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

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Reported By: Lori Morrow, RPR, CRR, CLR
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COMMISSIONER HIGGINS: Welcome, everybody, to our meeting tonight about the Bottineau Transitway. I'm County Commissioner Linda Higgins, one of the two county commissioners who represents the Cities in this line along with Commissioner Mike Opat.

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

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

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

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

COUNCIL MEMBER YANG: Good evening.
Blong Yang, City Council Member for Minneapolis for Ward 5, which is here.

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

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

The Bottineau Project is involving numerous entities. We have the Federal Transit Administration. They're really our lead federal agency involved. Hennepin County has been leading the efforts regarding looking at various alternatives, looking at the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. The Metropolitan Council has been
a partner with us as well. They are going to be a signatory of the DEIS as well. As the project moves forward later on this summer, the project will be transitioning from Hennepin County to the Metropolitan Council. They will be leading the efforts on the preliminary engineering, the Final Environmental Impact Statement, as well as construction should the project advance to that.

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

You might hear about the Bottineau LRT Project, and you're probably going to be hearing more and more about the Metro Blue Line Extension. That is the same thing. There's been a rename of the system. They're going more to a color scheme on this. And what was known as the Hiawatha Light Rail Line is now known as the Metro Blue Line. And this would be an extension of the Metro Blue Line. So as it exists right now, the Metro Blue Line ends at Target Field Station. And in the future, it would proceed west on Highway 55 and then up the rail
corridor up towards, I guess, West Broadway up near Brooklyn Park and then would continue up West Broadway up to just north of Highway 610 up near the Target North there.

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

A lot of people have asked how quickly could this happen. And I guess we kind of put this timeline together, but we'll certainly note down
below that this is a very optimistic schedule assuming everything comes together. There certainly is funding that would be needed at the state level, the county level, the Counties Transit Improvement Board, the federal level. So there's lots of pieces of the puzzle that all have to come together to make a major project like this happen.

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

There's currently a consultant that has been hired to look at the first four stations, meaning the two in Minneapolis and the two stations that are being studied in Golden Valley as well. And that consultant is on right now. They are going to be having more meetings coming up later on this summer, and they anticipate the station area planning
beginning later on this year for the rest of the stations, meaning Robbinsdale, Crystal, and Brooklyn Park. So that's kind of a snapshot of kind of where we're at and what might be happening in the future.

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

So after those five goals were kind of looked at, kind of previously we had looked at a whole range of alternatives up on the north end and on the south end. And so there was a wide range of alternatives that were considered before we actually got to the [inaudible]. Back in January of 2012, we had a series of scoping meetings where we went out into the community and asked what do you think are critical issues as the project advances. We got a lot of input on that. You'll probably see most of the items
that were brought forth as far as input from the citizens are the items that are addressed in the DEIS. As part of that, the scoping decision kind of looked at what specific options will be studied in the DEIS. I'll show you a map of that momentarily. And work has also happened regarding that alternatives analysis that looked at what is really the best project that should move forward. And then there's also the environmental aspect of that. So I'll touch on that momentarily.

And the DEIS now has been released in April of 2014, and the comment period extends through May 29. And some people might ask what is the DEIS. If you've been in the other room, we've got some copies of it in there. It's a very thick document. It looks at a whole host of issues. It assists decision makers in the assessment of different impacts of the project. It documents the protests and the need. And it looks at a variety of alternatives as part of that. It addresses transportation, social, environmental, and historical, a variety of potential impacts. It also defines potential litigation measures, but it doesn't specifically define what those measures may be. For example, last night I talked to quite a few people
that had questions and concerns about noise. And in some of those areas -- on the maps, it kind of shows some of those areas where maybe a sound wall would be considered. And some folks said, well, even though a sound wall might be required here, I don't want to look at a sound wall. Would you consider planting a row of trees or something else that would blend in. And so those are types of discussions that happen more as we transition into FEIS and get into some of the more specifics about how some of those potential mitigation measures might be addressed.

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

As far as the options that were studied in the DEIS, up on the north end of the corridor, there was Option A, which goes to Maple Grove. Option B was studied as well. That goes toward Brooklyn Park. Option C is common to all of the options that were studied. There on the south end, Option D1 was looked at, which stays in the railroad corridor down to Highway 55. And then Option D2 was also looked
at, which comes out of the rail corridor, heads down West Broadway and then down Penn, east on 55. Then all the options again tie in at Target Field Station and become part of the existing Blue Line.

