Alternatives / Page 3-123

The need for additional landscaping to mitigate potential visual intrusion/privacy impacts following clearing and grubbing activities during construction will be addressed in the Final EIS. Station design and aesthetics will be addressed during Preliminary Engineering and Final Design. Mitigation treatments for visual impacts would be developed during the Final Design process through discussion with affected communities, resource agencies, and stakeholders. Measures would be taken to ensure the design and construction of the Build Alternative considers the context of the corridor and that sensitive receptors receive adequate mitigation. Possible mitigation measures could include:

- Landscaping vegetation such as shrubs and bushes to supplement existing vegetation buffers
- Evergreen vegetation screening to supplement deciduous vegetation buffers in leaf-off conditions
- Fencing
- Tunneling

E4
N2

COMMENT: Calhoun Isles Condominium Association would like to be included in the discussions related to mitigation of visual effects and appreciate the inclusion of communities in this part of the project.

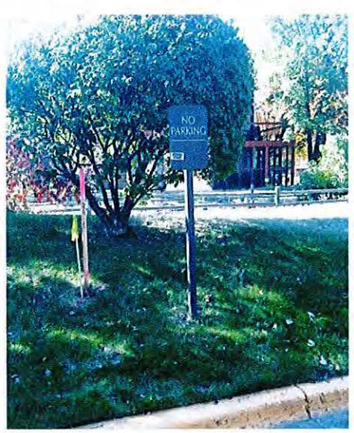
L1

4.10 Electromagnetic Interference and Utilities pg 4-130

This section provides general information regarding existing electromagnetic fields (EMF), electromagnetic interference (EMI), and utilities, and identifies potential effects that may result from the proposed Southwest Transitway project.

4.3.2.4 Migratory Birds

Given the lack of quality habitat along the proposed Build Alternatives, it is likely that the species present in the vicinity have adapted to survive in urban areas and tolerate high levels of human activity. Therefore, the Build Alternatives are not expected to have long term impacts to migratory bird populations.



COMMENT:

Exposed overhead LRT high voltage wires are deadly to birds and kill them en-masse, especially migrating birds. The DEIS dismissed as unlikely any effects on migrating birds. Calhoun Isles Condominium residents can attest to the presence of migrating birds several times a year and there is no doubt that this area is on a migrating path. The DEIS does not include any studies on this so mitigation is needed.

E6
N8

Calhoun Isles Condominium Association respectfully requests

that the comment period for 4.3.2.4 be extended until such time that a study of migratory patterns has been done and/or specific mitigations to address the impact of high voltage lines on migratory birds are proposed for the area between Lake Street Station and Cedar Lake.

E10

There is no mention of potential health hazards for persons living in close proximity, like 40 feet or less to the exposed overhead wires. That information should be made available to the public. Any effects could be corrected for example by using a tunnel for a shield.

N8
N11

ISSUE: CO-LOCATION

11.2.5 LRT 3A-1 (Co-location Alternative)

The potential adverse environmental impacts associated with LRT 3A-1 (co-location alternative) cause this alternative to fail to rise to the environmentally preferred alternative They include:

- The necessity to acquire Cedar Lake Park property owned by the Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board would cause a Section 4(f) impact.
- Failure to provide a direct connection between the CP Bass Lake Spur and the CP MN&S requiring freight trains to navigate the cumbersome and noisy Skunk Hollow switching wye to complete this maneuver.
- High construction related impacts because of the complex construction staging required to rebuild the freight rail tracks.
- Economic development and the potential for transit oriented development will be diminished because of the close proximity of freight rail operations to station locations.
- Pedestrian safety at the Wooddale, Beltline, and 21st Street LRT Stations would be affected by the need to cross the freight rail tract between the LRT stations and park and ride facilities.
- The economic impact of acquiring over 60 units of primarily high quality, high income multi-family housing by the West Lake Street station makes this alternative inconsistent with state, regional, and local policies and adopted plans.
- Retention of freight rail operations in the Kenilworth Corridor will continue to divide neighborhoods while its removal will allow the Southwest Transitway project to bring the areas together and improve community cohesion.

TOO CLOSE NOW

The use of park property is significant. Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act of 1966, codified at 49 U.S.C. § 303 and 23 U.S.C. § 138 prohibits the Secretary of Transportation from approving a project that requires the use of publicly owned land of a public park, recreation area, or wildlife and waterfowl refuge of national, state, or local significance, or land of an historic site of national, state, or local significance (as determined by the federal, state, or local officials having jurisdiction over the resource), unless the agency can demonstrate that:

- There is no feasible and prudent

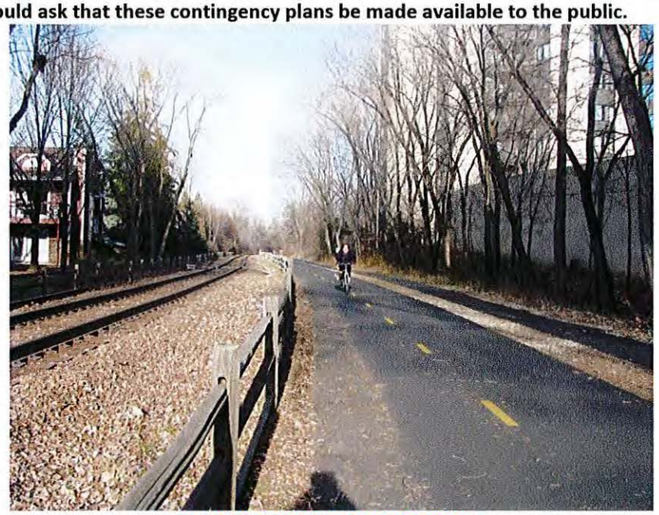
alternative to the use of the land; and

- The action includes all possible planning to minimize harm to the property resulting from such use.

The acquisition of 0.81 acres of Cedar Lake Park needed to co-locate the freight rail tracks that is associated with LRT 3A-1 (co-location alternative) would constitute a Section 4(f) use. Because this Draft EIS has presented other feasible and prudent alternatives to LRT 3A-1 (co-location alternative), this alternative cannot be recommended as the environmentally preferred alternative.

COMMENT: Calhoun Isles Condominium Association supports the conclusion that co-location of freight rail is not a feasible alternative for the reasons listed. The loss of park land described in the DEIS for the co-location cannot be mitigated. The impact on the neighborhoods and on the safety of residents especially at the crossings at Beltline and 21st Street Station would require significant mitigations not explored in this document. These mitigations for safety would require additional funding. D

COMMENT: Calhoun Isles Association review of the DEIS was unable to locate information related to plans for dealing with occurrences such as a derailment of the LRT train. Given the close proximity to the guideway, we would ask that these contingency plans be made available to the public. E9 R1



THERE IS NO SPACE FOR MORE TRACKS

Submitted by:
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December 5, 2012

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Mr. Ed Ferlauto

Co-chair - Transportation Committee

Cedar-Isles-Dean Neighborhood Association

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Phone (612) 929-1004

Summary Report
Southwest Transitway Light Rail Noise and Vibration

Cedar-Isles-Dean Neighborhood Association – Minneapolis, Minnesota

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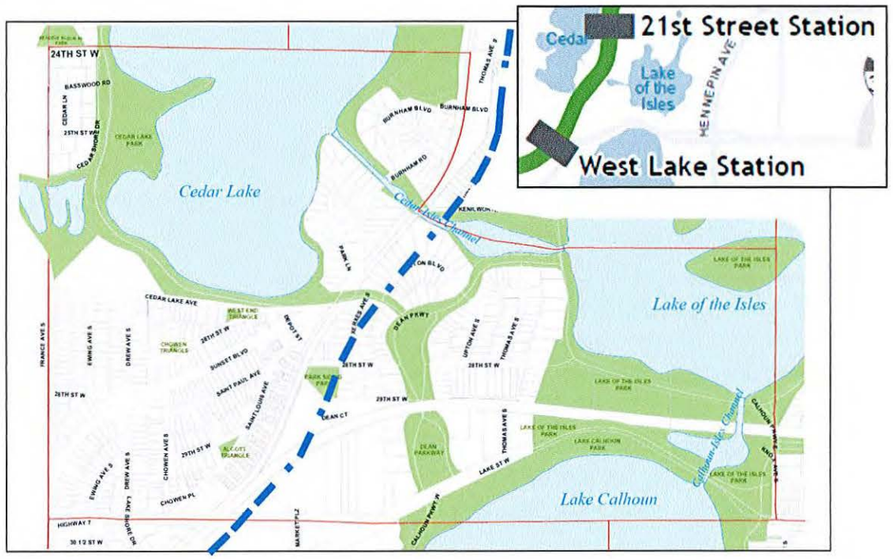
Introduction

We understand the Cedar-Isles-Dean Neighborhood Association (CIDNA) is reviewing the Federal Transit Administrations and Hennepin County Regional Rail Authority's Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Southwest Light Rail Transit (LRT) project. The Southwest Transitway LRT is planned to operate along a 15-mile route between downtown Minneapolis and Eden Prairie. The route passes through the CIDNA neighborhoods, as shown in Figure 1 below. CIDNA has concerns about several issues related to this alignment, including the LRT noise and vibration impacts.



ure 1 – Map showing the CIDNA neighborhood and inset of the Southwest Transitway route through the Kenilworth Corridor.

The DEIS includes an assessment of noise and vibration related to the construction and operation of the LRT system. ESI Engineering was asked to review the predicted noise and vibration impact as presented in the DEIS. This letter summarizes our findings.

The CIDNA neighborhood is in project segment A, as shown in Figure 2. Segment A is part of the "Locally Preferred Alternative", a route that is being recommended as the final alignment. Figure 3 is a compilation of drawings from the DEIS that show the preliminary plans in more detail.

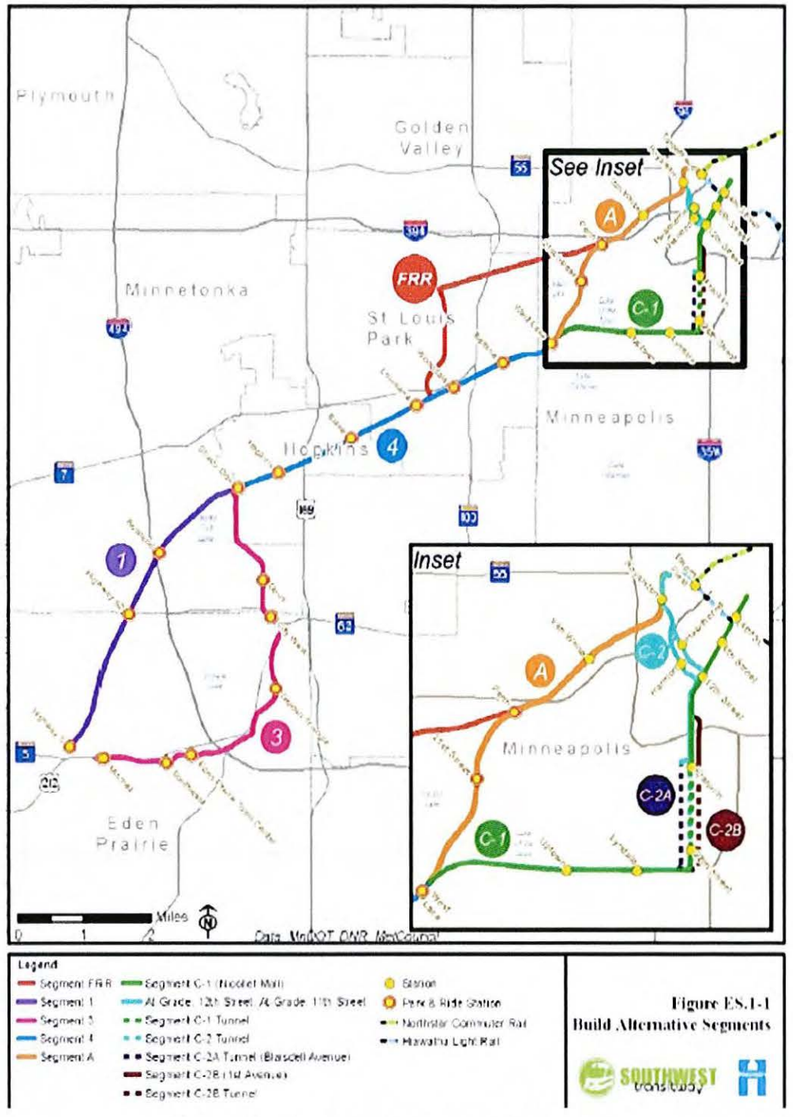


Figure 2 – Map showing project segments.

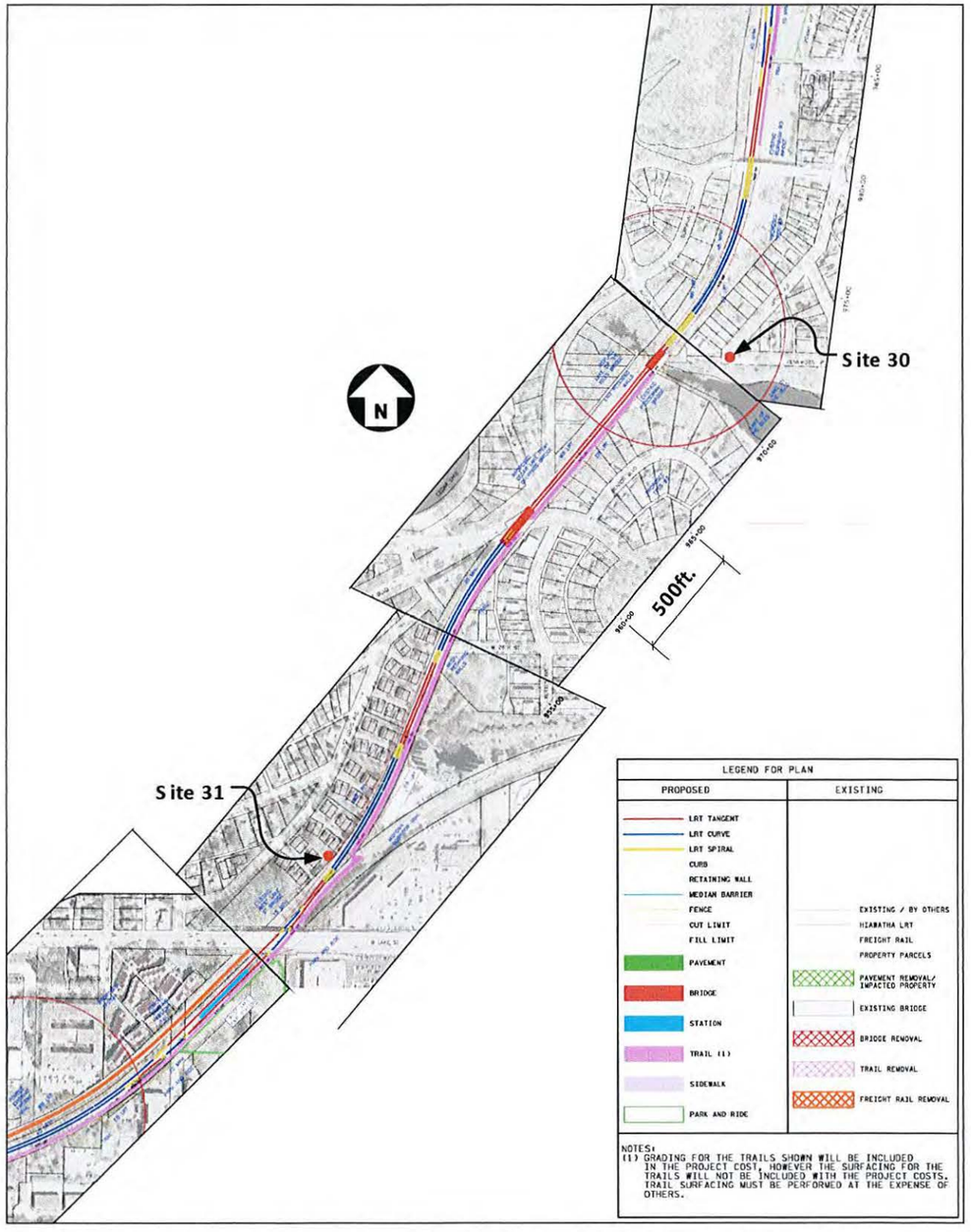


Figure 3 – Compilation of the LRT alignment through the Kenilworth Corridor.

Figure 4 is a section from the DEIS that shows the preliminary rail layout adjacent to a bike/walking trail, such as that along the Kenilworth Corridor. Figure 5 shows this section on an aerial photograph of the existing Kenilworth Corridor freight rail and bike/walking trail in an area that is very narrow. The nearest homes are approximately 30 feet from the centerline of the alignment.

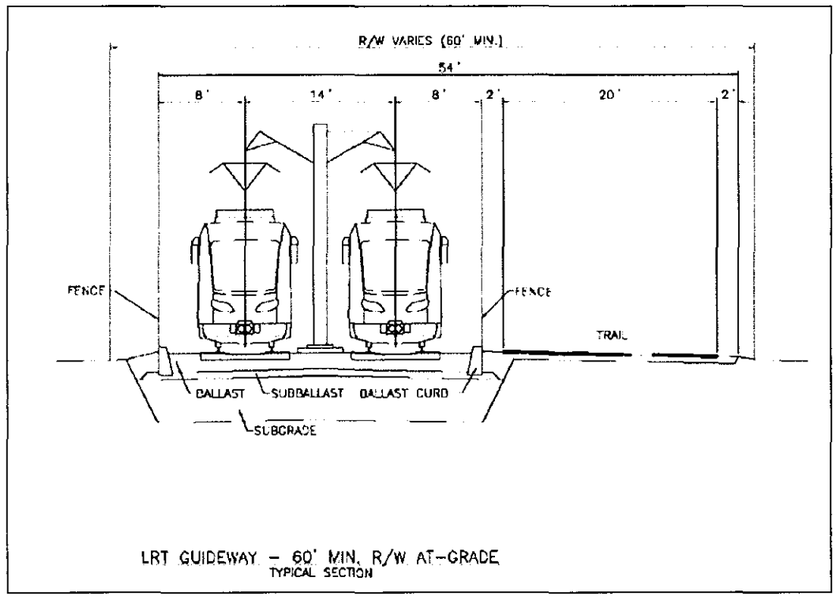


Figure 4 – A section showing the guideway adjacent to a bike / walking trail (from the DEIS).

Figure 5 – Photograph showing the proposed alignment in the Kenilworth Corridor.

Noise Impact

The FTA's Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment (FTA-VA-90-1003-06, May 2006) was used in the DEIS to evaluate noise and vibration impacts. The document, commonly referred to as the FTA manual or the FTA guidelines, defines noise and vibration impact criteria for different categories of land use. For the airborne noise impact assessment, the CIDNA neighborhoods are considered a Land Use Category 2. Further, the noise metric used is the Day-Night Sound Level, or L_{dn}. The impact criteria are defined by a set of curves, as shown in Figure 6. There are two impact levels; Severe and Moderate. Measurements of existing noise are used to determine the impact threshold per the curves in Figure 6. The method outlined in the FTA manual requires the project to calculate the LRT related noise level and compare the results with the impact thresholds.

A limited number of noise measurements are included in the DEIS. Two noise measurements were made along the Kenilworth Corridor at locations indicated in Figure 3. Site 30 is at Kenilworth Place and South Upton Avenue and Site 31 is at 3427 St. Louis Avenue.

Because there are many thousands of potential receivers that could be affected by the LRT noise, in the DEIS the various receivers were grouped into "clusters" along each segment of the alignment. There is no map showing where the clusters are located, but there is a distance given for each cluster to the track, and a train speed. This information, along with the predicted train noise impact, is given in a Noise Assessment Table included in Appendix H of the DEIS.

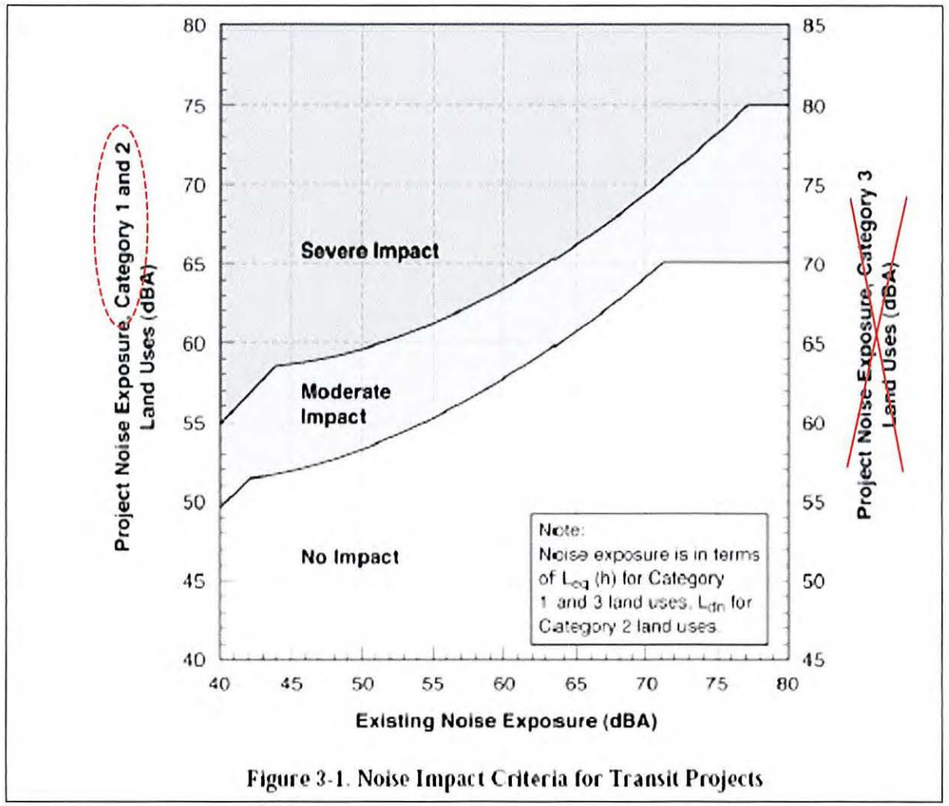


Figure 6 – The FTA's noise impact criteria.

Using the information provided, we also calculated the Noise Impact using the methods in the FTA Manual. Our calculations are summarized in a table included in Appendix A of this letter. The following summarizes the assumptions used in the calculations:

	DEIS	ESI
Cluster Identifier	A-A-WB-2-1	nearest homes
Train Sound Exposure Level	81 dBA	81 dBA
Train Speed	45 mph	45 mph
Number of Cars	3 cars	3 cars
Daytime volume	198 trains	198 trains
Nighttime volume	60 trains	60 trains
Distance to Nearest Receiver	49 ft	30 ft
Existing L_{dn} Noise Level	60 dBA	55 dBA

The differences in the assumptions are the distance to the nearest receiver and the existing noise level. The DEIS uses 49 ft as the distance to the cluster, where some homes are as close as 30 ft.

O1, O5

The DEIS uses the existing L_{dn} noise measurement from Site 31, which is 60 dBA, presumably because of traffic noise on Lake Street. The existing Ldn noise at Site 30 is 55 dBA, which we expect is more representative for existing noise along most of the corridor. The results of the DEIS and the ESI calculations are shown in Figure 7 below. The range for the ESI calculations includes the effects trains with bells and without bells. The DEIS calculations do not appear to include the effects of bells as the trains approach the West Lake Street Station. Further, the DEIS does not include the effects of the train horn.

E4

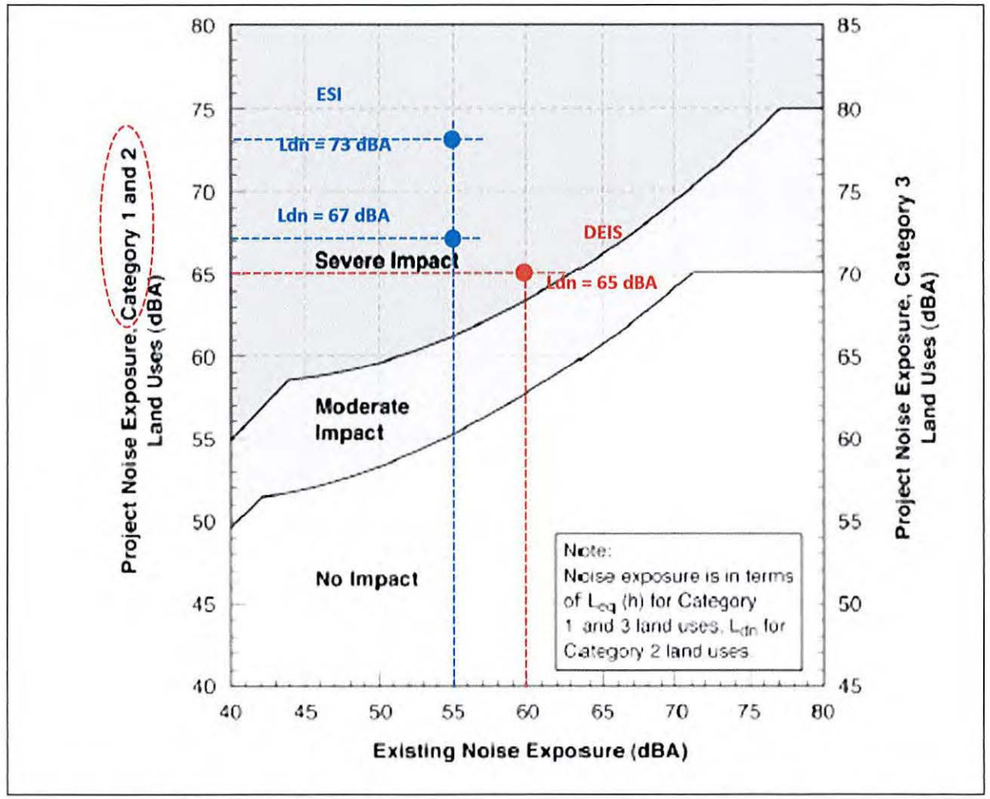


Figure 7 – A comparison of the DEIS (red) and ESI (blue) noise impact assessment.

The conclusion of both assessments is the same, that the noise impact is severe; however the ESI assessment uses a more realistic distance, existing noise exposure level and the effects of train bells. We did not find any mitigation methods in the DEIS to reduce the noise impact.

O1
O5

The following are additional comments on the noise impact assessment:

13. An Existing Noise Exposure level of L_{dn} = 60 dBA was assumed based on measurements near West Lake Street (Site No. 31), but we assume most of cluster A-A-WB-2-1 is located in an area similar to Site No. 30, which has an existing noise level of Ldn = 55 dBA. This reduces the impact criterion level.
14. Additional measurement of the existing noise exposure level are needed nearer the condo building more accurately evaluate the noise impact.
15. The DEIS "Noise Assessment Table - 2012 Update" uses a distance to track centerline of 49 ft for the nearest cluster, but the actual distance between track centerline and the nearest house is estimated to be about 30 ft.
16. Including bell noise traveling at 15 mph in the calculations increases the impact by about 6 dBA.
17. The DEIS "Noise Assessment Table - 2012 Update" uses the wrong moderate and severe impact levels. If the existing noise level is Ldn = 60 dBA, the impact criteria is 58 dBA for moderate and 63 dBA for severe, not 60 dBA for moderate and 64 dBA for severe as shown.
18. The impact criteria for an existing noise level of Ldn = 55 dBA (measurement Site No. 30) is 55 dBA for moderate and 61 dBA for severe.
19. The "Ambient Noise Impact Table - 2012 Updates" in Appendix H includes noise measurement results. The descriptions for Site No.'s 30 and 31 say that noise from several CT&W train events was removed. However the measurement is noted to indicate the freight train noise was included in the measurement. Which is correct?
20. The FTA manual does not have an adjustment for effects of elevation. No adjustment in the calculation for the height of the townhouses and condo buildings were included in the DEIS assessment.
21. Train horns were not used in the DEIS noise analysis. This is an issue at Cedar Lake Parkway if an at-grade-crossing is selected as an alternative to the bridge in the current design. Our calculations indicate that one train horn per hour at the Cedar Lake Parkway causes an impact that exceeds the Severe Impact criterion by 9 dBA at 50 ft.
22. If the train bells and horn are sounded from the front and rear of the 3 car trains simultaneously (as was done on the Hiawatha line), the noise exposure is greatly increased. This needs to be verified.
23. The distance from the track to the nearest cluster in the 2012 Update of the Noise Assessment Table is 49 feet. However, the nearest house is about 30 feet from the centerline of the alignment. The nearer distance increases the noise impact by about 2 dBA.
24. LRT speeds indicated on drawings in the DEIS are slower than 45 mph in much of the Kenilworth Corridor.

Vibration Impact

The FTA's Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment was also used in the DEIS to evaluate the project vibration impacts. There are three levels of assessment outlined in the FTA manual; the screen procedure, the general assessment, and the detailed analysis. The general assessment was done in the DEIS. A detailed analysis will be required in the Final EIS, and will include vibration measurements.

O1
O4
O5
O6

There are very few details in the DEIS on the general vibration assessment that was performed and what assumptions were made. Again, there are three land use categories and the residences in the CIDNA neighborhoods fall into Category 2. The vibration impact level or criterion is 72 VdB for frequent events (more than 70 per day). The ground-borne noise criterion is 35 dBA. Ground-borne noise is the noise that is caused by surfaces in a building that vibrate and create pressure waves.

Using the information provided in the DEIS, we also calculated the Vibration Impact using the methods in the FTA Manual. Our calculations are summarized in a table included in Appendix B of this letter. The following summarizes the assumptions used in the calculations:

	DEIS	ESI
Cluster Identifier	A-A-WB-2-1	nearest homes
Train Speed	45 mph	45 mph
Number of Cars	3 cars	3 cars
Distance to Nearest Receiver	41 ft	30 ft

The DEIS and our calculations show that the project generated vibration and ground-borne noise will exceed the impact criteria of 72 VdB and 35 dBA, respectively.

