

March 13, 2014

Public Comments on Draft Reports

This document contains comments submitted to the Southwest Project Office during the public comment period for the draft Freight Rail Location Alternatives Analysis, Water Resources Evaluation, and Kenilworth Tree Inventory. Comments were received from January 30, 2014 to March 12, 2014.

In total, **334 comments were received**, including:

- 73 comment cards from two public meetings
- 101 verbal comments from two public meetings
- 124 emails
- 13 letters
- 22 submissions via online form
- 1 phone call

Please note: Personal contact information, if provided, has been redacted unless included on letterhead. Comments are numbered in the order that they were processed. No other changes or corrections have been made including grammatical errors, word choice changes or spelling. For transcripts, all comments were typed verbatim from an audio recording of the community meetings. For handwritten comment cards, all comments are typed verbatim from comment cards. If handwriting is unclear, then correct spelling is used and the most contextual word choice is assumed or marked illegible.

Comments Received via Email

Email 001

From: Mary Gaines
Sent: Monday, February 03, 2014 10:01 AM
To: Brimeyer, James
Subject: please respond to questions

Hello Jim,

The draft proposal of routing freight trains through St Louis Park, taking out hundreds of family homes, destroying business properties, creating unsafe school grounds, is unconscionable when there are alternatives that are safer, cheaper, and less intrusive to the communities. Add to that, that the costs have not been included, and I would like to understand how this compares to the cost of moving a bike trail. Without that, this is misappropriation of taxpayer dollars. Please respond to the following questions: 1. What is the exact full cost of the re-route, including home takes, business takes, cost of school safety measures to be built, appropriate noise and vibration abatement measures, and safety mitigation equal to what the Kenilworth Corridor currently has; 2) How does this cost compare to a) moving the bike trail, b) shallow tunnel, c) co location of freight and light rail through Kenilworth Corridor

Please make these accurate including a 3rd party accounting audit, and make the numbers public.

Thank you,
Mary Beth Gaines

Email 002

From: JoAnn Schultz
Sent: Sunday, February 02, 2014 7:56 PM
To: CMs
Subject: SLP reroute

The consultant was not unbiased or independent so it seems. Throughout the report, he kept saying the MN&S was to be the permanent home of freight and was spoon fed some propaganda to make the MN&S happen. He kept calling the MN&S North a "concept". A concept isn't a proposal. The trains "have to get over Hwy 7 somehow" isn't a proposal. The trains would turn off at the power plant to meet up with the MN&S at Library Lane. On Google Maps, the world is flat so they consultant doesn't know the trains need to be elevated 65 feet to get up to Library Lane. There is no word on how he proposes to straiten the curves other than to put straight tracks somewhere. He proposes a road along side the railway so students can be dropped off by the bus. Where will this railroad be? It can't be on the High School side so it must be on the other side of the tracks. So are we supposed to accept kids being dropped off by bus across the tracks so they can cross them on the proposed foot bridge that will be "somewhere by the High School"? There will be a retaining wall before and after Minnetonka Blvd (a berm). He proposes safety measures as follows: To decrease the possibility of train and vehicle collisions at intersections is to eliminate them. 4 intersections will be eliminated. To help with pedestrian accidents, he proposes fencing along the tracks through the entire city. So we still have a division of the city with limited mobility that is unacceptable. We are still being subjected to the possibility of being negatively effected in extreme ways by a reroute that would be eliminated if applied elsewhere.

This report by the new consultant is terrible. He has no magic answer to the reroute and it is as flawed as the others he has criticized in his reviews. There is a lot more to comment on, but I'll stop here. The St. Louis Park reroute needs to be taken off the table because it is NOT viable.

St. Louis Park does not "owe" anyone a freight reroute. The FTA was given Kenilworth as the permanent home back in the 1990's, and it is in writing. How did those politicians at the time think they could override that and then lie and cheat throughout history about what really happened in that "deal" with Kenilworth residents. I don't think it should be SLP's problem to bail out the people who were not in a position to make said "deal". Plus being 20 years ago, this has just got to stop but it goes on and on and on. One of the lies was how Hennepin County cleaned up the Golden Auto site in exchange for a reroute. We know this is not true. Even in the last consultant's report, it states that the Golden Auto site was cleaned and delisted by 1998 (not by Hennepin County) and in 1999 Hennepin County wanted to use that spot to turn trains because it was already cleaned up (though can't be disturbed because of protective cover). The County's ransom for a reroute at that time was to how to build on that corner without poisoning our water but that never took off. Another lie for the reroute, was that SLP promised to take the freight but we also know that isn't true. #1 in favor of these lies was Dorfman, who was in City Council during these times, and she herself signed papers opposing a reroute. There is no reason why the new consultant would know about the Golden Auto being in existence at all. There is no reason at all why he would say that St. Louis Park had to quit claim that property over to Hennepin County like they have been drooling over since in 1999, especially since his proposed turn is through the power plant. Something smells terribly wrong here.

Sincerely,

JoAnn Schultz

Email 003

From: Anne Beaton
Sent: Monday, February 03, 2014 8:52 AM
To: Brimeyer, James
Subject: Unsafe reroute

Dear Mr. Brimeyer

I am writing to ask you to share my support of SWLRT and opposition to the Brunswick Central relocation plan with the rest of the Met Council. I have lived on Lake Street in SLP for over 12 years and have two children in SLP schools.

The proposed relocation of freight through St. Louis Park will have a detrimental impact on our city. The above grade structures, property acquisitions and strong public opposition to the project make it, according to criteria set by the Southwest Planning Office (SPO,) an undesirable option. If your colleges need to know more about why Brunswick Central is not an appropriate addition to St. Louis Park, you may want to point out the following:

1.) Brunswick Central plan does not include any mitigation for the residents of St. Louis Park. A July 9 2013 letter from Mayor Jeff Jacobs outlines the mitigation needed.
http://www.stlouispark.org/webfiles/file/final_swlrt_letter_070913.pdf

2.) There is a lack of information concerning the impacts of derailment, noise, and vibration on St. Louis Park. For example, logic dictates that if a 270,000-pound rail car tumbles down a hill, the result will be different than if that same rail car falls over on level ground.

3.) There is also no information about the general safety of the children when placed in close proximity to freight rail tracks.

What will be the impact on the safety the St. Louis Park children if the MN&S freight rail line is moved to within feet of an elementary school? Will freight tracks at the top of a hill be an attractive hazard to young children? Does an incident like the one recently in St. Paul have to occur in St. Louis Park before safety is studied?

<http://www.startribune.com/local/stpaul/220060901.html>

4.) It must also be remembered that St. Louis Park has NEVER agreed to accept the relocation of freight through our city.

Resolutions in 1996, 2001, 2010 and 2011 confirm that fact. The resolutions can be found:

<http://www.stlouispark.org/light-freight-rail/freight-rail-relocation-study.html> and https://attachment.fbsbx.com/file_download.php?id=507471106005568&eid=ASvLGmt dNTAY12eStf7gWkUJXbVwQCB1-JtziM7iuaVpcs3t00N_mvkJACjZNFfeFRUg&inline=1&ext=1376858832&hash=ASvav0ZXXtmT-mnG

No matter how great a positive impact SWLRT will have on St. Louis Park, the negative impact of the relocation will be catastrophic. Please do everything in your power to see co-location is chosen for freight trains in the SWLRT project.

Thank you,
Anne Beaton

Email 004

From: Jeff Hickstein

Sent: Monday, February 03, 2014 12:51 PM

To: swlrt

Subject: Bike trail options?

To whom it may concern,

My family lives in St. Louis Park on the border with Minneapolis, 1.5 blocks from the proposed Southwest LRT line, and both my kids have attended SLP schools including Park Spanish Immersion and SLP High, which are both on the proposed re-route for freight traffic. I support the freight re-route if it is technically and economically feasible.

My question is, "why are the least expensive and least invasive options of either moving or elevating the bike path not being considered?" I have friends who are avid bikers who are OK with an elevated path.

Thank you!

Jeff Hickstein

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Email 005

From: Jim Arneson

Sent: Thursday, February 06, 2014 8:50 AM

To: Ginis, Sophia

Subject: Access Issues

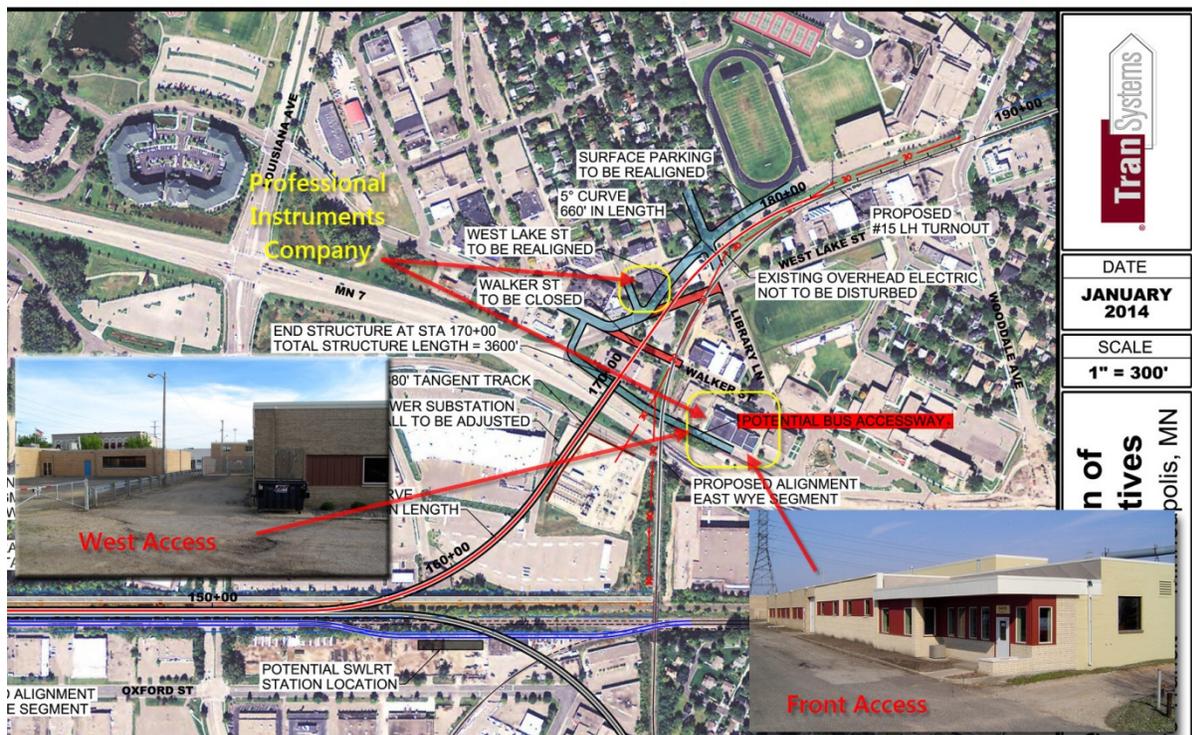
I've studied the Trans Systems plan published yesterday and have a few comments.

- The plan as shown (presumably) takes yet another Professional Instruments property. Our building at 6824 West Lake Street appears to be in the path of a re-alignment of the streets in the area adjacent the freight tracks.
- The plan shows a "potential Bus Accessway" along the front of our property at 6416 Highway 7 that would (presumably) impinge on access to our building.