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

As part of the input, we've got a series of public open houses. We were in Golden Valley last night. And we must have put on a fairly good show because I think I saw about four or five people that
were actually there last night that came back for more. So we'll have to see if they come next week as well. Or maybe two is enough. But we're going to be here tonight. And next week we're going to be in Brooklyn Park and Crystal after that. And again, people can provide verbal comments here tonight. We also have comment sheets in the other room.

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

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

As I mentioned a little bit earlier, the next consultant likely will not be hired until toward the end of 2014. It will likely be a year or two beyond that before, you know, the FEIS is finally ready. And those comments will get input as far as preliminary engineering work moving forward and the
work that will happen as part of the FEIS. So we'll gather the comments. We'll post those comments on the project website. And we'll try to put them into a variety of categories so that both the engineers and the planners and environmental specialists that are looking at the future work, they take that input as the work advances forward.

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

COMMISSIONER HIGGINS: Thank you, Joe.

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

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

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

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

Just a reminder, this is not a question and
answer period. As Joe said, there will be experts
and our staff people in the other room who will be
able to answer your questions. But tonight we want
to hear your comments about the environmental aspects
of the Bottineau Line. And we ask you to speak for
no more than three minutes. And we've got, you know,
the standard coloring system. At 30 seconds to go,
you'll get a sign that says you have 30 seconds left,
and then, thus, the red card comes up. And we would
ask you to then, you know, wrap up your sentence and
then yield to the next person.

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

And take it away, John.

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

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

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

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

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

And I see my red card is coming, so I'm going
to leave you folks. Thanks so much.

  COMMISSIONER HIGGINS: Thank you.

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

  COMMISSIONER HIGGINS: Okay. Good to know.

And before Vicki starts, let me put on my hostess hat for a minute. We have cookies and water in the back. Please enjoy them. They are pretty tasty.

Vicki.

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

So going forward, I would like to see more conversation about economic development. I really
support the Penn Avenue Station and making the park a
destination. I know that -- I believe that if the
park is a destination, there will be economic
development going up Plymouth to Penn, small
businesses, and that we should be growing small
businesses that are community-owned businesses, and
this is our opportunity to do that. I know that my
neighborhood will be supporting businesses along
Olson Highway.

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

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

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

MS. VICKI MOORE: I live in the Harrison
neighborhood at Second and Oliver.

COMMISSIONER HIGGINS: Good. Thanks.

Arlene followed by Elaine followed by Russ.

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

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

I have another concern about the ability to cross Olson Highway. Right now people can go to Olson Highway, catch a bus maybe at every other
street. I'm not sure the distance between the stops for the rail, but I'm pretty sure there won't be this type of access to go across Olson Highway. Is there any thought being given to maybe walking bridges that people can cross over? I think this is going to impact some people very much, especially neighbors and friends who have -- who live on both sides of Olson Highway. And if they've got to walk four to six blocks just to get across the street, that could be some difficulty for some people.

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

COMMISSIONER HIGGINS: Okay. Thank you.

Elaine.

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

I think that I couldn't -- I didn't read the 800 pages, but I didn't see anywhere where there was a real serious assessment of what is the cost of destroying wetlands and that they would be. There would be a lot more destruction of the wetlands than
is often put out at these meetings.

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

Thank you.

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

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

MR. RUSS ADAMS: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I'm Russ Adams with the Alliance for Metropolitan Stability. We're in the Stuart neighborhood at 525 East Franklin Avenue. I did not read the entire DEIS, but fortunately for me, I have a colleague who likes nothing better than to read very thick documents. And our comments are based on our review.
The first thing I want to say is compliment
the staff on the Bottineau Project for their improved
community engagement strategies. That's something
that has been noticed by many of the community groups
we work with. We're a coalition of 33 organizations,
but we've worked very closely with 17 community-based
environmental justice groups operating along the
Bottineau Corridor through community engagement team
work that we do.

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

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

I am going to jump around on this because I
don't have enough time to go through this point by point.

I want to start with jobs. I want to start with actual economic outcomes, which is really point number four under "Anchor Institution Strategy."