The following are additional comments on the vibration impact assessment:

3. The project generated vibration and ground-borne noise impact presented in the DEIS assumes the rails and train wheels are in perfect condition. Worn or corrugated rails and wheels with flats are know to increase vibration and ground-borne noise by as much as 10 dB.
4. The distance to the cluster A-A-WB-2-1, the nearest cluster, is shown in General Vibration Assessment Results at 41 feet vs. 49 feet in the Noise Assessment Table. This is inconsistent and there are residences that are closer than 41 feet.
5. Typically, a correction of -5 dB is added in the vibration calculations for wood framed houses. It does not appear that this correction was included in the DEIS General Vibration Assessment. The adjustment would reduce the DEIS vibration impact level from 73 VdB to 68 VdB, which is below the impact criterion of 72 VdB.
6. LRT speeds indicated on drawings in the DEIS are slower than 45 mph in much of the Kenilworth Corridor.

Please let me know if you have any questions or need more information.

Sincerely,

ESI Engineering, Inc.

Anthony J. Baxter, P.E.

Assumptions	Calculations					
	DEIS No Bells	ESI No Bells	ESI Bells @ 45 MPH	ESI Bells @ 15 MPH	ESI Horn & Bells @ 15 MPH	ESI LRT @ 25 mph
SEL_{ref}, Sound Exposure Level	81 dBA	81 dBA	81 dBA	81 dBA	81 dBA	81 dBA
N_{cars}, No. of Cars	3	3	3	3	3	3
S_C, Speed of LRT	45 mph	45 mph	45 mph	45 mph	45 mph	25 mph
V_{dC}, Daytime LRT Volume	198 ÷ 15 = 13	13	13	13	13	13
V_{nC}, Nighttime LRT Volume	60 ÷ 9 = 7	7	7	7	7	7
S_H, Speed of Horn	-	-	-	-	15 mph	-
V_{dH}, Daytime Horn Volume	-	-	-	-	1	-
V_{nH}, Nighttime Horn Volume	-	-	-	-	-	-
S_B, Speed of Bells	-	-	45 mph	15 mph	15 mph	-
V_{dB}, Daytime Bells Volume	-	-	198 ÷ 15 ÷ 2 = 7	7	7	-
V_{nB}, Nighttime Bells Volume	-	-	60 ÷ 9 ÷ 2 = 3	3	3	-
d, Distance to Track	49 ft	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft
Existing Noise Level	L_{dn} = 60 dBA (Site No. 31)	L_{dn} = 55 dBA (Site No. 30)	L_{dn} = 55 dBA (Site No. 30)	L_{dn} = 55 dBA (Site No. 30)	L_{dn} = 55 dBA (Site No. 30)	L_{dn} = 55 dBA (Site No. 30)
FTA Moderate Impact Criterion	60 dBA	55 dBA	55 dBA	55 dBA	55 dBA	55 dBA
FTA Severe Impact Criterion	64 dBA	61 dBA	61 dBA	61 dBA	61 dBA	61 dBA
Project Related Noise	L_{dn} = 65 dBA	L_{dn} = 67 dBA	L_{dn} = 70 dBA	L_{dn} = 73 dBA	L_{dn} = 75 dBA	L_{dn} = 62 dBA
Cumulative Noise Level	L_{dn} = 66 dBA	L_{dn} = 67 dBA	L_{dn} = 70 dBA	L_{dn} = 73 dBA	L_{dn} = 75 dBA	L_{dn} = 62 dBA
Increase Over Existing	+6 dBA	+12 dBA	+15 dBA	+19 dBA	+20 dBA	+7 dBA
FTA Impact Level	Severe	Severe	Severe	Severe	Severe	Severe
Exceedance Over Criterion	+1 dBA	+6 dBA	+9 dBA	+12 dBA	+14 dBA	+1 dBA

				DEIS	ESI - 1	ESI - 2	ESI - 3	ESI - 4	ESI - 5	ESI - 6
Land Use Category				2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Side of Track				WB	WB	WB	WB	WB	WB	WB
Distance from track centerline, ft				41 ft	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	45 ft	45 ft	45 ft
Speed, mph				45 mph	45 mph	45 mph	45 mph	45 mph	45 mph	45 mph
RMS Velocity level, VdB re 1 micro in./sec				74 VdB	77 VdB	77 VdB	77 VdB	74 VdB	74 VdB	74 VdB
Factors Affecting Vibration Source										
Source Factor	**Adjustment to Propagation Curve**		**Comments**							
Speed	Reference Speed		Vibration level is approximately proportional to 20*log(speed/speedref). Sometimes the variation with speed has been observed to be as low as 10 to 15 log(speed/speedref).							
	Vehicle Speed	50 mph	30 mph							
	60 mph	+1.6 dB	+6.0 dB							
	50 mph	0.0 dB	+4.4 dB							
	40 mph	-1.9 dB	+2.5 dB							
	30 mph	-4.4 dB	0.0 dB							
	20 mph	-8.0 dB	-3.5 dB	-1 VdB	-1 VdB	-1 VdB	-1 VdB	-1 VdB	-1 VdB	-1 VdB
Vehicle Parameters (not additive, apply greatest value only)										
Vehicle with stiff primary suspension	+8 dB		Transit vehicles with stiff primary suspensions have been shown to create high vibration levels. Include this adjustment when the primary suspension has a vertical resonance frequency greater than 15 Hz.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Resilient Wheels	+0 dB		Resilient wheels do not generally affect ground-borne vibration except at grequencies greater than about 80 Hz.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Worn Wheels or Wheels with Flats	+10 dB		Wheel flats or wheels that are unevenly worn can cause high vibration levels. This can be prevented with wheel truing and slip-slide detectors to prevent the wheels from sliding on the track.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Track Conditions (not additive, apply greatest value only)										
Worn or Corrugated Track	+10 dB		If both the wheels and the track are worn, only one adjustment should be used. Corrugated track is a common problem. Mill scale on new rail can cause higher vibration levels until the rail has been in use for some time.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Special Trackwork	+10 dB		Wheel impacts at special trackwork will significantly increase vibration levels. The increase will be less at greater distances from the track.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Jointed Track or Uneven Road Surfaces	+5 dB		Jointed track can cause higher vibration levels than welded track. Rough roads or expansion joints are sources of increased vibration for rubber-tire transit.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Track Treatments (not additive, apply greatest value only)										
Floating Slab Trackbed	-15 dB		The reduction achieved with a floating slab trackbed is strongly dependent on the frequency characteristics of the vibration.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ballast Mats	-10 dB		Actual reduction is strongly dependent on frequency of vibration.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
High-Resilience Fasteners	-5 dB		Slab track with track fasteners that are very compliant in the vertical direction can reduce vibration at frequencies greater than 40 Hz.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Factors Affecting Vibration Path										
Path Factor	**Adjustment to Propagation Curve**		**Comments**							
Resiliently Supported Ties	-10 dB		Resiliently supported tie systems have been found to provide very effective control of low-frequency vibration.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Track Configuration (not additive, apply greatest value only)										
Type of Transit Structure	Relative to at-grade tie & ballast:		The general rule is the heavier the structure, the lower the vibration levels. Putting the track in cut may reduce the vibration levels slightly. Rock-based subways generate higher-frequency vibration.							
	Elevated structure	-10 dB		0 dB	0 dB	0 dB	0 dB	0 dB	0 dB	0 dB
	Open cut	0 dB								
	Relative to bored subway tunnel in soil:									
	Station	-5 dB								
	Cut and cover	-3 dB								
	Rock-based	-15 dB		-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ground-borne Propagation Effects										
Geologic conditions that promote efficient vibration propagation	Efficient propagation in soil	+10 dB	Refer to the text for guidance on identifying areas where efficient propagation is possible.	-	-	-	+10 dB	-	-	+10 dB
	Propagation in rock layer: Dist. / Adjust.		The positive adjustment accounts for the lower attenuation of vibration in rock compared to soil. It is generally more difficult to excite vibrations in rock than in soil at the source.							
	50 ft	+2 dB								
	100 ft	+4 dB								
	150 ft	+6 dB								
	200 ft	+9 dB		-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Coupling to building foundation	Wood Frame Houses	-5 dB	The general rule is the heavier the building construction, the greater the coupling loss.							
	1-2 Story Masonry	-7 dB								
	3-4 Story Masonry	-10 dB								
	Large Masonry on Piles	-10 dB								
	Large Masonry on Spread Footings	-13 dB								
	Foundation in Rock	0 dB		0 dB	-5 dB	0 dB	0 dB	-10 dB	0 dB	0 dB
Predicted Vibration Level (VdB)				**73 VdB**	**71 VdB**	**76 VdB**	**86 VdB**	**63 VdB**	**73 VdB**	**83 VdB**
Impact Criterion (VdB)				**72 VdB**	**72 VdB**	**72 VdB**	**72 VdB**	**72 VdB**	**72 VdB**	**72 VdB**
Exceedance Over Criterion (VdB)				**+1 VdB**	**-1 VdB**	**+4 VdB**	**+14 VdB**	**-9 VdB**	**+1 VdB**	**+11 VdB**
Factors Affecting Vibration Receiver										
Receiver Factor	**Adjustment to Propagation Curve**		**Comments**							
Floor-to-floor attenuation	1 to 5 floors above grade:	-2 dB/floor	This factor accounts for dispersion and attenuation of the vibration energy as it propagates through a building.							
	5 to 10 floors above grade:	-1 dB/floor		-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Amplification due to resonances of floors, walls, and ceilings	+6 dB		The actual amplification will vary greatly depending on the type of construction. The amplification is lower near the wall/floor and wall/ceiling instersections.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Conversion to Ground-borne Noise										
Noise Level in dBA	Peak frequency of ground vibration:		Use these adjustments to estimate the A-weighted sound level given the average vibration velocity level of the room surfaces. See text for guidelines for selecting low, typical of high frequency characteristics. Use the high-frequency adjustment for subway tunnels in rock or if the dominant frequencies of the vibration spectrum are known to be 60 Hz or greater.							
	Low frequency (<30 Hz):	-50 dB								
	Typical (peak 30 to 60 Hz):	-35 dB								
	High frequency (>60 Hz):	-20 dB		-	-35 dB	-35 dB	-35 dB	-35 dB	-35 dB	-35 dB
Predicted Ground-Borne Noise (dBA)				**-**	**36 dBA**	**41 dBA**	**51 dBA**	**50 dBA**	**38 dBA**	**48 dBA**
Impact Criterion (dBA)				**-**	**32 dBA**	**32 dBA**	**32 dBA**	**32 dBA**	**32 dBA**	**32 dBA**
Exceedance Over Criterion (dBA)				**-**	**+4 VdB**	**+9 VdB**	**+19 VdB**	**+18 VdB**	**+6 VdB**	**+16 VdB**

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December 18, 2012

VIA E-MAIL AND U.S. MAIL

Peter McLaughlin
Chair, Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority
300 South Sixth Street
Minneapolis, MN 55487-0241

Re: Southwest Transitway DEIS

Dear Chair McLaughlin:

This letter is being sent on behalf of Costco Wholesale (Costco) and Emerson Process Management/Rosemount (Emerson). This letter is being sent to you as the Chair of the Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority (HCRRA), which is the lead state agency under the Minnesota Environmental Policy Act (MERA) for the preparation of the Southwest Transitway's (or SW LRT) October 2012 Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). This letter is also being copied to the Metropolitan Council (Met Council), which is the lead for the preparation of the SW LRT's Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS).

Costco and Emerson begin by thanking you for the opportunity to comment on the DEIS at the November 29, 2012 public hearing in Eden Prairie. And Costco and Emerson hereby submit their joint written comments on the DEIS. These written comments are consistent with their oral comments on November 29, 2012.

OVERVIEW

Other than their narrow objection to the proposed route of the SW LRT in City along Technology Drive, including the proposed location of the Eden Prairie Town Center transit station on Costco's property (Narrow Objection), Costco and Emerson are very much supportive of the SW LRT. Costco and Emerson have, in fact, been meeting with representatives of the City of Eden Prairie (City) for the past several months in order to address their Narrow Objection without compromising or delaying the success of the SW LRT. The seven-step basis for Costco and Emerson's Narrow Objection is set forth below.

F0

City has been receptive to Costco and Emerson's Narrow Objection. Indeed City has from May 18, 2010 to the present continuously supported Costco and Emerson's Narrow Objection by requesting that HCRRA and Met Council "evaluate alternatives" to the proposed route of the SW LRT in City along Technology Drive, including the proposed location of the

A

Eden Prairie Town Center transit station on Costco's property. City has had periodic meetings with HCRRA and Met Council representatives, and their representatives have assured City that they would, in fact, evalute such alternatives as part of the SW LRT's Preliminary Engineering process. These assurances from HCRRA and Met Council's representatives are reflected in City's December 4, 2012 "[g]eneral [c]omments" to the DEIS. 12/4/12 City's DEIS comment letter at 1 ¶¶ 1-2 (emphasis added).

SEVEN-STEP BASIS FOR COSTCO AND EMERSON'S NARROW OBJECTION

STEP NO. 1: City **is** to have a say in the decisions regarding the proposed SW LRT which affect City.

a. HCRRA and Met Council have repeatedly and emphatically assured the six local municipalities that are being asked to "host" the proposed SW LRT (*i.e.*, City, Edina, Hopkins, Minneapolis, Minnetonka and St. Louis Park) that they are, in exchange, entitled to provide input regarding, and ultimately the discretion to approve or deny, the route for the SW LRT, including the location of the transit stations within their borders. L1

b. City is, more specifically, a "participating agency" in the SW LRT project.

c. And 23 U.S.C. § 139 provides that City, as a "participating agency," is permitted to (1) assist the project sponsor in determining the range of alternatives to be considered in a project's DEIS and (2) identify, as early as practicable, any issues of concern regarding the project's potential impacts.

STEP NO. 2: HCRRA and Met Council ultimately **need** City to issue the necessary local land use approvals for the route of the SW LRT in City, including the location of the transit stations within City. L1

a. City is statutorily charged with the responsibility to protect the public health, safety and general welfare of its citizens. M1

b. City thus has broad discretion to act so as to protect its citizens. R1

c. The location of the route of the SW LRT in City, including the location of the transit stations within City, will have a significant impact on the public health, safety and general welfare of its citizens.

d. City thus has broad discretion to approve or deny the required land use approvals for the proposed route of the SW LRT in City, including the proposed location of the transit stations within City.

STEP NO. 3: City has continuously expressed its **objection** to the proposed route of the SW LRT in City along Technology Drive, including the proposed location of the Eden Prairie Town Center transit station on Costco's property.

a. On May 18, 2010, the Eden Prairie City Council passed Resolution No. 2010-40, which (1) expressed concern regarding the potential adverse environmental and economic impact of the proposed route of the SW LRT in City along Technology Drive, including the proposed location of the Eden Prairie Town Center transit station on Costco's property, and (2) asked HCRRA and Met Council to (a) "evaluate alternatives" and (b) "find solutions for mitigating impacts of the proposed LRT on the businesses."

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b. As reflected in HCRRA and Met Council's February 21, 2012 Request for Proposals (RFP), City has continued to insist that an "alternatives analysis . . . be done for the . . . Town Center station in Eden Prairie." (Emphasis added).

c. On November 20, 2012, the Eden Prairie City Council authorized its City Manager to submit City's comments to the DEIS.

d. On December 4, 2012, City's City Manager submitted, among other comments, City's following two "[g]eneral [c]omments" to the DEIS:

> 1) The City of Eden Prairie continues to support Alternative 3A as the preferred alternative as it serves the Major Center Area and Golden Triangle Area and provides the best opportunities for development, redevelopment, and economic development. Alternative 3A clearly has the highest ridership potential and the greatest positive economic impact to Eden Prairie and the region primarily due to its close proximity to existing and future job concentrations. However this alternative could be further improved in these respects by moving the Town Center Station closer to the Town Center or the Eden Prairie Center.
>
> 2) In order to better serve the Eden Prairie Town Center and Eden Prairie Center the feasibility of a more centrally located and walkable Town Center Station needs to be evaluated during the Preliminary Engineering process. Attached for reference are several concept location areas for the proposed Town Center Station that should be considered.

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12/4/12 City's DEIS comment letter at 1 ¶¶ 1-2 (emphasis added).

e. In response to City's continuous insistence that an "alternatives analysis . . . be done for the . . . Town Center station in Eden Prairie," HCRRA and Met Council have through their representatives represented their willingness to evaluate, as part of the Preliminary Engineering process, alternatives to the proposed route of the SW LRT in

City along Technology Drive, including the proposed location of the Eden Prairie Town Center transit station on Costco's property.

f. As reflected in Figures 1 and 4 of the DEIS, HCRRA and Met Council have already identified and conducted some preliminary analysis of alternatives to the Town Center transit station in City.

STEP NO. 4: City has compelling **land use concerns** with the proposed route of the SW LRT in City along Technology Drive, including the proposed location of the Eden Prairie Town Center transit station on Costco's property. I2

a. As reflected in City's May 18, 2010 resolution and December 4, 2012 DEIS comment letter, as well as HCRRA and Met Council's February 21, 2012 RFP, the primary purpose and need for the Eden Prairie Town Center transit station is to provide transportation to transit-dependent riders and pedestrians; it is not to be designed as a park and ride. M1

b. The "Station Vision" for the Eden Prairie Town Center transit station is as follows:

Station Vision

- A. vibrant mixed use district dominated by retail and residential uses. This idea builds on and enhances the efforts of the 2007 Major Center Area study and seeks *to create a walkable transit village that is well served by multiple modes of transit while accommodating service and personal vehicle circulation and parking.*

- Vertical mixed-use development of no fewer than 3 stories and no more than 5 stories for the majority of parcels. Rooftop decks should be allowed in excess of these heights.

- Land use near the station should be *higher density* and should include *higher-intensity multi-story mixed-use comprised* of offices and multi-family residences. Ground floor uses should be active and connected to the pedestrian environment.

(Underlining in original; italics added).

c. The proposed route of the SW LRT in City along Technology Drive, including the proposed location of the Eden Prairie Town Center transit station on Costco's property, would not serve the above-stated purpose and need for the Eden Prairie Town Center transit station; it is not near transit-dependent riders or pedestrians. K4

(1) Costco's property is guided and zoned as "Regional Commercial," which is defined by City as follows:

> Regional Commercial: This category is located in areas where one or more of the following characteristics are present: a) large sites are available to provide locations for major shopping centers which serve a wider region than the City itself; b) *relatively large sites for sales and service operations that are not typically found in shopping center structures and* ***attract little or no pedestrian traffic***; and c) sites to provide limited sales and service operations that are oriented and directly related to highway or freeway uses, tourists and travelers. Corresponding zoning districts are the C-Reg, C-Reg-Ser and the C-Hwy districts. Site coverage is .20-.40

(Underlining in original; bold and italics added).

(2) In contrast, the "Town Center" zone is defined by City as follows:

> **Town Center**
>
> This category designates the land use for a mixed-use downtown area to be located near the center of the Major Center Area. The 120 acre area is to be redeveloped over time into a compact, walkable, vibrant, pedestrian oriented area. The Town Center is a result of a history of planning dating back to the 1970's and the adoption of the 2006 Major Center Area (MCA) Study and Plan. The focus of the MCA Study is on ***creating a concentrated pedestrian and transit oriented development area*** *that has a supportive mix of higher intensity land uses (retail, service, office, housing, park, hospitality, and entertainment)*, consist of vertical mixed use buildings (i.e. office or housing over shops and restaurants) and the nearby housing will be higher density than typically found in other parts of the City. *Future transit services* (light rail and bus) will help ensure convenient access and mobility. Parking will be in parking structures and on-street with limited use of surface parking lots. Future buildings will front on a street with a lively and active street life. Parks, trails, landscaped streets and plazas will add green space and recreation amenities to the area. The redevelopment will be designed to support Eden Prairies' community health, active living and sustainability goals. In order to limit traffic congestion, development intensity in the balance of the MCA will be lower than in the Town Center. See the Town Center Land Use Plan and the Major Center Area Study for further information. Corresponding zoning is the TC - Town

> Center Mixed Use District. Residential is 45-75 du per acre. Commercial is .20-.40.

(Bold in original; underlining and italics added).

(3) City's "Major Center Area" is further defined as follows:

> Development patterns should continue as they have throughout most of the area abutting the outer ring road of Prairie Center Drive and Valley View Drive. A **compact, walkable Town Center** should be created that would cluster around Singletree Lane and Idlewild Lake. Eden Prairie's **highest development densities** should be found within the Town Center. Organized by a new grid system of streets and urban amenities, the Town Center should emphasize residential, retail and mixed-use development types.

(Emphasis added).

STEP NO. 5: City has compelling **economic concerns** with the proposed route of the SW LRT along Technology Drive, including the proposed location of the Eden Prairie Town Center transit station on Costco's property.

a. The proposed route of the SW LRT in City along Technology Drive, including the proposed location of the Eden Prairie Town Center transit station on Costco's property, would result in the partial taking of Costco and Emerson's property on Technology Drive, for which HCRRA and Met Council would be liable.

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(1) HCRRA and Met Council will be liable to Costco and Emerson for the "fair market value" of the real estate being taken from Costco.

b. The proposed route of the SW LRT in City along Technology Drive, including the proposed location of the Eden Prairie Town Center transit station on Costco's property, would result in the Minn. Stat. § 117.186, subd. 2-defined "business destruction" of Costco for which HCRRA and Met Council would be liable for its § 117.186-provided for "loss of going concern" (*i.e.,* the "fair value" of its Eden Prairie business) and substantial adverse impact for Emerson.

M4
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(1) Per the DEIS, the proposed location of the Eden Prairie Town Center transit station on Costco's property will take numerous parking spaces from and dramatically delay the access to and from Costco's convenience-based gas station, thereby causing the complete "business destruction" of this integral component of the store. *Id.*, subd. 2.

(2) Costco's convenience-based gas station is an integral component to its entire Eden Prairie store. Indeed, 10 years ago Costco refused to build on another parcel just south of the Eden Prairie Center Mall because its convenience gas station component could not be accommodated there.

(3) HCRRA and Met Council would clearly not be able to meet one of its statutorily-prescribed affirmative defenses under § 117.186, subd. 2 — notably, the subd. 2(2)-required showing that "the loss can be reasonably **prevented** [(a)] by relocating the business . . . in [(i)] the same [(*i.e.*, 'on-site')] or [(ii)] a similar and reasonably suitable location as the property that was taken [(*i.e.*, 'off-site')] or [(b)] by taking steps and adopting procedures that a reasonably prudent person of a similar age and under similar circumstances as the owner, would take and adopt in preserving the going concern of the business." (Emphasis and bracketed information added).

(4) HCRRA and Met Council would be liable for Costco's § 117.186 "loss of going concern."

(5) Costco's "loss of going concern" would be in excess of $100,000,000.

STEP NO. 6: There appears to be **at least one alternative** to the proposed route of the SW LRT in City along Technology Drive, including the location of the Eden Prairie Town Center transit station on Costco's property, that better advances not only (1) the purpose and need for this transit station to the SW LRT but also (2) City's land use objectives without subjecting HCRRA and Met Council to such extreme statutory liability under § 117.186.

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a. One alternative route for the SW LRT in City is along Singletree Lane, including the location of the Eden Prairie Town Center transit station on City owned property near the intersection of Singletree Lane and Prairie Center Drive.

b. This alternative would appear to much better serve the purpose and need for this segment of the SW LRT because it would be closer to transit-dependent riders and pedestrians.

c. This alternative would be consistent with the description of the transit station at issue as the "Eden Prairie Town Center" transit station, which came about because it was initially proposed to be located near the "Town Center."

d. This alternative would be consistent with City's land use objectives, which includes "transit facilities" within this "Town Center" designated area.

e. This alternative would minimize the takings liabilities because the transit station would be located on public property.

f. But neither this alternative route for the SW LRT in City along Singletree Lane nor any other alternative to the proposed route along Technology Drive has yet been evaluated by HCRRA or Met Council.

STEP NO. 7: There is **still adequate time** to conduct the requested alternative analysis without delaying the project. L1

a. HCRRA and Met Council do not anticipate completion of the requisite engineering for the Project until 2014.

b. Six months is adequate time to evaluate the above-discussed alternative routes of the SW LRT in City along, among others, Singletree Lane, including the Eden Prairie Town Center transit station near the intersection of Singletree Lane and Prairie Center Drive. G2

c. As has been explained by HCRRA and Met Council's representatives, the existing proposed route of the SW LRT in City along Technology Drive, including the proposed location of the Eden Prairie Town Center transit station on Costco's property, was adopted as a mere "placeholder" so that the proposal could move forward with environmental review; it was, per HCRRA and Met Council's representatives, NEVER intended to be a permanent or binding part of the overall SW LRT. I2 F0

CONCLUSION

Costco and Emerson appreciate HCRRA and Met Council's consideration of their Narrow Objection. And they, as supported by City, respectfully request that HCRRA and Met Council agree to evaluate, as part of the Preliminary Engineering process, the land use and economic impacts of alternative routes of the SW LRT in City along Technology Drive, including the location of the Eden Prairie Town Center transit station on Costco's property — notably, the alternative route of the SW LRT in City along Singletree Lane, including the location of the Eden Prairie Town Center transit station on City-owned property near the intersection of Singletree Lane and Prairie Center Drive. F0

To the extent, however, that HCRRA and Met Council either will not look at alternatives or do so but conclude that the alternatives are inferior, Costco and Emerson have several more objections as it relates to the proposed route for the SW LRT along Technology Drive, including the proposed location of the Eden Prairie Town Center transit station on Costco's property. But they have shared those concerns with City on multiple occasions. And, out of respect for the expressed willingness from HCRRA and Met Council, through their representatives, to perform an alternative analysis for this portion of the route as part of the Preliminary Engineering process, they will not repeat those concerns here.

Please contact me (612-977-8497) or Steve Chelesnik (952-828-3303), who is the Vice President & General Counsel of Emerson Process Management, with any questions and/or concerns.

Sincerely,

Jack Y. Perry

AND

Steven Chelesnik
Vice President & General Counsel, Emerson Process Management

JYP/kg
cc: HCRRA (swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us)
Hennepin County Housing, Community Work & Transit
701 Fourth Avenue South, Ste. 400
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See Comment #344 for Theme Delineations

December 14, 2012

Hennepin County
Housing, Community Works & Transit
ATTN: Southwest Transitway
701 Fourth Avenue South, Suite 400
Minneapolis, MN 55415

SUBJECT: Southwest LRT DEIS Comments

To Whom It May Concern:

The City of Minnetonka has reviewed the Southwest Transitway Draft Environmental Impact Statement. Attached you will find the city's comments and concerns regarding the Southwest LRT line.

We appreciate the opportunity to review the DEIS, to provide comments, and look forward to continuing to work with you and the Metropolitan Council on this project.

Sincerely,

Julie Wischnack, AICP
Community Development Director

Enclosure

Chapter Two: Alternatives Considered			
Page	**Issue**	**Why is this an issue**	**Proposed alterative/mitigation**
2-32	A total of 250 surface parking spaces are shown at the Shady Oak Road Station	Varying numbers have been proposed previously, but typically it has been 350 parking stalls	More work needs to be completed to better define these numbers. Collaboration between the SWLRT project and the Community Works project needs to occur in order to make sure there is consistency among all components of the project.
2-32	The park and ride locations and size of facilities need to be further explored.	The city anticipates that with the size of the park and ride at the Shady Oak station, the park and ride facility will need to be structured. Access directly off Excelsior Boulevard may cause congestions and an alternate access must be explored for consideration.	The exact location of the park and rides and potential for shared parking with the surrounding development, as well as the exact size, and whether the facility is surface or structure must be explored further as part of the project.
2-50 to 2-51	Traction Power Substations, Signal Bungalows, and any other signal cabinets	Location, design, placement and screening is unknown.	The location, placement, and screening of the Traction Power Substations and other signal cabinets must be closely coordinated with the City of Minnetonka. This equipment must be located, screened, and designed as appropriate to avoid impacts to existing and future developments.
2-53	No mention that Minnetonka is an opt-out community	While Minnetonka is an opt-out that utilizes Metro Transit for its service, it has a contract to do so. If the contract were to be cancelled, then the bus services may be modified.	Add language or acknowledge Minnetonka's status as an opt-out community

Chapter Three: Social Effects			
Page	**Issue**	**Why is this an issue**	**Proposed alterative/mitigation**
3-7	Land Use descriptions along the corridor	There is no mention as to when the land use plan used to describe this section was adopted.	As land use plans periodically change, it is important to note which year the plan was adopted that was used for this evaluation.
3-23	In the City of Minnetonka Comprehensive Plan, the summary lists the Golden Triangle	The Golden Triangle is located in Eden Prairie- not Minnetonka.	The words Golden Triangle should be removed and replaced by Opus.
3-23	Table on page 3-23	The City of Minnetonka section summary inaccurately describes the Opus area as the Golden Triangle.	Change to reflect "Opus Area"
Section 3.2	Neighborhood Community Services and Community Cohesion Impacts	This section contains relevant community information and data. The data is however, not translated into how any of the LRT alignments would affect local community services or cohesion. In alignment LRT 3A, the Opus and Shady Oak area, in particular, would generally be underserved but ready for additional opportunities. The LRT 1A alignment, Rowland and Highway 62 station area in Minnetonka would likely disrupt community services and cohesion. The planning for additional impacts around these stations is not planned in the City's comprehensive plan.	Show how LRT alignments would affect local community services or cohesion.

