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Bottineau Transitway Draft Environment
Impact Statement Public Hearing
Before Hennepin County Commissioner Linda Higgins
Thursday, May 8, 2014
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Reported By: Lori Morrow, RPR, CRR, CLR

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Adam Duininck, Metropolitan Council Member, Dist. 8
Gary Cunningham, Metropolitan Council Member, Dist. 7
George Selman, Robbinsdale City Council Member
Blong Yang, Minneapolis City Council Member, Ward 5

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1 COMMISSIONER HIGGINS: Welcome, everybody, to
2 our meeting tonight about the Bottineau Transitway.
3 I'm County Commissioner Linda Higgins, one of the two
4 county commissioners who represents the Cities in
5 this line along with Commissioner Mike Opat.

6 We have a fair number of other elected
7 officials and appointed officials who are here
8 tonight. I would like them to introduce themselves
9 as well. And then we'll get going with the program
10 and hear what you have to say.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER DUINICK: Thanks, Linda. I'm
12 Adam Duininck. I'm in the Metropolitan Council,
13 District 8, which is Northeast Minneapolis and
14 portions of South Minneapolis.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER CUNNINGHAM: I think you can
16 hear me. Can you hear me back there? All right. My
17 name is Gary Cunningham, and I represent District 7
18 on the Metropolitan Council, which is South Central
19 Minneapolis, Downtown Minneapolis, North Minneapolis,
20 and Robbinsdale.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER SELMAN: George Selman. I'm
22 on the Robbinsdale City Council, and I chair the
23 Community Advisory Committee for the Bottineau
24 Corridor.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER YANG: Good evening.

1 Blong Yang, City Council Member for Minneapolis for
2 Ward 5, which is here.

3 COMMISSIONER HIGGINS: Has anybody else come
4 in? Go ahead.

5 MR. JOE GLADKE: Great. Thank you,
6 Commissioner Higgins. I'm Joe Gladke with Hennepin
7 County Engineering Transit Planning. I'm just going
8 to provide a few slides as an overview for this.
9 This meeting is really about hearing your input, but
10 we just want to provide a brief update of kind of
11 where the project has been, where it's at right now,
12 and where it's likely to go in the future. I know
13 some people -- I see many familiar faces here who
14 have been to lots of meetings, and there might be
15 some other new faces that this may be your first
16 meeting. So I want to just try and give you a bit of
17 background, get through these quickly, and then get
18 on to hearing what your thoughts are.

19 The Bottineau Project is involving numerous
20 entities. We have the Federal Transit
21 Administration. They're really our lead federal
22 agency involved. Hennepin County has been leading
23 the efforts regarding looking at various
24 alternatives, looking at the Draft Environmental
25 Impact Statement. The Metropolitan Council has been

1 a partner with us as well. They are going to be a
2 signatory of the DEIS as well. As the project moves
3 forward later on this summer, the project will be
4 transitioning from Hennepin County to the
5 Metropolitan Council. They will be leading the
6 efforts on the preliminary engineering, the Final
7 Environmental Impact Statement, as well as
8 construction should the project advance to that.

9 We've also had great participation from the
10 cities along the corridor. The cities have a big
11 stake in this. They are the local land use
12 authorities. They are involved with the zoning and
13 potential land use changes along the alignment. And
14 they are active participants in the process as well.

15 You might hear about the Bottineau LRT
16 Project, and you're probably going to be hearing more
17 and more about the Metro Blue Line Extension. That
18 is the same thing. There's been a rename of the
19 system. They're going more to a color scheme on
20 this. And what was known as the Hiawatha Light Rail
21 Line is now known as the Metro Blue Line. And this
22 would be an extension of the Metro Blue Line. So as
23 it exists right now, the Metro Blue Line ends at
24 Target Field Station. And in the future, it would
25 proceed west on Highway 55 and then up the rail

1 corridor up towards, I guess, West Broadway up
2 near Brooklyn Park and then would continue up
3 West Broadway up to just north of Highway 610
4 up near the Target North there.

5 As far as where the project is at right now,
6 this kind of shows three parallel processes that are
7 happening on the project. And these are happening
8 somewhat at the same time. Tonight we'll hear kind
9 of about the middle one here, the Green, talking
10 about the environmental study. This is the Draft
11 Environmental Impact Statement. And after that, the
12 next step will be the Final Environmental Impact
13 Statement. We anticipate the Metropolitan Council
14 will secure a consultant to proceed with that work
15 probably toward the end of 2014. They have requests
16 for proposals out right now for the engineering
17 services. And that really kind of gets into the
18 project development phase. That's been kind of one
19 of the formal phases that's part of the federal
20 process that they have to go through. So we
21 anticipate that consultant will be hired toward the
22 end of summer or early fall, and work will continue.

23 A lot of people have asked how quickly could
24 this happen. And I guess we kind of put this
25 timeline together, but we'll certainly note down

1 below that this is a very optimistic schedule
2 assuming everything comes together. There certainly
3 is funding that would be needed at the state level,
4 the county level, the Counties Transit Improvement
5 Board, the federal level. So there's lots of pieces
6 of the puzzle that all have to come together to make
7 a major project like this happen.