There was a very compelling commentary in the Star Tribune this week that talked about let's stop talking about equity and start delivering real results. So we are part of a group that is pressing the Southwest Corridor to think about a community compact that would actually have very specific equitable commitments by all governmental parties. We think that would be a good strategy for Bottineau. I'm going to leave a copy of that with the staff. And I want to remind you that some of those components would be connecting people to real job opportunities along the corridor, utilizing the synergy that we could get through Hennepin County and DEED Workforce Training Centers and employment assistance firms as has been done with the Central Corridor and Vikings Stadium.

Let's raise the goal on hiring for the construction force. Let's bring it to 40 percent. That will better reflect the population of both North Minneapolis and populations of color along the
line. Let's make it easier for disadvantaged business enterprises to contract. And let's do ZIP code employment goals for these groups.

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

Thank you.

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

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

COMMISSIONER HIGGINS: He talks to us regularly.

MS. LINDA GALLANT: My name is Linda Gallant. I live at 1707 Xerxes Avenue North in Golden Valley. I feel like I live in North Minneapolis. Some people might say that's the wrong side of the tracks. I think it's the right side of the tracks. I want to say that I think, first of all, I would guesstimate that the majority of people in this room today believe that this is a done deal, do not believe that there is any further consideration for being honestly
and seriously given to the other routes. I think we should all focus on that. That's what people believe.

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

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

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

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

Thanks.

COMMISSIONER HIGGINS: Thank you, Linda.

Roger.

MR. ROGER SMITHRUD: Roger Smithrud. I live at 2357 James Avenue North, about approximately two
blocks from Penn, two blocks from West Broadway.

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

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

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

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

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

The outreach and engagement piece for this part as we move forward, I know it's a critical part
of it for community members. And if there's more
time, like for this event, the rain, mitigating
[inaudible] may have stopped people from coming out
if they don't live within walking distance, but we
can create that. That's my first thing.

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

When we look at the impact of the station
between the Plymouth -- I guess we're calling it
Theodore Wirth Station -- I'm not sure -- and the
Golden Valley Station, what is being done to look at
or set correct expectations around the myths about
the spacing and the lanes for the track and
alternatives that are being presented right now?
Because there are several arguments to say there's
not enough space, and that way they're destroying wetlands. Are there opportunities to set that right in the near term, so in the final document, we know what the actual numbers are and what the potential damage is.

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

I've got 30 seconds, so the rest I'll waive.

Thank you.

COMMISSIONER HIGGINS: Thank you very much. Last call. It looks like Natalie Yaeger. Thank you for coming.
MS. NATALIE YAEGER: Hi. I apologize. I'm just getting here, so I'm not quite as prepared as I wanted to be.

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

MS. NATALIE YAEGER: Sounds great. My name is Natalie Yaeger. I'm at 2736 Vincent Avenue North. I've been very involved in the Northside Transportation Network and dedicated quite a few years already researching and trying to figure out the ins and outs of this project. I have to say that right now, you know, I'm really disappointed in where things have gone. It really breaks my heart to see that the north side really hasn't been represented in the current plan for where the railway is going. I've seen many, many other options that would be a better fit for us. I actually lived in Vancouver, Canada, where we had a wonderful transportation system. And really, what transportation means to me is that it actually services the people. And where I'm seeing the current route, I don't really feel that it services the people or the needs of Minneapolis or the North Minneapolis residents, me
I personally would have been impacted by the route that would go -- the D1 route, I believe. D1, D2, I'm getting a little confused right now, but the one that goes down Broadway and then Penn. I would be right -- like less than a half a block off of that. I have no concerns right now. We currently are a one-car family. My husband relies on bus transport for his work, and he does not get adequate service. The buses run every 45 minutes. We're right off Broadway. And nor does the bus sometimes even show up. So we are not really being serviced right now. I'm very concerned about the bus rapid transit option for those reasons, and I would like to see a lot of investment provided for an equitable transportation system for our area. And I really feel that the light rail was that option.

I spoke at the County Commissioner's Office. There were 15 people that spoke -- or the County Commissioner's meeting when they were trying to decide on this. 15 people spoke. Only one was against having light rail come down the D1 route where that was. It was very disheartening to see the county commissioners not taking the people's voices into account, so. And then also, it also breaks my
heart to see it going through Theodore Wirth Park, which is where my kids ski and everything and we do a lot of activities.