3-38	Mitigation during the construction period	The DEIS states that more specific plans will be developed later for mitigation for businesses and residents. Because of the length of time for construction it is important that these plans are thoroughly developed and communicated before construction begins.	As plans are developed, consult with local businesses and residents about the plans to make sure they are on track. Once plans are developed and during construction, clearly communicate them to the businesses and residents. There should be some discussion about support for businesses along the line, such as the "Open to Business" program.
3-57	Segment 3, the DEIS notes that the LRT is not expected to affect community connectivity--including trails and roadway.	Opus has a pedestrian network of nearly 6 miles of trails. Appendix F shows multiple trail segments being removed as part of the project.	See comments for Appendix F.
3-68	Section 3.3.1 - The last line of the paragraph and the bullet points are in this section and also in Section 3.3.5.	Exact information is duplicate. It seems more appropriate in Section 3.3.5 since 3.3.1 is about legal and regulatory review and 3.3.5 is about acquisition and relocation.	Delete the line and bullet points from section 3.3.1 and leave it in 3.3.5 where it is more appropriate.
3-72	Section heading does not seem appropriate or the subject matter.	While there is some discussion in the section about mitigating or lessening impacts, the main subject matter of the section is Acquisition.	Change the heading of the section to "Acquisition".
3-84 to 3-86	There is a Restrictive Covenant on property PID 3611722210002 which states the property must only be used for parkland and open space purposes.	The current alignment shows LRT through part of this parcel.	Appropriate approvals to have the alignment through this area will need to be obtained from the City of Minnetonka and any other relevant parties.
3-84 to 3-86	The city has a Declaration of Tree Preservation Easement on the property located at 5450 Feltl Road (PID: 3611722220010).	The plan appears to propose track installation and grading as well as realignment of Smetana Rd and Feltl Rd within the easement area.	Appropriate approvals to have the alignment through this area will need to be obtained from the City of Minnetonka and any other relevant parties.
3-84 to 3-86	The city has a Conservation Easement on the property located at 5101 Nolan Drive (PID: 2611722440106).	The plan appears to propose a bridge through the east side of the conservation easement.	Appropriate approvals to have the alignment through this area will need to be obtained from the City of Minnetonka and any other relevant parties.

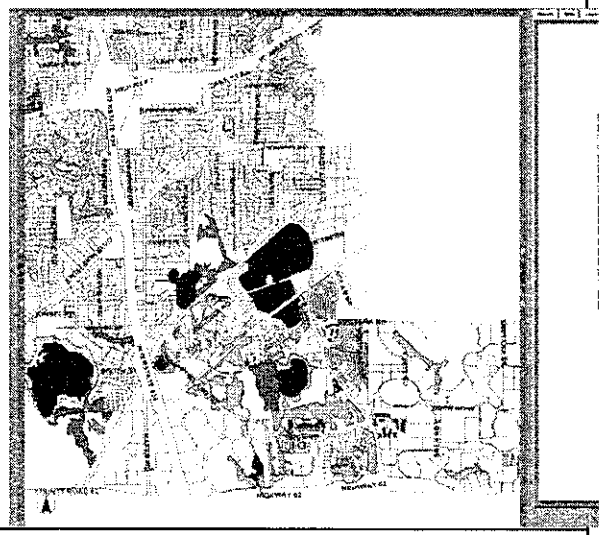
3-112	"North of Smetana Road the alignment is on a bridge to cross over ponds and existing freight rail lines. The proposed structure, along with catenary poles and wires, could have substantial visual impacts on sensitive receptors in the multi-family residential development on the east side of the corridor."	Documents only the multi-family residential on the east side of the LRT alignment north of Smetana Road and the visual impacts to those properties. The rail line, catenary poles and wires will have a negative visual impact, in addition to potential negative environmental impacts, adjacent to the multi-family residential developments to the north (Deer Ridge Townhomes) and South (Claremont) of Smetana Road with LRT 3A. As acquisition of land will be needed to route the corridor through these residential areas, the primary viewers will be residents and Opus trail users. Adjacent to the Claremont, existing vegetation is comprised of high quality tree resources and although mostly deciduous, removal will decrease existing buffering during leaf-on conditions and provide even less buffering during leaf-off season. Although the corridor elevation is lower than the residential buildings south of Smetana Road, attention to aesthetic should not be underestimated. Generally LRT 1A would have negative visual impacts on existing single family residential neighborhoods and Minnesota River Bluffs LRT Regional Trail Users.	Mitigate the additional visual and potential impacts to residential properties.

Chapter Four: Environmental Effects			
Page	**Issue**	**Why is this an issue**	**Proposed alterative/mitigation**
4-2	Section 4.1.1 The incorrect daily amount was stated under the regulation for a waters appropriations permit.	Per the MN DNR's website Minnesota Statute 103G.265 requires the Department of Natural Resources to manage water resources to ensure an adequate supply to meet long-range seasonal requirements for domestic, agricultural, fish and wildlife, recreational, power, navigation, and quality control purposes. The Water Appropriation Permit Program exists to balance competing management objectives that include both development and protection of Minnesota's water resources. A water use permit from DNR Waters is required for all users withdrawing more than 10,000 gallons of water per day or 1 million gallons per year. There are several exemptions to water appropriation permit requirements: domestic uses serving less than 25 persons for general residential purposes, test pumping of a ground water source, reuse of water already authorized by a permit (e.g., water purchased from a municipal water system), or certain agricultural drainage systems (check with your area hydrologist for applicability).	The accurate number of gallons per day should be reflected in the final EIS.

4-21, 4-23, 4-24 and page 196 of appendix H	Ensure that any permanent water removal does not result in negative impacts to ground water or surface waters.	Sections 4.1.4.2 - States there is a possible need for permanent water removal at both segments 1 and 3 and possibly a second area. Mitigation sections (4.1.6) lists methods to minimize impacts and Appendix H (page 196) indicates the permanent water removal or the cut below the water table will not impact wells since the closest well is at least 800 feet away. It further states that if water is diverted into or away from wetlands that the work will be engineered to minimize the impacts.	The engineering should be designed to prevent any impacts versus minimizing them.
4-24 to 4-44	Section 4.2, Water Resources, does not recognize Minnetonka's ordinances or regulation as it relates to wetlands, floodplains, shorelands, storm water management or grading and erosion control except in Table 4.2-1 which identifies Minnetonka as being the LGU under the WCA and references Minnetonka's role in project review and approval. It should also be noted that the city has a tree protection ordinance.	Appropriate permits must be acquired and mitigation strategies must follow the city's rules. For example Section 4.2.2.2 on page 4-32 discusses mitigation strategies for impacts to wetlands. Since the DEIS does not recognize that Minnetonka has a wetland ordinance that requires wetland mitigation in the amount of 1:1 for any amount of wetland fill (no De minimis), wetland mitigation is not mentioned as a strategy to offset the impacts.	Section 4.2.1.5--Local: Cities (page 4-28) - speaks in detail to Eden Prairie's regulation and mentions Mpls', Minnetonka's and St. Louis Park's. This section should be more developed to recognize each community's regulation to ensure appropriate planning and compliance. For example, Minnetonka has a grading and erosion control ordinance triggered by land disturbance of area encompassing 5,000 square feet or 50 cubic yards, that requires compliance with specific standards and the installation and maintenance of best management practices. The city's floodplain ordinance does not allow compensatory water storage to be located in an area of regulated trees. The city views the removal of trees to provide compensatory water storage as a mismanagement of natural resources.

			Section 4.2.2.1 100-year Floodplain (page 4-30) and Figure 4.2-2 (page 4-31) does not recognize the city's 100-year flood areas. This is problematic if fill or alteration occurs. Figures 4.2-3 and 4.2-4 and 4.2-5 (pages 4-36 through 4-38) may not have the city's 100-year flood elevations identified. Although tree impacts are not covered in this section it should be noted that Minnetonka has a tree protection ordinance that regulates tree removal and mitigation. Section 4.2.2.2 Wetlands, Streams and Lakes (page 4-32)- Minnetonka's ordinances relating to wetlands and shorelands are not identified and therefore necessary permits at the local level may not be acquired and appropriate mitigation may not occur. As previously stated, Minnetonka has a wetland ordinance that requires any wetland fill to be mitigated at a rate of 1:1, wetland mitigation is not mentioned as a strategy to offset impacts. Table 4.2-2 (page 4-34) Minnetonka should be added as a permitting agency for wetland and floodplain areas. Section 4.2.4 Short Term Construction Effects (page 4-42) Compliance with Minnetonka's regulation and storm water regulation will be required.

			Section 4.2.5 Mitigation (page 4-43) Recognize local rules so appropriate permitting and compliance can be achieved.
4-28	The City of Minnetonka requires a grading and erosion control permit for land disturbance greater than 5,000 square feet or 50 cubic yards	The City of Minnetonka has a city ordinance requiring such a permit to be obtained	Section 4.2.1.5-- Local: Cities Insert the following language into this section: "The City of Minnetonka requires a grading and erosion control permit for land disturbance activities that are greater than 5,000 square feet or 50 cubic yards."
4-30	The City of Minnetonka's Water Resource Management Plan (WRMP) has identified and regulates additional floodplain areas, outside of FEMA floodplain	The City of Minnetonka has a Floodplain District ordinance requiring floodplain areas identified by FEMA and the city's WRMP be regulated. The ordinance requires any fill be mitigated at a one to one ratio. The 100-year floodplain areas mapped under the city's WRMP can be obtained on the city's website or via a request for the city's GIS layer	Section 4.2.2.1 100-year floodplain and Section 4.2.3.1 Floodplains Include floodplain information from the City of Minnetonka's WRMP in the analysis of floodplain impacts.
4-31 and 4-36 throug h 4-38	Proper identification of forest resources on Figures 4.2-2, 4.2-3 and 4.2-4 and 4.2-5.	It does not appear that the referenced Figures accurately illustrate the deciduous forests, specifically the oak woodland, and brushland behind the Claremont Apartments just north of the proposed Opus station.	Re-evaluate the segments and identify and map the existing forest resources.

4-47	Figure 4.3-1 - It is difficult to see if all of the Minnesota Land Cover Classification System (MLCCS) remnant communities are depicted in this map because the resolution is poor. In Minnetonka there are several areas; a tamarack swamp SE of Glen Lake, semi permanently flooded cattail marsh E of Lake Minnetoga and an oak woodland brushland SW of the Conservatory Apartments. Additionally there are several other emergent wetland communities.	If the MLCCS designated remnant communities are not included, potential impacts and restoration will not addressed.	Confirm that the MLCCS information is recorded and provide a map with higher resolution or provide maps of these communities for each city so the information can be reviewed. Attached is map reflecting Minnetonka's MLCCS for the area. 
4-52	4.3.3.2 Native Habitats, Table 4.3-1 - In the comments under alternative 3A it is not clear if the MLCCS designation of oak woodland brushland located southwest of the Claremont Apartments and north of the Opus Station is included.	If it is not included potential impacts and restoration will not be addressed.	Confirm that it is recorded in the existing conditions.

4-53	Invasive species management plan mentioned in sections 4.3.3.4 Invasive Species, 4.3.4 Short-Term Construction Effects, and 4.3.5 Mitigation	Minnetonka is involved in restoration activities of natural habitats. The city appreciates the foresight in developing an invasive species management plan and would like to review the final plan.	Provide plan for city review and approval.
4-54 and 4-55	Is the summary depicting the potential impacts for Minnetonka's habitats if the city's existing MLCCS designated remnant communities are not accurately reflected in the existing conditions?	If the communities are not accurately included potential impacts and restoration will not be addressed.	Confirm that Minnetonka's MLCCS designated remnant communities are accurately recorded in the existing conditions.
4-61	Section 4.4.4 Long-Term Effects, the tamarack swamp located SE of Glen Lake is not identified.	If it is not identified how will the impacts be evaluated?	Determine if the alignment for LRT 1A will have any potential impacts to this resource.
4-103	Noise related to horns and bells at all at-grade crossings	Impacts to adjacent residents.	Quiet zones should be considered for implementation at all at-grade crossings to eliminate noise from bells and horns.
4-103 to 4-104	"Construction contractors *should* be required to develop a noise mitigation plan" and discusses what should be included.	The plan MUST be developed and include requirements from the city.	City must be involved in approval of the Construction Noise Mitigation Plan steps and approvals prior to work beginning.
4-118	DEIS references final EIS that is not yet completed.	Mitigation measures will be based on this document.	City needs an opportunity to review and provide input on findings.
4-119 and 4-127	On-going maintenance practices associated with light rail.	Section 4.9 discusses Hazardous and Contaminated Materials. The collection and disposal of oils, grease and other wastes is documented in the Draft EIS. Will salt be used during winter snow removal operations? If so, how will the amounts be monitored? Both Minnehaha and Nine Mile Creek are chloride impaired so salt use may be an issue.	Address the use of salt in the final document.

Chapter Five: Economic Effects			
Page	**Issue**	**Why is this an issue**	**Proposed alterative/mitigation**
Section 5.2	Station Area Development	Environmental Metrics – Concur with the report that LRT 1A is inconsistent with the Minnetonka Comprehensive Plan. If selected, recreating transit-friendly station areas west of the Shady Oak Station would pose significant challenges given the existing land use pattern and transportation systems.	None—concur with the report.
Section 5.2	Station Area Development	Environmental Metrics – LRT 1A and 3A for Shady Oak Station Area. The Short-term impacts described in Section 5.2.2 make no mention that this station is essentially "land-locked" by private land holdings. The document does not identify in any generality how these issues impact station area development.	Access and landownership issues identified in the DEIS will need a resolution in order for the Shady Oak station to come on-line.

Chapter Six: Transportation Effects			
Page	**Issue**	**Why is this an issue**	**Proposed alterative/mitigation**
6-53	Figure 6.3-2 does not reflect all trails in Opus and along Shady Oak Road.	The Opus trails need to be documented as they are important for connectivity to/from the proposed station and the businesses and residential in the area. The LRT will impact some of these trails as shown in Appendix F.	Document all trails.

Chapter Nine: Indirect Effects and Cumulative Impacts			
Page	**Issue**	**Why is this an issue**	**Proposed alterative/mitigation**
9-37, 9-38, 9-39	DEIS states that no mitigation is required for Transit Effects, Effects on Roadways and Other Transportation Effects including trails.	Effects to local transportation systems affected by the Southwest LRT must be included as a part of the overall study for potential improvements needed to eliminate increased congestion and impacts. DEIS states that because the indirect effects and cumulative impacts are expected to be beneficial, no mitigation is needed. Impacts could require substantial dollars for improvements.	Study area limits must be reviewed and defined with the city to determine overall impacts to local infrastructure systems.

Chapter Twelve: Public Agency Coordination and Comments			
Page	**Issue**	**Why is this an issue**	**Proposed alterative/mitigation**
12-4 and 12-15	Minnetonka has regulations not identified in Table 12.2-2 Preliminary List of Required Permits. These include wetland, floodplain, shoreland, erosion control, steep slope and tree protection ordinance as well as stormwater regulation.	The appropriate permits may not be acquired at the local level.	Include the above referenced Minnetonka items in the list of permits to be obtained.

Appendix F- Part 1: Conceptual Engineering Drawings			
Page Number	**Issue**	**Why is this an issue**	**Proposed alterative/mitigation**
38	The SWLRT alignment must go under (cut and cover) TH 62 rather than go over TH 62 as proposed.	Going over TH 62 would: 1) Limit the city's flexibility with much needed local roadway improvements and potential realignments within the Opus II Business Park. 2) Provide for a non-desirable connection and layout for the City West Station in the City of Eden Prairie due to existing topography. 3) Eliminates the opportunity to provide a trail linkage between the Opus II Business Park and the United Health Group Campus (located on the south side of TH 62). Having an elevated track through this area would preclude this opportunity.	The SWLRT alignment must go under (cut and cover) TH 62 rather than go over TH 62 as proposed.
38-39	Design refinements must shift the SWLRT alignment of the line slightly to the south/west near TH 62.	The city, MnDOT and property owners within Opus II Business Park have made significant investments in making transportation improvements to the interchange at US 169 and Bren Road. In the long term additional access into and out of the business park will be needed in order to provide acceptable Level of Service (LOS) at the existing interchange. One option suggested for consideration by MnDOT was a set of ramps from TH 62 into the Opus Business Park. The ramps would be for westbound traffic entering the site and for eastbound traffic leaving the site. The alignment shown for SWLRT in this area would preclude constructing these ramps in the future.	Shift the SWLRT alignment slightly to the south and west to allow for the ramps to be constructible in the future and not interfere with light rail operations.

39	Minnetonka agrees with the recommendation eliminating the trail crossing of the light rail line and Red Circle Drive south of Opus station, however the limits must be revised.	A portion of the trail located at the western edge of the property, west of the proposed alignment, must remain to maintain connectivity. Without this segment, it removes connectivity on the west side and increases the travel distance of pedestrians and bicyclists from the station to properties southwest.	Leave a portion of trail in place near Red Circle Drive currently shown for removal. It will allow construction of a parallel trail connection on the west side of the SWLRT line in the future.
39	The DEIS does not indicate how the new trail segment proposed to connect Opus station to the trails west of the north-south segment of Bren Road East will cross.	With the expected increase in traffic volumes on the roadways and additional pedestrian foot traffic, the city is concerned that an at-grade crossing in this location could pose a safety challenge.	A grade separated crossing of the roadway for the trail crossing at this location, and all others must be proposed within the Opus II Business Park.
39	For the trail area north of Bren Road W and the Opus station, the DEIS shows removal of trail segments west of the LRT alignment near Bren Road. The trail removal eliminates connection to properties east of the LRT line creating a gap between the underpass at Bren Road West and the trail network along Green Circle Drive.	The SWLRT project creates a trail gap without constructing a parallel north-south trail segment on the east side of the transit line. Connectivity that existed prior to the project would not be maintained.	As part of the preliminary design and FEIS, Metro Transit must replace the trail on the east side to bring more parcels and properties into a half mile walk and a two mile bike of Opus station. All trail segments proposed for removal and replacement as a part of the project must be reviewed to maintain connectivity that existed prior to the project.
40	The proposed LRT crossing and intersection reconfiguration at Smetana Road and Feltl Road is not acceptable.	The proposed reconfiguration switches the through movement of Smetana Road, the higher functionally classified roadway with heavier traffic volumes, to Feltl Road, the roadway with lower functional class and lower traffic volumes. It also creates additional SWLRT crossings that could be reduced.	There are other alternatives available that would preserve the alignment and through movement of Smetana Road, yet limit the number of at-grade crossings. The city requires that the FEIS and preliminary engineering develop and evaluate other concepts for this intersection acceptable to the city.

42	The curve of the alignment just west of the Shady Oak station (curve taking the alignment to the south)	The city has been informed that this curve may change in the future, which will impact redevelopment plans for the area.	Changes in the alignment from what is shown in the DEIS should immediately be discussed with the city and the city reserves the rights to provide comments on the new alignment.
Appendix F page 42-43	The proposed location of the Shady Oak station platform is currently landlocked as it exists today. The city assumes that 17th Avenue in Hopkins will need to be expanded south as part of the project in order to access the station.	The city has identified secondary access points into the station area as a key issue, as one access point is likely unable to accommodate the anticipated demand of this station.	Secondary access points from 47th Street West, 5th Street/K-Tel Drive and Shady Oak Road should be considered, as well as how the reconstruction of Shady Oak Road from Excelsior Boulevard to Highway 7 will function given the proximity to the station.

Appendix H – Part 1: Supporting Technical Reports and Memoranda			
Page	**Issue**	**Why is this an issue**	**Proposed alterative/mitigation**
4-21, 4-23, 4-24 and page 196 of appendix H	Ensure that any permanent water removal does not result in negative impacts to ground water or surface waters.	4.1.4.2 - States there is a possible need for permanent water removal at both segments 1 and 3 and possibly a second area. Mitigation sections (4.1.6) lists methods to minimize impacts and Appendix H (page 196) indicates the permanent water removal or the cut below the water table will not impact wells since the closest well is at least 800 feet away. It further states that if water is diverted into or away from wetlands that the work will be engineered to minimize the impacts.	The engineering should be designed to prevent any impacts versus minimizing them.

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Housing, Community Works & Transit
ATTN: Southwest Transitway
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To <swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>

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bcc

Subject Eden Prairie SWLRT

Please see attached comments on SWLRT

Thanks

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December 20, 2012

RESPONSE OF EATON CORPORATION- HYDRAULICS GROUP TO SOUTHWEST TRANSITWAY-DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT

Eaton Corporation-Hydraulics Group ("Eaton") hereby submits its comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Southwest Transitway.

Eaton acknowledges the substantial benefits that will arise from, and supports the need for, the Southwest Transitway, which is the subject of the DEIS. Eaton has followed with interest the progress of this project from initial discussions to the current proposals being considered. Because the terminal station of the Southwest Transitway is the Mitchell Station that sits directly on its campus, Eaton has been particularly concerned about the impact of this project on its Hydraulics Group Global Headquarters site. F0

Eaton's Hydraulics business is a worldwide leader in the design, manufacture and marketing of a comprehensive line of reliable, high-efficiency hydraulic systems and components for use in mobile and stationary applications. Mobile and stationary markets include agriculture, alternative energy, construction, forestry, manufacturing, material handling, mining, oil and gas, processing, transportation and utility equipment.

Eaton has been deeply interested in how the DEIS would evaluate the impact of the Mitchell Station and associated development on the Eaton site. Unfortunately, the DEIS does not even mention the detrimental impact that the Mitchell station and associated development will have on the Eaton site. This may be due to the lack of knowledge of the unique nature of the Eaton campus, which places the fundamental elements of research, design, manufacturing, and administration in a compact and single location. This configuration provides significant and irreplaceable benefits to Eaton in the efficient and profitable operating of this global business. I2 F0

To provide the reviewing authority with important and objective information about the detrimental impact of the Southwest Transitway, Eaton retained the firm of Shenehon and Associates to assist it in assessing the impact of the Mitchell station and associated development on the Eaton Hydraulics Group Global Headquarters campus. Shenehon's Consulting Memorandum setting forth a preliminary determination of the devastating impact the project will have on the operational efficiency of the campus is attached. Shenehon's analysis and conclusions confirms Eaton's own internal analysis. Again, these negative impacts were not mentioned in the DEIS

The impact of the Mitchell Station will likely involve the loss of the manufacturing building, and also the loss of Eaton's future expansion land. In addition, the Mitchell Station will bring a high volume of traffic into the area of the campus that will create F0

ingress/egress issues, which will negatively impact any existing operations that will remain at the campus. The continued viability of the site, which employs nearly 650 people, will be in doubt. These impacts were not noted in the DEIS.

In reviewing the Mitchell Station plans and DEIS, it appears to both Eaton and Shenehon that there is a very high likelihood that this plan will move forward and that its impacts will compel Eaton to find a suitable replacement for its campus. Replicating this campus will be difficult and very expensive. In addition to substantial relocation costs, Eaton will incur the costs of purchasing or leasing replacement space and the impairment of the existing property, plant and equipment. F0

The only alternatives in the DEIS that appear to ensure the continued viability of the Eaton campus are the 'No Build Alternative' and the 'LRT 1A', with all other plans involving a Park & Ride and, except for the 'Enhanced Bus Alternative', a Light Rail Transit Station.

Eaton looks forward to discussing with local, regional, and state agencies how the potential loss of a significant employer can be avoided. It is also important that as this project moves forward that significant funding is made available for the relocation of the Eaton campus and that Eaton is given adequate time to relocate their operations, which could take several years to facilitate. L1

Sincerely,

William VanArsdale
Group President
Hydraulics, Filtration, & Golf Grip
Eaton Corporation

CONSULTING MEMORANDUM

TO: File #12188

FROM: Shenehon Company

DATE: December 17, 2012

SUBJECT: Consulting Services for Eaton Corporation in Anticipation of Southwest Transitway Development.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this memorandum is to summarize the potential impacts to the Eaton Hydraulics Global Headquarters campus that will likely result from the Southwest Transitway Mitchell Station – Office and Park & Ride and to provide comment on the Southwest Transitway - Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). In analyzing the potential ramifications of the taking, it is our opinion that the Mitchell Station – Office and Park & Ride will pose a serious threat to the continued viability of the Eaton Hydraulics Group Global Headquarters campus. It is our opinion that the Mitchell Station plans completely disregard the campus that Eaton has established in favor of redeveloping the campus and surrounding area into a mixed use development, to include residential, commercial, and civic/institutional/office development. F0

In addition, the Mitchell Station - Office and Park & Ride plans include a major light rail station with ±800 spots for its Park & Ride program located on the north end of the Eaton campus, where the manufacturing facility and excess land are currently located. At a minimum, the light rail station and Park & Ride will result in the loss of the manufacturing facility and the excess land and negatively impact the campus by eliminating the integrated nature of the Eaton Hydraulics Group, along with the ability of future expansion. This will leave Eaton with a small, segregated, quasi-campus that will severely diminish the established synergy of the Eaton campus as it exists today. F0

In reviewing the DEIS the considered alternatives are a 'No Build Alternative,' an 'Enhanced Bus Alternative' and five Light Rail Transit (LRT) options. After studying the DEIS and Southwest Transitway Area Planning report, the only alternatives that appear to ensure the continued viability of the Eaton campus are the 'No Build Alternative' and the 'LRT 1A'; all other plans involve a Park & Ride and, except for the 'Enhanced Bus Alternative', a Light Rail Transit Station. The recommended alternative identified in DEIS is the 'LRT 3A-1' plan and the 'Co-Location Alternative' is only a slight variation on the 'LRT 3A-1' plan. Both of the recommended plans will have a significant negative impact on the viability of the Eaton campus, likely requiring the relocation of Eaton and involving significant relocation and capital improvement costs which may not even provide Eaton with a truly suitable replacement site. F0

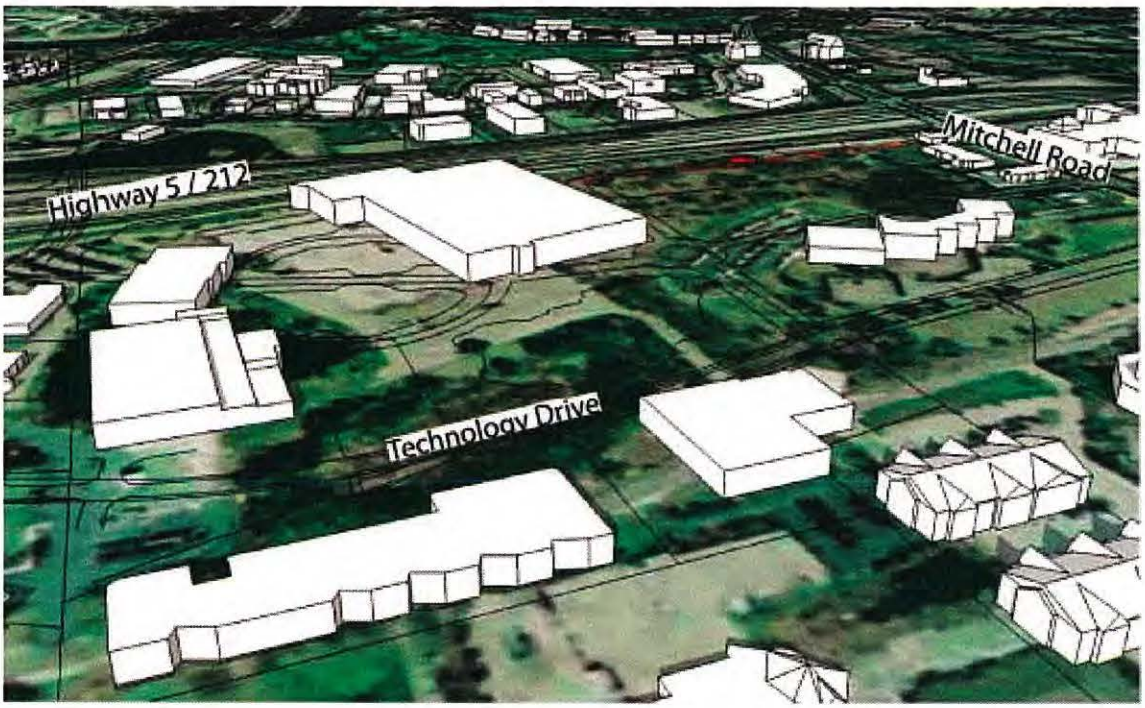
BEFORE CONDITION

The subject campus was initially established in the 1960s when Char-Lynn established its operations in Eden Prairie. Eaton expanded the campus in 1998 and 1999, assembling 61.57 acres of land with a very prominent presence along Highway 212 in Eden Prairie. The campus consists of four buildings: (1) the Hydraulics Group Global Headquarters (office), (2) the Manufacturing Plant, (3) the Technology Building (IS Innovation Center & Test Labs), and (4) the Test Lab - Noise Chamber and Display Area Building. The campus benefits from its proximity to a strong employment base in a first-tier Twin Cities community and from very good access characteristics and visibility. Eaton is the primary property owner of the land, which is bounded by Highway 212 to the north, Mitchell Road to the east, Technology Drive to the south, and Wallace Road to the west. Eaton's ownership comprises over 75% of the total land area within this block. In addition, the Eaton campus includes a 7.64-acre vacant parcel of land with the potential to be utilized for expansion as the company continues to grow and expand. Eaton currently employs approximately 650 people at the subject property and the campus has an assessed value of $22,606,000 with current real estate taxes of $853,845.

Campus developments like Eaton's, with strong locations in fully developed areas, are difficult to replicate. Eaton has established a fully integrated campus that creates exceptional efficiencies by having research and development, manufacturing, and executive offices in one location, while also possessing available land to expand operations as the company continues to grow. This environment streamlines communication and teamwork among employees and promotes effortless interactions and exchanges of ideas. At their Eden Prairie campus, Eaton is able to provide their employees with onsite training and the opportunity to see the diverse branches of the business firsthand.

The seclusion and ease of connection between the facilities that a contiguous parcel of land provides is extremely beneficial to the organization. Another common trait shared by Eaton and other comparable corporate campuses is proximity to a strong, highly skilled workforce. Corporations like Eaton will typically invest significantly more capital to create a campus environment than they would invest in standalone office, R & D, and manufacturing facilities, due to the synergistic benefits. The subject site also benefits from having great access and visibility due to its location on Highway 212, only 1.5 miles west of Interstate 494, within 20 minutes from both downtown Minneapolis and the airport. With the surrounding area already mostly developed it would be extremely difficult to find a suitable replacement site similar in size and location. A likely replacement site would either involve a costly redevelopment site or an inferior site located further from the core of the Twin Cities area.

The following graphic was taken from the Southwest Transitway Planning Study and depicts a bird's eye view of the existing area primarily occupied by the Eaton campus.