8 I also want to note along the bottom that one
9 of the other key aspects of the work on the corridor
10 is the land use planning that goes along with these
11 types of corridors. They do look at the areas not
12 just where the tracks would be laid but the areas
13 around the stations and what types of other
14 improvements may be needed in that area to try and
15 provide better access to the stations to get people
16 in and out. That might be better sidewalks. It
17 might be pedestrian scale lighting and other types of
18 improvements around the stations.

19 There's currently a consultant that has been
20 hired to look at the first four stations, meaning the
21 two in Minneapolis and the two stations that are
22 being studied in Golden Valley as well. And that
23 consultant is on right now. They are going to be
24 having more meetings coming up later on this summer,
25 and they anticipate the station area planning

1 beginning later on this year for the rest of the
2 stations, meaning Robbinsdale, Crystal, and
3 Brooklyn Park. So that's kind of a snapshot of kind
4 of where we're at and what might be happening in the
5 future.

6 Early on in this process, there were five
7 goals that were looked at. And we looked at a
8 variety of options for this corridor. The five goals
9 were to enhance regional access to activity centers,
10 to enhance the effectiveness of the transit service
11 within the corridor, to provide a cost effective and
12 financially feasible transit system, to promote
13 sustainable development patterns in the corridor, to
14 support healthy communities and sound environmental
15 practices.

16 So after those five goals were kind of looked
17 at, kind of previously we had looked at a whole range
18 of alternatives up on the north end and on the south
19 end. And so there was a wide range of alternatives
20 that were considered before we actually got to the
21 [inaudible]. Back in January of 2012, we had a
22 series of scoping meetings where we went out into the
23 community and asked what do you think are critical
24 issues as the project advances. We got a lot of
25 input on that. You'll probably see most of the items

1 that were brought forth as far as input from the
2 citizens are the items that are addressed in the
3 DEIS. As part of that, the scoping decision kind of
4 looked at what specific options will be studied in
5 the DEIS. I'll show you a map of that momentarily.
6 And work has also happened regarding that
7 alternatives analysis that looked at what is really
8 the best project that should move forward. And then
9 there's also the environmental aspect of that. So
10 I'll touch on that momentarily.

11 And the DEIS now has been released in April
12 of 2014, and the comment period extends through
13 May 29. And some people might ask what is the DEIS.
14 If you've been in the other room, we've got some
15 copies of it in there. It's a very thick document.
16 It looks at a whole host of issues. It assists
17 decision makers in the assessment of different
18 impacts of the project. It documents the protests
19 and the need. And it looks at a variety of
20 alternatives as part of that. It addresses
21 transportation, social, environmental, and
22 historical, a variety of potential impacts. It also
23 defines potential litigation measures, but it doesn't
24 specifically define what those measures may be. For
25 example, last night I talked to quite a few people

1 that had questions and concerns about noise. And in
2 some of those areas -- on the maps, it kind of shows
3 some of those areas where maybe a sound wall would be
4 considered. And some folks said, well, even though a
5 sound wall might be required here, I don't want to
6 look at a sound wall. Would you consider planting a
7 row of trees or something else that would blend in.
8 And so those are types of discussions that happen
9 more as we transition into FEIS and get into some of
10 the more specifics about how some of those potential
11 mitigation measures might be addressed.

12 The DEIS also facilitates review by a variety
13 of federal, state, and local agencies, as well as the
14 public, it satisfies both federal and state
15 environmental law requirements, and it provides
16 comparison of alternatives. It also identifies the
17 environmentally preferred alternative.

18 As far as the options that were studied in
19 the DEIS, up on the north end of the corridor, there
20 was Option A, which goes to Maple Grove. Option B
21 was studied as well. That goes toward Brooklyn Park.
22 Option C is common to all of the options that were
23 studied. There on the south end, Option D1 was
24 looked at, which stays in the railroad corridor down
25 to Highway 55. And then Option D2 was also looked

1 at, which comes out of the rail corridor, heads down
2 West Broadway and then down Penn, east on 55. Then
3 all the options again tie in at Target Field Station
4 and become part of the existing Blue Line.

5 I talked earlier about the five goals that
6 were looked at at the beginning. As part of those
7 five goals, there are 22 different evaluation
8 criteria that were measured as part of that. And
9 this is kind of a summation of all of those
10 evaluation criteria along with the different
11 option -- the build options shown to the right. In
12 addition to the build options, there was a no-build
13 option as well as a TSM option that was considered.
14 And when you look at how those various options
15 compared, the Option B, C, D1 is the environmentally
16 preferred alternative. And here's a map of that
17 there. This option has been adopted by the
18 Metropolitan Council into the Transportation Policy
19 Plan. So this is really the option that's moving
20 forward. But you'll see there's a variety of options
21 that were studied.

22 As part of the input, we've got a series of
23 public open houses. We were in Golden Valley last
24 night. And we must have put on a fairly good show
25 because I think I saw about four or five people that

1 were actually there last night that came back for
2 more. So we'll have to see if they come next week as
3 well. Or maybe two is enough. But we're going to be
4 here tonight. And next week we're going to be in
5 Brooklyn Park and Crystal after that. And again,
6 people can provide verbal comments here tonight. We
7 also have comment sheets in the other room.