Jim Arneson

President

Professional Instruments Company



Email 006

From: Curt Rahman
Sent: Tuesday, February 04, 2014 4:26 PM
To: Sophia Ginis
Subject: NEW Freight Reroute Takes Down STEP

I am writing to you as the Treasurer of STEP- the St. Louis Park Emergency Program <http://www.stepslp.org/> and as a member of the Business Advisory Committee (BAC) to the SWLRT to let you know that there is a new freight rail reroute proposal that will take down the STEP building.

In case you have not followed the SW LRT progress, after years of discussions and studies, we are now down to crunch time. The LRT line is set and will go through Kenwood on a route using what is called the "Kenilworth corridor". Freight will either be co-located next to the LRT line or rerouted through St. Louis Park.

A new study has now proposed that freight could be routed through St. Louis Park by building a new bridge over HWY 7, taking out a number of commercial buildings, INCLUDING STEP, and routing up past the High School on the old MN&S line.

- What do you need to do? Get involved. Learn about the line, understand what is happening and voice your concerns politely when given the opportunity.

Attend open houses and talk to the members of the Met Council that will make this decision.

Monday, February 10, 2014, 6:00 – 9:30 p.m.
Dunwoody College of Technology, Decker Auditorium
818 Dunwoody Boulevard, Minneapolis [[Google Map](#)]
Park in west lot, enter via west entrance.

Wednesday, February 12, 2014, 6:00 – 9:30 p.m.
St. Louis Park Senior High School, Carl A. Holmstrom Auditorium
6425 West 33rd Street, St. Louis Park [[Google Map](#)]
Park in west lot or on street; enter via School District office door (#2) or main foyer entrance (#5).

- Make comments on line by February 21st:
<http://metro council.org/Transportation/Projects/Current-Projects/Southwest-LRT/Engineering/StudyComments.aspx?source=child>
- Read the draft report: <http://metro council.org/Transportation/Projects/Current-Projects/Southwest-LRT/Publications-And-Resources/Engineering/SWLRT-Draft-Report-of-Independent-Freight-Rail-Loc.aspx>

I want to point out several things that were brought up by Jim Terry, the rail consultant during his presentation last night:

-The TC&W has not yet agreed to this reroute, despite comments in the report to the contrary.

-The plan calls for taking the STEP building, the STEP parking lot across the street and closing both Walker and West Lake Street due to a berm that needs to be above grade. The rail will be at about 6 feet above grade at Walker and about 2 feet above grade where STEP is.

-The report does not include any values from property takes or relocation of those businesses. It is estimated that this will add approximately \$50 million to \$105 million rail construction costs.

-Noise and Vibration analysis has not been addressed by the consultant.

-The trend in the Rail industry is toward heavier loads, longer trains, heavier locomotives and 100 car unit trains. This is the type of traffic we can expect on this line.

I keep hearing that EQUITY is a really big deal as a part of the light rail project. If that is true, then taking down STEP, the safety net of our community, should be a last resort. Co-location of light rail and freight in Kenilworth with a shallow tunnel is a good solution that we all need to support.

Lastly, I want to point out to everyone, that co-location will put the LRT trains in a tunnel and keep Kenilworth very much like it is today. If freight gets rerouted through SLP, then Kenwood does not get a tunnel. All 220 Light Rail trains a day through Kenilworth will be on the surface. The vast majority of people in Kenwood do not want 220 Light Rail trains a day at grade. Therefore, if a reroute happens, Kenwood loses, St. Louis Park loses and STEP loses. Why would anyone support a reroute?

Curt Rahman, Treasurer of STEP and a member of the SWLRT BAC

I will leave you with an excerpt from an email I got from Dick Parsons, the Chair of the Board of STEP and the Leader of the group that found our building for us:

One of the things I learned from leading the multiple year effort that culminated in the purchase of 6812 West Lake Street, is that it was almost impossible to find buildings in SLP that were available, suitably sized, affordable, on a bus line, centrally located, with adequate parking that served STEP's needs. Obviously, STEP is not the only one impacted by this plan and is not as big a deal as the school - but it does provide service to over 4,000 people each year who are the most vulnerable in our community.

I know you are very aware of the scope of STEP's services and fully supportive what it does in the community. I'll defer to you and what you think the best course of action would be to make sure STEP has a voice at the table.

Thanks for listening.

Dick Parsons, Chair of the Board of STEP

Email 007

From: Jane Dewing
Sent: Thursday, February 06, 2014 1:25 PM
To: swlrt
Subject: freight reroute

Although I live in St Louis Park I have always been of the opinion that the reroute is the best option in spite of our city council's opinion. However, I wonder if anyone has thought of rerouting the train before it gets to the cities. I've looked at railroad maps and I see that there's a connection point out towards Wilmar. There may even be others further down. I wouldn't think that the trains stop in any of the little towns between here and there and rerouting through an unpopulated area would eliminate some of the contention.

Thanks,

Email 008

From: Rodgers Adams
Sent: Thursday, February 06, 2014 11:14 AM
To: swlrt
Subject: consultant's freight rail report

I didn't see any reference in the consultant's draft report regarding the number of light rail stations that would be adjacent to freight tracks in each of the preferred options. Isn't there a safety and access issue when the two are located together? (And a cost factor, if the solution is to build pedestrian overpasses or elevators.) Perhaps I've overlooked something in the draft report, but, if not, it seems reasonable to ask the consultant to include this issue as the draft is revised.

Rodge Adams

Email 009

From: Sandy Sailer
Sent: Monday, February 10, 2014 8:19 PM
To: swlrt
Subject: Impact on the water by Lake of the Isles and Cedar Lake.

I am very distressed after learning about the meeting that took place this evening regarding the impact on the water by Lake of the Isles and Cedar Lake. The Lakes in Minneapolis are a treasure to the Twin Cities. People flock from all over the area just to enjoy the beauty of the lakes. Unless the lakes can be 100% protected, I am not in favor of this project!

Thank you for your time.

Sandy Sailer

Email 010

From: philsharyll
Sent: Friday, February 07, 2014 3:16 PM
To: Seth Rowe
Cc: swlrt
Subject: Re: St. Louis Park Schools and Freight Train Rerouting

I made a typing mistake. The quote should read “....easier than moving the rail line.” Sharyll Smith

From: [Seth Rowe](#)
Sent: Friday, February 07, 2014 11:44 AM
To:
Cc: [swlrt](#)
Subject: Re: St. Louis Park Schools and Freight Train Rerouting

As a point of clarification, this quote appears on Page 20 of the TranSystems draft report in the company's analysis of "the various Brunswick options."

Seth Rowe
Community Editor
Sun-Sailor

On Feb 7, 2014, at 10:39 AM, philsharyll wrote:

St. Louis Park Freight Rail Rerouting –

In the [St. Louis Park Sun Sailor](#) of February 6, 2014, Seth Rowe quoted TransSystems Senior Vice President Jim Terry, who said, “ Relocating schools would not be a simple matter, either, but in our opinion would be easier the moving the rail line.”

I am highly offended by this statement. As a tax-paying citizen of St. Louis Park, since 1970, I place an extremely high value on our school system. As a retired Senior Librarian of the Hennepin County Library System, I value education as the best way to help society. As a parent of two children who graduated from the St. Louis Park school system, and who, together with their friends from St. Louis Park, have gone on to lead successful lives, I value the specific St. Louis Park School System highly. Now, as a Literacy 1st and ELL volunteer working with today's St. Louis Park students, I look forward to continuing this valuable education in our community. Future St. Louis Park students deserve a safe, quiet place to continue their education and the excellent St. Louis Park High School and other St. Louis Park schools that are affected are now such places and should remain so in the future. Please, please, think about the future of our community and find an alternative to the freight reroute alternative that is so close to St. Louis Park Schools!

Sharyll Smith, citizen of St. Louis Park

Email 011

From: JoAnn Schultz

Sent: Saturday, February 08, 2014 9:56 PM

To: CMs

Subject: St. Louis Park reroute

1. I do not see how the new reroute plan is any different than the ones before it. It may or may not allow long freight trains to run, but like the other plans, it presents all kinds of detrimental effects for St. Louis Park. All the reroute options presented through the years have been drawn up by “experts”. This new consultant isn’t any better than the others with his use of inaccuracies and Google Maps. This new reroute is a cross between the first rejected reroute and rejected Brunswick reroute. It just takes different homes and businesses while destroying much of the city. He sells his so called viable plan as he presents a “concept”, then drawings days later then more detailed necessities even later. The more time that goes by, there more takings and improvements than originally thought, makes his original cost estimate completely made up.
2. The media has people to believe that SLP does not currently have these trains. The trains do currently run through SLP on the exact same tracks that lead into the Kenilworth Corridor. The plan that is opposed is to turn them North through the city using the MN&S route, where they currently do not run. The MN&S tracks are not adequate for the trains to be moved and the repeated reroute plans continue to try making them so. The media also has people to believe that it is a choice between the freight or LRT on the East - West route, which is also not true. There is perfect room to run both at grade, move the trail or dig tunnels for lrt.
3. The MN&S tracks were not built as a heavy freight railway yet it proposed to be one. Even going South through Edina and Bloomington, the consultant states that those tracks were built as a passenger train route. These are the same tracks through SLP with the same reason for being built – it was built long ago as a passenger train route. It has never carried and never been adequate for heavy freight. This is a convenient aspect that is omitted or denied only when it comes to SLP. Even the consultant implies SLP is against “more trains”, which is not the case.
4. There are two proposed bridges for SLP, one going North and one that would go South. It appears the North bridge creates another turn and grade change, things they are trying to avoid. Highway 7 needs to be lowered for the bridge. The trains must labor up hill while turning, creating way too much noise for the area that is currently pretty quiet, even with the smaller trains that go by. It eliminates homes, businesses, and a school. One of the criteria for eliminating options was the taking of property, yet doesn’t seem to apply with St. Louis Park. The Southern connects takes more property. The taking of property does not enhance the lives of SLP, especially when the property is replaced by heavy freight we do not have long that line.
5. Once the trains turn North off of Hwy 7, the route North will introduce the type trains never experienced up through that part of the city. Trains will go from 10 cars to 110 cars. The trains will be longer, louder, and create more vibration on the older homes in the area in addition to devaluing property for all the homeowners up the city. This does nothing to enhance our lives, only downgrades it. Taking property to make adequate room for a new route is a criteria for option elimination, except when it comes to SLP.
6. Upgrading the tracks while smoothing out curves & grade changes for a track close to schools, homes and businesses is just trying to make the MN&S route something it is not. The long trains just don’t fit through neighborhoods of the city. Instead of saying the MN&S route is not viable, like other reroute options, continuous recreating of reroute options continue to appear and appear and appear. I thought the consultant was kidding when he mentioned moving the

schools but he was not. With the new reroute plan, there will still be berms, though this consultant calls them retaining walls. These are necessary because of the grade changes that exist on the MN&S tracks. The landscape along the reroute will change dramatically and will downgrade the city rather than enhance it. Raising the tracks will effect the area by both possibly allowing the heavier trains to travel where they currently do not and also be an eyesore with the retaining wall and railway for heavy freight right next to homes. The requirement for route criteria is that the new route must create undue impacts to the communities, which is ignored when it comes to SLP because the impacts of this reroute plan is dramatic and all negative

7. The safety ideas are presented like they are good things. The closing of roads make mobility limited. It is proposed we have 2 crossing along the entire length of the city. This includes vehicles, pedestrians, bicycles and emergency vehicles. This downgrades the life of St. Louis Park residents, it does nothing to enhance it. Again, community impact doesn't appear to be considered for SLP communities. Any safety concerns are readily dismissed. This is not acceptable.
8. The proposed fence along the right of way is terrible and snakes around the city like a dump. You can't travel around the city by car or bike, so they are going to make sure you can't walk it either. The fence is in blue on exhibit 5 of the reroute proposal. It is not even a straight line down the tracks, but an outline of the right of way which goes this way and that way in some areas. Again, this does nothing to enhance the city but rather is a detrimental effect making our communities look ghastly.
9. Please leave St. Louis Park alone and stop the reroute nonsense. It makes no sense and I have become totally appalled by the politics involved over the years. When redeveloping areas, it should enhance our lives and improve livability. This reroute does the exact opposite and that is not acceptable.
10. I'm also offended with the appearance of preference for Kenilworth residents. These would be the people near the "pinch point", the few blocks of the route that causes problems because of the trail. The consultant mentions them several times in his report. Once he mentions them because they would be better off with a reroute since freight impacts community cohesion there, and another because of their pride of "housing stock". SLP may be working class and not rich, but that doesn't mean we are not proud also. It also doesn't mean we should be thrown under the bus for this project. That is just wrong.