THE PROJECT

The Mitchell Station – Office Park & Ride as quoted by the Southwest Transit Area Planning Study will be the "end of the line" and "will act as a MAJOR park-and-ride location." The Southwest Transitway Station Area Planning and DEIS studies the surrounding area within a half-mile radius of the proposed Mitchell Station, but clearly focuses on the block bounded by Highway 212, Mitchell Road, Technology Drive, and Wallace Road. In fact, the plan focuses almost exclusively on the redevelopment of this block. Despite Eaton owning approximately 75% of the land within this block, the plans make almost no mention of the existence of the Eaton campus and do not address the potential impacts to the viability of one of Eden Prairie's major employers. Preliminary plans indicate that most of this block will be completely redeveloped and that north/south and east/west roadways will run through the center of the current Eaton Campus. Further study of the plan reveals that of the four buildings and land that comprise the Eaton campus, only the office structure and the small Test Lab building are to remain once the area is fully redeveloped. Though complete redevelopment of the entire block may not happen immediately, the LRT Station and ±800 car Park & Ride do appear as immediate threats to the viability of the Eaton Campus.

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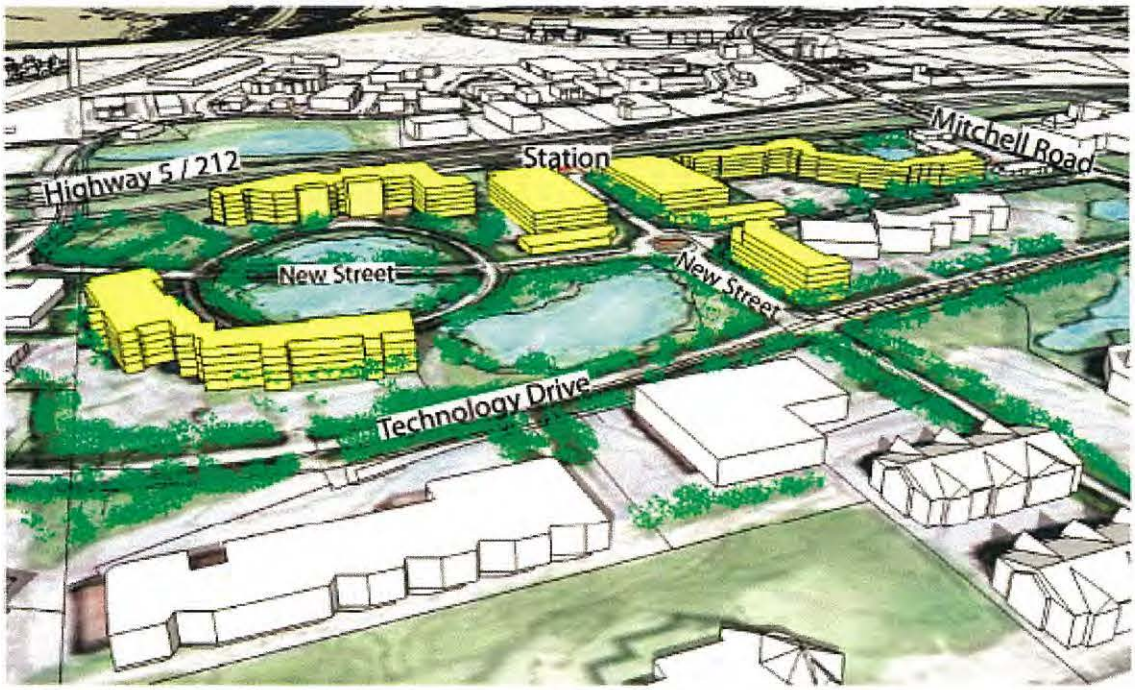
The following graphic was taken from the Southwest Transitway Plan and depicts the redevelopment of the block that is primarily comprised by the Eaton campus.



Note: yellow structures indicate new development with white buildings representing existing structures. The plan illustrates the loss of not only the manufacturing facility but also the technology building. In addition, there are significant road expansions (including a roundabout) and added retention pond infrastructure.

The Southwest Transitway is marketing the Mitchell Station – Office Park & Ride as a redevelopment opportunity that intends to completely redevelop the block where the Eaton campus is located. The plan specifically references development involving "New Buildings Only," intending to create the developments listed below.

Commercial Development	108,000 square feet
Civic/Institutional/Office	494,400 square feet that will accommodate 1,412 people
Park and Ride, Ramp	800 cars

In addition, the plan describes the development of a new roadway system that will connect Technology Drive with the Station and Transit Plaza, which will facilitate bus and car drop-off activities. The plan envisions "large parking structures" and a new series of streets that will connect the Station to the Eden Prairie Municipal Campus. There is also an intention to "introduce a significant residential component into the station area near the station itself." The plan indicates an "opportunity to develop or expand one to three corporate campuses" but fails to mention the existing campus that occupies 75% of the primary Transitway and redevelopment area.

TIMING OF REDEVELOPMENT

The plans for the Southwest Transitway leading to the Mitchell Station – Office and Park & Ride date back to 2002, when feasibility studies were being completed on eight transit alternatives. In 2005 and 2006 the Transitway placed its focus on three transit routes and in 2008 and 2009 plans began to emerge that focused on creating a Transitway Station at Mitchell Road where the Eaton campus is currently situated. Over this period an unprecedented level of economic growth and prosperity occurred, followed by a deep economic recession and financial crisis from which we continue to slowly recover.

As a result, continued office and commercial development growth is currently very speculative and should focus on new development opportunities as opposed to redeveloping thriving, existing campus developments. In this case, the subject provides approximately 650 local jobs and close to $1,000,000 in annual property tax revenue. The potential to add 1,400+ jobs is enticing to any community, but it would take several years (if not longer) for this to be realized, and at the risk of losing 650 existing jobs. Assuming 1,400 jobs would be created through the redevelopment of the site, this is essentially a net gain of 750 jobs, but at a significant cost to the community. Costs associated with this redevelopment would include the expensive cost to relocate Eaton, extensive infrastructure costs, and likely tax increment financing to entice corporations to the redevelopment area. Additionally, it would take several years before the jobs lost from the Eaton campus would be replaced, and even longer to reach the projection of 1,400+ jobs.

Based on published reports and the DEIS, it is clear that there is a high probability that the Transitway plan will move forward. Yet it appears that the Southwest Transitway Authority has not completed a cost-to-cure analysis which would consider the consequences of keeping Eaton in their current location. As a result, it is critical that the Southwest Transitway consider the potential relocation of a 60 plus acre, four-building campus, which currently employs approximately 650 people, and the extensive costs associated with this relocation. It appears that even if the Transitway project were scaled back to accommodate the continued viability of Eaton, the risk of continued eminent domain would always remain, given the stated intention to see the area redeveloped into a high density, pedestrian and vehicle oriented redevelopment project.

The DEIS indicates that "acquisitions/displacements would be necessary for all of the Build Alternatives-some acquisitions would be very small areas needed to expand right-of-way, but others would involve entire parcels of land that would necessitate relocating a resident or business." The DEIS also references the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 as amended, [42 U.S.C. 4601 et seq.] The Uniform Act requires that property owners be paid fair market value for their land and buildings, and that they be assisted in finding replacement business sites or dwellings. Further defined, the fair market value is based on the highest and best use of the site, which in the instance of the subject would be for continued use as a corporate campus. Based on the Transitway plans it is our opinion that the Eaton facility would have a high likelihood of requiring relocation. F0

The relocation costs alone would be very expensive for Eaton and would also require significant capital investments to re-establish a corporate campus in the southwest Twin Cities. It is also

likely that the location of any replacement campus would be inferior in comparison to its current location. This also impacts Eaton's ability to recruit talented employees given the strong uncertainty involving the continued viability of the Eaton campus. The following is a summary of the issues involved in relocating Eaton.

Building 1 – Eden Prairie Manufacturing Plant

Replace a 241,227 square foot manufacturing space that is used by Eaton to produce steering units and motors. Eaton aggressively estimates that it would take approximately 18 months to relocate, but it could take longer.

Building 2 – Technology Building

F0

Replace the 60,000 square foot technology/innovation center and test labs. Costs considered in relocating would be the cost to purchase or lease a replacement facility plus moving expenses, capital, and infrastructure upgrades.

Building 3 – Hydraulics Group HQ

Replace the 93,748 square foot office building that is used for marketing, engineering, customer services, and finance. Costs considered in relocating would involve purchase or lease of a replacement office facility and moving and information technology costs.

Building 4 – Engineering Test Lab/Noise Chamber

Replace a 20,000 square foot building. Costs would include purchasing or leasing a replacement building and would also include moving and capital infrastructure costs.

The cost to move the campus would be substantial and there is no guarantee that Eaton will be able to find a suitable replacement property. In addition to relocation costs, Eaton will incur the costs of purchasing or leasing replacement space and the impairment of the existing property, plant and equipment.

Conclusion

Eaton has committed significant capital investments to establish a global headquarters campus for its Hydraulics Group, and it will be extremely costly and difficult to replace. The Mitchell Station – Office and Park & Ride will significantly impact Eaton and will likely involve the loss of the manufacturing building, which is considered the primary building of the campus, and also the loss of land for future expansion. In addition, the Park & Ride and Transit Station will bring a high volume of traffic into the area of the campus, which will in turn create ingress/egress issues and negatively impact any existing operations that will remain at the campus.

Eaton's loss of any of their buildings will have a negative effect on the functionality and operations of the Hydraulics Group headquarters campus. Further, the Mitchell Station plans call for the complete redevelopment of the block where the Eaton campus is currently situated and where Eaton controls approximately 75% of the land area. In reviewing the plans, it appears that the manufacturing plant and technology building will be lost as a result of the project and

would leave Eaton with less than half of the space it had prior to the taking. In reviewing the Mitchell Station plans, it seems the impact of the redevelopment plans will force Eaton to find a suitable replacement for their campus. It will be very difficult and very expensive to replicate what Eaton has created over the past 50 years. In addition to the substantial relocation costs, Eaton will incur the costs of purchasing and/or leasing replacement space and the impairment of the existing property, plant and equipment.

After studying the DEIS and Southwest Transitway Area Planning the only alternatives that appear to ensure the continued viability of the Eaton campus are the 'No Build Alternative' and the 'LRT 1A', with all other plans involving a Park & Ride and, except for the 'Enhanced Bus Alternative', a Light Rail Transit Station. The recommended plans for a light rail station at this site will likely involve the loss of the Eaton campus. The plans to redevelop the site assume the creation of 1,400 jobs, but ignore the potential loss of nearly 650 jobs from the loss of the Eaton campus. As this project moves forward, it is imperative that significant funding is made available for the relocation of the Eaton campus and that Eaton is given adequate time to relocate their operations, which could take several years to facilitate.

"Bob Brockway"
<rmbrockway@comcast.net>
12/20/2012 10:56 AM

To <swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>
cc
bcc
Subject SW LRT Comments

Dear Sir:
I live in the Calhoun Isles condo complex which is just east/north of the future West Lake Street LRT station. I believe the SW LRT should be constructed, but **only if it is done right** and that means not destroying the Kenilworth bike trail, path and park environment. This also means not subjecting the people who live near the proposed route to even moderate impact.

CONCERNS:

1. My major concern is that the LRT designers will use the excuse that the project can not afford doing it right. If such is the case, then let's build only the length that can be afforded and do the rest when more money is available. Make it a show piece that you can be proud of, not a horrible eye sore and a destroyer of neighborhoods.
2. The space between the Calhoun Isles condos and the Cedar Shore town house condos is too narrow for two LRT tracks, the Kenilworth bike and walking trail, and at the same time, avoid significantly impacting those people living in those condos. The only way to do this is to place the LRT in a ditch with an enclosed sound barrier. E4
3. Grade crossings at Cedar Lake Pkwy and at the Belt Line Blvd will produce huge bottlenecks for traffic. That's OK for passengers living in Eden Prairie, but not for the locals.
   3.1 Sunset Blvd and Cedar Lake Pkwy converge to cross the LRT tracks at the south east corner of Cedar Lake. These two streets have always relieved pressure on West Lake Street. A grade crossing would significantly reduce traffic flow. The option of placing a LRT bridge over this intersection is a giant step backward. What a terrible thing that would be for the park and the South Cedar Lake bathing beach environment. The LRT must go under the road. Even New York City doesn't put their trains across Central Park. E8
   3.2 Belt Line Blvd is the only north south street available to cross the proposed LRT tracks between Highway 100 and Lake Calhoun. That's a distance of over a mile. With gates going down every three to four minutes, traffic will be backed up to Highway 7/5 which is only a few hundred yards north. At the time a RR right-a-way was granted, I'm sure Belt Line was not a heavily traveled four lane road.
4. The bell noise from the LRT, when entering the West Lake Street station, is a concern. An enclosed sound barrier is critical to prevent this bell noise from being amplified to the high floors in the Calhoun Isles towers. E4

I hope that you give these thoughts proper consideration. It's the residents and park visitors of Minneapolis who are being told to accept the down sides of an LRT planned through their parks and neighborhoods. The Met Council's own studies show that, in the future, the city will grow much more than the suburbs so these parks, beaches, and neighborhoods must be preserved now or they will be forever lost.

Robert M. Brockway
3145 Dean Court, # 904
Minneapolis, MN 55416

rmbrockway@comcast.net

Beth Swedberg
<beth.swedberg@gmail.com>
12/20/2012 02:39 PM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us
cc
bcc
Subject SW LRT crossing at Cedar Lake Parkway

To whom it may concern,
I have been a resident at 33 Park Lane in Mpls for 17 years. I support the development of light rail for the metro area. I am opposed to an at grade or above grade crossing at Cedar Lake Parkway. Please seriously consider a trench option for the LRT and trails with the auto traffic crossing slightly above grade. This area is extremely busy all year round with overload levels of auto, pedestrian and bike traffic spring/summer/fall as one would expect of the "Grand Rounds" route. Please do not add the additional burden of 250 to 350 trains per day at grade and for goodness sake please do not elevate the train. The noise and lights and overall impact will seriously affect the quality of life, property values (and subsequent tax revenue) as well as safety at this important intersection.
Thank you,

E8

E8 N2

O1

Beth Swedberg
33 Park Lane
Mpls, MN 55416

bswedberg@comcast.net
612-922-7299

"Bob Salmen" <bobsalmen@efsinvestments.com>

12/20/2012 05:08 PM

To <swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>

cc

bcc

Subject DEIS for Southwest Light Rail Project & Proposed Royalston Station

To Whom It May Concern:

As was instructed by the southwest Light Rail website, I have enclosed a copy of my DEIS as it relates to properties I own located at the Royalston City Market (415 & 501 Royalston Avenue).

Please review and feel free to contact me with any questions or comments you may have.

Sincerely yours,

Robert D. Salmen
President
Equity Financial Services Corp.
501 Royalston Avenue, Suite 100
Minneapolis, MN 55405
T 612.370.0333
F 612.370.0555
C 612.991-8000
bobsalmen@efsinvestments.com

December 10, 2012

Equity Financial Services

Sent US Postal & Email: swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us

Hennepin County Housing, Community Works & Transit

ATTN: Southwest Transitway

c/o Minnesota Metropolitan Council

701 Fourth Avenue South, Suite 400

Minneapolis, MN 55415

RE: DEIS for the Southwest Light Rail Project and proposed Royalston Avenue Construction & Station

To Whom It May Concern:

We are writing to you today as a property owner of the Royalston City Market located at 415 & 501 Royalston Avenue. Our properties are bordered between Royalston & Border Avenue (east/west) and Highway 55/Olson Memorial (north). We own approximately 8 acres and the land is currently developed with two, multiple tenant office/warehouse properties consisting of 220,000 square feet. Upon our initial review, the DEIS has a number of inadequacies and reflects a lack of understanding of the current conditions and business operations for my property and its tenants/businesses along Royalston Avenue. M2

From the current plan shown on the Southwest Corridor website, it appears the Southwest Light Rail is proposed to travel up and down Royalston Avenue with a "Royalston Stop" constructed near the southeast corner of our 415 Royalston property.

The DEIS does not reflect an understanding of the business operation of the Royalston City Market tenants/businesses. Our property is a profitable, thriving, office/industrial property which is home to five businesses with over 150 owners/employees. While each business is different, all require unfettered vehicular access from Royalston AND Border Avenue. The DEIS shows that the SW LRT, as proposed, will make it virtually impossible for some businesses to continue to operate profitably at their current locations. M2

The DEIS shows a clear lack of understanding of the geographic constraints of the Royalston City Market tenants/businesses. Additionally, the DEIS anticipates land use changes with no suggested implementation or mitigation for existing tenants/businesses at Royalston City Market that will be affected by the SW LRT. At a minimum there will be business disruption during construction and the likelihood that the businesses will not be able to survive construction. In addition, it is clear that these businesses may be unable to conduct their business after construction. M2

Specific Comments (by section):

2.1.3 LOCALLY PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS

I2

R2

As it relates to the Locally Preferred Alternative for the Royalston Station concerning safety, access, accessibility, visual sightlines and cross-access. We feel that discussions should be reviewed to construct an "at-grade" platform and access at the Royalston Station path across 7th Street & Hwy 55.

M2

I2 P5

The plans for the construction of the light rail as it relates to the crossing of Highway 55 and 7thStreet is of major concern for our Royalston City Market properties. Whether the trains cross Highway 55 at grade level, by way of a tunnel, or if the plans are to elevate the light rail tracks, this construction and elevation will most certainly have a huge negative impact on the value of our real estate. Elevated rail lines would leave our now "excellent visibility" to "no visibility", leaving our Royalston City Market properties in the "shadows" of the light rail tracks and out of direct visibility of our major clientele, the downtown business community. Also worth noting is the loitering and "less than desirable" clientele that would use this "shadow area" for their temporary residence whereby decreasing the value of my real estate asset.

M2

P4

There has been some information in the marketplace that Border Avenue might be an alternative route for this Southwest Light Rail and its connection to the Interchange Transit Hub. I would like to make it clear that losing trucking and vehicle access to my Royalston City Market properties along Border Avenue would also have a great negative impact on the value of my real estate. We have major concerns for our tenant/businesses trucking accessibility during construction and after the rail line is complete. Our properties have continuous large truck traffic throughout the day which we must insure this accessibility is maintained or risk being in breach of our lease commitments. This particular issue must be studied early in order to adequately mitigate the impact of construction and long term vehicular and trucking access on the business operations.

With the construction of light rail along Border Avenue, the Royalston City Market properties and the tenants/businesses within the properties would lose all major trucking access to loading docks and parking areas. Accessibility to and from I-94 is crucial for our current and future tenants at the Royalston City Market. Without this type of access, the properties would suffer major asset losses.

3.1.5 LONG TERM EFFECTS

M2

The DEIS states "improved accessibility will help the study area become more attractive to business and residential opportunities, especially when linking to major employment centers with rapid transit." While the SW LRT may make the area more attractive to business and residential opportunities, the plan, as presented, will have the impact of dislocating the businesses at Royalston City Market. Further study is required to insure the businesses' ability to continue at their current location.

M1

The DEIS anticipates land use changes with no plan for implementation. The DEIS requires further study of how the proposed SW LRT will affect the current land use and how the proposed change in land use will be implemented. The DEIS proposes "no mitigation" for land use changes, stating that the preliminary engineering will work to mitigate local concerns. This is not adequate to meet the needs of the Royalston City Market businesses.

3.1.7 MITIGATION

The DEIS states that "businesses and residents may experience difficulties with accessibility at certain times of day during the construction of the project, and minor detours for through traffic might be required. In general, these effects will not change the land use of the area during construction, but may affect the number of people using area businesses directly affected by access or construction traffic issues." This statement shows a complete lack of understanding of the nature and operation of the businesses at the Royalston City Market. Our properties fronting Royalston Avenue will have access totally eliminated during construction because some tenants have only one driveway option. This particular issue must be studied early in order to adequately mitigate the impact of construction on the business operations. It will not be satisfactory to simply supply "appropriate notification and signage." M2

3.2.2.6 NEIGHBORHOODS AND COMMUNITY COHESION

On page 3-58 there is a statement related to access: "The implementation of LRT service would not sever roadway or drive way connections or remove the existing multiple-use trail adjacent to the proposed guideway alignment of Segment A." Again, this statement shows a lack of understanding and familiarity with the Royalston City Market tenants/businesses. We have major concerns for our tenant's trucking accessibility during construction and after the rail line is complete. Our properties have continuous large truck traffic throughout the day which we must insure this accessibility is maintained or risk being in breach of our lease commitments. It must be a priority in early Preliminary Engineering, to study the long-term effects of the route and station placement on these businesses. This study must determine if and when acquisition is necessary. Alignment along the Royalston Avenue right-of-way – center, west side and eastside, should be evaluated for effects on adjacent businesses weighed against keeping two-way traffic. M3

3.2.2.7 SUMMARY OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS BY BUILD ALTERNATIVE

The statement in the DEIS that the LRT 3A (LPA) alternative "is not anticipated to have significant impacts to neighborhoods or community cohesion" is inaccurate as it relates to the Royalston City Market tenant/business community. Further study is required to determine its impact on this thriving business district. M3

3.3.5 MITIGATION

Our Royalston City Market will be negatively impacted by the alignment and platform. We have tenants/businesses that require direct, frequent and unfettered access from semi-trucks. Some tenants have only one access onto Royalston Avenue. Construction will severely impact or eliminate their access. We have major concerns for our tenant's trucking accessibility during construction and after the rail line is complete. Our properties have continuous large truck traffic throughout the day which we must insure this accessibility is maintained or risk being in breach of our lease commitments. The long term effects of conducting business must be a priority for study during early in the Preliminary Engineering process in order to determine if and when acquisition is necessary. Alignment along the Royalston Avenue right-of-way – center, west side and east side – must be evaluated for effects on adjacent businesses, weighted against keeping two-way traffic circulation. M2

4.7.3 NOISE – LONG TERM EFFECTS

With the rail lines being constructed so close to our properties and us not yet having been informed to the construction process, we are unaware if we should be concerned about the long term noise from the train cars which may negatively impact our Royalston City Market properties and our tenants/businesses. O6

4.7.6 NOISE - CONSTRUCTION NOISE MITIGATION

O6

We have great concern with the noise levels for our Royalston City Market tenants and their businesses as the light rail is under construction.

4.8.3 VIBRATION – SHORT TERM AND LONG TERM EFFECTS

O5
O6
O12

With the rail lines being constructed so close to our Royalston City Market properties and us not yet having been informed to the construction process, we are unaware if we should be concerned about earth movement and/or vibrations issues which may negatively impact our properties and our tenants/businesses. We have great concern with the vibrations which may negatively affect our tenants and their businesses as the light rail is under construction as well as the vibrations from the daily train schedules once the project is completed.

5.1 ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

The DEIS states that the Southwest Transitway will contribute to the local businesses by increasing accessibility. This is not true for the tenants/businesses of the Royalston City Market. Our tenants will have decreased access and restricted roadways and therefore the SW LRT will not contribute to competitive advantage for the businesses. Further study, during early preliminary engineering, is required to insure that the businesses at the Royalston City Market are able to remain competitive.

P6

5.2.2 SHORT TERM EFFECTS

We feel that the Royalston City Market and its tenants/businesses at the Royalston Station will be negatively impacted by the location of the alignment and platform. These are industrial businesses that require direct, frequent and unfettered access from semi-trucks and some businesses contain only one access onto Royalston Avenue. We have major concerns for our tenant's trucking accessibility during construction and after the rail line is complete. Our properties have continuous large truck traffic throughout the day which we must insure this accessibility is maintained or risk being in breach of our lease commitments. The long-term effects on the businesses at this site should be a priority to study early in the Preliminary Engineering process to determine if and when acquisition is necessary. Alignment along the Royalston Avenue right of way – center, west side and east side- should be evaluated for effects on adjacent businesses weighed against keeping two-way traffic circulation.

I2

M2

If construction is to occur during the day, as the DEIS states, this will have a devastating impact on the Royalston City Market tenants/businesses. Further study is required during Preliminary Engineering to identify means of addressing the short term effects on the existing tenants/businesses.

The DEIS states that "short-term construction effects to the social or economic characteristics of the study are anticipated to include short and long-term economic gains to each community resulting from the implementation of any Build Alternative". This is not true for the Royalston City Market tenants/businesses. As proposed, the construction effects will have no short or long-term economic gain to the businesses, they will more likely have an economic loss, and further study is required to determine how to mitigate the short and long-term effects of construction on these businesses.

M2

5.2.3 MITIGATION

The DEIS states that a Construction Access Plan will be developed at the start of major construction activities. Some tenants/businesses along Royalston Avenue have only one point of access. Preliminary Engineering must further study how these businesses will be affected during construction and develop a

P5
M2

detailed access plan to insure business viability. Table 5.2.3 is not sufficient to address the issues of the Royalston City Market tenants/businesses. Further study is required and mitigation must be identified to address the concerns of the Royalston City Market tenants/businesses.

5.2.4 LONG-TERM EFFECTS

In Table 5.2-4, under the LPS's Environmental Metrics, access on Royalston Avenue will be affected. At least six properties and at least 10 businesses at the Royalston Station will be negatively impacted by the location of the alignment and platform. These are industrial businesses that require direct, frequent and unfettered access from semi-trucks and the sites contain only one access onto Royalston Avenue. We have major concerns for our tenant's trucking accessibility during construction and after the rail line is complete. Our properties have continuous large truck traffic throughout the day which we must insure this accessibility is maintained or risk being in breach of our lease commitments. The long-term effects to businesses on these sites should be a priority to study in early Preliminary Engineering in order to determine if and when acquisition is necessary. Alignment along the Royalston Avenue right-of-way, center, west side and east side – should be evaluated for affects on adjacent businesses weighed against keeping two-way traffic circulation. M2

In table 5.2.4 the DEIS contemplates a future change of land use to higher density, mixed use at the Royalston Station. There is the potential for the Royalston Business community to be completely changed due to the SW LRT. Further study is required, during Preliminary Engineering to determine if and when acquisition is necessary to mitigate negative impacts on the existing businesses or to determine if acquisition is necessary to facilitate the move to the proposed land use. M4

In table 5.2-4, under the LRT 3C-2's Environmental Metrics, it identifies 20 on-street parking spaces for potential elimination on Royalston Avenue. Since this alignment is the same as the LPA, this information should be used consistently throughout this table. These 20 on-street parking spaces are essential to the Royalston City Market tenants/businesses. Preliminary Engineering must develop mitigation for the loss of those parking spaces to the businesses.

Table 5.2-4 states the "parking and access to businesses along this route are unlikely to be affected." This is not true for the Royalston City Market tenants/businesses. Both parking and access, critical to the Royalston City Market tenants/businesses, will be greatly affected by the SW LRT. These businesses have semi-traffic and require frequent, direct and unfettered access to their businesses. Some Royalston City Market tenants/businesses have only one access point for their businesses. Early Preliminary Engineering must identify alternative access and parking for these businesses. P10

6.2.2.2 PYHYSICAL MODIFICATIONS TO EXISTING ROADWAYS

The DEIS states that "conceptual designs indicated that construction of the Southwest Transitway is likely to result in minor physical modifications to existing roadways that may affect local circulation patterns." This is not true for the Royalston City Market tenants/businesses. The SW Transitway will have major affects to the circulation patterns around Royalston, Border & Holden Avenues. P5

On page 6-20, closing of Holden Street is identified. The closing of this intersection will have a significant impact on access to the Royalston City Market tenants/businesses. Early Preliminary Engineering must identify alternative access for the Royalston City Market tenants/businesses to mitigate the effect of closing Holden Avenue. P5

At the top of page 6-35, the closing of the Royalston and 5th Avenue North intersection is identified as a necessity for Segment C-2. Since this alignment is the same as the LPA in this area and the closing of this intersection has not been mentioned under the LPA, this inconsistency needs to be addressed. The Royalston City Market tenants/businesses have serious concerns about closing this intersection. P5

6.2.2.6 BUILDING/FACILITY ACCESS

The Royalston City Market properties/tenants/businesses should be included in the list of properties with affected access in the Build Alternative. U

6.3.1.3 TRUCKING

The Royalston City Market will be negatively impacted by the location and alignment of the Royalston Station platform. Our tenants/businesses are industrial businesses that require frequent, direct and unfettered access from semi-trucks with some tenants having only one access which is Royalston Avenue. We have major concerns for our tenant's trucking accessibility during construction and after the rail line is complete. Our properties have continuous large truck traffic throughout the day which we must insure this accessibility is maintained or risk being in breach of our lease commitments. The long-term effects to doing businesses on these sites should be a priority to study early in early Preliminary Engineering to determine if and when acquisition is necessary. Alignment along the Royalston Avenue right-of-way – center, west side and east side- should be evaluated for effects on adjacent businesses weighed against keeping two-way traffic circulation. I2 M2

6.3.2.3 TRUCKING

At the top of page 6-58, truck access and movement issues are discussed. There is no mention of the industrial businesses along Royalston Avenue and it states that no significant impacts are anticipated. That is not true for the Royalston City Market tenants/businesses. The tenants/businesses along Royalston Avenue could have minimized, or eliminated, access for trucks due to turning movement constraints. This must be studied further during early Preliminary Engineering. I2 P6

9.2.2 INDIRECT EFFECTS

The DEIS identifies that the indirect effects are desired and consistent with local plans. While consistent with existing land use plans, there is no plan for addressing the issues of the existing businesses. The impact of the SW Transitway on the existing businesses must be studied during early Preliminary Engineering to determine whether acquisition is necessary. I2 M2

9.6.21.3 ANTICIPATED CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

The DEIS anticipates job creation as a result of the SW Transitway. The Royalston City Market tenants/businesses currently have in excess of 150 jobs. There is the potential for these jobs to be lost and a resulting decrease in jobs, as a result of the impact of the SW Transitway on the Royalston City Market tenants/businesses.