8 If you have more questions that you would
9 like to get answered, the staff will be in the other
10 room to address those questions. In this room here,
11 we're primarily going to have testimony from folks.
12 So you'll have a chance to do that. But if you have
13 questions, please see us in the other room.

14 As far as your comments, if you provide
15 written comments, you'll be requested to provide
16 email addresses as well. We like to acknowledge that
17 we have received your comments. Those comments will
18 be addressed as the project moves forward, but it
19 won't happen in a very timely fashion.

20 As I mentioned a little bit earlier, the next
21 consultant likely will not be hired until toward the
22 end of 2014. It will likely be a year or two beyond
23 that before, you know, the FEIS is finally ready.
24 And those comments will get input as far as
25 preliminary engineering work moving forward and the

1 work that will happen as part of the FEIS. So we'll
2 gather the comments. We'll post those comments on
3 the project website. And we'll try to put them into
4 a variety of categories so that both the engineers
5 and the planners and environmental specialists that
6 are looking at the future work, they take that input
7 as the work advances forward.

8 So with that, I'm going to turn it over to
9 Commissioner Higgins to begin the public hearing.

10 COMMISSIONER HIGGINS: Thank you, Joe.

11 We have chairs up in the front row for
12 people -- so that we can get people speaking one
13 after another in a fairly rapid order. And --

14 Are we going to have the names up on the
15 screen again?

16 So as people have come in and wanted to
17 testify, they signed up at the table over at the
18 front, left corner. If you also would like to
19 testify and haven't signed up yet, please make your
20 way over there. So you can see we have names in the
21 order of speaking.

22 So if John would make his way to the
23 microphone, and then Vicki and Arlene and Elaine will
24 be just ready to go.

25 Just a reminder, this is not a question and

1 answer period. As Joe said, there will be experts
2 and our staff people in the other room who will be
3 able to answer your questions. But tonight we want
4 to hear your comments about the environmental aspects
5 of the Bottineau Line. And we ask you to speak for
6 no more than three minutes. And we've got, you know,
7 the standard coloring system. At 30 seconds to go,
8 you'll get a sign that says you have 30 seconds left,
9 and then, thus, the red card comes up. And we would
10 ask you to then, you know, wrap up your sentence and
11 then yield to the next person.

12 So thank you all for coming. I want to make
13 sure I say that before we start and as we end. But
14 we're here tonight to listen to you. So thank you.

15 And take it away, John.

16 What did I forget to say? Oh, yeah. That's
17 right. We would ask that people don't cheer and
18 applaud and boo and all of that to the speakers. It
19 is just something that we think isn't necessary for
20 the comment period.

21 We also have a note taker here in the front
22 row so that your comments will be recorded so that
23 when we go to work further through the comments that
24 people give us, we've got an accurate record of them,
25 just so you know.

1 Okay. Take it away, John.

2 MR. JOHN MUNGER: All right. My name is
3 John Munger, 1211 Washburn Avenue North. I am the
4 executive director of the Loppet Foundation. I'm
5 really here with that hat on. We are a
6 North Minneapolis and really Theodore Wirth Park
7 oriented organization and work very closely with the
8 Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board to provide
9 outdoor, active kind of opportunities in the
10 Minneapolis area. So, obviously, Theodore Wirth Park
11 is really important, which is why we're advocating
12 for several tunnels through the park. Just kidding.
13 So that was funny, you guys. No one broke a smile
14 even. People are very sensitive now.

15 We actually do have some concerns about the
16 route through the park. We've been working with
17 staff on those. We're not overly concerned, but,
18 obviously, the impacts on the trails through the park
19 and the ski trails and the mountain biking and so
20 forth are something that we're interested in making
21 sure continues. So that's kind of one aspect of
22 what, you know, we want to see happen there.

23 We don't have a real strong opinion on the
24 different routes, whether it goes the Penn Avenue
25 route or the Wirth Park route. But we do have a

1 strong opinion that if it does go the Wirth Park
2 route that we think there's a real opportunity to
3 have a stop at Plymouth. And really, I like the
4 way -- as you said in the other room, the way the
5 Theodore Wirth stop is probably better than the
6 Plymouth Avenue stop. And it looks like that's on
7 the plans. And so that's wonderful. But just to
8 kind of talk about what that means, you know, when
9 one of the primary things that you're trying to
10 accomplish is to support healthy communities. And
11 having a stop for Theodore Wirth Park is one of the
12 ways to do that. Obviously, North Minneapolis is
13 kind of an area that has some health disparities.
14 Making Theodore Wirth more accessible for people to
15 get to via light rail, I think, is really important.
16 It's about the same size as Central Park in New York
17 City. And people don't really kind of realize that.
18 But it's this great opportunity and this great park
19 right on the edge of North Minneapolis. And over the
20 past dozen, twenty years, the park has really grown
21 in use. You can go there pretty much any winter
22 afternoon, and there's tons and tons of kids out
23 there. Having a stop there, I think, will just make
24 that all the more easy for folks.