Sincerely,
JoAnn Schultz
resident of St. Louis Park

Email 012

From: Karen Karnowski
Sent: Tuesday, February 11, 2014 10:06 PM
To: swlrt
Subject: Southwest Light Rail

I am against the Southwest Light Rail going through Kenilworth. it would destroy to many thing, home and the beauty of that area that are not being addressed.

thank you
Karen

Email 013

From: Maria Meade
Sent: Tuesday, February 11, 2014 3:32 PM
To: swlrt
Subject: Light Rail Corridor

Is this the only option you can come up with for building the light rail?
I will lose my apt if you build this.
In the Spring the loons still stop on Cedar Lake on their return trip north. They won't anymore.
We have a unique asset in our lakes.
There are better commuter routes than ones that threaten the serenity of this unique area of our city.
Not everyone is affluent who lives here, no matter how you try to trump up that this is about privileged selfish wealthy people trying to protect their utopia.
You are planning on going ahead with a plan that (contrary to what you've been telling us) will have profound affect on our beautiful lakes.
You are an unelected council with way too much power it appears.
If you were staring at these plans going though your yard I doubt you would be so callous and complacent.
It does not directly affect you, so why should you care.
Our taxes will pay for a line that could be built on a main corridor like they did on University Ave in St Paul.
Why couldn't we have chosen a main street or highway?
Why disturb our unique city with its Lakes?
I think there are other routes that would work.
You don't care I know...and my words are a waste of time.
Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android

Email 014

On Feb 17, 2014, at 6:42 PM, "Patricia Neal" <> wrote:

Please forward to the appropriate people.

I appreciate the extensive work the Met Council has undergone to research the best options for an accessible, efficient LRT metro system and the goal of increasing equity through our metro region. The conversation of creating the conditions for equity is a game-changer, possibly transformational for our region.

Regarding the Southwest LRT plans, you are at the point of finalizing decisions for the next 3-4 generations of not only humans but of the local environment.

I have been following the meetings via friends, STRIB, and MPR, and attended the recent meeting at Dunwoody and then followed the results of the next meeting in St Louis Park.

Reflections:

I've been hearing from my Kenwood and SLP friends about the feelings of win/lose. Kenilworth wins/SLP

loses or SLP wins/Kenilworth loses, and Eden Prairie wins no matter what.

Each community has very valid lists of opposition, but how are we to truly know the longitudinal ramifications of either decision? In the meantime, we are left to try to understand and manage what we do know, which is limited to our neighborhoods.

You say you want feedback, but never heard what exact feedback would make any difference. Questions were answered but the answers reflected decisions already made. There was no seeming mechanism for the feedback to be utilized, other than to register support/opposition for the 2 options.

At our meeting Fran Davis suggested 1 meeting under 1 roof for everyone. That way, we'd be hearing our neighbors, not blaming our neighbors. Instead, we are set up to be pitted against each other.

There is no reason for this to happen.

Can we get ONE meeting?

Put us in one room with a bunch of good facilitators sprinkled around the room, not just one at the front.

*Add visuals/artist renderings to what each solution looks like, re: the SLP city website.

Mix us up into small groups to have facilitated conversation.

It's potentially risky, but this is big. You need all of our support to succeed not only with this project, but going forward.

Thank you,
Patricia Neal

Email 015

From: Thomas Bacheller
Sent: Saturday, February 15, 2014 9:28 AM
To: swlRt
Subject: +++ Please do NOT build SW Light rail +++

Our precious lakes must be preserved. Our awesome bike trails are a huge asset to the City of Minneapolis.

This project is way too expensive and can't come close to supporting itself.

Stop thinking so foolishly. Stop SW light rail lines.

Thomas T Bacheller

Email 016

From: judy coughlin
Sent: Thursday, February 13, 2014 10:14 AM

To: swlrt
Subject: Southwest Light Rail going through Kenilworth

Hi, please note I have lived in the Cedar Lake Area for 13 years and I am against this option. The reason I moved here was for the Chain of Lakes biking and running options. I also feel it would disrupt natural parkland. and noise, thanks Judy

judy coughlin

Email 017

From: Steve
Sent: Wednesday, February 12, 2014 6:43 PM
To: swlrt
Subject: Comment on draft report.

I am at the Feb. 12 meeting at SLP High School. What i don't get is that the freight routing analysis powerpoint says at the end "2 routes are viable". It seems to me that this is a recommendation. This might not of been intended but this doesn't look good. It appears that a decision has been made.
Thanks, Steve

Email 018

From: Leynia
Sent: Wednesday, February 12, 2014 8:15 PM
To: Brimeyer, James
Subject: freight rail

Dear James,

If the railroading of SLP passes, homeowners will never get our investments back out of our homes. The decrease in home values will reduce the property taxes, further spiraling down the value of our good city.

Regards,

Ellen Lipschultz

Email 019

From: Joyce Murphy
Sent: Wednesday, February 05, 2014 8:06 PM
To: PublicInfo
Subject: Fwd: LRT questions

To All whom this concerns,

Here are some questions that need to be asked about this contentious situation concerning the planned LRT light rail line being put forth at this time.

What is wrong with keeping the situation on the Kenilworth trail as it now exists? It seems to be very successful as it now stands. What we are being told is that it must be destroyed so that rail freight and a light rail line should be put in place of the trail. Many people are going all out to keep things just as they now exist. People are using this trail for biking, walking, hiking and using the trail for biking to their jobs in downtown Minneapolis. Why should we be tearing it apart when it seems to be working very well?

My next question is why was this trail built in the first place if we were going to use the area as a light rail line at some point in the future? Why didn't we save it for that purpose and keep it unused as a rail line property in waiting. Also why were people allowed to build houses in this area if there were other plans for its use? Within the last two years there was a house torn down and replaced with a brand new house. How was this allowed to happen if the light rail lines were imminent? This plan has been lurking for the past 31 years, that's right 31 years. At some point in time in the past someone would have said, "Hey! This land is reserved for light rail use only" so don't go building stuff on it and we have to save it for that purpose when the time is ready. A simple statement that was never made by those in the know.

What we are seeing now is the result of all this bamboozlement with the truth and people fighting to keep what has been created and is in place.

We have spent thousands of dollars in studies to find a viable way to build light rail and keep the area for the homes and trails that were allowed to be built but no reasonable solution is forthcoming.

Meanwhile no one wants to listen to the people whose rights and homes will be stepped on and homes destroyed.

And finally I have heard that the people of Eden Prairie and points west do have good bus service which is being used to get them to Minneapolis. The bus service can be expanded if needed for much less than a billion dollars. They are not sitting in their homes by the fire out of work because they cannot get to Minneapolis. So maybe NO light invasive and expensive light rail is the best and least combative plan of all.

Joyce Murphy

Email 020

From: Sarai Brenner

Sent: Saturday, February 22, 2014 5:25 AM

To: swlrt

Subject: Kenilworth colocation

I am against Co-Location of LRT and Freight in the Kenilworth Corridor. Given the refusal of the freight company to agree to relocate freight, the danger of collocating them and the concerns over damage to our lakes and parks in Minneapolis, I hope that Minneapolis will deny Municipal Consent for any proposal of Co-Location of LRT and freight in the Kenilworth Corridor. This includes the proposed "shallow tunnel" option alongside the freight line. This "option" is Co-Location, violates past promises for freight relocation, will dramatically adversely impact the Kenilworth Corridor and Cedar Lake Park system as well as surrounding communities and provides little benefit to the citizens of Minneapolis. Bottom line: it is NOT a good deal for Minneapolis and we should not approve. We are better running

LRT at grade without freight, and that is what we agreed to originally. Kenilworth would be asked to take ALL the costs with NO benefits. The danger of colocation is clear. To run them side by side less than 12 feet from center track to center track) would increase the danger of yet again another disastrous derailment, this time within tens of feet of people's homes, and the tunnels do nothing to rectify this since much of the alignment is still at grade around the channel. The whole process by which this has been done is a travesty, and Minneapolis agreed to the LRT ONLY under the scenario of no colocation, and we should only agree to proceed if the Met Council stands by their original promise to relocate freight. This is a lose lose scenario for Minneapolis, and to allow colocation to proceed would be a travesty.

Sincerely,

Sarai Brenner
Sent from my iPad

Email 021

From: Mark Sawinski
Sent: Friday, February 21, 2014 7:42 PM
To: swlrt
Subject: Freight Rail Comment

The SLWRT analysis paralysis has gone on far too long.

The Met Council vote was taken. Politics came in to play yet again to suppress the Met Council's decision to keep freight and tunnel ight rail in Kennelworth. Decades have past and millions have been spent researching this line time and time again.

In fact, this project has outlasted project architect and proponent Gail Dorfman since her days as SLP mayor, County Commissioner and now non profit employee.

Governor Dayton extended the timeline adding even more costs to this already over budgeted and analyzed project and has even jeopardized it through Federal funding sunset dates.

It would've been easy to keep freight rail and light rail safe and economical at grade on the Kennelworth corridor by simply moving the bike trail. Common sense, practicality and budget consideration has gone out the window on this one.

St. Louis Park doesn't want freight rail relocation and taxpayers don't want this nonsense to go on.

Mark Sawinski
SLP resident

Email 022

From: Mary Beth
Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2014 12:17 PM

To: James
Subject: SWLRT

Hello Jim,

From: Mary Gaines
Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2014 12:09 PM
To: Haigh, Susan
Subject: SWLRT comment

Hello Susan,

Please do not destroy STEP, our local food shelf by voting in favor of the current proposed train reroute. They serve over 4000 st louis park residents. More than one fourth of the children who attend our great SLP schools receive food and services from STEP.

A bike trail cannot mean more than food on these people's tables. Please.