9.6.22.4 MITIGATION

While the indirect and cumulative impacts of the SW Transitway at the Royalston station may be anticipated, further study is required to determine if the impacts are so negative on the properties & businesses that acquisition is required. M4 I2 N12

9.6.2.4 MITIGATION

The DEIS states that "no mitigation for the expected indirect effects and cumulative impacts to land use is proposed for any of the Build Alternatives." The statement that Preliminary Engineering will work to mitigate local concerns is not adequate to address the impact on the Royalston City Market properties, tenants/businesses. Preliminary Engineering must study the impact on the Royalston City Market properties, tenants/businesses to determine if acquisition is necessary and to identify potential relocation areas. N12

11.1 EVALUATION RELATIVE TO PROJECT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The DEIS states that the "Southwest Transitway" would be developed to avoid as much disruption as possible to neighborhoods, commercial districts and historic areas in the corridor." In addition, "another objective of the Southwest Transitway" project is to support public and private economic development . . . " This statement of goals and objectives is in direct conflict with the impact the SW Transitway will have on the Royalston City Market tenants/business community. As proposed, the SW Transitway will totally disrupt the Royalston City Market tenant/business community and will not support private economic development. Further study is required in Preliminary Engineering to insure the goals and objectives of the project can be achieved with minimal disruption to the existing business community. M2

In summary, we continue to lease office & warehouse space within our Royalston City Market and are gravely concerned that having construction of this capacity in and around our properties will negatively impact the success of our future leasing efforts. We have recent experience with this type of adverse market conditions. Tenant's considering our properties will be concerned and skittish about entering into a lease with an undeterminable future which negatively impacts the asset value of the properties. M2

Please keep us informed as to the progress of the Southwest Light Rail. We will be keeping a close eye on this progress and how it will impact our real estate values both during and after construction.

Sincerely,

Robert D. Salmen

Chief Manager

Royalston City Market

bobsalmen@efsinvestments.com

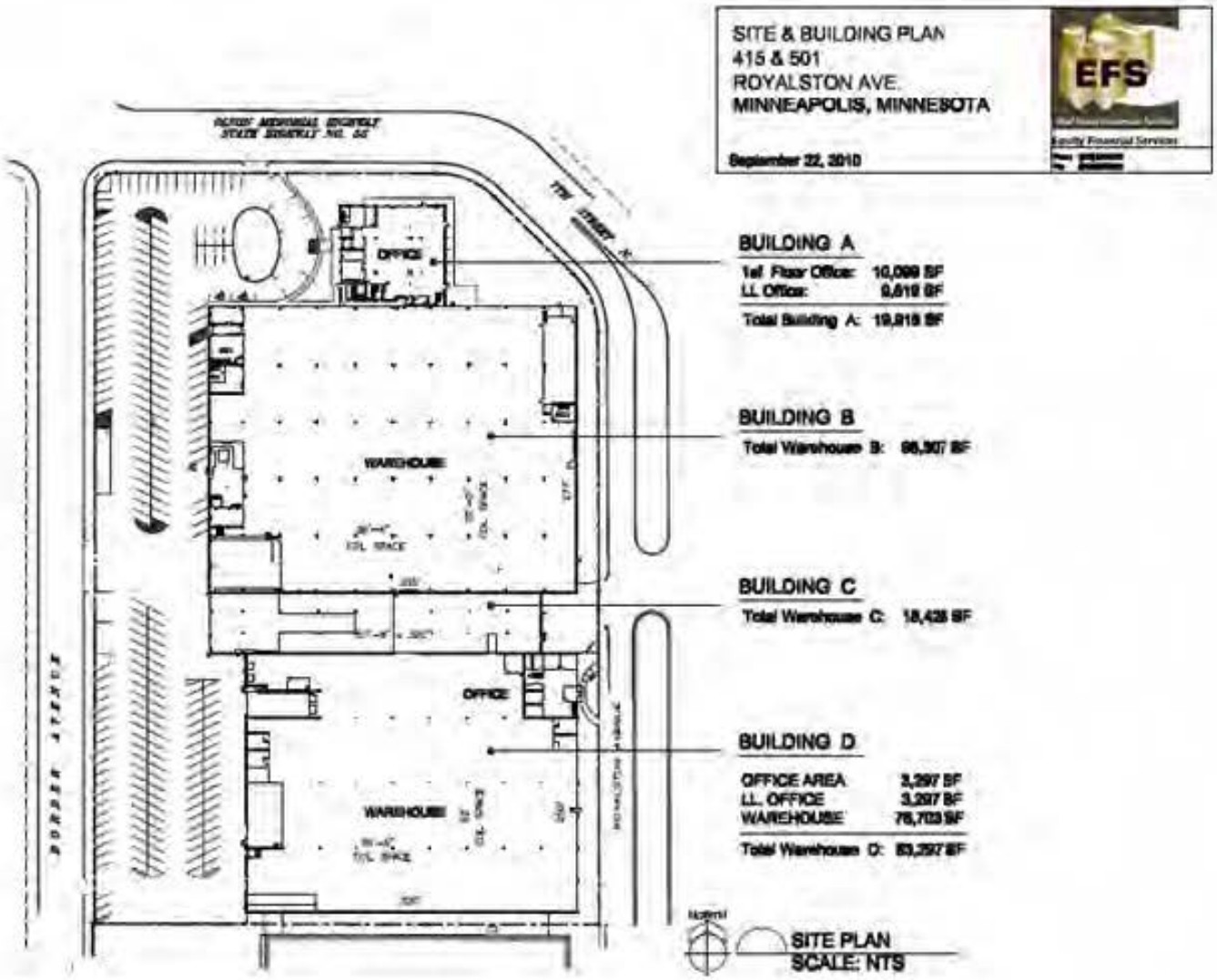
612.991.8000 (cell)

Cc: Richard Salmen, Esquire

Royalston City Market

415 & 501 Royalston Avenue

Site & Building Plan



"Kirkham, James MD"
<jkirkham@subrad.com>
12/20/2012 08:21 PM

To "swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us"
<swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>
cc
bcc
Subject Light rail

From: James Kirkham
22 Park Lane
Minneapolis,MN
55416
612-928-9660
Dear Decision maker,

The area from along the Kennilworth Corridor is unique. This is a very quiet but heavily used natural area.
A beach is at the south end of Cedar Lake and another quiet beach on Cedar Lake just west of 21st street.
A bike trail accompanies the current freight rail line.
There is a connection via a channel between Cedar Lake and Lake of the Isles with very heavy use by canoes/kayaks and paddleboards in the summer and
skiers and pedestrians in the winter on the ice when the channel is frozen.
Currently it has a feel of being in the country—not a urban feel—very quiet.
In addition this area has the intersection of Cedar lake Rd and the bike trail/rail line with the grand rounds bike trail. The Grand Rounds are a candidate for the national Register of Historic Places.

The current preferred option would cause much harm in excessive noise/vibration and visually harmfully impact the Park Like feeling. D E8
The proposed 'fly over' bridge is unacceptable as the noise and negative visual affect would destroy much of the unique character in this area. Putting a structure the size of that bridge and its' pilings in that area would destroy a precious jewel along the Grand Rounds. Thousands of pedestrians and bikers would have to deal with that change as well as the autos and the persons living and visiting the area.

Ideally a tunnel from north of 21st to Lake would be constructed that courses under the Kennilworth channel between Lake of the Isles and Cedar. E0

If that is not feasible, the Minneapolis Park Board has put forth a proposal to trench the light rail line from Kennilworth Channel to south of the Cedar Lake Road intersection with Burnham Road and the bike trails. One of their trenching options should be adapted if tunneling is not possible. E0

Some of the options put forth by the Park Board that envision trenching add safety separating the bike crossing from the rail and automobile traffic. E9
Safety should be of concern to you with the final result improving safety—certainly not putting and at grade crossing where two major bike trails intersect with automobile traffic and nearly 200 train crossings a day many after dark.

I would ask you to also consider trenching/tunneling under 21st to mitigate noise and impact. If 21st were trenched/tunneled then the adjacent beach and parks would not have the negative additional impact of noise with crossing signals/horns. E4

Summary
1. Very unique quiet area in proposed route of LRT
2. Tunnel or trench at Cedar Lake Road intersection because
    a. Decrease noise of crossing signals/train

b. Increase safety by separate bike and rail/auto traffic.
c. Markedly decreased negative visual/noise impact of a fly over bridge

3. Consider trench option at 21st because
   a. Decrease noise of crossing signals/train
   b. Increase safety by separate bike and rail/auto traffic.

4. A tunnel would be the only option that would preserve the 'out of the city' feel of canoeing/paddle boarding/kayaking/biking/skiing thru the channel and bike trails that is currently present. Please determine the cost and plausibly engineering options for such a tunnel.

E0

Thank you,
James Kirkham

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"Jackie Cherryhomes" <JackieCherryhomes@fctyler.com>

12/20/2012 10:12 PM

To <swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>

cc "Mike Higgins" <MHiggins@thefishguysinc.com>, "Duane Petersen" <dpetersen@starkelectronics.com>, <sforberg@starkelectronics.com>, "Timothy D. Hayes"

bcc

Subject DEIS Response on behalf of Royalston Businesses

Please find attached the comments to the SW Transitway DEIS. These comments are submitted on behalf of three businesses on Royalston Avenue, The Fish Guys, Stark Electronics and LBP Mechanical.

If you have any questions regarding this submission please contact Jackie Cherryhomes at jackiecherryhomes@fctyler.com or at 612-961-5614.

Thank you.

December 2, 2012

Hennepin County
Housing, Community Works & Transit
Attn: Southwest Transitway
701 4th Avenue South, #400
Minneapolis, MN 55414

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is being written on behalf of The Fish Guys, LBP Mechanical and Stark Electronics in response to the DEIS. The DEIS has a number of inadequacies and reflects a lack of understanding of the current conditions and business operations on Royalston Avenue.

The DEIS does not reflect an understanding of the business operation of the Royalston Avenue businesses. These are profitable, thriving, industrial businesses with over 250 employees. While each business is different, all three require unfettered vehicular access. The DEIS shows that the SW LRT, as proposed, will make it virtually impossible for these businesses to continue to operate efficiently, effectively and profitably at their current locations. I2 M2

The DEIS shows a clear lack of understanding of the geographic constraints of the Royalston Avenue Businesses. Additionally, the DEIS anticipates land use changes with no suggested implementation or mitigation for existing businesses on Royalston Avenue that will be affected by the SW LRT. At a minimum there will be business disruption during construction and the likelihood that the businesses will not be able to survive construction. In addition, it is clear that these businesses will be unable to conduct their business after construction. M2

Specific Comments (by section):

3.1.5 LONG TERM EFFECTS

The DEIS states "improved accessibility will help the study area become more attractive to business and residential opportunities, especially when linking to major employment centers with rapid transit." While the SW LRT may make the area more attractive to business and residential opportunities, the plan, as presented, could have the impact of dislocating the businesses on Royalston Avenue. Further study is required to insure the businesses' ability to continue at their current location. M1

The DEIS anticipates land use changes with no plan for implementation. The DEIS requires further study of how the proposed SW LRT will affect the current land use and how the proposed change in land use will be implemented. The DEIS proposes "no mitigation" for land use changes, stating that the preliminary engineering will work to mitigate local concerns. This is not adequate to meet the needs of the Royalston businesses.

3.1.7 MITIGATION

The DEIS states that "businesses and residents may experience difficulties with accessibility at certain times of day during the construction of the project, and minor detours for through traffic might be required. In general, these effects will not change the land use of the area during construction, but may affect the number of people using area businesses directly affected by access or construction traffic issues." This statement shows a complete lack of understanding of the nature and operation of the businesses on Royalston Avenue. The properties along Royalston will have access totally eliminated during construction because they have only one driveway option. This particular issue must be studied early in order to adequately mitigate the impact of construction on the business operations. It will not be satisfactory to simply supply "appropriate notification and signage."

I2

M2

3.2.2.6 NEIGHBORHOODS AND COMMUNITY COHESION

On page 3-58 there is a statement related to access: "The implementation of LRT service would not sever roadway or drive way connections or remove the existing multiple-use trail adjacent to the proposed guideway alignment of Segment A." Again, this statement shows a lack of understanding and familiarity with the Royalston businesses. All three properties at the Royalston Station will be negatively impacted by the location of the alignment and platform. The Royalston businesses are industrial that require frequent, direct and unfettered access from semi-trucks. The sites contain only one access onto Royalston Avenue. It must be a priority in early Preliminary Engineering, to study the long-term effects of the route and station placement on these businesses. This study must determine if acquisition is necessary. Alignment along the Royalston Avenue right-of-way – center, west side and eastside, should be evaluated for effects on adjacent businesses.

I2

M2

3.2.2.7 SUMMARY OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS BY BUILD ALTERNATIVE

The statement in the DEIS that the LRT 3A (LPA) alternative "is not anticipated to have significant impacts to neighborhoods or community cohesion" is inaccurate as it relates to the Royalston business community. Further study is required to determine its impact on this thriving business district.

I2

M3

3.3.5 MITIGATION

At least three properties at the Royalston Station will be negatively impacted by the alignment and platform. These are industrial businesses that require direct, frequent and unfettered access from semi-trucks. The sites have only one access onto Royalston Avenue. Construction will severely impact their access. The long term effects of conducting business on these sites must be a priority for study during early in the Preliminary Engineering process in order to determine if acquisition is necessary. Alignment along the Royalston Avenue right-of-way – center, west side and east side – must be evaluated for effects on adjacent businesses.

I2

M2

5.1 ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

The DEIS states that the Southwest Transitway will contribute to the local businesses by increasing accessibility. This is not true for the Royalston Avenue businesses. The area businesses will have decreased access and therefore the SW LRT will not contribute to competitive advantage for the businesses. Further study, during early preliminary engineering, is required to insure that the businesses on Royalston Avenue are able to remain competitive. I2 P6

5.2.2 SHORT TERM EFFECTS

At least three businesses at the Royalston Station will be negatively impacted by the location of the alignment and platform. These are industrial businesses that require direct, frequent and unfettered access from semi-trucks and the sites contain only one access onto Royalston Avenue. The long-term effects on the businesses at this site should be a prior to study early in the Preliminary Engineering process to determine if acquisition is necessary. Alignment along the Royalston Avenue right of way – center, west side and east side- should be evaluated for effects on adjacent businesses. I2

If construction is to occur during the day, as the DEIS states, this will have a devastating impact on the Royalston Avenue businesses. Further study is required during Preliminary Engineering to identify means of addressing the short term effects on the existing businesses. M2

The DEIS states that "short-term construction effects to the social or economic characteristics of the study are anticipated to include short and long-term economic gains to each community resulting from the implementation of any Build Alternative. This is not true for the Royalston businesses. As proposed, the construction effects will have no short or long-term economic gain to the businesses and further study is required to determine how to mitigate the short and long-term effects of construction on these businesses.

5.2.3 MITIGATION

The DEIS states that a Construction Access Plan will be developed at the start of major construction activities. The businesses along Royalston Avenue have only one point of access. Preliminary Engineering must further study how these businesses will be affected during construction and develop a detailed access plan to insure business viability. Table 5.2.3 is not sufficient to address the issues of the Royalston Avenue businesses. Further study is required and mitigation must be identified to address the concerns of the Royalston businesses. I2 M2

5.2.4 LONG-TERM EFFECTS

In Table 5.2-4, under the LPS's Environmental Metrics, access on Royalston Avenue will be affected. At least three properties at the Royalston Station will be negatively impacted by the location of the alignment and platform. These are industrial businesses that require direct, frequent and unfettered access from semi-trucks and the sites contain only one access onto Royalston Avenue. The long-term effects to businesses on these sites should be a priority to study in early Preliminary Engineering in order to determine if acquisition is necessary. Alignment along the Royalston Avenue right-of-way, center, west side and east side – should be evaluated for affects on adjacent businesses. I2 M2

In table 5.2.4 the DEIS contemplates a future change of land use to higher density, mixed use at the Royalston Station. There is the potential for the Royalston Business community to be completely changed due to the SW LRT. Further study is required, during Preliminary Engineering to determine if acquisition is necessary to mitigate negative impacts on the existing businesses or to determine if acquisition is necessary to facilitate the move to the proposed land use. I2 M4

Table 5.2-4 states the "parking and access to businesses along this route are unlikely to be affected." This is not true for the Royalston businesses. Both parking and access, critical to the Royalston Businesses, will be greatly affected by the SW LRT. These businesses have semi-traffic and require frequent, direct and unfettered access to their businesses. The Royalston businesses have only one access point for the businesses. Early Preliminary Engineering must identify alternative access and parking for these businesses. P10

6.2.2.2 PYHYSICAL MODIFICATIONS TO EXISTING ROADWAYS

The DEIS states that "conceptual designs indicated that construction of the Southwest Transitway is likely to result in minor physical modifications to existing roadways that may affect local circulation patterns." This is not true for the Royalston businesses. The SW Transitway will have major affects to the circulation patterns around Royalston Avenue. P6

On page 6-20, closing of Holden Street is identified. The closing of this intersection will have a significant impact on access to the Royalston Avenue businesses. Early Preliminary Engineering must identify alternative access for the Royalston businesses to mitigate the effect of closing Holden Avenue

At the top of page 6-35, the closing of the Royalston and 5th Avenue North intersection is identified as a necessity for Segment C-2. Since this alignment is the same as the LPA in this area and the closing of this intersection has not been mentioned under the LPA, this inconsistency needs to be addressed. The Royalston businesses have serious concerns about closing this intersection.

6.2.2.6 BUILDING/FACILITY ACCESS

Royalston Avenue properties should be included in the list of properties with affected access in the Build Alternative. U

6.3.1.3 TRUCKING

There is an error in the sentence describing industrial areas. With the assumption that the Royalston area is mistakenly being attributed to Eden Prairie, rather than Minneapolis, at least three properties at the Royalston Station will be negatively impacted by the location and alignment of the platform. These are industrial businesses that require frequent, direct and unfettered access from semi-trucks and the sites contain only one access onto Royalston Avenue. The long-term effects to doing businesses on these sites should be a priority to study early in early Preliminary Engineering to determine if acquisition is necessary. Alignment along the Royalston Avenue right-of-way – center, west side and east side- should be evaluated for effects on adjacent businesses. U M2

6.3.2.3 TRUCKING

At the top of page 6-58, truck access and movement issues are discussed. There is no mention of the industrial businesses on Royalston Avenue and it states that no significant impacts are anticipated. That is not true for the Royalston businesses. The industrial businesses on Royalston Avenue could have minimized access for trucks due to turning movement constraints. This must be studied further during early Preliminary Engineering. P6

9.2.2 INDIRECT EFFECTS

The DEIS identifies that the indirect effects are desired and consistent with local plans. While consistent with existing land use plans, there is no plan for addressing the issues of the existing businesses. The impact of the SW Transitway on the existing businesses must be studied during early Preliminary Engineering to determine whether acquisition is necessary. M2

9.6.21.3 ANTICIPATED CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

The DEIS anticipates job creation as a result of the SW Transitway. The Royalston businesses currently have in excess of 200 jobs. There is the potential for these jobs to be lost and a resulting decrease in jobs, as a result of the impact of the SW Transitway on the Royalston businesses. M2

9.6.22.4 MITIGATION

While the indirect and cumulative impacts of the SW Transitway at the Royalston station may be anticipated, further study is required to determine if the impacts are so negative on the businesses that acquisition is required. I2 M4

9.6.2.4 MITIGATION

The DEIS states that "no mitigation for the expected indirect effects and cumulative impacts to land use is proposed for any of the Build Alternatives." The statement that Preliminary Engineering will work to mitigate local concerns is not adequate to address the impact on the Royalston businesses. Preliminary Engineering must study the impact on the Royalston businesses to determine if acquisition is necessary and to identify potential relocation areas. I2 N12

11.1 EVALUATION RELATIVE TO PROJECT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The DEIS states that the “Southwest Transitway” would be developed to avoid as much disruption as possible to neighborhoods, commercial districts and historic areas in the corridor.” In addition, “another objective of the Southwest Transitway” project is to support public and private economic development . . . “This statement of goals and objectives is in direct conflict with the impact the SW Transitway will have on the Royalston business community. As proposed, the SW Transitway will totally disrupt the Royalston business community and will not support private economic development. Further study is required in Preliminary Engineering to insure the goals and objectives of the project can be achieved with minimal disruption to the existing business community.

M2

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DEC 20 2012
BY:

Draft Environmental Impact Statement Comment Form

Southwest Transitway Project

Federal and state environmental rules require that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) be prepared for the proposed Southwest Transitway project. The EIS process includes the preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), which must be made available for public review and comment.

The DEIS discusses: (1) the purpose and need for the project; (2) the alternatives considered; (3) the impacts of these alternatives; and (4) the agencies and persons consulted.

Comments on the DEIS will be accepted through December 11, 2012. All comments must be received by that date. Please include a return mailing address with all comments.

Public hearings on the DEIS will be held in November 2012. To learn more about the hearings, please visit www.southwesttransitway.org

I have been in support of the SW LRT through the Kenwood neighborhood since I first heard about the possibility in 2005. And, I'm really excited about having a station at W. 21st St. -- 2 blocks from my house. C

My main concern is safety -- especially at the street crossings. C

Secondarily, I'm concerned about the noise -- especially after 10pm.

I'm against co-location of the freight trains and light rail both traveling in the same corridor (Kenilworth). C

In general, I'm in support of public transportation for it's environmental and economic benefits and look forward to riding the SW LRT in both directions -- to downtown Minneapolis, the Mall of America, the airport, Hopkins, and Eden Prairie. Our neighborhood has very limited access to public transportation -- only during rush hours, Mon-Fri.

I'd like to help make the Kenilworth route and the 21st St. station a reality by working with my neighbors and appropriate agencies. L1

Name: Kathy Williams
Address: 2409 W. 21st St.
City/State/Zip: Minneapolis / MN / 55405-2311
Telephone: 612-377-6146 Email: Kathyroyw@gmail.com

Thank you!

SOUTHWEST transitway

Fold here

Mr. and Mrs. Roy S. Williams
2409 W 21st St
Minneapolis, MN 55405

MINNEAPOLIS MN 554
19 DEC 2012 PM 4 L
19 DEC 2012

Happy
USA
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Hennepin County
Housing, Community Works & Transit
ATTN: Southwest Transitway
701 Fourth Avenue South, Suite 400
Minneapolis, MN 55415

55415$1843 C083

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DEC 20 2012
BY:

Draft Environmental Impact Statement Comment Form

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Public hearings on the DEIS will be held in November 2012. To learn more about the hearings www.southwesttransitway.org

I1, I2

- Have main parking lot by Whole foods for Park+Ride and no parking lot at 21st St, as this would destroy the quite residential chorector of the area.
- Have a tunnel and not a bridge crossing the tracks on Cedar Lake Pkwy. Again, a bridge is usually very unfitting for the area and too large. E0
- Regular freight trains should not be routed through Kenilworth D
- Environmental impact study is very important due to closeby lakes E3
- Trenches for noise reduction + to increase safety by discouraging crossing outside of planned pedestrian crossings. E9

Name: Stephanie Lauenstein + William Mullen
Address: 2404 Sheridan Ave S, Minneapolis, MN 55405
City/State/Zip:
Telephone: 612 377-2697 Email: stephanielauenstein@yahoo.com

Thank you!

SOUTHWEST transitway

Fold here

Mullen
2404 Sheridan Ave S.
Mpls MN 55405

19 DEC 2012 PM 7 L

USA FIRST-CLASS FOREVER

Hennepin County

Housing, Community Works & Transit
ATTN: Southwest Transitway

701 Fourth Avenue South, Suite 400

Minneapolis, MN 55415

5541518430

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RECEIVED
DEC 20 2012
BY:

December 17, 2012

Hennepin County
Housing, Community Works and Transit
701 Fourth Avenue South, Ste 400
Minneapolis, MN 55415

To whom it may concern:

We are responding on behalf of the fifty-seven homeowners who make up the Cedar Lake Shores Townhome Association (CLSTA) to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) issued for the Southwest Transitway (aka Southwest LRT) proposed to run from Eden Prairie to downtown Minneapolis, Minnesota. After an analysis of the document we have several serious concerns that we believe need to be addressed in order to preserve and protect our homes and neighborhood should this project be funded and approved. In the following paragraphs we will highlight each of those concerns with appropriate references to the DEIS and ask that you address each as part of the engineering and design process and potential building of this LRT.

INTRODUCTION

Before we proceed to specifics, let us briefly describe our locale. Our multifamily association owns the townhomes and land immediately adjacent to the west side of the existing freight rail line from the West Lake Street Bridge in Minneapolis to Cedar Lake Parkway. This freight line as well as the set of accompanying bikeways and walking trail are part of the Kenilworth Corridor which is also the preferred route (LPA) for LRT development (for reference purposes, we are part of Segment A in the DEIS). Our closest home to the tracks is approximately 23ft. away from the nearest railroad track bed and the Corridor width near us measures only 62 ft. between our property and our east side neighbor. This portion of the Corridor is characterized by multifamily townhomes, apartments and condominiums, developed Minneapolis parkland, beautiful lawns, mature deciduous and evergreen trees and bushes, wildlife aplenty as well as many species of birds and is highlighted by the walking trail and bikeways. In short, we live in a bucolic, well developed but beautiful, quiet neighborhood close to shops and lakes that is considered by many to be an ideal place to live in the Twin City area. For these reasons, the primary goal of the Southwest Transitway in this location should be the **preservation** of the existing neighborhood. M3

Much is made in the DEIS of our immediate neighborhood being the current recipient of freight rail traffic. While true let us point out exactly what that means. For many years there was no freight rail traffic in this corridor at all and some of us in CLSTA were even told by Hennepin County that the renewal of freight traffic would be temporary. That of course has not happened and we have for some time averaged approximately two freight trains out and two trains in per day passing CLSTA in this Corridor. If you measure the total time it takes for all the moving trains to pass by it is less than one hour per day. This means that for twenty- three hours of each day our immediate neighborhood is accurately described in the preceding paragraph and is accurately characterized as having no freight rail traffic. It is D

that standard, twenty three of twenty four hours (96% of the time), that we assert should be the rational basis for several study components found in the DEIS. You will note that we will refer back to this reality/standard when discussing several of our concerns.