25 And I see my red card is coming, so I'm going

1 to leave you folks. Thanks so much.

2 COMMISSIONER HIGGINS: Thank you.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER CUNNINGHAM: Madam Chair, I
4 need to disclose that I am on the board of the
5 Loppet Foundation. So just for the record.

6 COMMISSIONER HIGGINS: Okay. Good to know.
7 And before Vicki starts, let me put on my hostess hat
8 for a minute. We have cookies and water in the back.
9 Please enjoy them. They are pretty tasty.

10 Vicki.

11 MS. VICKI MOORE: Thank you so much for
12 coming out to our community. When you guys mention
13 the Blue Line, I think of it as being an
14 international line because it passes through the
15 communities of so many new Americans, and it passes
16 through the communities of so many environmental
17 justice communities. A lot of the discussion in the
18 community has been around alignments and stops and
19 change. I see this as the potential for transit
20 development. In my neighborhood, when we talk about
21 trying to bring people and developers in, they'll say
22 you don't have enough people to support the business.
23 You don't have enough amenities for our workers.

24 So going forward, I would like to see more
25 conversation about economic development. I really

1 support the Penn Avenue Station and making the park a
2 destination. I know that -- I believe that if the
3 park is a destination, there will be economic
4 development going up Plymouth to Penn, small
5 businesses, and that we should be growing small
6 businesses that are community-owned businesses, and
7 this is our opportunity to do that. I know that my
8 neighborhood will be supporting businesses along
9 Olson Highway.

10 If we're going to do this, I think it's
11 really important that -- as we move forward that we
12 consider equitable development standards and
13 community benefits agreements. I think by doing so,
14 you're engaging the community in a way that they can
15 start to see the benefit and the potential of what's
16 coming to us as this line moves through our
17 neighborhood rather than just looking at change and
18 perhaps wanting to keep things the way they are
19 rather than looking at how things could be.

20 So that's all I had to say. Thank you very
21 much for coming out.

22 COMMISSIONER HIGGINS: Thank you. And I
23 forgot to have you give your address as well, if
24 everybody would do that.

25 MS. VICKI MOORE: I live in the Harrison

1 neighborhood at Second and Oliver.

2 COMMISSIONER HIGGINS: Good. Thanks.

3 Arlene followed by Elaine followed by Russ.

4 MS. ARLENE EL-AMIN: I'm Arlene El-Amin. I
5 live at 1708 Eighth Avenue North.

6 I have a concern. When I looked at the map
7 tonight, it looked like Eighth Avenue would be a real
8 alternative route for persons who were traveling down
9 Penn -- or excuse me -- Olson and might get stopped
10 by a train that's approaching and that they might
11 divert over to Eighth Avenue, which would be from
12 Penn Avenue all the way down to probably Van White.
13 I live on a corner where there's a triangle there,
14 and there's like three streets converging. I have
15 about 12 -- 14 grandchildren under the age of 12 that
16 play a lot when they come to my house. I would be
17 very much concerned about the increase in traffic
18 that might be impacting that area and hope that
19 perhaps you thought about maybe a -- I think they
20 call it a roundabout or something, something that
21 would slow the traffic down, because, inevitably,
22 there is going to be a traffic increase in that area.

23 I have another concern about the ability to
24 cross Olson Highway. Right now people can go to
25 Olson Highway, catch a bus maybe at every other

1 street. I'm not sure the distance between the stops
2 for the rail, but I'm pretty sure there won't be this
3 type of access to go across Olson Highway. Is there
4 any thought being given to maybe walking bridges that
5 people can cross over? I think this is going to
6 impact some people very much, especially neighbors
7 and friends who have -- who live on both sides of
8 Olson Highway. And if they've got to walk four to
9 six blocks just to get across the street, that could
10 be some difficulty for some people.

11 I'm also concerned about how would -- the
12 people who normally would go across Olson Highway and
13 catch a bus now, how would they get across the street
14 with the rail actually -- you know, having the bar go
15 there; you can't go there. So how would they
16 transverse the area to get there? You know? How far
17 will I have to walk from Penn to get to Irving to
18 cross over to the other side? You know? I think
19 that that's going to be a real problem for especially
20 our senior citizens and for the children, because,
21 you know, children are going to have a tendency --
22 they're going to try to jump those tracks. I
23 remember as a child myself, we took shortcuts. When
24 I was living in Chicago, and we went across the
25 tracks.

1 So I hope those are things that you're
2 considering in this development.

3 COMMISSIONER HIGGINS: Okay. Thank you.
4 Elaine.

5 MS. ELAINE WYNNE: Thank you. I'm
6 Elaine Wynne, and I live near the arts high school on
7 Georgia Avenue. I grew up on a farm, lived almost 30
8 years in Minneapolis, and been out in Golden Valley
9 for 20 years. My husband and I love light rail. We
10 would like it in our backyard. When I adjust the
11 environmental impacts, I'm concerned about what will
12 happen to three parks, but particularly Wirth Park,
13 and also the ridership. I feel like Golden Valley
14 is a drive-through. It's -- you know, there's going
15 to be one stop really not very close to anybody
16 where anybody lives. And Golden Valley actually
17 uses public transportation a lot and I think would
18 increase it. I like the one that came down
19 Highway 100 and went on Penn Avenue. That was
20 always my favorite. I've always said that.