Thank you,
Mary Beth Gaines

Email 023

From: Andrew Shireman
Sent: Thursday, January 30, 2014 8:25 AM
To: Shireman, Mark
Subject: Move the Bikepath over for LRT

You can forward this e-mail to the committee if you would like.

Like my dad was saying, just move the bike path over through the Kennilworth Corridor. That right-of-way was set aside for future light rail. It is so inexpensive to move a bike path over than it is to relocate Twin Cities & Western and build the LRT under Lake of the Isles. Like my grandma used to tell me...keep it simple.

Just move the bike path and keep freight rail and light rail on the HCRRA property.

Otherwise, use commuter rail from Target Field on the BNSF Wayzata Sub to reach the HCRRA rails at Cedar Lake Jct. and ultimately TCWR trackage at Beltline. From there the commuter trains can use TCWR trackage out to Chanhassen or possibly Chaska to serve people out in the Jonathan area. Heavy welded rail and automated block signaling would have to be installed on TCWR and HCRRA trackage, but definitely something to consider since none of the bike trail system would be affected.

Another idea would be to have the Southwest line branch off the Blue Line/Hiawatha Line near the Lake Street station and use the old Milwaukee Road's 29th Street Depression from Hiawatha Ave. to join up with HCRRA property near Calhoun Square. REMEMBER...regardless of whether LRT trains use the Kennilworth or Midtown Greenway corridors, people are going to have to give up some of their bike paths. This is part of the mission of the Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority.

Thank you for your time.

Email 024

From: Shireman, Mark
To: Nyquist, Daren; Pfeiffer, Daniel; Ginis, Sophia
Subject: Southwest LRT Ideas from experts in the Twin Cities
Date: Thursday, January 23, 2014 2:36:56 PM

Hi Outreach Coordinators!

I am writing to you on the behalf of a group of individuals who are experts in the topic of both railroad history and how to best utilize trackage rights. There is a diverse group of railfans and citizens of the west metro area that meet and discuss the usage of railroads as a hobby and passion.

Our suggestions are as follows regarding the southwest corridor for commuting:

1. Keep in mind that the right of way trails were set aside for future railway usage. People who built close to these right of ways knew that and took a calculated risk. They need to deal with the traffic and noise for the public good.
2. The rails would be best suited as commuter (NOT light rail) rail from downtown Minneapolis directly to Chaska along the main right of way that was set aside for this purpose.
3. The Midtown Greenway should be utilized as part of the route.
4. As citizens of the western suburbs AND bicycle enthusiasts AND walkers, the best option in the tight areas near West Lake Station, Beltline Station, etc is to MOVE THE BIKEPATH OVER and let the freight trains and commuter trains use the right of way which was the best route many decades ago and still is. Bikeways and trains and walkers can co-exist but the trains should have the right of ways.
5. Use the BNSF route to Cedar Lake Junction and then follow the TCW route to Chanhassan.
6. The diverted route to Opus, City West, Golden Triangle, Eden Prairie Town Center, Southwest Station, and Mitchell Station should not be the main route. It should be a feeder line or personalized rapid transit (PRT) that picks people up in their neighborhoods and delivers them to the Shady Oak Station.
7. Other former right of ways should be added to the system following this one.

Sincerely,

Mark Shireman
Minnetonka

Email 025

From: Shireman, Mark
Sent: Thursday, January 30, 2014 7:16 AM
To: Pfeiffer, Daniel
Subject: RE: Southwest LRT Ideas from experts in the Twin Cities

Thanks!

From: Pfeiffer, Daniel
Sent: Wednesday, January 29, 2014 3:44 PM
To: Shireman, Mark
Subject: RE: Southwest LRT Ideas from experts in the Twin Cities

Mark Shireman-

Thank you for your comments. Your comments have been noted in the project record.

From: Shireman, Mark
Sent: Wednesday, January 29, 2014 3:21 PM
To: Nyquist, Daren; Pfeiffer, Daniel; Ginis, Sophia
Subject: RE: Southwest LRT Ideas from experts in the Twin Cities

In addition, there are a few other things to point out in order to accommodate freight business, commuter rail, and cyclists/hobbyists along the same, shared routes:

- a. High costs for TCW Railroad if they have to haul long, heavy coal, grain, ethanol, DDG, or mixed freights on an alternate rail (The old Minneapolis, Northfield, and Southern Line through St. Louis Park.) Very bad choice!
- b. Very bad choice to build a tunnel under Lake of the Isles. TOTALLY UNNECESSARY!! See items below.

From: Shireman, Mark
Sent: Thursday, January 23, 2014 2:37 PM
To: 'Daren.Nyquist; 'Daniel.Pfeiffer; 'Sophia.Ginis'
Subject: Southwest LRT Ideas from experts in the Twin Cities

Hi Outreach Coordinators!

I am writing to you on the behalf of a group of individuals who are experts in the topic of both railroad history and how to best utilize trackage rights. There is a diverse group of railfans and citizens of the west metro area that meet and discuss the usage of railroads as a hobby and passion.

Our suggestions are as follows regarding the southwest corridor for commuting:

8. Keep in mind that the right of way trails were set aside for future railway usage. People who built close to these right of ways knew that and took a calculated risk. They need to deal with the traffic and noise for the public good.

9. The rails would be best suited as commuter (NOT light rail) rail from downtown Minneapolis directly to Chaska along the main right of way that was set aside for this purpose.
10. The Midtown Greenway should be utilized as part of the route. The Depression Corridor/29th Street Depression should be used from the Hiawatha Line near Hiawatha Avenue and Lake Street to the west.
11. As citizens of the western suburbs AND bicycle enthusiasts AND walkers, the best option in the tight areas near West Lake Station, Beltline Station, etc is to MOVE THE BIKEPATH OVER and let the freight trains and commuter trains use the right of way which was the best route many decades ago and still is. Bikeways and trains and walkers can co-exist but the trains should have the right of ways.
12. Use the BNSF route to Cedar Lake Junction and then follow the TCW route to Chanhassan. Hook the commuter train lines from Target Field to the BNSF route to the TCW route and upgrade the BNSF, TCW and Canadian Pacific rails to continuous, 115 pound or more welded rail the entire way. Install Centralized Traffic Control or at least some sort of Automated Block Signaling protection as far as Chanhassan or even Chaska where commuter train s could even serve the Jonathan commercial area of Chaska.
13. The diverted route to Opus, City West, Golden Triangle, Eden Prairie Town Center, Southwest Station, and Mitchell Station should not be the main route. It should be a feeder line or personalized rapid transit (PRT) that picks people up in their neighborhoods and delivers them to the Shady Oak Station.
14. Other former right of ways should be added to the system following this one.

I am surprised I have not heard from any of the three of you.

Sincerely,
Mark Shireman
Minnetonka

Email 026

From: Fran Schmit
Sent: Tuesday, February 25, 2014 11:07 PM
To: swlRt
Subject: SWLRT

I have enclosed a note to the Council in hopes that it will be read and understood.
Thank you for the opportunity to comment.
Fran Schmit

We are all completely aware of the politics driving the effort to remove the freight trains from the area. Gail Dorfmann said it many times over the years that "it was a done deal" - -so we should just shut up and roll over. Since the politicians refuse to be named (Gail and RT Ryback are the 'front' people) we can do nothing but resist. There is no reason, on the table, to move the trains....and certainly no reason to run the trains up and over St Louis Park. The City Council of St Louis Park and the School board and many concerned citizens have stated over the years that co-location is required. Make it so.

Email 027

From: Christine Werner
Sent: Tuesday, February 25, 2014 1:57 PM
To: swlrt
Subject: SLP reroute

Hello,

I live in SLP on the proposed reroute line. I love my neighborhood and don't want to see it decimated by the proposed reroute. I just don't understand how we can still be considering something that is fraught with so many potential problems and unknowns, when a proposal like moving the bike trail exists that cost far less. I love the bike trail too, but I don't love it enough to put my house and family in danger.

I am guessing if this freight came right past your house you would feel differently and might start looking at the safety of a few people as important as the convenience of many.

Christine Werner

Email 028

From: Kay Drache
Sent: Tuesday, February 25, 2014 11:48 AM
To: swlrt
Subject: Freight Rail Comment

Greetings,

I am writing to urge you to drop all consideration of relocating freight rail within Saint Louis Park. The numerous problems and unneeded expenses associated with these options should make it obvious that any of the colocation options, from the least expensive (move the bike trail, which was created as a temporary convenience after Hennepin County purchased the corridor) to the shallow or deep tunnels, are better choices. When ALL expenses are considered (property takes, mitigation) the colocation options represent the safest and most cost effective choices.

Respectfully,

Kay E. Drache

When you absolutely, positively, have to know... ask a librarian.

Email 029

From: Louise Kurzeka
Sent: Tuesday, March 04, 2014 12:07 AM
To: swlrt
Subject: comments on TranSystems re-route option

The new option offered by TranSystems for re-routing freight traffic through St. Louis Park simply presents the same safety issues of previous re-route options along with a variety of new issues related

to traffic disruption and displacement of one school as well as the St. Louis Park Emergency program - an essential city resource which only recently was able to buy property for a permanent home.

The most recent option for re-routing freight through St. Louis Park offered by TranSystems has solved none of the major safety issues voiced by the SLP community over the past four years and creates additional issues by displacing one school from its premises as well as the St. Louis Park emergency program - an essential city resource that only recently found and was able to purchase a permanent location. The plan also disrupts traffic patterns around the high school through road closures that would add significantly to congestion by forcing all traffic leaving the high school track side lot down Library Lane and making it impossible for school buses to efficiently line up for the end of day pick up. These circumstances will end up costing residents more in taxes to offset increased transportation costs and decreased property tax revenues from dislocated businesses.

Furthermore, I find it troubling that the Met Council has engineered an option for colocation that takes in Minneapolis residents concerns for the aesthetics of light rail trains on the landscape but has thought nothing about the aesthetics of two story berms cutting through St. Louis Park or in this case now, huge raised bridges needed to bring the track alignment on each side of Hwy 7 high enough to accommodate a reroute.

All of these options for re routing through St. Louis Park are unacceptable and need to be removed from consideration. If a second route option beyond the shallow tunnel colocation option is needed then the Met Council should look at the option for removing the bike path for the short distance required to collocate.

Sincerely,
Louise Kurzeka

Email 030

From: Deanna
Sent: Monday, February 24, 2014 8:59 PM
To: Brimeyer, James
Subject: Thoughts on the SWLRT discussion

Hello Mr. Brimeyer,

I would imagine you are flooded with letters about the upcoming SWLRT decision. I have some thoughts to send along to you, too. I appreciate your time and diligence in listening to all community members affected by this tough decision.

Thank you in advance for time,

Deanna Plant

Email 031

From: The OKHouse
Sent: Monday, February 24, 2014 5:42 PM

To: swlrt
Subject: Freight Rail Comment

Hello,

We are 24 year residents of XXXX Zarthan Ave South in St. Louis Park. We are four blocks from the freight rail crossing at Wooddale and Highway 7 and five blocks from the crossing at Mc Donald's and the High School.

Has every person who has signed their name to any piece of paper involved in the decision of the freight rail versus the light rail placement actually walked in this area? If not, they should. And while they are here imagine it is their family, their children, their grandparents and friends that live in and go to school here.