In keeping with the stated Tier Two project goals and objectives (p.2-6 of the DEIS), we enthusiastically agree that the protection of the environment and the preservation of the quality of life are critical to the success of any future transit project in this Corridor. By "doing the right thing", a term used many times in discussion with public officials about outcomes for this potential project, the final design and build will ensure that the ensuing concerns raised by CLSTA are properly addressed and the quality of life we currently enjoy is maintained along with the development of a first class transit system. E1

CONCERNS

Noise

Because of the proximity of our land and homes to the proposed LRT line we believe serious and profound negative noise effects will be created unless appropriate mitigation steps are implemented. The DEIS data specify a current Leq ambient noise level near us of 44dB (DEIS Appendix H). Given the weight of the LRT train, the frequency of its proposed schedule (a train passing every three to five minutes from seven am to ten pm, DEIS p.4-84), the required braking, the potential wheel squeal given the track curvature adjacent to us and the use of warning bells for the nearby West Lake St. station, the sound level will reach as high as 114dB (p.4-84 of the DEIS). As your measurement and our reality/standard indicate, this outcome presents what both of us categorize as a severe impact on us (DEIS Appendix H Fig. 2 Noise Impact Criteria and DEIS p.4-93, Category 2). Additionally, a separate noise analysis commissioned by the Cedar-Isles-Dean Neighborhood Association (CIDNA) also supports this severe impact assessment for our location (see ESI Engineering, Inc. study report of 12/5/12 attached to the CIDNA DEIS response). O1 O1

Visual

Once again, because of our location, we believe serious and profound negative visual effects will be created unless appropriate mitigation steps are implemented. For analytical purposes the DEIS categorizes CLSTA as a "B" Primary Viewer and generally defines "Visual Intrusion/Privacy" and" Visual Resources" (DEIS p.3-100). It then proceeds to incorrectly state that for Segment A, where we are located, "mature vegetation buffers the corridor for the length of the Segment, screening views to/from residential areas and parklands". While this is true for some parts of this Segment it does not properly describe our land and the sporadic buffer for CLSTA viewpoints and is, therefore, an overstatement at best. Please also note that in Table 3.6-2 (DEIS p.3-108) the assumption is made that our "Visual Quality" and "Visual Sensitivity" condition is "moderate" rather than "high". We would argue that that categorization significantly understates the visual impact for us in our portion of Segment A. Our assertion is supported by Table3.6-3 where the DEIS analysis indicates substantial effects for residential areas in Segment A as it relates to "Guideway" and "Elevated Structures/Bridges" (DEIS p.3-110). To further support our visual concerns, the DEIS states that for residential areas in this Segment, "Visual impacts may be substantial where the alignment is not screened by vegetation", "visual intrusion and N2 N2

privacy impacts of the project's elements on the sensitive receptors may be substantial where views from the alignment into previously private spaces are created" and "visual intrusion and privacy impacts on the outdoor living areas of residential properties could be substantial where...buffers do not exist" (DEIS p.3-115 and paragraph three on p.3-125). On a different note, we were very pleased that the DEIS correctly recognizes tunneling as a possible mitigation measure for these type of concerns (DEIS p.3-124). We will later return to this possible mitigation measure in our response. N2

Vibration

The DEIS states in Chapter 9, Indirect Effects and Cumulative Impacts, that no vibration mitigation is necessary for Segment A (DEIS p.9-52). We disagree that that statement can be entirely accurate for all of Segment A. As you read further, the DEIS identifies 247 vibration sensitive land parcels for Segment A, Category 2 (essentially residential) (DEIS p.4-110). Though we could not absolutely identify whether CLSTA is included as one of those parcels, we are presuming it is primarily because of our proximity to the tracks and the proposed frequency for LRT vehicles. Since more detailed analyses will be conducted during preliminary engineering or Final EIS phases, we have to assume that those analyses will be performed closer than 100 ft. (DEIS p.4-108) and that those outcomes will support the need for mitigation in our location using appropriate vibration suppression technologies. Until that actually occurs, we have serious and profound concerns about the vibration effects on our homes and lives. O1

Parking

The DEIS states that 150 parking places will be available at the West Lake St. station (DEIS p. 2-32). Given the earlier estimate of 2800 daily boardings at this location (LPA Evaluation Documents, Technical Memorandum #6, September 9, 2009), it seems quite possible that more parking spaces will be needed for those who drive to this station. We believe that Chowen Ave. and St. Louis Ave. in Minneapolis, adjacent to the west side of CLSTA will become a preferred parking destination. Without the implementation of some type of parking mitigation in our immediate neighborhood we again have serious concerns about the long term effects on the character and livability of our immediate neighborhood. I2 P10

Neighborhood Connectivity and Cohesion

The DEIS makes the following statement : "However, the operation of LRT service along Segment A is not anticipated to adversely affect community cohesion because Segment A is currently bisected by a freight rail line and adding LRT service does not alter the existing barrier" (DEIS p. 3-58). We believe that this statement is not accurate. As noted in our introduction, for 23 hours a day the reality is that there is no rail traffic in the Kenilworth Corridor. Hence, residents constantly walk across the freight rails to get to bikeways, walking trails, parks, retail shops and other neighborhood destinations and, therefore, the freight rail does not present a barrier the vast majority of the time. We sincerely hope that as it relates to community cohesion for Segment A and any subsequent LRT development, the statement that "the effects and impacts are expected and planned for" (DEIS p. 9-40) accurately reflects the current, true nature of our immediate neighborhood and not the incorrect statement noted above. I2 M3 N1

Cedar Lake Parkway Bridge Proposal

On a very site specific issue, the DEIS suggests a bridge treatment for the junction of the Kenilworth Corridor and Cedar Lake Pkwy in Minneapolis (DEIS p. 3-115 and 116 and Appendix F, Segment A, sheet 2). This bridge could be as high as 43 ft. and as long as 1000 ft. It would start its' ascent near the north end of our townhomes, pass over Cedar Lake Pkwy and return to grade before reaching the channel connecting Cedar Lake and Lake of the Isles. We have serious and profound concerns with this approach. We strongly believe that a more creative and integrated way to construct this grade crossing and achieve grade separation as well as reduce severely negative visual, noise and vibration impacts to CLSTA and the surrounding neighborhoods, is to have the LRT and trails proceed uninterrupted below a Cedar Lake Pkwy bridge. This latter type of approach provides considerably better outcomes for LRT, CLSTA and trail users. We will discuss this and related issues in our outcomes and suggestions section that follows. O1 E8

Co-Location Alternative

For obvious reasons, CLSTA is adamantly opposed to this alternative. As stated in the DEIS all of our townhomes would have to be removed to implement this option (DEIS p.3-58). Furthermore, the DEIS quite clearly states that this alternative "does not meet the project's purpose and need and is not a practicable alternative due to environmental impacts" (DEIS p.11-13). CLSTA has already forwarded to Hennepin County and the Met Council staff a resolution passed by our Board in June of this year clearly stating our opposition to this alternative. It reads as follows: "We strongly believe that co-location would in a dramatic fashion negatively change the natural environment of the affected neighborhoods, create much larger and more expensive safety, sound, visual and other potential problems that would require mitigation action, and, in general severely detract from any transportation and community development plan being considered for the southwest corridor of Hennepin County. For these reasons we strongly oppose the co-location of freight rail and LRT within the Kenilworth corridor". Enough said. D E0 O1 M3 R1

OUTCOMES

We recognize that to achieve broader transportation goals for our metropolitan area the addition of new LRT or other transportation options has the potential to provide long term benefit to the metropolitan area. The trick of course is to build a transit system that meets all of its goals, not just a few, so as to provide appropriate development along with appropriate preservation. If both development and preservation goals are met then we and everyone else concerned with this project will justifiably be quite satisfied and proud of the process and outcomes. M1

For those of us who live here, the description of CLSTA and our immediate neighborhood as provided in the introduction accurately reflects the current, everyday reality for this portion of Segment A. As we feel fortunate and appreciative to live here, we feel strongly that this current reality needs to be preserved and therefore, this is the outcome we seek. If the appropriate mitigation and design is implemented for noise, visual, and vibration abatement in our neighborhood, and if the appropriate N2 O1

design is implemented for the Cedar Lake Pkwy junction most of this outcome can readily be achieved. Parking and neighborhood connectivity and cohesion can also be addressed through other related project initiatives and/or by partnering with other government entities. Let us assure you that CLSTA and other neighborhood groups are more than willing to assist in any way possible to help attain this outcome. P10

SUGGESTIONS

While we realize it is not our role to identify the specific method for addressing concerns (that seems more properly placed in the hands of designers and engineers), one potential approach kept coming up in our neighborhood discussions and seemed more legitimately worthwhile than others for addressing them. Let us briefly speak to that approach.

When we considered the following realities: (1) the proximity of our homes to the potential track bed, (2) the narrowness of the corridor at our location (both noted in the Introduction) and, (3) the nature of our concerns particularly related to noise, visual and vibration, it seemed that "tunneling" of some type was the best choice of the four mitigation strategies suggested in the "Build Alternatives" section of the DEIS (DEIS pp. 3-123 and 124). We are not convinced that there is adequate room in the corridor between West Lake ST. and the channel connecting Cedar Lake and Lake of the Isles to use landscaping or evergreen vegetation mitigation to address our concerns. Sound and visual barriers (a form of fencing) along with trenching mitigation might be an option though we are not familiar enough with that option to estimate its viability at our location. The DEIS drawings of a cut and cover tunnel (DEIS p.2-47, Figure2.3-13) appears to be the best alternative to address all of our concerns and achieve the desired outcome for CLSTA as well as our immediate neighborhood. We ask that you give this suggestion your most serious consideration. E4 E0 G2 N2 O1 O9

CLOSING

We want to thank you for the opportunity to both read and respond to the DEIS early enough in this process that our concerns can be heard, seriously considered and hopefully addressed. If we can be of any assistance whatsoever in the development of this project please feel free to contact us at the addresses listed below.

Sincerely,

Richard Johnson

President, CLSTA
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Minneapolis, MN 55416
Dickatcls@aol.com

John Erickson

Vice President, CLSTA
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MINNEAPOLIS, MN 55415

55415184300

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Michael Hayman
<MHayman@minnehahacreek.org>
12/21/2012 11:26 AM

To "swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us" <swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>
cc
bcc
Subject Southwest Transitway Draft Environmental Impact Statement Comment

Find attached the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District's comments regarding the Southwest Transitway Draft Environmental Impact Statement. The comment letter will also be delivered via U.S. Postal Service standard mail.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions.

See Comment #502 for Theme Delineations

Michael Hayman
MCWD Planner

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Deephaven, MN 55391
952.471.8226
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MINNEHAHA CREEK WATERSHED DISTRICT

MINNEHAHA CREEK WATERSHED DISTRICT

QUALITY OF WATER QUALITY OF LIFE

The Minnehaha Creek Watershed District is committed to a leadership role in protecting, improving and managing the surface waters and affiliated groundwater resources within the District, including their relationships to the ecosystems of which they are an integral part. We achieve our mission through regulation, capital projects, education, cooperative endeavors, and other programs based on sound science, innovative thinking, an informed and engaged constituency, and the cost effective use of public funds.

December 6, 2012

Hennepin County
Housing, Community Works & Transit
701 Fourth Avenue South, Ste 400
Minneapolis, MN 55415

RE: Southwest Transitway Draft Environmental Impact Statement

Dear Hennepin County,

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Southwest Transitway. The Project consists of construction and operation of a 15-mile light rail transit (LRT) line in the Minneapolis/St. Paul region, connecting downtown Minneapolis to the cities of St. Louis Park, Hopkins, Edina, Minnetonka, and Eden Prairie.

Each alternative alignment contains segments within the MCWD. Nearly the entire length of Segment 4 and Segment Freight Rail Realignment (FRR) are within the boundaries of the MCWD as well as portions of Segment A and Segment C-1. This involves five to six station areas, depending on the alternative, and numerous miles of rail.

The Minnehaha Creek Watershed District (MCWD) has regulatory authority over projects that have the potential to impact water resources. The MCWD regulates for Erosion Control, Floodplain Alteration, Wetland Protection, Dredging, Shoreline Stabilization, Waterbody Crossings and Stormwater Management. The MCWD is also the Local Government Unit for the MN Wetland Conservation Act that regulates wetland impact. As such, the MCWD recommends early and ongoing coordination between the Project Office and MCWD to determine specific regulatory requirements for this project.

In addition to its regulatory capacity, the MCWD has a capital improvement program and grant programs to implement projects that manage water quality, quantity and overall ecosystem integrity. Currently, the MCWD is engaged in the planning and implementation of a number of projects in partnership with public and private entities to improve the riparian corridor of Minnehaha Creek between Highway 169 and Meadowbrook Golf Course in Hopkins and St. Louis Park.

These projects have the potential to be impacted, positively or negatively, by the Southwest Transitway. Therefore, the MCWD encourages Hennepin County and the Project Office to engage the District early and often to integrate the planning and implementation efforts of each party, thereby maximizing the identification of holistic solutions to transit, economic development, community livability and environmental improvement.

The Minnehaha Creek Watershed District is currently in various stages of planning and implementation of the following projects in coordination with project partners:

- Cottageville Park Expansion
  - Includes regional stormwater management for Blake Rd. drainage

- Redevelopment of 325 Blake Road
  - Could include regional stormwater management for approximately 235 acres of St. Louis Park, Hopkins and Edina

  - Could include regional stormwater management for approximately 100 acres west of Blake Road, including the Blake Road station area

  - Includes community greenway along Minnehaha Creek, connecting 325 Blake Road with downstream stretches of Minnehaha Creek, the existing SW LRT trail, Methodist Hospital, and both the Blake Road and Louisiana Avenue stations

  - Includes redevelopment of 11 to 13 acres of creekside property adjacent to the Blake Road Station

- Realignment of Reach 20 on Minnehaha Creek
  - Could include regional stormwater management for approximately 25 acres including the Louisiana Station area

  - Includes regional stormwater management of approximately 75 acres of drainage from Excelsior Blvd., Interlachen Park and Meadowbrook Manor

  - Includes trail and boardwalk along the Minnehaha Creek corridor connecting Methodist Hospital – Louisiana Avenue – Meadowbrook Manor – Oxford Street – Meadowbrook Road – SW LRT

Given proposed redevelopment of 325 Blake Road and its proximity to the proposed LRT, the District is interested in collaborative and integrated planning to further explore the interaction of the site with LRT, potential greenway linkages between the site and the LRT trail, future traffic patterns along Blake Road, and location and function of the Blake Road Station.

Similarly, the District would welcome close coordination with Hennepin County and the Project Office on the potential reconstruction of the LRT crossing over Minnehaha Creek. Hydraulic capacity, wildlife and human passage through this area are of particular interest to the MCWD.

Finally, the District would encourage Hennepin County and the Project Office to engage in coordinated planning of all station areas within the MCWD to identify collaborative opportunities to manage stormwater runoff in a comprehensive manner. Minnehaha Creek and downstream receiving Lake Hiawatha are listed on the State's 303 (d) list of impaired waters. Based on the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's draft Total Maximum Daily Load for these waterbodies, the area encompassing the Louisiana and Blake Stations are a large contributing source of pollution, creating opportunity for large scale management and pollution reduction.

Further, if planned and implemented in an integrated manner with LRT and Transitional Station Area Planning, stormwater management projects could be implemented that treat large areas of urban land, potentially offsetting future regulatory requirements for this project and future redevelopment; generating large future cost savings to local municipalities, Hennepin County, Metropolitan Council and the taxpayers at large.

As an active member of the Southwest LRT Community Works Steering and Technical Implementation Committees, the MCWD is committed to working in close coordination with the public and private partners throughout the Project development. The District looks forward to collaboratively exploring the opportunities for water resource and ecological improvement generated by this project and hopes that it can serve as a model for future partnerships in transit projects.

Sincerely,

James Wisker
Director of Planning, Projects and Land Conservation

Rhea Sullivan
<rhea.sullivan@gmail.com>
12/21/2012 11:34 AM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us

cc Kathleen Cobb <kathycobb70@gmail.com>, David Rhees <Rhees@thebakken.org>, Meg Forney <megf@visi.com>

bcc

Subject West Calhoun Neighborhood Council's Comments on the DEIS

Dear Project Director,

Attached you will find a cover letter and comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Southwest Transitway from the West Calhoun Neighborhood Council.

Thank you,

Rhea Sullivan

Rhea Sullivan, Coordinator
West Calhoun Neighborhood Council
rhea.sullivan@gmail.com
612-386-6974

West Calhoun Neighborhood Council
3208 West Lake Street, Box # 1
Minneapolis, MN 55416
Voice Mail: 612-928-3511

Date: December 21, 2012

To: Hennepin County Housing, Community Works & Transit
Attention: Southwest Transitway Project Director

From: West Calhoun Neighborhood Council

The West Calhoun Neighborhood Council (WCNC) appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Southwest Transitway Draft Environmental Impact Statement. As the organization that represents residents in the vicinity of the West Lake Station, we have raised some concerns in the attached comments that we anticipate being addressed as Preliminary Engineering goes forth.

In general, WCNC sees the Southwest Transitway and the West Lake Station as an opportunity to create a welcoming gateway to Minneapolis and the Chain of Lakes. However, this unique location currently faces some particular issues that in fact may be solved through creative design of the West Lake Station and surrounding access points. A few of these are listed below.

1. *Connections to the Lake Calhoun.* As part of the Historic Grand Rounds, the parkway and Lake Calhoun draw thousands of recreational visitors each year, particularly during the summer months. It is imperative that bicycle and pedestrian connections from the area of the West Lake Station remain unimpeded. It is important that the station area design consider paths, lighting, and signage that will enhance those connections. S3 S4 E7 I2
2. *Parking/traffic.* The West Lake St./Excelsior Blvd. Corridor is already congested, at times approaching gridlock. Traffic flow to/from the West Lake Station will require exceptionally creative planning to avoid exacerbating an ongoing problem. The Southwest Transitway construction could mitigate current traffic issues and enhance traffic flow by looking at alternatives to the current street confluence. P4 E10 I2
3. *Neighborhood accessibility.* Pedestrians, bicycles, and autos alike move through the business, housing, and recreation nodes in West Calhoun via several streets and trails. We are concerned that access to these properties be unimpeded during and after construction of the Southwest Transitway at West Lake. And again, the opportunity to enhance the safety and ease with which people and vehicles flow through the area presents itself in this project. E7, E9 P5 R2 I2

WCNC also wants to make clear its support for the DEIS preferred plan of relocating freight lines to St. Louis Park. Co-location of freight train tracks and light rail is untenable. Much of the route through the city and into St. Louis Park already includes a D A

recreational bike and pedestrian path adjacent to the tracks in a narrow corridor. Retaining freight train traffic would create safety and congestion issues for those using the trail and attempting to reach light rail platforms.

A

We also support alternatives to the bridge over Cedar Lake Parkway, such as tunneling or trenching, to maintain a safe and aesthetically pleasing environment. An at-grade LRT crossing is totally unacceptable in that location for safety, traffic, and air pollution reasons. The proposed bridge is out of scale with the surrounding area and would cause greater disruption to the existing natural environment; thus, it is important to look at further alternatives.

S3
S4
E8
G2

WCNC looks forward to participating as a stakeholder during further planning and implementation stages of the Southwest Transitway.

Sincerely,

David Rhees

David Rhees
President
On behalf of the West Calhoun Neighborhood Council

Comments from the West Calhoun Neighborhood Council on the Southwest Transitway Draft Environmental Impact Statement

Chapter 3: Social Effects

Page 3-16

3.1.2.4 Segment A [LRT 1A, LRT 3A (LPA), and LRT 3A-1 (co-location alternative)]

In addition to the specified zoning districts for individual parcels or areas, Minneapolis has adopted several overlay zoning districts in which Segment A would be located. Northwest of Lake Calhoun and between Cedar Lake and Lake of the Isles the city has established the Shoreland Overlay District that specifies development guidelines within a half-mile radius around each of these lakes. Although the ordinance does not prohibit transportation uses or facilities, it does specify guidelines for controlling both point source and non-point source pollutant discharge within the Shoreland Overlay District.

Comment: *Excelsior Blvd/West Lake Street/Dean Parkway/West Calhoun Parkway is the highest traveled highway corridor in Hennepin County with counts of 39,500 cars. Run-off would potentially increase in this vicinity. Further in-depth environmental analysis is required for projected future use of this confluence within the half-mile radius of the West Lake Station.*

E9

N6

Page 3-17

3.1.2.5

In addition to the general zoning districts established adjacent to Segment C-1, zoning overlay districts have been established for specified regions. East of the West Lake Station, an alignment following Segment C-1 would cross through a Pedestrian Overlay District (PO) established by the City of Minneapolis for the Uptown region.

Comment*: A Pedestrian Overlay District is required to connect station users to the west side of Lake Calhoun to promote street level activity by creating a pleasant and unique pedestrian environment. This is an essential section of the Historic Grand Rounds National Scenic Byway (www.minneapolisparks.org/grandrounds/home.htm-- see Grand Rounds map), which is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.*

S4

Outcome: The Grand Rounds National Scenic Byway fully retains its integrity and intention and maintains one of the basic design characteristics of the Grand Rounds: a continuous recreational driving experience.

E7

S4

Page 3-20

3.1.3 Land Use Plans

Table 3.1-2 Summary of Local and Regional Comprehensive Plans and Studies

Plans and Studies	Available at Project Website	Date adopted	Summary
METROPOLITAN COUNCIL			
Metropolitan Council 2030 Regional Development Framework	http://www.metrocouncil.org/planning/framework/documents.htm	2004 2006 2012	Addresses regional growth in transportation, housing, and employment. Identifies Southwest Transitway as LPA.

E1

M1

***Comment**: WCNC supports Southwest Transitway plans to work in harmony with the Regional Development Framework and other local planning documents. For example, see excerpt below from Appendix H-1 (pg. 7), which cites Land Use Plans, The Metropolitan Council Plans and Studies, 2030 Regional Development Framework (RDF) adopted in 2004:*

Appendix H-1, Page 7

The RDF addresses four primary policies:

1. Working with local communities to accommodate growth in a flexible, connected, and efficient manner;
2. Planning and investing in multi-modal transportation choices, based on the full range of costs and benefits, to slow the growth of congestion and serve the region's economic needs.
3. Encouraging expanded choices in housing location and types, and improved access to jobs and opportunities; and
4. Working with local and regional partners to reclaim, conserve, protect, and enhance the region's vital natural resources.

Page 3-33

3.1.5.1 Effects to Land Use and Socioeconomics

Accessibility is an important consideration when making development decisions for various types of land use, including residential, office and retail commercial, health and community services, and recreation facilities. Improved accessibility will help the study area become more attractive to business and residential development opportunities, especially when linking major employment centers with rapid transit.

E10

I2

P10

***Comment**: Due to existing parking saturation in the West Lake Station area, we expect that parking will be mitigated in order to accommodate the addition of projected trans riders who will drive to the station in order to board the LRT. Present zoning codes do not address the required parking needed for mass transit use. Reliance on already established adjacent private businesses' parking should not be used to offset user needs.*

People on foot must have ready and safe circulation in and around Calhoun Village, Calhoun Commons, Market Plaza, and the West Lake Station.

Page 3-38

3.1.7 Mitigation

Short-term construction effects can be mitigated by using standard construction best management practices (BMPs) such as the use of construction staging, dust and erosion control, proper mufflers on equipment, restricted construction times, optimum traffic re-routing measures, minimization of lane, sidewalk, or trail closures during construction, and maintenance and timely removal of temporary traffic control devices. Although specific plans for maintaining access and construction BMPs are not yet established, it is expected that a BMP construction plan will be developed prior to construction. This plan will specify construction staging and treatments to minimize impacts. The BMPs could include working with residents and merchants to provide alternative access to their neighborhoods, properties, and businesses, providing advance notice of construction plans and phasing, maintaining access to bus stops and school routes, and alerting the public to road, sidewalk, and trail closures and detour routes.

[…] Businesses and residences may experience difficulties with accessibility at certain times of day during the construction of the project, and minor detours for through traffic might be required. In general, these effects will not change the land use of the area during construction, but may affect the number of people using area businesses directly affected by access or construction traffic issues.

***Comment**: Due to the particularly challenging proposed location of the West Lake Station, mitigation during construction to the business area and adjacent residential properties is required.* E10 I2 M1

Page 3-49

3.2.2.1 Neighborhoods

Minneapolis

Each Build Alternative would operate through several geographically defined neighborhoods in the City of Minneapolis.

***Comment**: While the proposed LRT 3A (LPA) route would travel through the defined boundaries of nine Minneapolis neighborhoods, it will have the greatest impact on Kenwood, CIDNA, and West Calhoun due to the geography and existing land use of the area. The Kenilworth Trail and Cedar Lake Park – vital local and regional amenities – are both part of the Kenwood neighborhood, with the Kenilworth Trail continuing through CIDNA and West Calhoun.* E1

***Outcome**: West Lake Station users and all other users have safe and convenient access to and from Lake Calhoun and the Southwest LRT Trail, the Midtown Greenway and the Kenilworth Regional Trail.*

***Outcome**: Way-finding is provided between the West Lake Station and Lake Calhoun and the trails.* E7, E9

***Outcome**: Safe and adequate bike parking is provided for recreational and commuter users of the trail and for Lake Calhoun visitors. This location within the Minneapolis Chain of Lakes Regional Park is the closest major park land to the proposed West Lake Station. It is a primary visitor portal to the Grand Rounds National Scenic Byway.* I2

The Calhoun Executive Center parking lot next to Lake Calhoun sits on land that is partially owned by the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board as part of the Minneapolis Chain of Lakes Regional Park. On weekends and weekday evenings, visitors use this area for parking and to access the regional park and the Grand Rounds National Scenic Byway. S4

Issue: *Park and trail access behind Whole Foods* E7, E2

Millions of annual park visits to this area originate by foot, bicycle, motorized vehicle, and in the future the LRT. P9

Traffic patterns altered by the addition of a West Lake Station will have a direct impact on the park visitor experience and all modes of traffic on Lake Calhoun Parkway and Dean Parkway. West Calhoun Neighborhood Council is concerned that the introduction of the high-volume West Lake Station increases the complexity of this area and is committed to ensuring that all visitors have a positive, easy, and safe experience accessing and using the park lands and trails in this area. I2 R2 P4

Below are the critical outcomes that the West Calhoun Neighborhood Council has adopted and must be addressed in the FEIS and Preliminary Engineering.

Statement*: Multimodal traffic patterns in a roughly 1/2-mile radius of the West Lake Station must be studied in partnership with the street/trail property owners (Hennepin County, City of Minneapolis, MPRB). Deliverables of the study should include traffic volume and flow projections, and recommendations for* I2 E9 P9

1) long-term street/trail network modifications and

2) short-term network modifications to be implemented with station development.

Outcome*: LRT and West Lake Station area design decisions for this area are based on design recommendations from a comprehensive and multimodal (bicycle, pedestrian, transit, vehicle) circulation analysis that addresses impacts to the Grand Rounds National Scenic Byway parkways and trails.* I2

Outcome*: The design of this area makes clear that it is a "gateway" to the Minneapolis park system.*

Outcome*: A safe, free-flowing pedestrian and bicycle route with exceptional wayfinding exists between the LRT station area and Lake Calhoun and adjacent park land.* E7, E2

Outcome*: There is no loss of vehicle parking for park and trail users.*

Outcome*: Greenspace at the northwest corner of Lake Calhoun is preserved for park visitors and recreational purposes.* N1

Page 3-52

West Calhoun: The West Calhoun neighborhood sits between Minneapolis' border with St. Louis Park and Lake Calhoun. The neighborhood is principally residential, although the commercial region of West Lake Street has developed into a thriving shopping area. The Grand Rounds Scenic Byway, encircling Lake Calhoun, is a heavily used parkway road system that includes the off-street trails of a portion of the Minneapolis Chain of Lakes Regional Park. In addition to Lake Calhoun and the interim

use trails and park space, the neighborhood is also home to the Bakken Museum and the Minikahda Club golf course.

***Comment**: The Calhoun Commons business area is newly developed. There is concern about the curb cut onto Market Plaza, which slows traffic flow. Increased traffic at the West Lake Station could exacerbate the situation. A traffic study in this area is required.* E10 P4

In building Calhoun Commons, the street was vacated and is now private parking. In-depth study of access routes to the station is required, including the feasibility of reopening the vacated street. I2

The Fire Station at Market Plaza will be impacted by its proximity to the West Lake Station. We request a Fire Department analysis of accessibility at Market Plaza. R3 P4 E10

The West Lake Station will serve as the gateway to the City of Minneapolis and the Grand Rounds National Scenic Byway and the Chain of Lakes. User counts on the Chain of Lakes are the second highest in the state of Minnesota; the count is 1.3 million at Lake Calhoun. Further in-depth analysis of traffic flow and linkages to and from these two assets and the station is required. Safety and connections should be enhanced. Most recent data shows the daily traffic count on Lake Street to be 39,500 cars. E7, E2 P4

***Outcome**: The Grand Rounds National Scenic Byway (eligible for the National Register of Historic Places) fully retains its integrity and intention.* S4
***Outcome**: Motorized and nonmotorized vehicles and pedestrians experience continuous and safe flow.*

Page 3-58

3.2.2.6 Neighborhoods and Community Cohesion

Segment A [LRT1A and LRT 3A (LPA)] and Freight Rail Relocation

However, the operation of LRT service along Segment A is not anticipated to adversely affect community cohesion because Segment A is currently bisected by a freight rail line and adding LRT service does not alter the existing barrier. [...] The operation of LRT service along Segment A is not anticipated to adversely affect community cohesion.

***Comment**: The infrequency and slow speeds of the current freight trains means tracks are easily crossed, as evidenced by the many informal pathways across the tracks that provide access from residences to parks, trails, and retail stores. LRT, on the other hand, would run every 7.5 minutes in each direction at high speeds. This change clearly alters the existing linkages within and among neighborhoods. Also, the Kenilworth Trail now functions as a community connector where neighbors meet in a recreational context. So while WCNC agrees that new transit services and linkages would become available to neighborhood residents, we disagree that there would be no impact on community cohesion. We urge Southwest Transitway designers to consider a full range of measures, in consultation with the community, to mitigate this impact.* E1, E4 M4

At the West Lake Station, there is high-density residential housing adjacent to the proposed line. Casual walking connections need attention to safety measurements for pedestrians on either side of the tracks and enhanced connections to new or existing service, activity centers, or social amenities (parks and open spaces) in the study area. Barriers should not impede safe pedestrian circulation. R2 M1

Page 3-64

3.2.2.8 Community Facilities and Resources: Places of Worship, Schools, and Public Housing

Summary of Potential Impacts to Community Facilities by Build Alternative

The study area contains several community facilities and neighborhood amenities that provide public services (see Summary Table of Potential Impacts). These facilities include law enforcement, fire stations, public health, education, recreation, libraries, post offices, community facilities, and religious institutions. Implementation of any of the Build Alternatives considered would improve access to community facilities and resources, places of worship, schools, and public housing in the study area.

***Comment**: More information about the access to the Fire Station at Market Plaza is needed. Further in-depth analysis is required to evaluate the impact of West Lake Station on the response time to emergencies. In addition, the effects of increased traffic on ExcelsiorBlvd. at the Fire Station ambulance entrance needs to be assessed.* R3 P4 E10 I2

Page 3-66

3.2.5 Summary

Table 3.2-2. Summary of Neighborhood, Community Services, and Community Cohesion Impacts by Build Alternative

Environmental Metric	Build Alternative				
	LRT 1A	LRT 3A (LPA)	LRT 3A-1 (Co-location)	LRT 3C-1 (Nicollet Mall)	LRT 3C-2 (11th/12th Street)
Connections or movement between land uses maintained	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Neighborhood character maintained	Yes: Segment 4 follows HCRRA ROW. No: Segment 1 High intensity, high density station areas and park-and-ride lots in residential areas of Segment 1 could change character.	Yes: Segment 3 is mostly commercial and industrial. Yes: Segment 4 follows HCRRA ROW. No: Segment A May have aesthetic and traffic impacts in historic areas.	Yes: Segment 3 is mostly commercial and industrial. Yes: Segment 4 follows HCRRA ROW. No: Segment A May have aesthetic and traffic impacts in historic areas.	Yes: Segment 3 is mostly commercial and industrial. Yes: Segment 4 follows HCRRA ROW. Yes: Segment C: High density land uses are compatible along this segment.	Yes: Segment 3 is mostly commercial and industrial. Yes: Segment 4 follows HCRRA ROW. Yes: Segment C: High density land uses are compatible along this segment.

***Comment**: Mitigation for the aesthetic and traffic impacts in the historic area is needed.*

In Table 3.2.2, we disagree with the conclusions of both environmental metrics as they affect Segment A. The table asserts that connections or movement between land uses will be maintained. The table also indicates that neighborhood character will be maintained, with the exception of some aesthetic and traffic impacts to historic areas. It strains belief that such unremarkable outcomes are possible when two tracks of LRT will travel through this corridor at, roughly, 7.5-minute intervals, permanently severing communities on either side of the corridor. This is not the case today, as the freight trains are few and infrequent. E1 M1 N2

Not only will the neighborhood character be impacted by sheer number and frequency of trains, but Segment A should also be given extremely high consideration for mitigation of noise. The section of LRT between West Lake Station and 21st Street Station has 87.5% of the total properties severely impacted by noise on the entire LRT line. O1

These are but two of the potentially destructive impacts to this residential area. WCNC suggests that tunneling is the only means of mitigation in Segment A. E0

Page 3-79

3.4.5.3 Build Alternatives

Segment 4 [LRT 1A, LRT 3A (LPA), LRT 3A-1 (Co-location), LRT 3C-1(Nicollet Mall), and LRT 3C-2 (11th/12th Street)]

Other potential effects to historic properties in Segment 4 relate to station area development in the Hopkins, Wooddale, and West Lake Station areas, access issues, and potential vibration issues.