So thank you.

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

Thank you.

COMMISSIONER HIGGINS: Thank you. All right.

Are we done? Okay.

FEMALE SPEAKER: Got one more.

COMMISSIONER HIGGINS: One more person?

Okay.

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

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

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

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

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

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

In regards to what happened in the meeting tonight, I just want to say I honestly don't want a train in our neighborhood because I don't want the people to have to lose their homes. And that's basically what's going to happen. And if they did have a train, I just don't like the fact that they keep using our tax money. And the cost of living is not going down. It's going up in our neighborhood. And they use the money to get people from the suburbs in, but they are not charging them what they are us. It's like our tax dollars are being used to support the suburbanites. And I just would like that money
to be used for our kids and our elders and ourselves in our neighborhood and people in our community.

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

And that's all. Thank you.

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

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

MS. ALYSSA LIPKE-PIER: My name is Alyssa Lipke-Pier, and I'm an architect, and I live at 1045 Washburn Avenue North. I'm also on the planning commission for the City of Minneapolis, but I'm not here in that capacity today. I'm just here as a citizen who has lived in north for over a decade.
And I'm here because I'm assuming the Bottineau Line is going to run along Theodore Wirth Park anyway. So I just wanted to talk about station locations. I have concerns that it's going to come down to either Plymouth Avenue or Golden Valley Road. And I feel as though a lot of the benefits of Golden Valley are the fact that they want to do a park-and-ride that could attract people to drive and park there and take light rail into downtown or elsewhere. But I think that there are different benefits that need to be looked at for putting it at Plymouth, and specifically at the northeast corner of that intersection, so north of Plymouth Avenue on the east side rather than on the south side of Plymouth Avenue, specifically because North Minneapolis is already cut off from most of the amenities. We have 55 to the south. We have 94 that blocks us from the river. Now we're going to have a train blocking us from our only other major amenity, which is Theodore Wirth Park. So at the very least, if we're going to end up being blocked off from everything, we should at least have the amenity of having a stop in our neighborhood that also would bring people to the park. And the major park buildings are right there at Plymouth Avenue. If you put it at Golden Valley Road, there's nothing.
So I think that having a station at Plymouth Avenue on the northern side of the street could actually set up Theodore Wirth as more of a destination park to draw from around the metro along the light rail lines so we would have more families and people experiencing North in a way that they haven't experienced it before as well as giving people from North a way to get to the airport or to downtown or to other things so the light rail wouldn't just be serving surrounding suburbs and people who don't live in North but would actually be an amenity for North to enhance our park and enhance our connection to the city. So I don't know in terms of development if it's very much. It's in a park. So either way, the only development I think Golden Valley would spur would be a parking lot, or a parking ramp, which you know, whatever. I would rather see both personally because I can see where they serve very different needs, but I think if it came down to one or the other, the moral and ethical choice is Plymouth Avenue, because it actually -- instead of just taking away, it actually adds a little bit of value back. And North has waited long enough for that.

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

So there's my two cents.

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

P.S., I also think we need to have connections that get people from North across the tracks, whether it's land bridges or some sort of connection, because right now, given that's our only access to a major amenity, and it's going to get cut off with a train that has a fence -- we were already told there would be a fence. The fence needs to look nice, and there needs to be pedestrian bridges over it to get into the park, because right now there are paths that have been there for a hundred years that families have used generationally, and they're still used today, even though they're not formal entrances to the park. So some of those need to be preserved or rebuilt or reestablished just so it's not a total cutting off of an amenity.
MS. CANDY BAKION: Candy Bakion, 701 Olson Memorial Highway, Apartment 201, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 55405.

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

(Concluded at 7:20 p.m.)

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REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

STATE OF MINNESOTA) ) ss.
COUNTY OF HENNEPIN)

I hereby certify that I reported the Draft Environmental Impact Statement public hearing on the 8th day of May, 2014, in Minneapolis, Minnesota;

That the proceedings transcribed by me are a true record of the proceedings held;

WITNESS MY HAND AND SEAL, this 14th day of May, 2014.

Lori L. Morrow, RPR, CRR, CLR
Notary Public, Hennepin County, Minnesota
My commission expires: January 31, 2015