Do they want their toddler and elementary student attending a school where right outside is a two-story high freight rail track? Recess has to be scheduled around the train schedule. What happens when that train derailes? Do they want their high school student attending the school where the rail track is right outside of their door? Do they want to attend football games under a rail track? Or, there is no football program because there is no safe place to practice and other teams don't want to come to a place that is not safe.

Or, does their brother, sister, friend, grandparent live near the track that goes by the high school? The track that was only made to be used for electric trains years ago? The track that has multiple curves?

Sure, you can demolish an entire small community - two schools, dry cleaners, two vehicle repair shops, a dog care business, a McDonalds (where the young kids gather), a yogurt shop where the kids gather to discuss their school assignments, a community service program (STEP) that has finally found a permanent building and location to serve those in need. And what you get in return is a big blank space with a two story berm with freight trains.

You can say the trains will go slower - are you going to be riding along with them to keep them going slow when they are behind schedule? When they are having a bad day and not paying attention? When the track is not in good condition but they have not been made aware of it? We put a lot of trust in those engineers but as time shows mistakes are made. Do you want to be one of the ones responsible for making the decision to put trains and tracks where safety a few feet from the track is a concern?

The only way it can be more inexpensive to reroute the train through St. Louis Park rather than the Kenilworth area is by demolishing the St. Louis Park area. Who is going to pay for new schools? Or to heavily update the schools already here. Who is going to help the businesses relocate and not be financially ruined? Who is going to help the residents whose homes are of much less value or no value?

Have they walked to Kenilworth area? There are not houses and schools located almost on top of the tracks. Yes, there are some houses/condos that may have to be demolished. There is more green space that has trees that should be removed and replaced. It has been shown that freight rail, light rail and the bicycle path can all be there together. Do huge areas of homes, schools and businesses need to be demolished?

Both options are not the greatest. You are trying to place the LRT in established residential areas. One area has a population with income and homes that are above average. The other area has income, homes, schools and business that are average. But, if this is to go forward what area is going to have the least interruption to it's residents and still be a safe place for all?

It has not been an easy decision for you to make. I hope that you will listen to every resident of each area and put yourself in their shoes. I hope that each of you will be completely comfortable in the decision that is made. Many residents lives are in your hands.

Sandy Kline

Email 032

From: William Hume

Sent: Friday, February 21, 2014 10:51 AM

To: swlrt

Subject: Freight Rail Comment! from a journalist

2/21/2014

Metro Transit:

Being a newspaper journalist myself these days, concerning national high-speed rail issues and a retired gentleman from a long career in infrastructure build/land surveyor for civil engineering, I do understand the challenges regarding planning and construction of large transit infrastructure.

In proper perspective; the Twin Cities is rushing to judgment concerning light-rail transportation and perceived public need. During my review of this project, gathered mostly from local media, I find no "professional scientific calculations" or professional forecast for the future of this LRT route!

Rather than elected officials catering to special interest politics, we should have rational transit planning based upon initial build costs, future maintenance and numbers of actual commuters that may use this alternative form of transportation.

The brutal reality of factual socio-economic-demographics defines the Hiawatha LRT and the University Ave., Minneapolis/St. Paul LRT as good choices. These light-rail units move lower income types and short travelers to destinations without expensive vehicles this social strata can't afford! These route constructions were actually great planning!

SW LRT is simply not needed. A better solution would be BRT highly efficient eco-motor buses traveling on more streets to the wealthy southwestern suburbs...an example of this pragmatic thinking is the recent decision by the "Red Rock transit planners" to decline rail in place of a fleet of BRT! Excellent choice by this group.

Save money by switching to BRT for the SW route direction! This will actually create more stops and more frequent pick-up points for riders.

We are the moderately sized mid-western Twin Cities. We are NOT Chicago! We don't need what the big

towns need transportation wise.

A wide ranging public referendum vote would be revealing, if you so choose to connect with your constituency.

Email 033

From: Kelly Kubacki

Sent: Friday, February 21, 2014 11:51 AM

To: swlrt

Subject: Freight Rail Comment

Dear Met Council Members,

With a remarkable feeling of déjà vu, I write to you today to voice my concerns, disapproval and frustration with the “new” proposed freight rail reroute plan.

To preface, I live on Library Lane close to the high school football field. The freight traffic that has been coming through with increased frequency over the last few months (the horn blowing at 11:30pm the other night woke me up) is already a growing nuisance. I cannot even fathom how much worse it will be if freight were to be rerouted.

It’s frustrating that we keep reexamining ideas to find some magical solution when there is a best case scenario solution already on the table – the use of shallow tunnels. As Mark Fuhrmann has stated, “The shallow tunnel option is the best option because it ensures conditions in the Kenilworth neighborhood will be the most similar to existing conditions today.”

It seems that in a state like Minnesota where we look out for our neighbors, everyone would be incensed that there was an option to relocate freight rail traffic to another city through two schools, requiring the acquisition of numerous homes and businesses, when there was an option that would not require people losing their homes or hard fought small businesses, and would not jeopardize the education of our children.

I’m also confused as to why anyone would feel St. Louis Park should take the untold risk and cost of the aforementioned property acquisitions, cost of human life when the freight rail inevitably derails from its 19 foot elevation, crashing into a high school, elementary school and/or citizens’ homes, and the sizeable decrease in property value. Are the lives and homes of St. Louis Park residents so unimportant to our fellow Minnesotans that people will stop at nothing to ensure the freight rail is relocated?

To be frank, I’m in complete shock anyone remains so committed to dismissing any discussion of a tunnel option in an effort to ensure the freight rail relocation happens. As a proud member of the DFL party, I’ve endorsed the principles that every person matters, that children and education are important, and that supporting small businesses keeps our economy strong. It is simply incomprehensible that anyone would be willing to place the lives of people on the line, jeopardize the safety and education of our children, and completely destroy the American dream so many people have worked hard to build (in terms of owning a home and/or small business).

I keep searching for anything that would allow me to understand why some Minneapolis residents are opposed to the shallow tunnel option. Thus far, the comments seem to be “we were promised the freight traffic would be gone” or “we’re concerned about the lakes” which appears to now be a non-issue thanks to the additional study performed and highlighted at the last Met Council public meeting.

I hope you take my comments and those of other St. Louis Park residents to heart. Please don’t destroy our wonderful community by rerouting freight rail.

Sincerely,

Kelly Kubacki, Esq.

Email 034

From: Mary Gaines

Sent: Friday, February 21, 2014 11:57 AM

To: swlrt

Subject: Reroute is expensive and dangerous

Hello Metro Transit,

I am very disappointed in your team. How can you be so cruel as to say the children and safety of St Louis Park are not "getting in line" with the LRT. Clearly you are not looking at the facts.

There are no schools within less than 100 feet of any track in Minneapolis Kenilworth corridor. Please check your facts. Do not listen to hear- say.

The costs of a reroute you are sharing are not transparent and not complete. You are lying to the public by handing out financial figures that are not all inclusive. Check your facts and provide complete, honest, ethical answers to the tax paying citizens of MN.

St Louis Park, Hopkins and other wonderful tax paying cities are NOT stopping the progress. A co-location option, and several other safe and financially appealing options have been on the table (though taken off by you) for years. The LRT would be built by now if you had chosen one of these years ago, saved countless dollars and months/years of time. It is the Met Council and the Minneapolis politicians who have slowed the progress. Please be honest with us and yourselves about that fact.

If you cannot do your job honestly, and ethically, you should not be in it.

Please respond to the following:

1. How many feet away from freight tracks are all the schools along the freight line proposed.
2. What is the exact, full cost of a reroute, including home take, mitigation, business takes, food shelf take, and noise and vibration protection for all the schools along the line.
3. When exactly was the co-location option and moving the bike trail option put on the table? How many months has it been since then and why have your team delayed the project by not choosing that option?

Mary Beth Gaines

Email 035

From: Evelyn Turner

Sent: Tuesday, February 11, 2014 10:14 AM

To: swlrt

Subject: Kennilworth Corridor Plans

Please post on the SWLRT website the latest detailed plans for the shallow tunnel option. I'm looking for plans at the level of detail as those in Appendix F of the DEIS or similar that show locations of the tunnels (including portals), the freight rail, the paths and the property lines. (The more detail the better.)

I would also like information on the infiltration chambers:

- Are the tops of the chambers impervious?
- What is the total area of the chambers for each tunnel?
- Where are the likely or possible locations for the chambers?
- Would the chambers function if they were below the water table?
- What sort of planting would be allowed over the chambers?
- What sort of maintenance would the chambers require?

Also, where would any grit chambers (or other pretreatment facilities) be located?

These may seem miniscule details in the whole of the project, but I will be looking at and living with these details, not the whole project.

Email 036

From: Dave Lingo

Sent: Tuesday, February 18, 2014 9:20 AM

To: swlrt

Subject: Kenilworth Problem

WHY NOT SINGLE TRACK?

A while back a StarTribune reader who had lived in Europe wrote a letter about a possible solution to the present Kenilworth impasse: he suggested a one-track line through the bottleneck area and allowing only one train at a time to use the track through that area. It seems that would ameliorate the present crowding concern with both freight and LRT lines, and the bicycle trail. This would remove the necessity of one entire track in that congested area!

Would this work? I have heard no discussion of this. The reader said that in Europe, the one-way passenger train travel is done all the time, so it's nothing new. With modern signaling technology it would seem that one train at a time through that bottle-neck could work. It would save some money on track construction, although costs for signaling and train control would expand at that point.

I feel you ought to give this idea some consideration, even though it may be a bit unorthodox for LRT planners at this point, but the alternative increasingly is sounding like the entire project might be scrapped due to this vexing bottle-neck issue at the Kenilworth point. It wouldn't kill the LRT riders if they had their train stopped for a minute to allow another train heading the opposite direction to pass before moving onto the single track portion.

Actually, it's really sort of shame the train isn't planned to run south on Hennepin, then turn west on Lake Street and then onto the planned route. It seems like that would have had opportunities to go through much more traffic-dense sections of town and avoid altogether the Kenilworth debacle. Other issues would arise of course, but at least more people might have had the chance to hop on.

Suggestion: consider the single-track option at Kenilworth.

An LRT supporter,

Dave Lingo

From: Dave Lingo
Sent: Monday, March 03, 2014 11:35 AM
To: Ginis, Sophia
Subject: SWLRT Single Track

Sophia:

Thanks for the very complete answer to my email about possible single track operation at the Kenilworth bottleneck. For sure you guys have thought about it...I just hadn't heard or read about your efforts. Well, I hope you get it all figured out before the public loses interest and the project gets dropped. I am a firm believer that we need a regional LRT/Busway network sooner rather than later. I am looking forward to the new line on University Ave opening in June, and I'm sure that is going to be a huge success. Thanks for all your good work.

Dave Lingo

Email 037

From: Peter Lorvick
Sent: Thursday, February 20, 2014 4:41 PM
To: swlrt
Subject: Questions about the Southwest LRT Project

Hi,

I live just west of Cedar Lake in Saint Louis Park.
I walk Cedar Lake quite a bit in the warmer seasons.

I have wondered why Cedar Lake is the only Minneapolis city lake that does not have at least a walking path around the shoreline.

I have also wondered why there has been no discussion, that I am aware of, that looks at moving the existing walking paths/bike paths to around the lake, instead of moving the freight train lines.