[…]

Segment A [LRT 1A, LRT 3A (LPA), and LRT 3A-1 (Co-location)]

Architectural properties in Segment A which are listed in or eligible for the National Register include seven individual properties and five historic districts. The segment also includes three individual architectural properties and one historic district which are under evaluation for eligibility. […]

Potential long-term effects may occur at the following properties:

- Cedar Lake Parkway, Grand Rounds (potential effects of the changes to the intersection of the LRT corridor with the historic parkway, including the LRT overpass bridge, and, under the co-location alternative, the effects of widening the trail/rail corridor; these changes may affect the parkway itself and may alter its setting)

- Kenilworth Lagoon/ Channel, Grand Rounds (potential effects of the construction of new bridge structures within the historic district; the design and footprint of these structures may affect the banks of the historic channel and may affect the district's overall feeling and setting)

Other potential effects to historic properties in Segment A relate to station area development in the West Lake, 21st Street, Penn, and Van White Station areas, traffic issues and potential noise and vibration issues.

***Comment**: We urge Southwest Transitway designers and engineers to adopt the highest design standards to protect our local, regional, and national cultural assets including, but not limited to, Cedar Lake Parkway and the Historic Grand Rounds National Scenic Byway. We expect that these critical urban resources will be honored and preserved for future generations and must be addressed in the FEIS and Preliminary Engineering.*

E2, E7

S4

3.4.7 Mitigation

Methods for avoidance, minimization, or mitigation of impacts to historic and archaeological property would be developed and coordinated under the Section 106 consultation process as the project advances, and included in the Section 106 Agreement. The agreement for the selected alternative will be developed in consultation with the SHPO and other consulting and interested parties. As described in Section 3.4.4.3, potential mitigation measures may include:

• Consultation on the design of the project, when historic properties are located nearby;

• Educational efforts and incentives aimed at the rehabilitation of historic properties in areas that may experience project-related redevelopment

• Development of a plan to address potential vibration or noise effects on historic properties

• Public education and interpretation about historic properties in the project area, often as a part of the project itself

***Comment**: The West Calhoun Neighborhood Council requires mitigation of impacts to the Historic Grand Rounds National Scenic Byway*. This must be addressed in the FEIS and Preliminary Engineering

S4

Page 3-85

3.5 Parklands and Recreation Areas

It is important to note that at this stage of the project, estimates of direct park impacts are based on conceptual engineering drawings. Therefore, sufficient engineering detail is not available to fully eliminate all potential impacts. It is anticipated that during Preliminary Engineering, reasonable and prudent efforts will be made to adjust engineering designs in order to avoid or minimize direct impacts.

Comment: *The West Calhoun Neighborhood Council requires being a stakeholder in Preliminary Engineering to estimate direct park impacts.*

L1

Page 3-85

3.5.3 Existing Conditions

Public parks, conservation areas, and recreation areas are owned and maintained by the municipalities in which they are located. In the City of Minneapolis, these properties are owned and maintained by the independent Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board.

and

Pages 3-91 and 3-92

Section of Table 3.5-1. Public Parks, Recreation Areas, and Conservation areas within the Study Area by Segment

Park Name	Jurisdiction or Ownership	Segment	Park Resources
Lake of the Isles segment of the Minneapolis Chain of Lakes Regional Park	Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board	A and C	Lake with 2.86 miles of shoreline, bike path, display fountain, fishing dock, hockey rink, ice rink, , soccer field, walking path, wells, off-leash recreation area
Kenwood Parkway	Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board	A	Parkway, open space
Bryn Mawr Park	Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board	A	50.84-acre park; 2 baseball fields, biking path, 2 broomball rinks, cricket field, ice rink, 10-table picnic area, restroom facilities, soccer field, 11 softball fields, sports facility, tennis court, tot lot/playground, wading pool, and walking path
Dean Parkway segment of the Minneapolis Chain of Lakes Regional Park	Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board	C	Parkway with 17.5 acres of parkland, 0.6 mile of bicycle and walking paths
Lake Calhoun Parkway segment of the Minneapolis Chain of Lakes Regional Park	Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board	C	Parkway; scenic drive that circles Lake Calhoun; beach, boat dock, eatery/concessions, fishing dock, picnic area, restroom facilities, soccer field, walking path
Lake Calhoun segment of the Minneapolis Chain of Lakes Regional Park	Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board	C	3.2-mile bike/skate path, 3.1-mile walking path, three supervised beaches, archery, boat dock, eatery/concessions, fishing dock, parkway, picnic area, restroom facilities, soccer field, softball field, volleyball court, wells

S4

E2, E7

***Comment**: Note these are all a part of the Historic Grand Rounds National Scenic Byway. These elements of the Historic Grand Rounds need to be taken into consideration when designing the Southwest Transitway and related adverse impacts. West Calhoun Neighborhood Council supports the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board's request for a transportation analysis/recommendations for the area's circulation system, including all jurisdictional levels (city, park board, county), to preserve the integrity of the Grand Rounds National Scenic Byway.*

Pages 3-94 and 3-95

Segment A [LRT 1A and, LRT 3A (LPA)]

Temporary direct impacts

The conceptual engineering completed for the project identifies approximately 0.016 acre of potential temporary impact to land from Park Siding for grading associated with future trail reconstruction. However, this is not directly associated with the project, as HCRRA would not conduct the grading unless requested to do so by the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) to allow the reconstruction of the interim use trail. Completion of the trail would be conducted by MPRB or others. Should MPRB choose not to accept HCRRA's offer of grading for trail reconstruction, there would be no impact to Park Siding.

***Comment**: The West Calhoun Neighborhood Council expects bicycling and pedestrian trails to remain open during construction to the largest degree possible.*

P9

E7, E1

Page 3-104

3.6.2.4 Segment A [LRT 1A, LRT 3A (LPA), and LRT 3A-1 (co-location alternative)]

Segment A is located on existing rail ROW owned by HCRRA that is currently used as a pedestrian and bike trail and parallels existing freight lines (Photo 3.6-4). The corridor travels through the Cedar-Isles-Dean and Kenwood neighborhoods, the Minnesota Chain of Lakes Regional Park, and travels between a pair of lakes (Cedar Lake and Lake of the Isles) in Minneapolis. Land uses adjacent to the segment between West Lake Street and I-394 include transportation uses for freight, parkland, and single- and multi-family residential land uses.

***Comment**: Please note the heavy use of bicycle and pedestrian trails along the Kenilworth Corridor. According to information provided to the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board's Community Advisory Committee, the Kenilworth Trail received 617,000 visits in 2009 and use has only grown since then. The Regional Park Visitor Survey 2008 indicates that 63% of these visits were non-local, meaning that more than six out of 10 users came from outside Minneapolis.*

P8

E2, E7

Page 3-115

3.6.3.3 Build Alternatives

Segment 4 [LRT 3A-1 (Co-location alternative)]

[…] Visual impacts on sensitive receptors located in the multi-family residential development areas on both sides of the corridor as it approaches the West Lake Station would generally not be substantial because of mature vegetation buffers and the presence of an existing freight rail corridor where the LRT, freight rail, and trail would be co-located.

Seven at-grade center-track platforms are proposed for each station in the segment, but no sensitive receptors (in addition to the trail users aforementioned) are located adjacent to the station sites; therefore no visual impacts are anticipated except at West Lake Station, where sensitive receptors in a multi-family residential tower would have views from upper floors to the station. However visual impacts would not be substantial because the proposed station would fit the current urban context.

***Comment**: In paragraph two above, visual impacts to residents in West Lake Station multi-family residential towers are noted but considered as not substantial because this is a built urban environment and the proposed station would fit the current urban context. Respondents disagree on this point; there is no current equivalent to the visual impact of two tracks of light rail passing through this area every 7.5 minutes. Significant engineering and landscape design is required to mitigate the sizable visual impacts on all immediately adjacent residential units.*

E4, E1

N2

Page 3-115

Segment A [LRT 1A and LRT 3A (LPA)]

The project elements in Segment A corridor would be located on HCRRA property. Although the segment is located in an existing transportation corridor (Kenilworth Regional Trail), the project would introduce new visual elements—the fixed guideway, including track, catenary poles, and wires—into the area. Catenary poles and wires could have substantial visual impacts on trail users who would share the corridor with the fixed guideway.

Visual impacts on sensitive receptors located at single-family and multi-family parcels throughout the corridor would generally not be substantial because of mature vegetation buffers and the presence of an existing freight rail corridor. Visual impacts may be substantial where the alignment is not screened by vegetation. Visual intrusion and privacy impacts of the project elements on the sensitive receptors may be substantial where views from the alignment into previously private spaces are created. Visual intrusion and privacy impacts on the outdoor living areas of residential properties could be substantial where vegetation or landscape buffers do not exist.

***Comment**: WCNC agrees that there will be substantial visual effects on trail users and residences not screened by well-designed landscape and hardscape elements, including land berms and evergreens, as well as seasonal leaf-off periods. We agree that privacy impacts to indoor and outdoor living areas of residential properties will also be significant without excellent landscape design. We urge project engineers to employ the highest standards of creativity and design as they attempt to preserve the quality of this vital urban green space.*

E4

N2

Page 115, cont. (Cedar Lake Parkway)

The proposed alignment is on a bridge over Cedar Lake Parkway. Visual impacts on sensitive receptors adjacent to the corridor in the multi-family residential parcel and Cedar Lake Parkway could be substantial. Visual intrusion and privacy impacts of the project elements on the residents in units with windows facing the alignment where it is bridged structure could be substantial.

***Comment**: WCNC agrees that a bridge over Cedar Lake Parkway clearly would have substantial visual impacts on residences from Lake Street to the Kenilworth Channel. (See Appendix 1.) It would also have substantial impacts on users of the Historic Grand Rounds National Scenic Byway (drivers, bicyclists, pedestrians), as well as Cedar Lake*

E8, E4

N1

N2

Park and beach users, a fact not mentioned in the present study. Such a bridge is also likely to violate the Shoreland Overlay District zoning requirements, which state: E8, E4

> *"Except for structures subject to a more restrictive maximum height limitation in the primary zoning district, the maximum height of all structures within the SH Overlay District, except for single and two-family dwellings, shall be two and one-half (2.5) stories or thirty-five (35) feet, whichever is less."*
> *Source: Minneapolis, Minnesota, Code of Ordinances; Title 20 – Zoning code; Chapter 551. – Overlay Districts; Article VI. – SH Shoreland Overlay District*

M1

We do not see any evidence in the present study that the feasibility of trenching, tunneling, or depressing the LRT below Cedar Lake Parkway was examined. We strongly request that a thoughtful and serious study of these options be undertaken, since a bridge would have such grave quality of life impacts on area residents and users, and an at-grade crossing is likely to have significant traffic and safety impacts. West Calhoun Neighborhood Council supports tunneling or trenching at Cedar Lake Parkway. E0, E8

Page 3-123

3.6.5.3 Build Alternatives

The need for additional landscaping to mitigate potential visual intrusion/privacy impacts following clearing and grubbing activities during construction will be addressed in the Final EIS. Station design and aesthetics will be addressed during Preliminary Engineering and Final Design. Mitigation treatments for visual impacts would be developed during the Final Design process through discussion with affected communities, resource agencies, and stakeholders. Measures would be taken to ensure the design and construction of the Build Alternative considers the context of the corridor and that sensitive receptors receive adequate mitigation. Possible mitigation measures could include:

- Landscaping vegetation such as shrubs and bushes to supplement existing vegetation buffers
- Evergreen vegetation screening to supplement deciduous vegetation buffers in leaf-off conditions
- Fencing
- Tunneling

E4, E10

***Comment**: Appreciating the present study's approach that mitigation treatments would be developed through discussion with affected communities, WCNC joins the joint neighborhood task force in requesting the definition of "measures [that] would be taken to ensure that the design and construction of the Build Alternative considers the context of the corridor and that sensitive receptors receive adequate mitigation." We assume that consideration of placement and screening/mitigation of Traction Power Substations would also be done in cooperation with affected communities and stakeholders.* N2 H3

Page 3-125

3.6.6 Summary

LRT 3A (LPA) would have the second highest effects on visual quality in the project area because of substantial impacts on sensitive receptors located on trails, which are present in three (4, A, and

FRR) of the alignment's segments. Further, LRT 3A (LPA) would have possibly substantial effects on the visual quality of one of its three segments, which includes sensitive receptors in residential land uses adjacent to the segment (A) where the alignment is on a bridge.

***Comment**: We agree that LRT 3A will have huge visual quality impacts to the Segments 4, A, and FRR area. In particular, the visual impacts of the proposed aerial bridge at Cedar Lake Parkway will impact not only residents but also all users of the Historic Grand Rounds National Scenic Byway.*

N2

E4, E8

Page 3-128

3.7.1.1 Light Rail Transit

Safety and security aspects of the Southwest Transitway would be developed in accordance with the Metropolitan Council's policies and procedures. At this time, specific safety and security policies and procedures have not been developed for the Southwest Transitway; policies, procedures, and any mitigation measures required for safety and security will be specified at an appropriate level of detail in the Final EIS.

***Comment**: The adjacent neighborhoods will be stakeholders in the development of Southwest Transitway Safety and Security Policies. Of particular concern is the report of studies that show an increase in crime rates when mass transit is adjacent to liquor stores, as it will be at the West Lake Station.*

R3

Page 3-129

3.7.2 Existing Conditions

Public safety and security within the study area is provided by the police departments, fire departments and emergency response units of the cities of Eden Prairie, Minnetonka, Hopkins, St. Louis Park, and Minneapolis. Emergency medical services are located in each city.

***Comment**: Please note that the Minneapolis Park Police also provide service within Minneapolis. The joint neighborhood task force requests that the MPRB Police be consulted on security issues related to the impact of the proposed West Lake Station.*

E10 E9 R3

Page 3-129, cont.

Primary safety concerns associated with the freight rail relocation segment of the proposed project, as expressed by the community, are derailments, chemical spills, the accessibility and safety of pedestrians (particularly near schools), and vehicular and traffic safety at grade crossings. These issues are addressed in the discussion below.

***Comment**: Please note that residents of the co-location corridor option have no less concern about issues such as derailments, chemical spills, pedestrian and bicyclist safety, and traffic safety.*

E9 R2

Chapter 4 Environmental Effects

***General comment**: Presently, the LPA corridor from the West Lake Station to I 394 is a high quality residential area with many parklands that are low noise, vibration and light, and with abundant native plants including ongoing community restoration efforts such as 40+ acres of native prairie within or adjacent to the proposed rails and station. There is abundant wildlife and dark night skies. More detailed analysis of multiple variables is necessary to determine mitigation options to preserve, even enhance, the status quo.*

N1 E4 N8 O1

***General comment**: There is no examination and discussion in this DEIS about the impact of LRT light on the corridor between the West Lake Station and the Intermodal Station. There is nothing about train light, corridor light, quantitative measurements, impacts on presently dark areas of neighborhoods and parklands. There is nothing about light scatter, color, distortion, or pollution. There is nothing about the effects of new constant and intermittent light sources on animals and people. More in-depth analysis is required to determine mitigation.*

E4 N1 N2 N8

Page 4-75

4.6.4 Long Term Effects

The traffic analysis completed for this Draft EIS indicates that several intersections are anticipated to degrade to LOS D, E, or F as a result of at-grade crossings… LRT stations, specifically those with park and ride, will cause localized increases in traffic along adjacent roadways.

***Comments**: Studies have not been conducted about future traffic patterns on the already saturated streets surrounding the proposed West Lake Station. Presence of small businesses in the area as well as visitors who have a destination of Lake Calhoun Parkway and other park and trail facilities contribute to current traffic congestion and overload within the half-mile radius of the proposed West Lake Station. Please refer to the Capstone Project (online at http://pwpg.org/lake-st-excelsior-blvd/) that discusses traffic and trail usage in Minneapolis. Currently, automobile traffic is frequently gridlocked in the area surrounding the proposed West Lake Station. It is expected that the West Lake Station will attract additional automobile use in this area.*

E10 P4 I2

No degree of degradation of the air quality should occur in this already saturated area as a result of the West Lake Station. We require additional study of the current traffic flow and projected traffic flow increase related to LRT use.

N9

Page 4-76 through Page 4-77

4.7.1 Methodology

Airborne noise effects associated with the proposed Southwest Transitway Project were evaluated using the FTA's Detailed Noise Assessment methods (FTA 2006). The methodology included identifying noise-sensitive land uses, measuring existing outdoor noise levels in the project area,

using the existing noise levels to identify noise impact thresholds, calculating project-related outdoor noise levels, and determining if project-related noise levels exceed FTA noise impact thresholds. FTA noise impact thresholds vary depending on land use and existing noise exposure. Two types of noise impacts are included in the FTA criteria. The type of impact affects whether noise mitigation is implemented.

• Severe Impact. A significant percentage of people are highly annoyed by noise in this range. Noise mitigation would normally be specified for severe impact areas unless it is not feasible or reasonable (unless there is no practical method of mitigating the impact).

• Moderate Impact. In this range, other project-specific factors are considered to determine the magnitude of the impact and the need for mitigation. Other factors include the predicted increase over existing noise levels, the types and number of noise-sensitive land uses affected, existing outdoor-indoor sound
insulation, and the cost-effectiveness of mitigating noise to more acceptable levels. Refer to Appendix H for details on the noise impact criteria.

***Comment**: Noise at high frequency and high decibel levels like wheel squeal and low frequency like train movement sway and rumble are not included in Table 1 (pg. 4-78). Noise monitoring locations listed in the table on pg. 4-82 do not include study of noise levels at elevations higher than the ground. Residents in high-rise condos near the proposed LRT report that noise at the ground level is amplified at higher levels. Sound travels in buildings and the frequency is changed and becomes more audible. Noise monitoring locations should include higher elevations so that appropriate mitigation can be implemented.*

E4 O1

Noise monitoring at locations 30 and 31 (see pg. 4-82, Figure 4.7-1) is inadequate due to the complexity of our neighborhoods, especially at the narrowest point of the corridor.

Page 4-118

4.8.6 Mitigation

Detailed vibration analyses will be conducted during the Final EIS in coordination with Preliminary Engineering. The Detailed Vibration Assessment may include performing vibration propagation measurements. These detailed assessments during the Final EIS/preliminary engineering phase have more potential to reduce project related effects than assessments of mitigation options at the conceptual engineering phase of the project. Potential mitigation measures may include maintenance, planning and design of special trackwork, vehicle specifications, and special track support systems such as resilient fasteners, ballast mats, resiliently supported ties, and floating slabs.

***Comment**: As design of mitigation of vibration impacts occurs, the range of frequencies must be taken into consideration. Segment A will experience high frequency vibrations, for example when brakes are applied, to low frequency as the trains rumble along the tracks' curves.*

E4 O4

Neighborhood associations should be included in the alternative design of this mitigation. Alternatives may include tunneling or trenching in areas with severe impact from noise and vibration.

L1

E0, E4

Chapter 5 Economic Effects

Page 5-15
Table 5.2-2. Short-Term Station Area Effects

Environmental Metric: Traffic
LRT 3A (LPA) Low--During construction temporary closures or rerouting of traffic from at-grade intersections will be required. The area is well served by a mature integrated network of roadways so traffic diversions should have minimal affect upon the transportation system.

E10 P5

***Comment**: Accessibility and disruption of traffic around the West Lake Station will occur during and after construction. In the planning and budgeting process, funds for mitigation need to be made available. Limited accessibility and heavy traffic loads, often approaching gridlock, already exist in this area, as several sources report.*

- *According to Hennepin County in 2011, the Lake Street/Excelsior Boulevard corridor was the busiest county state road in Hennepin County, with 39,500 cars daily.*
- *The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board has reported that the Minneapolis Chain of Lakes, including Lake Calhoun (within a half-mile radius of the West Lake Station) is the second most-visited location in Minnesota (behind the Mall of America).*
- *Capstone studies by students from the Civil Engineering Department at the University of Minnesota have assembled existing data and background information from the city, county and state, and have conducted extensive traffic counts and other observations, including using digital video: "Traffic Assessment and Recommendations for Lake Street and Excelsior Boulevard Intersection and Adjacent Intersections." See this and other student Capstone studies relating to the Lake St. and Excelsior Blvd. intersection online at www.pwpg.org/lake-st-excelsior-blvd/.*
- *A November 2012 parking study commissioned by the West Calhoun Neighborhood Council and conducted by Spack Consulting found that parking was near to or over capacity in some locations near the proposed West Lake Station. The study was conducted outside the busy lake and park recreation season on cool cloudy days. When the estimated 2,800 daily Southwest Transitway riders are added to the mix, parking spaces will be at a premium. (For the full report, go to www.westcalhoun.org.)*

Page 5-19
5.2.4 Long-Term Station Area Effects
Environmental Metric: Displacement Parking/Access Regulations
LRT 3A (LPA) Low--Parking and access to businesses along this route are unlikely to be affected. Business parking is provided off site and is not anticipated to be affected by the LRT project. Permanent access restrictions for businesses are not anticipated. 20 on-street and 11 off-street parking spaces will be eliminated.

***Comment**: Business parking is already at saturation point around the West Lake Station. See November 2012 parking study at www.westcalhoun.org and the University of Minnesota Capstone Studies at pwpg.org/lake-st-excelsior-blvd/.* I2

It is essential to maintain the viability of businesses in the two shopping centers (Calhoun Village and Calhoun Commons on Lake St. and Excelsior Blvd., respectively) adjacent to the West Lake Station. The irregular configuration of streets adjacent to these commercial centers already presents some parking and accessibility problems; with the addition of the Lake Street Station those problems will be exacerbated. P10

In addition, residential parking is limited, especially with the addition of 187-unit Dwell apartments at 3129 Ewing, built by Bigos Development Corp., which also manages the adjacent 151-unit Calhoun Greenway Apartments. Only 322 parking stalls will accommodate this increase in residences. The complex is near the West Lake Station and will increase parking congestion.

The goal of WCNC is that in conjunction with the creation of the West Lake Station, parking issues in this area will be addressed to the satisfaction of the neighborhood.

***Outcome**: A public parking analysis is required.* E10 P10

Pages 5-19 and 5-20

Environmental Metric: Developmental Potential (station development potential and transportation)
LRT 3A (LPA) High--Segments 3, 4, and A all have high potential for development around station locations. The areas, with the exception of 21st Street in Minneapolis, are identified as areas for transit-oriented development consistent with the implementation of LRT.
For Segments 3, 4 and A, the expansion of the transportation system and service to areas designated for growth and redevelopment will equate to a positive economic effect in terms of development around station locations.

Comment: The land use around the West Lake Station includes several commercial properties, including Calhoun Village and Calhoun Commons. There are few undeveloped parcels around this station and no plans to upgrade the current commercial parcels. Traffic flows are currently at saturation and private parking is fully utilized near this station, contrary to the statements made in Section 5.2.5.2 about parking and access to businesses. Two proposals to add residential apartment buildings on land zoned as residential, namely, the Bigos proposals for the vacant Weisman property on Lake St. and for vacant property behind Calhoun Commons. Hence, the prospects for economic development near the West Lake Station are minimal. In 2009 the city of Minneapolis retained R-1 zoning for properties near the station. Limited public parking will restrict even more the area's growth potential, and the lack of public parking could even deteriorate the present economic richness. P10 E1, E10

Page 5-21

5.2.5.2 Mitigation for Parking and Access

Parking

Build Alternatives LRT 1A, LRT 3A (LPA), and LRT 3A-1 (co-location alternative) are all anticipated to have a relatively modest impact on parking with the removal of 20 on-street parking spaces on Royalston Avenue. Mitigation of this effect may include working with staff from the City of Minneapolis to identify needs and opportunities for providing alternative parking solutions. However, based on adjacent land uses and long-term city plans for this area, the need for alternative parking solutions is believed to be low.

Access

Build Alternatives LRT 1A and LRT 3A (LPA) are not anticipated to have any long-term effects on business access; therefore, no mitigation is required.

***Comment**: While parking at Royalston Ave. is cited, there are also serious parking and access issues around the West Lake Station. With 2,800 riders predicted to enter this area daily, further study of how to mitigate these issues is requested. See below for further evidence of congestion issues that already exist.* E10 I2

- *According to Hennepin County in 2011, the Lake Street/Excelsior Boulevard corridor was the busiest county state road in Hennepin County, with 39,500 cars daily.*
- *The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board has reported that the Minneapolis Chain of Lakes, including Lake Calhoun (within a half-mile radius of the West Lake station) is the second most-visited location in Minnesota (behind the Mall of America).* P4
- *A study by students from the Civil Engineering Department at the University of Minnesota have assembled existing data and background information from the city, county and state, and have conducted extensive traffic counts and other observations, including using digital video: "Traffic Assessment and Recommendations for Lake Street and Excelsior Boulevard Intersection and Adjacent Intersections." See this and other student Capstone studies relating to the Lake St. and Excelsior Blvd. intersection online at www.pwpg.org/lake-st-excelsior-blvd/.*
- *A November 2012 parking study commissioned by the West Calhoun Neighborhood Council and conducted by Spack Consulting found that parking was near to or over capacity in some locations near the proposed West Lake station. The study was conducted outside the busy lake and park recreation season on cool cloudy days. When the estimated 2,800 daily Southwest Transitway riders are added to the mix, parking spaces will be at a premium. (For the full report, go to www.westcalhoun.org.)*

Chapter 6 Transportation Effects

***Comment**: We have grave concerns that Transportation Effects were inadequately analyzed, especially around the West Lake and 21st Street Stations. Our concerns are outlined below:*

1. General Traffic Flow

The most important contextual factor regarding transportation in the West Calhoun and CIDNA neighborhoods is the over-saturated W. Lake St./Excelsior Boulevard vehicle corridor. This thoroughfare is the primary east-west route through our neighborhoods.

The W. Lake St./Excelsior Boulevard vehicle thoroughfare currently carries 39,500 vehicles per day, a number confirmed by Hennepin County at the October 9, 2012, MPRB charette on park improvements between Lake of the Isles and Lake Calhoun. This makes this corridor the most heavily traveled in Hennepin County. Capstone studies conducted by University of Minnesota Civil Engineering students in 2010 and 2011 (go to pwpg.org/lake-st-excelsior-blvd/) show that this corridor is already over-congested, requiring 2.75 minutes to traverse the section of Excelsior Boulevard between Market Plaza and W. Calhoun/Dean Parkway, giving it an "F" rating for traffic flow at evening rush hour. The studies did not include the effect of existing traffic lights at the Excelsior Boulevard/W. 32d St. intersection (the Minikahda Club intersection) and at the main Calhoun Commons entrance on Excelsior. E10 P4

Hennepin County stated at the MPRB charette meeting that there are no plans or funds allocated to improve traffic flows on this corridor in the next five years, during which the Southwest Transitway is scheduled for construction. The W. Lake St./Excelsior corridor will remain uniquely vulnerable to any and all impediments to traffic flow, including the impact of Southwest Transitway construction near the corridor. P5

Southwest Transitway construction will surely impede traffic through the corridor. How this will be mitigated is not specifically addressed in the DEIS. We fully understand that Southwest Transitway is designed to alleviate the saturation problem that is due to heavy drive-through traffic, but this can happen only over the long run. The West Calhoun Neighborhood Council is concerned with how the disruptions of transitway construction will be mitigated in the meantime. It is important to mitigate these potential problems with careful planning and involvement of neighborhood residents. In particular, we seek assurance that construction is not disruptive to the point of true gridlock. Further, any P5 E10 P5

additional major construction abutting the corridor may have to be put on hold for better traffic flow and neighborhood livability.

NOTE: Both a fire station and an ambulance station are located on Market Plaza close to the convergence of Lake St. and Excelsior Blvd. These critical emergency services are hindered on occasion by the traffic congestion that exists on Lake and Excelsior. The West Calhoun Neighborhood Council requires that clear steps for mitigation be outlined. E9 P4 R3

The West Calhoun Neighborhood Council encourages creative planning rather than reliance on "standard practices," as referenced in the DEIS, for mitigating construction effects on parking and traffic flow (i.e. diverting traffic, mitigating parking problems, etc.). This approach is not satisfactory given the unique features of the critical W. Lake St./Excelsior corridor. It is particularly vulnerable to further impediments that would be caused by construction. There is no mention of staging out construction to assure reasonable traffic flow and adequate parking in the neighborhood for its residents. The W. 32nd/Chowen/Abbott area is especially vulnerable to disruption by heavy construction traffic. Further, hundreds more people will soon be living in this area when the six-story 185-unit Dwell is completed in 2013. E10 P5

2. Traffic Flow on Excelsior Boulevard

The DEIS does not comment on the effect of an additional stoplight at the proposed traffic entrance to the West Lake Station and the impact of park-and-ride or kiss-and ride vehicle traffic from Linden Hills, Edina, and Uptown on the southern entrance to the West Lake Station. Nor does it comment on how the additional boardings/disembarkations at the West Lake Station will affect traffic flow on Excelsior Boulevard. The additional traffic on Excelsior Boulevard will take an over-congested artery and transform it into a parking lot, having a negative impact on business users at Calhoun Commons and Calhoun Village, commuters who continue to use Excelsior Boulevard, park users crossing Excelsior Boulevard, and neighborhood residents. E10 P4 I2

3. Traffic Flow on W. Lake Street

The DEIS does not comment on how traffic will access the West Lake Station from the W. Lake St. bridge. By law, additional turn-out lanes on both the east- and west-bound lanes are prohibited because of reduced visibility for exiting from and merging onto Lake St.; hence, access to the West Lake Station for kiss-and-ride or park-and-ride LRT customers from the north side of Lake St. or from those coming east on Lake St. will be prohibitively restricted to using the south entrance to the station on Excelsior Boulevard, further exacerbating traffic congestion on that artery. There is no room to provide for exits and entrances to W. Lake St. without the taking of condominium property on the E10 P4 I2

westerly approach to the bridge or commercial property (Calhoun Village) on the easterly approach to the bridge.