21 I think that I couldn't -- I didn't read the
22 800 pages, but I didn't see anywhere where there was
23 a real serious assessment of what is the cost of
24 destroying wetlands and that they would be. There
25 would be a lot more destruction of the wetlands than

1 is often put out at these meetings.

2 And then one curiosity I have is how much
3 will the owners and stockholders of BNSF Railroad be
4 receiving for the purchase of this land needed for
5 the light rail? And why have no agreements been
6 negotiated -- any tentative agreements at least? I
7 know there are estimates, but do we actually know
8 that those estimates are going to be anywhere close
9 to what we're going to need to pay the railroad for
10 this? And does it really in terms of cost balance
11 out when you take that into consideration?

12 Thank you.

13 COMMISSIONER HIGGINS: Thank you. Russ
14 followed by Linda and then Roger.

15 And I would like to tell you that
16 Council Member Jennifer Munt has joined us to
17 my right.

18 MR. RUSS ADAMS: Thank you, Madam Chair.

19 I'm Russ Adams with the Alliance for
20 Metropolitan Stability. We're in the Stuart
21 neighborhood at 525 East Franklin Avenue. I did not
22 read the entire DEIS, but fortunately for me, I have
23 a colleague who likes nothing better than to read
24 very thick documents. And our comments are based on
25 our review.

1 The first thing I want to say is compliment
2 the staff on the Bottineau Project for their improved
3 community engagement strategies. That's something
4 that has been noticed by many of the community groups
5 we work with. We're a coalition of 33 organizations,
6 but we've worked very closely with 17 community-based
7 environmental justice groups operating along the
8 Bottineau Corridor through community engagement team
9 work that we do.

10 I also want to point out that the
11 Bottineau Corridor is an environmental justice
12 corridor. 52 percent of the residents within that
13 mile radius along the corridor are people of color.
14 And according to the Met Council, 14 percent of the
15 people living in the corridor do not own a single
16 car, are transit dependent. We want to encourage you
17 to think about how the transit investment,
18 corresponding land use, and economic development
19 generate community benefits and equitable outcomes
20 for the low income communities of color in the
21 corridor.

22 And also, remember that the corridor connects
23 two significant, large EJ populations between
24 Minneapolis and Brooklyn Park.

25 I am going to jump around on this because I

1 don't have enough time to go through this point by
2 point.

3 I want to start with jobs. I want to start
4 with actual economic outcomes, which is really point
5 number four under "Anchor Institution Strategy."
6 There was a very compelling commentary in the
7 Star Tribune this week that talked about let's stop
8 talking about equity and start delivering real
9 results. So we are part of a group that is pressing
10 the Southwest Corridor to think about a community
11 compact that would actually have very specific
12 equitable commitments by all governmental parties.
13 We think that would be a good strategy for Bottineau.
14 I'm going to leave a copy of that with the staff.
15 And I want to remind you that some of those
16 components would be connecting people to real job
17 opportunities along the corridor, utilizing the
18 synergy that we could get through Hennepin County and
19 DEED Workforce Training Centers and employment
20 assistance firms as has been done with the
21 Central Corridor and Vikings Stadium.

22 Let's raise the goal on hiring for the
23 construction force. Let's bring it to 40 percent.
24 That will better reflect the population of both
25 North Minneapolis and populations of color along the

1 line. Let's make it easier for disadvantaged
2 business enterprises to contract. And let's do ZIP
3 code employment goals for these groups.

4 You can see a number of other examples
5 specific and some general in this. And we're always
6 available to chat.

7 Thank you.

8 COMMISSIONER HIGGINS: Thank you. As Linda
9 is coming up, I would like to remind you, if you
10 would like to speak, please make your way to the
11 table, and Denise will get you on the list.

12 MS. LINDA GALLANT: Can I pretend we're in
13 Congress and accede some of my time to him so he has
14 a couple more minutes? Thank you.

15 COMMISSIONER HIGGINS: He talks to us
16 regularly.

17 MS. LINDA GALLANT: My name is Linda Gallant.
18 I live at 1707 Xerxes Avenue North in Golden Valley.
19 I feel like I live in North Minneapolis. Some people
20 might say that's the wrong side of the tracks. I
21 think it's the right side of the tracks. I want to
22 say that I think, first of all, I would guesstimate
23 that the majority of people in this room today
24 believe that this is a done deal, do not believe that
25 there is any further consideration for being honestly

1 and seriously given to the other routes. I think we
2 should all focus on that. That's what people
3 believe.