--

Thanks,
Pete

Email 038

From: Tim Josephson
Sent: Thursday, February 20, 2014 5:01 PM
To: PublicInfo
Subject: Southwest transit corridor

In regards to southwest corridor and Kenilworth problems:

Run the route down the Midtown greenway to the Franklin station. Problems solved!
This route was originally meant for rail. High density housing along here will increase ridership.

Respectfully submitted:
Timothy Josephson
Roseville

Sent from my iPad

Email 039

From: Mike Robbins
Sent: Friday, February 21, 2014 9:03 AM
To: swlrt
Subject: Freight Rail and the SWLRT

Dear People,

Please do not allow the safety of thousands of children to be compromised by a re-route into St Louis Park. It is just wrong. Additionally the reroute would wipe out the local food shelf STEP. It would be heartless to sacrifice these two items because a few wealthy and well connected folks that live near the Kenilworth Railroad Corridor would like to put my community in peril rather than accept the safest route.

Thank you,

Mike Robbins
St Louis Park, MN 55416

Email 040

From: Sean Gilbertson
Sent: Friday, February 21, 2014 9:37 AM
To: swlrt
Cc: [newsroom](#); [stories](#); Safety In the Park; Mayor Jeff Jacobs; [betsy.hodges](#); [kate.brickman](#)
Subject: Re: SWLRT and St. Louis Park.

Thousands suffer and are put in danger to soothe the braying of a handful of wealthy loudmouths. This has been the case through much of history, but I like to think we as citizens at least have a voice in these decisions now.

It's offensive how transparent those in power are being with respect to the SWLRT "debate." All of the facts and all of the outcry is against putting the children of St. Louis Park in danger, but that doesn't stop people like Peter McLaughlin and Betsy Hodges from spraying their ignorance all over the toilet this project has become. They may as well just say "But what about the rich people in Kenwood?" rather

than trying to cobble together some semblance of cogent argument out of nonsense (Betsy Hodges didn't know whether passenger trains ran along the current line! This is our mayor!) and wasting all of our time.

Those of us in St. Louis Park will never stop fighting. We will never acquiesce. Those in Kenwood only care about 1% of their view being altered. Those bought by Kenwood only care about keeping their jobs. We in St. Louis Park care about the safety of our children and the economic viability and quality of life of our entire city.

Come on down to St. Louis Park. We'd love to talk with you about it.

Sean
55426

Email 041

From: Mark Sawinski
Sent: Friday, February 21, 2014 7:42 PM
To: swlrt
Subject: Freight Rail Comment

The SLWRT analysis paralysis has gone on far too long.

The Met Council vote was taken. Politics came in to play yet again to suppress the Met Council's decision to keep freight and tunnel ight rail in Kennelworth. Decades have past and millions have been spent researching this line time and time again.

In fact, this project has outlasted project architect and proponent Gail Dorfman since her days as SLP mayor, County Commissioner and now non profit employee.

Governor Dayton extended the timeline adding even more costs to this already over budgeted and analyzed project and has even jeopardized it through Federal funding sunset dates.

It would've been easy to keep freight rail and light rail safe and economical at grade on the Kennelworth corridor by simply moving the bike trail. Common sense, practicality and budget consideration has gone out the window on this one.

St. Louis Park doesn't want freight rail relocation and taxpayers don't want this nonsense to go on.

Mark Sawinski
SLP resident

Email 042

From: Bert Schmitt
Sent: Friday, February 21, 2014 1:34 PM
To: swlrt;
Subject: Freight rail reroute

Mc Laughhlin quote `` little cities `` should fall inline.

This once again underscores the arrogance and lack of understanding put forth from the MET council and it's representatives at the recent St. Louis Park meeting. I sat through the whole meeting (4 hours) and left with the feeling that nothing was accomplished and all our comments fell on deaf ears. Proven by the above quote.

One more time we will not be bullied and have an unsafe freight rail traffic routed through our town. I guess you missed the statement of fact by our mayor that consent for a reroute of rail traffic through St Louis Park will not be given.

Please resolve this issue by removing the reroute of freight rail traffic through St Louis Park from your self imposed limited options.

Bert Schmitt
St. Louis Park, MN 55416

Email 043

From: Sharon Lehrman
Sent: Friday, February 21, 2014 12:57 PM
To: swlrt
Subject: Freight reroute comments

Just like our SLP mayor Jeff Jacobs and our entire city council, our SLP school board, our STEP food shelf, the TC&W railroad, and thousands of other SLP residents, I am vehemently opposed to the freight reroute to St Louis Park.

The New Tran-Systems Plan is a disaster, and if built would undoubtedly create a tragic disaster. It's unbelievable it is being considered especially at this time of heightened rail safety awareness. To consider running heavy, long, loud, frequent, unsafe freight trains directly through our neighborhoods and school campuses is mind-boggling, especially given that it can all be alleviated by simply moving a bike trail. Please consider the following when making your decision that will affect our community forever.

- o The trains will run 75 feet from our high school, about the length of one rail car.
- o The trains will run adjacent to 5 schools and thousands of children.
- o The trains will run across Dakota Av. S where children/school buses cross in mass.
- o The trains will wipe out the STEP food shelf.
- o The trains will separate our high school from our athletic field.
- o The trains will wipe out several long standing SLP businesses.
- o The trains will create extremely high levels of noise and vibration next to our high school.
- o The trains' noise will increase massively over today due to the planned track incline.
- o The trains will run on dangerous reversing curves.
- o The trains will run on berms north of the high school in residents' backyards.
- o The trains will close Walker St, Library Ln, 28th, 29th streets
- o The trains will run an average of 253 railcars a day, vs. 28, a nearly tenfold increase.

- o The train track may someday be opened to the busy BNSF to the north.
- o The train track will cost \$100-\$200 million dollars vs. moving the bike trail-\$35 million
- o The train track will be forever. Federal laws protect train tracks in perpetuity.

Sharon Lehrman, MPH, RDN, LD
Nutrition Consultant
Registered and Licensed Dietitian Nutritionist
President, Minnesota Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (MAND)
Nutrition, Health, and Wellness
St. Louis Park, MN 55416

Email 044

From: Tim Brausen
Sent: Friday, February 21, 2014 12:12 PM
To: swlrt
Subject: Please co-locate freight rail and LRT in the Kenilworth Corridor, and build the shallow tunnel as mitigation for Minneapolis residents

The process for selection of the SWC LRT route has been long and deliberate. All options have been explored thoroughly, though the current attempt to fabricate another route to re-locate freight rail through St. Louis Park has not received the in-depth scrutiny that the prior re-location options did as there is insufficient time and this new option does not merit closer scrutiny.

The time to make a decision is now, and the Kenilworth Corridor with co-location of the freight and LRT and the building of a shallow tunnel is the best option. It requires no property takings, it does not result in freight rail tracks running closer or through school properties, it does not require closing businesses and city streets nor does it present increased safety risks for thousands of people. Re-locating freight rail through St. Louis Park would split our community, for the sake of preserving a bike trail that was designed to be both a freight corridor and a transit corridor.

Please choose the Kenilworth Corridor for both LRT and freight rail, and get SWC LRT built!

TIMOTHY PAUL BRAUSEN
Attorney at Law
St. Louis Park, MN 55426-2447

Certified Real Property Law Specialist as certified by the Minnesota State Bar Association

Email 045

From: Henry Solmer
Sent: Saturday, March 01, 2014 11:51 AM
To: swlrt
Cc: [mark.dayton](#); Haigh, Susan; Munt, Jennifer; Brimeyer, James; Cunningham, Gary; Duininck, Adam; [katie.rodriquez](#); [lona.schriebers](#); Elkins, Steve; Wulff, Wendy; Vaneyll, Gary; Reynoso, Edward; McCarthy, Marie; Rummel, Sandy; Melander, Harry; [richard.cramer](#); Chavez, Steven

Subject: SWLRT routing options

At the February 12th presentation of the freight rail routing options by Trans Systems, it was clear that the best route for the freight rail was its present location in the Kenilworth corridor, and the 2nd best was a return to its original location in the Greenway. However, a topic that is not being examined here is the best location for the LRT. Assumptions were made at the beginning of the route selection process which artificially lowered projected ridership numbers for the Nicollet/Greenway alignment, and made lowball estimates of the reroute costs of putting LRT in the Kenilworth corridor (i.e., nothing for cost of tunnels and rerouting freight). It now appears that the Nicollet/Greenway route would be cost-competitive with Kenilworth, and would attract more riders. This alignment would also better serve the transit-dependent population, would allow many people to commute to jobs in the Uptown/south Minneapolis area, and would allow persons who live in south Minneapolis to reverse-commute to jobs in western suburbs. Since we will be living with the results of this decision for generations to come, it is worthwhile to reopen the LRT route selection process even if that delays final construction for a year or two. Projected costs of a streetcar line down Nicollet are not much different from LRT; just put the LRT there and be done with it, and resolve the Kenilworth issues at the same time.

If Met Council refuses to re-open the LRT selection process, then I urge you to co-locate the freight and LRT within the Kenilworth corridor, as that option is much safer and less divisive to the community than the TransSystem or "high berm" freight options within SLP. While the shallow tunnel approach is workable, it would also be OK to have freight rail and LRT at grade. As a frequent bicyclist in Kenilworth, it is obvious that the bike trail can be relocated, resulting in a much cheaper overall project.

Henry Solmer
St Louis Park

Email 046

From: Katherine McManus
Sent: Saturday, March 01, 2014 1:10 PM
To: Brimeyer, James
Subject: Trans System Re-Route Plan Through St. Louis Park

From: Katherine McManus
Sent: Friday, February 28, 2014 10:58 AM
To: swlrt
Cc: Damian McManus; Sue Sanger
Subject: Trans System Re-Route Plan Through St. Louis Park

To Whom It May Concern:

I have lived in SLP for almost 20 years. I am proud of this community and it's focus on Children First and being one of the 100 Best Communities for Young People by America's Promise - The Alliance for Youth. I am, equally, proud of the education system offered to my children...PSI, the Junior High and now the HS...all National Schools of Excellence by the US Dept. of Education.

Just to give you a feel for how familiar I am with the train re-route in question..I have raised my 18 year old twins here, I have volunteered in the playground at Park Spanish Immersion for 7 years and have

commuted over 1,000 times back and forth, over the Dakota railroad tracks, to the SLP High School to drop off and pick up my kids. They have walked from the HS to the soccer field 100's of times to play soccer or watch a football game, crossing over these same tracks.

EVERY morning, I have to stop my car at or on the tracks to allow distracted, unobservant teens to walk in front of my car as they cross the road from McDonald's to the HS, walking diagonally across the tracks. Even with light freight, these tracks are precarious to teens whose brains are still "under construction" and who routinely are unable to make good choices (per famous developmental psychologist, Dr. David Walsh).

The shorter trains currently vibrate the classrooms and cause teachers to stop teaching until the train noise dissipates. I often wonder how students can concentrate in class or think clearly while taking a test under these circumstances? Could you do it? I know I couldn't! With the proposed heavy freight re-route, multiply these disruptions by a conservative factor of say 10 or more!

Our SLP City's Mission Statement, updated this past December, states it's mission to be: To deliver responsive municipal services to ensure a safe, welcoming and vital community now and in the future....While Including values such as:

We are stewards of the public trust...