4. Traffic in Residential Neighborhoods

In addition to the busy arteries around the West Lake Station, residential streets in West Calhoun will be impacted by traffic. If 2,800 people per day are expected to board at the West Lake Station, there will be significant traffic impacts that need to be mitigated. E10 P4

5. Parking

The full range of parking options (and combinations thereof) need to be evaluated and openly discussed, including (but not limited to) paid district parking with validation, meters on nearby streets, residential permit parking on surrounding neighborhood streets, as well as additional structured parking (at some reasonable distance from the station platform, preferably with some ground-level commercial space). P10 E10

Given the complexity of the West Lake area, to maximize the positive influences that a new transit station can produce, it is critical that the Preliminary Engineering work (managed by the Southwest Project office) and the Transitional Station Area Action Planning (TSAAP) work (managed by Hennepin County) include well-devised and executed stakeholder involvement and public outreach. This will entail a far greater level of effort than that contemplated in the TSAAP consultant's contract. It is essential that the staff and elected/appointed officials of the various governmental entities collaborate constructively with each other in a manner that is transparent to the public. L1

It is apparent that traffic circulation is limited due to the geographically constricted area and that it is critical to establish way-finding.

Chapter 7 Section 4(F) Evaluation

***Comment**: Missing from this chapter of the DEIS:*

- *The Historic Grand Rounds National Scenic Byway is a nationally designated urban scenic byway.*
  It appears detailed information for this area where the LRT corridor is proposed to be located has not received appropriate documentation.
- *Concerns for placing the transit corridor in or adjacent to a nationally designated urban scenic byway might include:*
  - *Would the area lose its designation?*
  - *Would it cause an economic loss due to the impact of transit corridor?*
  - *Could mitigating measures justify the location of the transit corridor in this area/corridor of the Ground Rounds and the outcome be justifiably and acceptably appropriate?*
  - *Is there an opportunity to strengthen the connection between the West Lake Station and the Historic Grand Rounds National Scenic Byway?*

E2, E7 S4

Chapter 8 Financial Analysis

Capital cost estimates for the Build Alternatives are in 2012 dollars, as shown in Table 8.1-1. These cost estimates will be refined during Preliminary Engineering (PE). The Enhanced Bus Alternative is intended to be a lower cost transportation solution that addresses the mobility issues defined in the project's Purpose and Need statement. This alternative includes two new express bus routes and minor modifications to existing express bus service including an increase in service frequencies.

COMMENT: Table 8.1-1 Capital cost estimates do not include the cost of a park and ride lot at the Lake Street station; however, Appendix F, Conceptual Engineering Drawings, calls for a park and ride. Budgeting and planning processes need to reconcile the differences, given the existing parking congestion in the area.

I2 T0

Appendix H, Part 2

Southwest Transitway – Potential Effects on Historic Properties Segment 4– Shady Oak Station to West Lake Station

COMMENT: This table notes potential effects on two historic properties and the

E2, E7

S4

Historic Grand Rounds National Scenic Byway at Lake Calhoun in the Lake Street station area. It is important to take into account especially the impact on and ease of access to Lake Calhoun Parkway for recreational use and to consider all impacts on environmental quality.

Jennifer Hicks
<jih1269@me.com>
12/21/2012 11:34 AM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us
cc Jennifer Hicks <jih1269@me.com>
bcc
Subject Kenilworth Neighborhood Concerns

Hello,

As a recent home owner along the Southwest Corridor that is being considered for the new light rail route, I have some concerns regarding how the project will impact the community.

My house is a Platinum LEED certified home (the third in MN) and one of my greatest pleasures is the ability to have my windows and skylights open from May through October for the fresh air and "climate control" it provides my home without me having to use the artificial services of an air conditioner. The health benefits of the fresh air, the economic benefits of "free temperature control" and the environmental benefits of not using energy or artificial coolant are all significant advantages of my home, which I chose to build in the quiet and serene, yet populated, area of Minneapolis.

All of these benefits would be *significantly* reduced - if not completely eliminated - by poor noise and route planning on the part of the SW Transit Authority. This would essentially reduce the functionality as an environmentally responsible and forward-thinking property. LEED certification is an effort to improve the community, environment, and lifestyle of the owners - having approximately 250 high-speed trains within 30' of my home essentially ruins all my good efforts. E4 D

The "flyover bridge" will also conspicuously alter the feel and livability of the community, creating for major changes in the traffic patterns, lifestyles and community activities that take place along that area. The beach at Cedar Lake is a vital component to the community, allowing for families to play, children to learn and grow, and people to gather. Creating a higher-speed thoroughfare alongside the parks and beach will remove those options from the lives of the residents, lessening the reasons people would chose the neighborhood. Residential areas create themselves in the look, feel and attitude appropriate to the region and the lifestyles of the residents. Imposing such an eyesore as well as incompatible functioning interchange will hurt the community, have a negative impact on people's lives as well as property values, and severely harm the beauty of the Kenwood area. E8 D

Due to the frequency and rapid speed of the trains, I am greatly concerned for the noise in what is considered one of the most peaceful and family-friendly neighborhoods in the Twin Cities. Many families that live along the corridor have play spaces in their backyards that would be compromised by the loss of safety and the increase of noise - parents would be unable to hear children play, children would not hear parents calling for them, and everyone would have to live with windows shut and doors closed in order to live without the noise and increased dust and debris in their homes. E4 D

While the residents of the area have been largely ignored in the interest of what the Transit Authority is pushing upon up, I do sincerely hope our concerns will be considered while the project is being developed in a part of the city where it is completely inappropriate, unnecessary and undesired. L1 D

Thank you for your consideration. I do hope these comments will be read and discussed. Many

people have lives and families that have grown up and settled in the Kenwood, Dean, CIDNA and associated neigherboods for reasons, and this light rail will remove that option for future families.

Sincerely,

Jennifer I Hicks
2584 Upton Ave South
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To "swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us" <swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>, "Peter.McLaughlin@co.hennepin.mn.us"
cc "jrcampbell@earthlink.net" <jrcampbell@earthlink.net>
bcc
Subject Southwest Transitway DEIS Comment

Attached please find a comment letter on the Southwest Transitway DEIS submitted by Jim Campbell on behalf of the Southwest Corridor Investment Partnership. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

Louis N. Smith
smith
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Southwest Corridor
Investment Partnership

December 21, 2012

Mr. Peter McLaughlin, Chair
Hennepin County Regional Rail Authority
A2400 Government Center
300 S. 6th St.
Minneapolis, MN 55487-0241

Ms. Susan Haigh, Chair
Metropolitan Council
390 Robert St. N.
St. Paul, MN 55101

Re: Southwest Light Rail Transit Project – Draft Environmental Impact Statement

Dear Commissioner McLaughlin and Chair Haigh:

I am writing on behalf of the Southwest Corridor Investment Partnership to express support for the Southwest Light Rail Transit Project. Our Partnership, which first convened in October 2012, seeks to mobilize and align long term investments in the Southwest Corridor to leverage the success of the LRT Project and promote economic prosperity for Corridor residents, employees, and the Twin Cities region. Our members include United Health Group, Xcel Energy, Park Nicollet, Target, Japs-Olson, Cargill, and SuperValu. A

The business community strongly supports this project because it serves over 210,000 jobs and believes that it is a good and necessary investment in 21st Century transit to promote our competitive position as a state and region. Our Partnership is committed to working together so that our respective long term investments in capital facilities and job growth will create synergies with the public investment in transit. A

We recognize that the HCRRA and Metropolitan Council are currently collecting public comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement to assess the potential impacts of the project and also possible ways to mitigate those impacts. We trust that the DEIS and public comments will help to assure that this is the best possible project for the region and local communities.

Our message is simply that as you and your colleagues consider the DEIS and comments, we hope that you and the Federal Transit Authority will also keep in mind the critical importance of this Project for the future economic vitality of our region. Southwest LRT will be a great investment.

Sincerely,

James R. Campbell, Chair

"Corbett, Michael J (DOT)" <Michael.J.Corbett@state.mn.us>
12/21/2012 11:49 AM

To "swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us" <swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>, "Katie.Walker@co.hennepin.mn.us"
cc "Bly, Lynne (DOT)" <lynne.bly@state.mn.us>, "Christianson, Dave (DOT)" <dave.christianson@state.mn.us>, "Clarkowski, Lynn (DOT)" <lynn.clarkowski@state.mn.us>, "Coddington,
bcc
Subject RE: DEIS12-003 Southwest Transitway

Hello,

Attached is MnDOT's comment letter on the Southwest Transitway DEIS.

Michael Corbett, PE
MnDOT Metro Division – Planning
1500 W County Road B-2
Roseville, MN 55113
651-234-7793
Michael.J.Corbett@state.mn.us

See Comment #474 for Theme Delineations

Minnesota Department of Transportation
Metropolitan District
Waters Edge Building
1500 County Road B2 West
Roseville, MN 55113

December 20, 2012

Ms. Katie Walker, Project Manager
Hennepin County
Housing, Community Works and Transit
701 Fourth Avenue South, Suite 400
Minneapolis, MN 55415

SUBJECT: Southwest Transitway Draft EIS
MnDOT Review # DEIS12-003
Hennepin County

Dear Ms. Walker:

Thank you for the opportunity to review the Southwest Transitway Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). We recognize that the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) is a planned backbone element of the Twin Cities regional transitway system and that it will help to increase citizens' access to major regional destinations. Below you will find technical comments regarding material included in the Draft EIS and anticipated future review steps.

Please note that MnDOT's review of this DEIS does not constitute approval of a regional traffic analysis and is not a specific approval for access or new roadway improvements. As plans are refined, MnDOT would like the opportunity to meet with Hennepin County to review the updated information. MnDOT's staff has reviewed the document and offers the following comments:

Freight Rail

MnDOT has been a partner agency in the development of the SWLRT project, and has been involved principally due to its responsibility in several areas. These include State trunk highway infrastructure, bridges, intersections, and contiguous rights of way, railroad grade crossing safety, and support of freight rail system service and continuity, in accordance with the Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan, the State Rail Plan, and the State Freight Plan.

MnDOT has actively monitored freight relocation issues and initiatives, and was tasked as the Responsible Governing Unit (RGU) in ruling on the validity of the draft St. Louis Park Freight Rail Relocation Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) that was commissioned by Hennepin County in support of the freight rail relocation option.

In reviewing the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), MnDOT notes that the Federal Transit Agency (FTA) has directed the Metropolitan Council, through its conditional approval to enter into Preliminary Engineering, to continue the factual determination of the most effective and beneficial routing of freight traffic that is impacted by this project. Consistent with previously stated positions, MnDOT considers the two options, co-location and re-location, to both be potentially workable for freight rail, and should undergo appropriate study to quantify costs and operating aspects as planned by the Project Team during initial phases of the Preliminary Engineering. MnDOT feels that this will adequately satisfy the intent of the FTA condition regarding freight rail routing, serve to positively answer the concerns of the opposing viewpoints in this matter, and reach agreement with the operating freight railroads on the necessary goal of retaining effective connections to the rail freight system.

Noise

It appears that the noise analysis followed the FTA noise analysis and mitigation protocols, thus MnDOT did not perform a detailed analysis on the results. It has been MnDOT's understanding, based on conversations with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA), that LRT is not exempted from addressing the Minnesota State Noise standards nor are they exempted from addressing the Minnesota State Noise Rules (7030 series). If not exempted by the MPCA, State Noise Standards and rules should be addressed.

If you have any questions regarding MnDOT's noise policy please contact Peter Wasko in our Design section (651-234-7681 or Peter.Wasko@state.mn.us).

Water Resources

It appears that drainage permits will be required where the corridor crosses and parallels state roads within MnDOT's right of way. MnDOT expects these determinations will be made when the final design plan is submitted.

Additional information may be required once a drainage permit is submitted and after a detailed review. MnDOT will not allow an increase in discharge to MnDOT right-of-way. Please direct any questions regarding these issues to Hailu Shekur (651-234-7521 or hailu.shekur@state.mn.us) of MnDOT's Water Resources Engineering section.

Design

It is anticipated that all trunk highway impacts will be reviewed and approved through the layout approval process and proposed alterations will use the policy and criteria presented in the MnDOT Road Design Manual. Additional information on MnDOT's Geometric

Design and Layout Development process can be found at:
http://www.dot.state.mn.us/design/geometric/index.html

For questions concerning this subject, please contact Nancy Jacobson, (651-234-7647 or nancy.jacobson@state.mn.us) in the Metro Design Section.

Planning

Page 6-47 currently states: "A traffic management plan would be developed and agreed upon by appropriate levels of administration including MnDOT, Hennepin County, and all municipalities along the construction alignment. The plan would include ways to maintain traffic flow, existing transit services, and pedestrian access along each disrupted roadway."

MnDOT suggests adding bicycle access to the sentence as well since there may be instances where construction will disrupt existing on-street bikeways or trails.

The FEIS should describe the provision of short and long-term bicycle storage and parking near transit stations. Bicycle storage provides an important connection as part of an integrated transportation system and can promote the use of public transportation. The FEIS should investigate the number of bicycle parking spaces needed and the total space required for these facilities at stations and bus stops along the corridor.

Several of the maps contain a roadway labeling error. Minnesota Trunk Highway 7 does not extend east of Highway 100. East of Highway 100, the roadway should be labeled as County Road 25.

Because of the ease of boarding and alighting associated with light rail transit, the SWLRT may be an attractive option for a variety of users including people with mobility challenges. Some may use Metro Mobility to arrive at an LRT station. Consider mobility drop off zones at points where passengers may arrive by mobility bus. A mobility zone assures that should there be any problems with loading or unloading, other mainline buses would not be caught in a queue waiting for the problem to resolve.

Traffic

Both Priority and preemption are mentioned in different places in the document. The type of operation that is chosen will greatly impact the operation of the traffic signals. MnDOT prefers that all the at-grade signals be operated with priority. Please clarify the proposed operation plan.

MnDOT and HCRRA have been and will continue to work on finalizing an agreement that addresses the HCRRA Transportation Corridor which crosses TH100.

Page 6-18: Include: TH212 at Shady Oak Road Interchange Project

Page 6-38: The access to/from Lake Street on TH 7 will be closed (part of the TH7/Louisiana Ave Interchange Project, City of St. Louis Park led Project)

Page 6-61: If the freight rail relocation option is chosen, the timing and duration of TH7 closures will need more discussion as it relates to the construction and impacts of the proposed MN&S bridge over TH 7.

The intersection of Prairie Center Drive and Valley View Road is shown as an at grade intersection. This intersection operates at a Level of Service (LOS) E under the existing conditions. The 2030 LRT build scenarios show that this intersection is proposed to operate at a LOS F. This degradation in service represents an unacceptable level of delay. In addition, operations at three other intersections nearby (Prairie Center Drive and Viking Drive, Valley View Road and Bryant Lake Drive, Valley View Road and Flying Cloud Drive) are expected to have their LOS degraded to LOS E or LOS F in the 2030 build scenario. These LOS conditions have the potential to negatively impact the access ramps to and from TH212 and could potentially affect operations on the TH212 mainline. Please identify the options that have been investigated at the Prairie Center Drive and Valley View Road intersection. Also, identify the tools that have been implemented to better understand the operations of this intersection. MnDOT looks forward to working with the design team to investigate strategies to mitigate these impacts.

The maps showing the sites being considered for the Operations and Maintenance Facility (OMF) are too general, making it difficult for MnDOT and other agencies to get a sense of the types of impacts these facilities may have on roadway operations. In particular, the Eden Prairie 2 (Wallace Road) site could have significant impacts to the Eastbound TH 212/Wallace Road off-ramp if the tracks were to cross this roadway at-grade.

The document references several figures. One set of figures is labeled as alignments and location codes. This figure outlines the proposed route and also identifies all the proposed intersections. This figure describes the intersection crossing as AG (at grade) or GS (grade separated). If these designations change as the project moves forward, MnDOT would like the opportunity to review and comment on these proposed changes.

Please direct any questions regarding these comments to Ryan Coddington (651-234-7841 or ryan.coddington@state.mn.us).

Right-of-Way/Permits

Any use of or work within or affecting MnDOT right-of-way requires a permit. Per the Cooperation Agreement between MnDOT and the Metropolitan Council for SWLRT, the use of MnDOT right-of-way may not require permits, but will require extensive

communication and coordination between the two agencies. It is anticipated that more specific impacts to MnDOT right-of-way will be determined during the FEIS and Preliminary Engineering phases. Permit forms are available from MnDOT's utility website at www.dot.state.mn.us/tecsup/utility. Please direct any questions regarding permit requirements to Buck Craig, MnDOT's Metro Permits Section, at (651) 234-7911.

Thank you for the opportunity to review the Southwest Transitway Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

Sincerely,

Pat Bursaw

Pat Bursaw
Office of Planning, Program Management, and Transit

Copy via Email:
Lynne Bly
Dave Christianson
Lynn Clarkowski
Ryan Coddington
Buck Craig
April Crockett
Paul Czech
Rick Dalton
John Griffith
Jim Henricksen
Lars Impola
Brian Isaacson
Nancy Jacobson
Carl Jensen
Brian Kelly
Molly McCartney
Gina Mitteco
Tori Nill
Becky Parzyck
Scott Pedersen
Ron Rauchle
Hailu Shekur
Tod Sherman
Aaron Tag
Michael Vogel
Pete Wasko
Ann Braden, Metropolitan Council

Louis Smith
<Smith@smithpartners.com>
12/21/2012 11:54 AM

To "swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us" <swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>, "Peter.McLaughlin@co.hennepin.mn.us"
cc "jrcampbell@earthlink.net" <jrcampbell@earthlink.net>
bcc
Subject Southwest Transitway DEIS Comment

Attached please find a comment letter on the Southwest Transitway DEIS submitted by Jim Campbell on behalf of the Southwest Corridor Investment Partnership. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions.

See Comment #371 for Theme Delineations

Sincerely,

Louis N. Smith
smith
partners
PLLP

400 Second Avenue South
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Minneapolis, MN 55401
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Southwest Corridor
Investment Partnership

December 21, 2012

Mr. Peter McLaughlin, Chair
Hennepin County Regional Rail Authority
A2400 Government Center
300 S. 6th St.
Minneapolis, MN 55487-0241

Ms. Susan Haigh, Chair
Metropolitan Council
390 Robert St. N.
St. Paul, MN 55101

Re: Southwest Light Rail Transit Project – Draft Environmental Impact Statement

Dear Commissioner McLaughlin and Chair Haigh:

I am writing on behalf of the Southwest Corridor Investment Partnership to express support for the Southwest Light Rail Transit Project. Our Partnership, which first convened in October 2012, seeks to mobilize and align long term investments in the Southwest Corridor to leverage the success of the LRT Project and promote economic prosperity for Corridor residents, employees, and the Twin Cities region. Our members include United Health Group, Xcel Energy, Park Nicollet, Target, Japs-Olson, and SuperValu.

The business community strongly supports this project because it serves over 210,000 jobs and believes that it is a good and necessary investment in 21st Century transit to promote our competitive position as a state and region. Our Partnership is committed to working together so that our respective long term investments in capital facilities and job growth will create synergies with the public investment in transit.

We recognize that the HCRRA and Metropolitan Council are currently collecting public comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement to assess the potential impacts of the project and also possible ways to mitigate those impacts. We trust that the DEIS and public comments will help to assure that this is the best possible project for the region and local communities.

Our message is simply that as you and your colleagues consider the DEIS and comments, we hope that you and the Federal Transit Authority will also keep in mind the critical importance of this Project for the future economic vitality of our region. Southwest LRT will be a great investment.

Sincerely,

James R. Campbell, Chair

mbergdude@aol.com
12/21/2012 01:46 PM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us
cc mmcmonigal@stlouispark.org
bcc
Subject SWLRT-DEIS - comment from Marc Berg, St. Louis Park

Attached as a PDF is my comment on the SWLRT-DEIS.

Please let me know that you have received this.

Thanks,

Marc M. Berg

Marc M. Berg
2913 Webster Avenue South
St. Louis Park, MN 55416

December 21, 2012

VIA EMAIL ONLY (swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us)

Hennepin County
Housing, Community Works & Transit
ATTN: Southwest Transitway
701 Fourth Avenue South, Suite 400
Minneapolis, MN 55415

Re: Southwest Light Rail Transit Draft Environmental Impact Statement ("SWLRT-DEIS")

Dear Sir or Madam:

I have lived in St. Louis Park for 19 years, and in the Birchwood neighborhood for almost 17 years. I served at the Birchwood neighborhood alternate to the Project Management Team (the "PMT") that studied and discussed the impact of the proposed freight rail re-route under consideration as part of the Southwest Light Rail Transit ("SWLRT") project. I am submitting this comment to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (the "DEIS") for the SWLRT, which I understand to be open for public comment through December 31, 2012.

Like other residents of St. Louis Park, I have serious concerns about the negative impact that the proposed re-route of freight rail traffic along the MN&S line will have on the city. Over the past few years that I have followed this issue, I have been unable to unable to understand why the government officials planning the SWLRT have apparently pre-judged the re-route as a preferred alternative to co-locating the new SWLRT with the existing freight rail in the Kenilworth corridor (the "co-location" alternative), or why they have concluded that co-location is either impossible, or so undesirable that opting for co-location would kill the SWLRT project itself. I have always seen the re-route as ***a horrendously bad idea***, ***on many levels***, and I have struggled to understand why the re-route is treated as a precondition to moving forward with SWLRT. The DEIS, unfortunately, fails to provide any satisfactory reasons as to why the SWLRT cannot be built without the re-route.

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I have reviewed the DEIS and I believe that the authors have incorrectly concluded that federal law would ***prohibit*** co-location as a viable alternative. Chapter 11, page 12 ("Page 11-12") of the DEIS states that because co-location would require the acquisition of .81 acre of Cedar Laker Park, and because other alternatives (i.e., the LPA/re-route alternative) would not, the U.S. Secretary of Transportation would be legally prohibited from approving co-location under Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act of 1966, 49 U.S.C. § 303 and 23 U.S.C. § 138 (hereinafter "Section 4(f)" or "the statute"). The DEIS's discussion the facts relating to a Section 4(f) analysis,

L4

and the rationale as to why Section 4(f) is implicated, is set forth in Chapter 7 of the DEIS ("Section 4(f) Evaluation").[1]

L4

I believe that the DEIS concludes that co-location would be "prohibited" because the authors of the DEIS have deliberately misconstrued the statute. Page 11-12 of the DEIS states that "[t]he use of park property is significant," because Section 4(f) "prohibits the Secretary of Transportation from approving a project that requires the use of publicly owned land of a public park . . . of . . . local significance (as determined by the federal, state, or local officials having jurisdiction over the resource), unless the agency can demonstrate that: [t]here is no feasible and prudent alternative to the use of the land; and [t]he action includes all possible planning to minimize harm to the property resulting from such use." The DEIS continues to state that the acquisition of less than an acre of Cedar Lake Park is a Section 4(f) use – presumably, because Cedar Lake Park has been designated as "of local significance" by officials having jurisdiction – and that "[b]ecause this Draft EIS has presented other feasible and prudent alternatives to LRT 3A-1 (co-location alternative), this alternative cannot be recommended as the environmentally preferred alternative." This passage at page 11-12 appears to be the legal "linchpin" of the DEIS's rationale for rejecting co-location as a viable option.

The language of Section 4(f) itself, however, appears to give the U.S. Department of Transportation far greater flexibility in approving projects involving the use of public parks, recreation areas, etc. than what the authors of the DEIS would have us believe. The pertinent language of Section 4(f) is as follows:

> **Approval of Programs and Projects.** Subject to subsection (d), the Secretary may approve a transportation program or project (other than any project for a park road or parkway under section 204 of title 23) requiring the use of publicly owned land of a public park, recreation area, or wildlife and waterfowl refuge of national, State, or local significance, or land of an historic site of national, State, or local significance (as determined by the Federal, State, or local officials having jurisdiction over the park, area, refuge, or site) only if—
> (1) there is no prudent and feasible alternative to using that land; and
> (2) the program or project includes all possible planning to minimize harm to the park, recreation area, wildlife and waterfowl refuge, or historic site resulting from the use.

See 49 U.S.C. § 303(c).

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[1] My comments below assume, for the sake of discussion, that the acquisition of .81 acres of park land is a Section 4(f) use. See, for example, DEIS, at Page 7-5 ("At this time, these publicly owned properties are assumed to qualify for Section 4(f) protection based on the criteria set forth in 23 C.F.R. § 774"). Recently, another St. Louis Park resident, Mr. Ryan Edstrom, made a presentation to the St. Louis Park City Council in which he argued that the DEIS is incorrect when it states that co-location would impact .81 acres of park land – and, therefore, Section 4(f) is not implicated. I understand that Mr. Edstrom is an engineer by training, and I would encourage you to review his written comments on the DEIS as well. Obviously, if Mr. Edstrom is correct, there is no need for any analysis under Section 4(f), and the co-location alternative cannot be rejected for the reasons argued at Page 11-12 of the DEIS.

Thus, Section 4(f) does not – as the DEIS suggests – state that the Secretary is "prohibited" from approving a project that would involve the acquisition of locally-significant park property "unless" there is no feasible and prudent alternative to using the land. Instead, Section 4(f) states that the Secretary "may" approve the project "only if" there is no prudent and feasible alternative to using the land. The DEIS has attempted to characterize Section 4(f) as being far more restrictive than it actually is.

More importantly, however, the DEIS contains no explanation whatsoever as to how its authors concluded that re-route was a "prudent" alternative. As outlined is Section 4(f), a rejection of co-location in favor of re-route would necessarily require a finding that re-route is both "feasible" and "prudent." The terms "feasible" and "prudent" as used in Section 4(f) are defined in the Code of Federal Regulations, at 23 CFR § 774.17 ("*Feasible and prudent avoidance alternative*"). Under Section 774.17, an alternative is "not feasible if it cannot be built as a matter of sound engineering judgment." Whether an alternative is ***prudent***, however, requires a more thorough and careful evaluation of a number of factors listed under subpart 3 of the definition of "feasible and prudent avoidance alternative" in Section 774.17. Under 23 C.F.R. § 774.17, an alternative is not prudent if: L4

> **(i)** It compromises the project to a degree that it is unreasonable to proceed with the project in light of its stated purpose and need;
> **(ii)** It results in unacceptable safety or operational problems;
> **(iii)** After reasonable mitigation, it still causes:
> **(A)** Severe social, economic, or environmental impacts;
> **(B)** Severe disruption to established communities;
> **(C)** Severe disproportionate impacts to minority or low income populations; or
> **(D)** Severe impacts to environmental resources protected under other Federal statutes;
> **(iv)** It results in additional construction, maintenance, or operational costs of an extraordinary magnitude;
> **(v)** It causes other unique problems or unusual factors; or
> **(vi)** It involves multiple factors in paragraphs (3)(i) through (3)(v) of this definition, that while individually minor, cumulatively cause unique problems or impacts of extraordinary magnitude.

No where does the DEIS contain any explanation or analysis as to how or why it concluded, based upon the factors listed above, that the re-route fits the definition of a "prudent" alternative within the meaning of Sections 4(f) and 27 C.F.R. § 774.17. Furthermore, I believe that if the DEIS took an honest look at the detrimental impact that the re-route will have on St. Louis Park, it would conclude that re-route is **not** a "prudent" alternative – and, thus, co-location is **not** barred by Section 4(f). L4

You are likely to receive numerous written comments regarding the negative impact that the re-route will have on St. Louis Park. These impacts include safety concerns, hazardous materials concerns, traffic congestion concerns, emergency vehicle access concerns, as well as increased noise, increased vibrations, interruptions to school operations, increase in the overall project cost, and decrease in homeowner values. Many of these concerns were explained in the PMT process, and at the public hearing on November 14, 2012. Curiously, the DEIS dismisses the expected ***800 percent increase in rail traffic*** on the MN&S line, and the accompanying noise, to be ***"slight"*** impacts (see DEIS, at Page 11-10), there should be no question that the re-route will have a negative impact on St. Louis C C

Park. If the data is evaluated honestly, the DEIS *should* conclude that the re-route will result in unacceptable safety problems for people who live, work, or attend school near the MN&S. The DEIS *should* conclude that the re-route will result in unacceptable operational problems to both the railroad and the city. The social, economic, and environmental impacts *should* be viewed as severe. The disruption to the established community that lives along the planned re-route *should* be seen as severe. In short, the DEIS should view these concerns in a serious, non-dismissive fashion, and conclude – based upon the factors listed above – that re-route is not a "prudent" alternative.

The required analysis under 23 C.F.R. § 774.17 is missing from the DEIS, which is a critical flaw in this process. The impact on the .81 acre of Cedar Lake Park property is not the "deal-breaker" for co-location that the DEIS makes it out to be. There is no reason that DEIS should not conclude that co-location is the preferred alternative. First, a serious analysis needs to be undertaken as to whether the re-route is "prudent;" and, second, that analysis needs to be clearly explained in the final EIS. C

Thank you in advance for your consideration of these public comments.

Marc M. Berg

Joan Vanhala
<joan@metrostability.org>
12/21/2012 02:05 PM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us
cc Marisol.simon@fta.dot.gov, Russ Adams <russ@metrostability.org>, Malik Holt-Shabazz <malik@hnampls.org>
bcc
Subject SWLRT DEIS public comment AMS

TO: Hennepin County
Housing, Community Works & Transit
ATTN: Southwest Transitway
701 Fourth Avenue South, Suite 400
Minneapolis, MN 55415

From: Alliance for Metropolitan Stability
2525 E. Franklin Avenue
Minneapolis, MN 55406
Contact: Joan Vanhala, Coalition Organizer
612-332-4471; joan@metrostability.org

Please accept the Alliance for Metropolitan Stability's attached public comment for the Southwest Light Rail Transit Draft Environmental Impact Statement. Please include these attachments with our comments to the SWLRT DEIS:

Attachments:

1. Corridors of Opportunity Outreach and Engagement grantee map
2. Southwest LRT Community Works Investment Framework timeline
3. Harrison neighborhood station area map for SWLRT and Bottineau LRT
4. Bassett Creek Valley zoning map
5. Alliance for Metropolitan Stability comments to the Van White Station area plan

Please let us know if any of the attachments did not come through electronically.