4 I know what federal regulations say about the
5 options. I want to say two things. I think the DEIS
6 report -- I didn't read the whole thing, but I read
7 the entire noise section. I'm not a scientist, but
8 I could figure it out. First of all, I think the
9 report gives short shrift to the economic justice
10 realities. Does not have any specifics, but how
11 does this group that carefully avoids the population
12 centers of North Minneapolis, carefully goes
13 around them, how is it going to provide greater
14 opportunities for people in my neighborhood,
15 North Minneapolis, to get to better jobs? It
16 says we're going to -- I talked to the Metropolitan
17 Transit person yesterday. We're going to look into
18 that. We're going think about it. I think the time
19 is now to be far more specific, far more focused, and
20 far more willing to say this is what we're going to
21 do in terms of if we're going to say this is a
22 transit system to get people to those good jobs out
23 in the burbs. We've got to say how we're going to
24 do it, because right now we're not -- you know,
25 these stations aren't near too many people. Let's

1 get real.

2 Number two, I think the report gives short
3 shrift to the massive impact -- 220 trains a day --
4 on Theodore Wirth Park. I want more attention paid
5 to what is going to be done to try to reduce,
6 mitigate the impact of this 220 trains a day on the
7 most wonderful park in the Twin Cities. I didn't
8 know it was as big as Central Park. Somebody else
9 just said that. That's fantastic. I used to live in
10 New York City. But Central Park would not allow 220
11 trains a day to go through it. And we have to be
12 very careful of that.

13 And I want more attention given to precise
14 proposals about noise mitigation. I want to tell the
15 woman who spoke earlier. She said it's not in her
16 backyard. It is in my backyard literally. And I
17 can't find anything in the report that talks about
18 what's the precise proposal for noise mitigation.

19 And I guess I couldn't give him more time
20 because I used up too much of mine.

21 Thanks.

22 COMMISSIONER HIGGINS: Thank you, Linda.

23 Roger.

24 MR. ROGER SMITHRUD: Roger Smithrud. I live
25 at 2357 James Avenue North, about approximately two

1 blocks from Penn, two blocks from West Broadway.

2 I have been watching this a little bit on the
3 side grounds and not paying enough attention as I
4 should. But after finding out that I'm having to
5 take the bus a lot more than I used to, I'm finding
6 out that catching the bus is a lot harder to do on
7 time schedules. And having a light rail that has set
8 time schedules that they are posting and saying how
9 long they will be there would make a dramatic
10 difference for me if I had to get downtown, if I had
11 to go out to the hospital, which I've been making
12 more trips there than usual. And to me, it would
13 have a tremendous impact being on the D2 route rather
14 than the D1 route, even though I think it's a lot
15 less controversy to go the D1 route, and it's a
16 lot more work and a lot more politics, a lot more
17 negotiations and understanding and a lot more hard
18 work to get the D2 route to go. But I think it
19 would benefit North Minneapolis not just with
20 transportation but with business opportunities and
21 potential growth, making North Minneapolis more
22 known as a good place to go than even South
23 Minneapolis. It would be almost like wanting
24 to go downtown without being downtown.

25 Thank you.

1 COMMISSIONER HIGGINS: Thank you. Is there
2 anybody else who has not signed up who would like to
3 have this chance to speak? If not, once again, we
4 have staff in the other room who would be willing to
5 answer some questions if they can for you if you have
6 questions. And then I guess thank you for coming
7 and -- oh, that's right. There are paper forms in
8 the other room as well if you want to write rather
9 than talk, and those are available. You can turn
10 those in by email, or you can get the forms off of
11 the Bottineau Transitway website and turn them in by
12 the 29th of May. We're still accepting for two,
13 three more weeks.

14 One more person to speak? Okay. All right.
15 We have another person to speak. Thank you for
16 coming.

17 MR. AASIM SHABAZZ: Aasim Shabazz. And I
18 live near North at 1041 James Avenue, about a half --
19 maybe three blocks from the Van White Station.

20 First, I want to start off with saying thanks
21 for this forum. But based on looking at the -- not
22 all 800 pages, but I have some comments based on my
23 role.

24 The outreach and engagement piece for this
25 part as we move forward, I know it's a critical part

1 of it for community members. And if there's more
2 time, like for this event, the rain, mitigating
3 [inaudible] may have stopped people from coming out
4 if they don't live within walking distance, but we
5 can create that. That's my first thing.

6 The environmental impact as far as on
7 business and disruption in the near North communities
8 between Olson Highway, as was mentioned by Arlene
9 earlier about the stops and the pedestrian traffic, I
10 think that needs to be given more thought about what
11 that looks like in a design. I know that that's
12 pushed down to the land use and the city. But is
13 there something within this that we can look at the
14 safety factors? Because students are at risk. There
15 are schools over in that district, and it is a high
16 residential district. So more thought should be
17 considered to that.

18 When we look at the impact of the station
19 between the Plymouth -- I guess we're calling it
20 Theodore Wirth Station -- I'm not sure -- and the
21 Golden Valley Station, what is being done to look at
22 or set correct expectations around the myths about
23 the spacing and the lanes for the track and
24 alternatives that are being presented right now?
25 Because there are several arguments to say there's

1 not enough space, and that way they're destroying
2 wetlands. Are there opportunities to set that right
3 in the near term, so in the final document, we know
4 what the actual numbers are and what the potential
5 damage is.