We are committed to lifelong learning...

This re-route isn't safe and vital to our community!
This isn't good for our students and their life-long learning!
This isn't welcoming to anyone!

My kids are graduating this May and I can easily sit back and say this won't affect me any more...but, that would not be acceptable, because EVERY ADULT in SLP, those on the School Board and those on the City Council need to stand up for all of our children, now, and in the future. If we don't speak up for them, who will?

This heavy freight re-route plan needs to be taken off the table NOW!

Thank you for listening,

Katherine McManus
St. Louis Park, MN. 55416

Email 047

From: Barry Schade
Sent: Sunday, March 02, 2014 2:34 PM
To: swlrt; Ginis, Sophia
Cc: bmna; Beth Elliott; Lisa Goodman
Subject: BMNA comments on Draft Freight Rail Report

On February 12, 2014, the Bryn Mawr Neighborhood Association (BMNA) Board, after considering the substance of the Draft Freight Rail Report, reaffirmed the neighborhood opposition to co-location of freight and LRT in the Kenilworth. The main reasons for that opposition are contained in the

resolution passed by the BMNA Board on June 8, 2011. That resolution is attached and made part of these comments.

The draft analysis prepared by TranSystems validates the position taken by the BMNA and a coalition of communities in Minneapolis that relocation of freight is both feasible and reasonable. We believe, as substantiated by the draft report and subsequent discussion, that locating the freight traffic through St. Louis Park, using the concept developed by TranSystems, is safe and cost-effective.

While the details of the draft report may be revised, we support the conclusion of the report that the modified route through St Louis Park is feasible.Barry Schade

Resolution adopted at the June 8, 2011 BMNA board meeting

WHEREAS the Bryn Mawr Neighborhood Association (BMNA) has consistently supported the Southwest Transitway and on April 11, 2007, passed a resolution supporting the LRT and Kenilworth Alignment, including a Penn Avenue Station; and

WHEREAS the BMNA again, on July 9, 2008, passed a resolution in support of the LRT project and Kenilworth alignment; and

WHEREAS Bryn Mawr residents are frequent users of the Cedar Lake Regional Trail and the Kenilworth Trail both for biking and walking; and

WHEREAS the Bryn Mawr neighborhood stressed its regular reliance on the trails for biking and walking in its February 25, 2011 comments on the Southwest Transitway Station Area Strategic Planning Document; and

WHEREAS the BMNA has joined with a Corridor Coalition of neighborhood organizations along the proposed Southwest Transitway in order to collectively address Transitway issues affecting quality of neighborhood life; and

WHEREAS it has been proposed that both freight and LRT trains be routed through the Kenilworth Corridor, thus potentially displacing the bike and pedestrian trail; and

WHEREAS the current configuration of the Cedar Lake Regional Trail and the Kenilworth Trail results in over 450,000 visits a year, which number is projected to increase.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the BMNA supports the current configuration of the Kenilworth Trail and joins other members of the Corridor Coalition in strongly opposing any infringement upon or realignment of the Kenilworth Trail in connection with any routing of freight along side SW LRT trains in the Kenilworth Corridor or for any other reason.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the BMNA is strongly opposed to keeping the freight lines in the Kenilworth Trail Corridor along side the SW LRT.

Email 048

From: Mark De Boer
Sent: Thursday, February 27, 2014 11:13 PM
To: swlrt
Subject: Freight Rail comment

To whom it may concern,

I'm writing to encourage you to not route increased freight traffic through St Louis Park. I have followed the studies and proposals over the past months/years and encourage you to pick the shallow tunnel option and route all traffic through the Kenilworth corridor. I will encourage my representatives to deny consent if traffic is routed through the St Louis Park as there are viable and I think preferable options for routing the freight traffic through schools and so close to homes and businesses. Please select the shallow tunnel option.

Thank you,
Mark De Boer
St Louis Park MN 55426

Email 049

From: Safety In the Park
Sent: Friday, February 28, 2014 7:36 AM
To: Haigh, Susan; swlrt
Cc: lapray; Thom Miller
Subject: Comment to the SWLRT-TranSystem plan

February 28, 2014

Susan Haigh, Chair
Metropolitan Council
390 Robert Street North
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101

Dear Chair Haigh,

Since its inception four years ago, Safety in the Park has asked for a freight rail study that compares the proposed MN&S freight relocation equally to the conditions that exist on the Bass Lake Spur in St. Louis Park. We asked that at a minimum, any alternate freight rail routes through St. Louis Park should hold to one simple standard: that the community is made no less safe than it is today. This means applying the safety elements of today's freight route in St. Louis Park, the Bass Lake Spur corridor, to any potential re-route through our city. A potential re-route must be similar in all aspects to what exists in the Bass Lake Spur today; distances from tracks to single family homes and schools, similar track curvatures and grade changes, a similar number of at-grade auto/pedestrian crossings and similar overall grade changes.

Despite assurances from the Governor's office and from the SWLRT – SPO that this latest study conducted by TranSystems would be a fair comparison, it is not. TranSystems did not apply the criteria

requested by Safety in the Park and by our State Legislators, Latz, Simon and Winkler, nor did it apply the Met Council's own criteria that eliminated four of the six co-location options. Had either of these sets of criteria been applied, TranSystems' MN&S North Plan would have been eliminated from contention.

Our extensive list of "problems" with the TranSystems plan has been well articulated by the St. Louis Park City Council, St. Louis Park School Board and the Twin Cities and Western Railroad. We agree with and submit their letters in response to the TranSystems Freight relocation plan.

<http://www.stlouispark.org/light-freight-rail/recent-news.html>

<http://rschooltoday.com/school468/FCK/Image/freightletter.pdf>

<http://tcwr.net/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Civil-Design-Report-Transystems.pdf>

With the end of the comment period about the TranSystem report, it can only be concluded that no re-route to the MN&S in St. Louis Park is possible. The DEIS plan written by Hennepin County is unsafe and unacceptable to the railroads. The Met Council's Brunswick Central plan while conceptually acceptable to the railroads is not only unacceptable to all of the communities along the SWLRT route but also violates the criteria set by the SWLRT-SPO and should have been eliminated from contention shortly after its release last summer.

To ask St. Louis Park residents to accept less safety because Minneapolis does not want to look at LRT trains or move a bike trail is unacceptable. We demand the removal of St. Louis Park from freight re-route consideration once and for all.

Jami LaPray, Thom Miller and the Safety in the Park Steering Committee

Email 050

From: Denise Zurn

Sent: Friday, February 28, 2014 10:52 AM

To: swlrt

Subject: No Freight Rail Re-route

Friday – 28 February 2014

To: The Metropolitan Council

Regarding: Trans Systems Re-route Plan

It is hard to believe that once again an at-grade freight rail re-route is being proposed for St. Louis Park, and that the SAME comments need to be written and submitted AGAIN!

Once again – grades and curves that do not work for heavy freight.

Once again – a set-up for terrible safety issues for school students.

Once again – no study of noise and vibration impacts.

Once again – no mitigation in the form of home and business removal to create an actual heavy-freight route.

This is simply an unacceptable plan.

NO – DO NOT design for derailments.
NO – DO NOT design-in safety hazards that will kill students.
NO – DO NOT design neighborhoods that will necessitate later re-building of schools in new locations.
NO – DO NOT place livability and cost burdens into the future to create dishonest cost estimates now.

NO!

Denise Zurn & Terry Freeman and Family
Birchwood Neighborhood Residents
St. Louis Park, MN 55416

Email 051

From: Juli Rasmussen
Sent: Friday, February 28, 2014 11:32 AM
To: swlRt
Subject: Opposition to TranSystem Proposal

I want to express my serious concern and opposition to the TranSystem option to relocate freight rail traffic in St. Louis Park. The reasons for this opposition are numerous.

- Increased freight traffic traveling only 35 feet from our high school parking lot and within 85 feet of classrooms substantially increases the safety risks to our students and creates negative educational impacts. (The study inaccurately reflected actual distances.)
- The study failed to address safety criteria that had previously been included in earlier studies.
- TC&W railroad rejected the proposal due to both safety concerns and the anticipated substantial increase of cost for implementation and maintenance.
- As each conductor has discretion to reduce speed as needed, it is reasonable to assume that they will take a cautious approach when traveling by the school; as they should. However, on average, data suggests that it would take approximately 15-20 minutes for a train approximately 120 cars long to pass through a railroad intersection. Multiple that by six to eight trains a day and you have a major impact on local streets. When people become frustrated, they do not always act logically. This anticipated impact moves beyond an inconvenience to a potential safety risk as people look for alternate ways to navigate local area streets.
- This proposal will, in fact, divide St. Louis Park in two. As a resident who lives on the North side of the tracks and uses the intersection(s) impacted by this proposal every day/multiple times a day, it will be a major inconvenience to make my way to the other side of the city.
- The number of properties (both residential and commercial) that would need to be removed adds additional cost when other plans put forward do not require the removal of either residential or commercial properties.

I could go on, however I think these concerns are representative of both individual, community and city concerns. I urge you to please reject the TranSystems proposal as the risks, cost and anticipated adverse impact heavily out weight any potential benefit.

Thank you for your consideration.

Juli Rasmussen
St. Louis Park Resident

Email 052

From: Paul Danicic
Sent: Friday, February 28, 2014 11:35 AM
To: swlrt
Subject: Comment on Transystems re-route plan

To who it may concern,

I am writing in opposition to the Transystems' plan to re-route freight traffic through St. Louis Park. My children will be attending St. Louis Park High School in a few years and this plan significantly increases the risk to future students and the community members nearby. It is also proposing a hazard to the Park Spanish Immersion School where my children now attend. So I write this in an attempt to protect the future students attending there as well.

It is obvious to me that the plan was not thoroughly completed, misinforming readers about the distance of the proposed tracks from the school and incorrectly identifying the use of the school buildings located at Park Spanish Immersion. It is a poor document to base such important decisions upon.

Given these errors, which in my own work would be found unacceptable and would be highly criticized and then thrown out, I am very troubled to hear the Metropolitan Council has such a limited time to make decisions of such magnitude and that this study would be considered for them. ALL of the safety, educational, environmental and traffic impacts just touched on in this report need thorough analysis and consideration.

In addition, the very railroad using this line is highly critical of the Transystems plan and states clearly that the plan goes against all the goals of the National Rail Plan. The Transystems plan must not be used for making any decisions regarding the Southwest Regional Transit line development. To do so would have devastating and costly impacts later on and harm the Twin Cities legacy of making good decisions when presented with hard choices.

Respectfully,

Paul Danicic
St Louis Park Resident

Email 053

From: Darlene Olson
Sent: Friday, February 28, 2014 11:40 AM
To: swlrt
Subject: SWLR

Hello,

I do not live near the area of the proposed light rail; I will not personally be affected by where it is placed and I most likely would not ride it because I can get downtown to Nicollet Ave. more easily on the bus.

But I care deeply about the city of St. Louis Park and the people who live here. It simply is wrong to consider running long trains within 50 feet of the high school and close to the immersion school. Also, the impact on families of taking out their homes, removing businesses, etc. is unacceptable. I know this would not be considered if we were Edina. The intersection by the high school (Lake St. and Dakota) is busy and indeed a new bridge was just put over Highway 7 connecting this area to Wooddale Ave. to accommodate traffic in the area.