6 And the last part is the zoning around the
7 three stops that are near North. That would be
8 Van White, Plymouth, and then the one downtown at
9 the interchange. When we look at that for the
10 density, the residential, can we look at the
11 development of the economic -- the lack of economic
12 business development opportunities that exist right
13 now? It's heavily residential. It doesn't really
14 speak to the routing of traffic and directing, I want
15 to say, the roles in a design that will allow us to
16 grow, allow us to have access to amenities. Right
17 now, it's just going to create another throughway on
18 Olson Highway but not enough for amenities of the
19 businesses and the communities involved. So if
20 there's --

21 I've got 30 seconds, so the rest I'll waive.
22 Thank you.

23 COMMISSIONER HIGGINS: Thank you very much.
24 Last call. It looks like Natalie Yaeger. Thank you
25 for coming.

1 MS. NATALIE YAEGER: Hi. I apologize. I'm
2 just getting here, so I'm not quite as prepared as I
3 wanted to be.

4 COMMISSIONER HIGGINS: Sure. We have you
5 speak for no more than three minutes. We'll give you
6 a 30-second warning. If you'll start with your name
7 and your address, that would be great.

8 MS. NATALIE YAEGER: Sounds great. My name
9 is Natalie Yaeger. I'm at 2736 Vincent Avenue North.
10 I've been very involved in the Northside
11 Transportation Network and dedicated quite a few
12 years already researching and trying to figure out
13 the ins and outs of this project. I have to say that
14 right now, you know, I'm really disappointed in where
15 things have gone. It really breaks my heart to see
16 that the north side really hasn't been represented in
17 the current plan for where the railway is going.
18 I've seen many, many other options that would be a
19 better fit for us. I actually lived in Vancouver,
20 Canada, where we had a wonderful transportation
21 system. And really, what transportation means to me
22 is that it actually services the people. And where
23 I'm seeing the current route, I don't really feel
24 that it services the people or the needs of
25 Minneapolis or the North Minneapolis residents, me

1 being one of them.

2 I personally would have been impacted by the
3 route that would go -- the D1 route, I believe. D1,
4 D2, I'm getting a little confused right now, but the
5 one that goes down Broadway and then Penn. I would
6 be right -- like less than a half a block off of
7 that. I have no concerns right now. We currently
8 are a one-car family. My husband relies on bus
9 transport for his work, and he does not get adequate
10 service. The buses run every 45 minutes. We're
11 right off Broadway. And nor does the bus sometimes
12 even show up. So we are not really being serviced
13 right now. I'm very concerned about the bus rapid
14 transit option for those reasons, and I would like to
15 see a lot of investment provided for an equitable
16 transportation system for our area. And I really
17 feel that the light rail was that option.

18 I spoke at the County Commissioner's Office.
19 There were 15 people that spoke -- or the County
20 Commissioner's meeting when they were trying to
21 decide on this. 15 people spoke. Only one was
22 against having light rail come down the D1 route
23 where that was. It was very disheartening to see the
24 county commissioners not taking the people's voices
25 into account, so. And then also, it also breaks my

1 heart to see it going through Theodore Wirth Park,
2 which is where my kids ski and everything and we do a
3 lot of activities.

4 So thank you.

5 And can I add one more thing? We
6 definitely need a stop in the Golden Valley area
7 for North Minneapolis.

8 Thank you.

9 COMMISSIONER HIGGINS: Thank you. All right.
10 Are we done? Okay.

11 FEMALE SPEAKER: Got one more.

12 COMMISSIONER HIGGINS: One more person?
13 Okay.

14 MR. DAVID GREEN: Hi. I'm David Green.
15 Normally, I'm at these meetings representing ISAIAH,
16 but I'm just going to speak for myself tonight. I
17 got here late, and I got here late because I have
18 this little guy to take care of. A 5:30 meeting
19 weekdays for something as important as this is
20 outrageous. People ought to be able to come to this
21 meeting, ought to be able to testify. I'm shocked
22 that 40 minutes into this we're done with this
23 testimony. That's not right. We either need to have
24 another meeting on the north side or something
25 because I couldn't get here on time. A lot of

1 people -- the last speaker said she just got here.

2 So that's all I have to say. Thanks.

3 COMMISSIONER HIGGINS: All right. Is there
4 anybody else? Anybody else who would like to speak?

5 Well, thank you all for coming. And I know
6 people will be around to talk. And have a great
7 evening. Thank you.

8 (Reporter's Note: At this point, the
9 meeting adjourned. The following are individuals
10 who spoke directly to the comment reporter and did
11 not speak publicly to the commission.)

12 MS. LENORA WARE: Lenora Ware, 1031 Knox
13 Avenue North, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 55411.

14 In regards to what happened in the meeting
15 tonight, I just want to say I honestly don't want a
16 train in our neighborhood because I don't want the
17 people to have to lose their homes. And that's
18 basically what's going to happen. And if they did
19 have a train, I just don't like the fact that they
20 keep using our tax money. And the cost of living is
21 not going down. It's going up in our neighborhood.
22 And they use the money to get people from the suburbs
23 in, but they are not charging them what they are us.
24 It's like our tax dollars are being used to support
25 the suburbanites. And I just would like that money

1 to be used for our kids and our elders and ourselves
2 in our neighborhood and people in our community.

3 They had the North Star train. And the
4 North Star train has more -- what is it -- amenities.
5 And we don't have that on the trains in the Cities
6 for us. Again, it's our tax money. So why don't we
7 get the same thing in the city they are getting in
8 the suburbs and we're paying for it?

9 And that's all. Thank you.

10 If they do have the train, please have more
11 safety and security for all of us and more
12 compassionate police force.

13 MR. CURTIS ADAMS: Curtis Adams, 1031 Knox
14 Avenue North, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 55411. I don't
15 think they should bring the train over here because
16 people would lose a lot of their homes, and I think a
17 lot more people would be getting arrested or fined
18 because people don't like to pay on the trains
19 because they just think they could get away with it.

20 MS. ALYSSA LIPKE-PIER: My name is Alyssa
21 Lipke-Pier, and I'm an architect, and I live at 1045
22 Washburn Avenue North. I'm also on the planning
23 commission for the City of Minneapolis, but I'm not
24 here in that capacity today. I'm just here as a
25 citizen who has lived in north for over a decade.

1 And I'm here because I'm assuming the Bottineau Line
2 is going to run along Theodore Wirth Park anyway. So
3 I just wanted to talk about station locations. I
4 have concerns that it's going to come down to either
5 Plymouth Avenue or Golden Valley Road. And I feel as
6 though a lot of the benefits of Golden Valley are the
7 fact that they want to do a park-and-ride that could
8 attract people to drive and park there and take light
9 rail into downtown or elsewhere. But I think that
10 there are different benefits that need to be looked
11 at for putting it at Plymouth, and specifically at
12 the northeast corner of that intersection, so north
13 of Plymouth Avenue on the east side rather than on
14 the south side of Plymouth Avenue, specifically
15 because North Minneapolis is already cut off from
16 most of the amenities. We have 55 to the south. We
17 have 94 that blocks us from the river. Now we're
18 going to have a train blocking us from our only other
19 major amenity, which is Theodore Wirth Park. So at
20 the very least, if we're going to end up being
21 blocked off from everything, we should at least have
22 the amenity of having a stop in our neighborhood that
23 also would bring people to the park. And the major
24 park buildings are right there at Plymouth Avenue.
25 If you put it at Golden Valley Road, there's nothing.

1 So I think that having a station at Plymouth Avenue
2 on the northern side of the street could actually set
3 up Theodore Wirth as more of a destination park to
4 draw from around the metro along the light rail lines
5 so we would have more families and people
6 experiencing North in a way that they haven't
7 experienced it before as well as giving people from
8 North a way to get to the airport or to downtown or
9 to other things so the light rail wouldn't just be
10 serving surrounding suburbs and people who don't live
11 in North but would actually be an amenity for North
12 to enhance our park and enhance our connection to the
13 city. So I don't know in terms of development if
14 it's very much. It's in a park. So either way, the
15 only development I think Golden Valley would spur
16 would be a parking lot, or a parking ramp, which --
17 you know, whatever. I would rather see both
18 personally because I can see where they serve very
19 different needs, but I think if it came down to one
20 or the other, the moral and ethical choice is
21 Plymouth Avenue, because it actually -- instead of
22 just taking away, it actually adds a little bit of
23 value back. And North has waited long enough for
24 that.

25 And so in addition, I think that it actually

1 in terms of siting and planning, it would fit better
2 with establishing more of a destination point for
3 that park anyway just from a -- you know, if I was
4 looking at it as an architect and as an urban
5 planner, that's where I would think the best station
6 would be in terms of enhancing the city and the
7 Grand Rounds.

8 So there's my two cents.

9 Fund both. And if you can't, just fund
10 Plymouth.

11 P.S., I also think we need to have
12 connections that get people from North across the
13 tracks, whether it's land bridges or some sort of
14 connection, because right now, given that's our only
15 access to a major amenity, and it's going to get cut
16 off with a train that has a fence -- we were already
17 told there would be a fence. The fence needs to look
18 nice, and there needs to be pedestrian bridges over
19 it to get into the park, because right now there are
20 paths that have been there for a hundred years that
21 families have used generationally, and they're still
22 used today, even though they're not formal entrances
23 to the park. So some of those need to be preserved
24 or rebuilt or reestablished just so it's not a total
25 cutting off of an amenity.

1 MS. CANDY BAKION: Candy Bakion, 701 Olson
2 Memorial Highway, Apartment 201, Minneapolis,
3 Minnesota, 55405.

4 Dear Commissioners, I would like to make sure
5 that you hold fast to keep a focus on keeping the
6 light rail stations planning in the community and
7 community focused with a lens on equity and
8 affordable for all. And my hope is to provide
9 economic advantages for the surrounding communities
10 along the light rail and beautification along with
11 that, also access in ways of for the youth, for the
12 elders, for the middle class to be able to access the
13 lines, providing alternative methods and support at
14 station area planning, and to make it pretty, and to
15 provide more resources to the powers that be to
16 engage the community and provide some really cool
17 swag.

18 (Concluded at 7:20 p.m.)

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