Consideration should be given to removing the bike trail from Kenilworth so both rail and light rail would fit in the area. We have biked this trail recreationally many times but not weight should be given to the recreation part of it over against other considerations. The real question is: how many people use this trail as a means of transportation to jobs, school, etc. I bet the unduplicated count is very small--so what is the per capita cost for those riders? Yes, extremely high. We recreation riders have lots of other choices.

I favor light rail but it is possible that the SWLR is not meant to be.

Darlene M. Olson
SLP 55426

Email 054

From: Susanne Wollman
Sent: Friday, February 28, 2014 11:48 AM
To: swlrt
Subject: TranSystem Option to relocate freight rail traffic to St. Louis Park

I have great concerns about the road closures, safety concerns for rail very close to our schools along with curves and changes in elevation that pose safety hazards. When the railroad (TC&W) does not approve a plan due to safety concerns, it amazes me that this reroute option is still under consideration. It seems that the Metropolitan Council is telling St. Louis Park that the safety of our children along with the livability of our city is less important than freight trains and possibly moving a bike trail.

My house is located less than 500 feet from the re-route option. Even if the trains travel on berms, this increases the distance noise will travel and greatly increases derailment risks.

I would urge the Metropolitan Council to colocate freight rail and reject the St. Louis Park re-route option.

Susanne Wollman
St Louis Park, MN 55416

Email 055

From: Duncan Anderson
Sent: Friday, February 28, 2014 1:06 PM
To: swlrt
Subject: swlight rail and reroute through SLP

Metro Transit Members,

I have been a resident of SLP for over 18 years. This is a vital community for not only the residents of SLP, but the whole metro area. I am dismayed by the lack of foresight and common sense that has been applied to this entire project and the residents of our community. I believe it is the job of the metro transit to uphold the infrastructure of communities and promote livability and vitality to metro communities. The destruction occurring from rerouting train traffic straight through our community would be the demise of our city. The environmental, educational, residential and health our community would be destroyed. All of these issues have been voiced over and over. I do not need to go into detail. We will no longer be a desired community to live in and raise families. I would like you to strongly consider the impact of this on not only SLP, but the surrounding communities, including Minneapolis. I do not believe this is the mission of the Metro Transit Organization.

I am just one more voice in the united voices of SLP to oppose this reroute. I have attended several meetings where community leaders and residents are all saying the same thing. We do not want this in our community!!!! I have not heard one voice in the crowd EVER supporting this step.

Please respect the value of our community and not be a deciding factor in it's demise.

Respectfully, Mary Hendrickson

Email 056

From: avirocks
Sent: Friday, February 28, 2014 3:17 PM
To: swlrt
Subject: St Louis Park Trans Re Route

To Whom it may concern at Metro Transit,
As a long time resident of St Louis Park, I am strongly against the train re route plan. It would put an unfair burden on our community by increasing train traffic exponentially. It seems to be riddled with safety issues including unsafe proximity to schools. It is a horrible proposition and also stinks of gentrification. Please find a more sound and evenly distributed plan.
Thanks for your consideration, Mr. Avi Reinharz-

Email 057

From: The Brinkman's
Sent: Friday, February 28, 2014 3:25 PM
To: swlrt
Subject: SWLRT Routing Comment

I'm a resident of St Louis Park, and I'd like to comment on the re-routing of freight through our city. It's abundantly clear to me that the Met Council, Mayor Hodges, and especially Peter McLaughlin want one thing, and one thing only. The freight trains OUT of the Kenilworth corridor. Apparently nothing else is acceptable. You just keep grasping at straws, hoping the next report will come up with some "magic bullet" that disqualifies co location in the Kenilworth, or some route through St Louis Park that is cheaper, or at least somewhat feasible, but is has not happened.

The latest trial balloon, the Transystems route, would according to the TC&W's engineering firm be, compared to the Kenilworth option, "detrimental in every respect". Civil Design Inc. further states "Certainly no railroad would accept such an alignment today if there were any other choice". TC&W President Mark Wegner said in a statement " When state and federal authorities are looking at freight options here in the twin cities, it's hard to imagine them taking the position that a less safe route is preferable to our current route (Kenilworth). Indeed. But that is apparently the position being taken.

In answer to the obvious problems and concerns about the Transystems route, we got this response: Mr, McLaughlin is quoted as saying " We're trying to determine just how much say the railroad's got". Mayor Hodges said " I don't want to give veto power to the railroad"

McLaughlin recently vowed to force the TC&W out of the Kenilworth corridor via the STB.

Does he want to force us all to accept a route which according to the railroad is " neither efficient, safe, or cost effective"?

That's just wrong in so many ways, I don't know where to start.

Please do the right ("safe, efficient, cost effective") thing, and keep the freight in the Kenilworth corridor and co-locate. It's not that the residents of St Louis Park don't want any trains in their city. We have them now, and will still when this is all settled. We just are worried about safety. I wish the mayor (of Mpls) and county commissioner were as concerned about the safety of our residents as they are about the water quality and vegetation (has there been a study done about potential safety issues with SLP re-routing??)

Thank You, Mark Brinkman

Email 058

From: lottminn

Sent: Saturday, March 01, 2014 7:12 AM

To: swlrt

Cc: mark.dayton; sen.ron.latz; rep.steve.simon; rep.ryan.winkler; marison.simon; Haigh, Susan; Munt, Jennifer; Brimeyer, James; Cunningham, Gary; Peter McLaughlin; jjacobs1956; hallfinslp@gmail.com; spanoslpouncil; Sue Sanger; AnneMavitySLP; gregg; tpbrausen; Duininck, Adam; Rodriguez, Katie; Schreiber, Lona; Vaneyll, Gary; Elkins, Steve; Reynoso, Edward; McCarthy, Marie; Rummel, Sandy; Melander, Harry; Kramer, Richard; Chavez, Steven; Wulff, Wendy; lottminn; safetyinthepark
Subject: Freight Rail comment

Dear Chair Haigh and members of The Metropolitan Council,

To take a quote from Mark Wegner's recent response to TranSystem's freight analysis, "When state and federal authorities are looking at freight rail options here in the Twin Cities, it's hard to imagine them taking the position that a less safe route is preferable to our current route." And yet, the residents of St. Louis Park continue to fight this same battle while outside interests are pushing this unsafe reroute on our community.

The TranSystems freight relocation analysis provided nothing new to show that a re-route through SLP can be done safely. It was riddled with errors and miscalculations that only proved the point that re-routing freight trains onto the MN&S track is not a viable option. Even Jim Terry, the gentleman from TranSystems who presented the findings, admitted the Kenilworth freight corridor provided the best route for freight traffic. When you look at the proposed re-route, winding through backyards, cutting off main thoroughfares through a relatively small community, and bisecting a high school campus, a rational-thinking person sees how dangerous this plan is. I am left wondering why it is still being considered after countless iterations have shown it to be an engineering/safety nightmare and potential financial black hole (ie, mitigation not addressed, takings likely substantially under-counted and upkeep not addressed).

To no small point, St Louis Park will continue to keep freight traffic on the safer tracks in our community – the Bass Spur line. Our local government is working with the Metropolitan Council and planners of SWLRT to accommodate SWLRT through a portion of our community. Both LRT and freight will be safely co-located along these track for miles. What so many of us strongly oppose and cannot accept is redirecting that same heavy freight off its current route and bisecting our community onto tracks that were not designed nor intended to handle the volume, the weight, the noise, the vibration, the frequency, the speed, and the inherent danger to our citizens. The Kenilworth freight corridor is and always has been a freight corridor. Simply because a bike trail was allowed to be built in that freight corridor cannot trump the safety and livability of St. Louis Park. Why is moving a portion of the bike trail (one of the "easiest," least expensive, least disruptive alternatives) a non-negotiable? I'd like to think that because the TC&W has also rejected this re-route alternative, cooler heads will prevail. Sadly, nothing surprises me anymore.

I have sympathy for the Kenwood neighborhood residents, but Kenilworth was the route chosen for LRT, and it appears highly unlikely that the route will be changed. That freight traffic was not part of the consideration when the LRT route was selected lies at the feet of the planners, not in the backyards and schoolyards of SLP residents. The fact that other options were discarded because of cost and that they necessitated the taking of homes and businesses shows all of us in St. Louis Park that this reroute should also be off the table. You're looking for a way to appease the Kenwood/Minneapolis neighborhoods....I get it. But please don't continue to consider this re-route as the necessary Plan B. It needs to finally be removed from consideration.

Most Sincerely,

Linda Lott

St. Louis Park, MN 55416

cc: Metropolitan Council
Corridor Management Committee
St. Louis Park City Council
Governor Mark Dayton
U.S. Senator Al Franken
U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar
U.S. Representative Keith Ellison

State Senator Ron Latz
State Representative Ryan Winkler
State Representative Steve Simon
Marisol Simon

Email 059

From: jill
Sent: Saturday, March 01, 2014 11:39 AM
To: swlrt
Subject: Reroute to St. Louis Park

It is time to end the dangerous proposal to reroute trains in St. Louis Park. This issue has been studied and debated far too long when it is CLEARLY unsafe for the schools, businesses and populated areas in St. Louis Park.

We do not live in St. Louis Park but have followed this controversy and believe it's time to stop the reroute plan.

Bruce and Jill Bauer

Email 060

From: Henry Solmer
Sent: Saturday, March 01, 2014 11:52 AM
To: swlrt
Cc: mark.dayton; Haigh, Susan; Munt, Jennifer; Brimeyer, James; Cunningham, Gary; Duininck, Adam; katie.rodriquez; Iona.schrieber; Elkins, Steve; Wulff, Wendy; Vaneyll, Gary; Reynoso, Edward; McCarthy, Marie; Rummel, Sandy; Melander, Harry; richard.cramer; Chavez, Steven
Subject: SWLRT routing options

At the February 12th presentation of the freight rail routing options by Trans Systems, it was clear that the best route for the freight rail was its present location in the Kenilworth corridor, and the 2nd best was a return to its original location in the Greenway. However, a topic that is not being examined here is the best location for the LRT. Assumptions were made at the beginning of the route selection process which artificially lowered projected ridership numbers for the Nicollet/Greenway alignment, and made lowball estimates of the reroute costs of putting LRT in the Kenilworth corridor (i.e., nothing for cost of tunnels and rerouting freight). It now appears that the Nicollet/Greenway route would be cost-competitive with Kenilworth, and would attract more riders. This alignment would also better serve the transit-dependent population, would allow many people to commute to jobs in the Uptown/south Minneapolis area, and would allow persons who live in south Minneapolis to reverse-commute to jobs in western suburbs. Since we will be living with the results of this decision for generations to come, it is worthwhile to reopen the LRT route selection process even if that delays final construction for a year or two. Projected costs of a streetcar line down Nicollet are not much different from LRT; just put the LRT there and be done with it, and resolve the Kenilworth issues at the same time.

If Met Council refuses to re-open the LRT selection process, then I urge you to co-locate the freight and LRT within the Kenilworth corridor, as that option is much safer and less divisive to the community than

the TransSystem or "high berm" freight options within SLP. While the shallow tunnel approach is workable, it would also be OK to have freight rail and LRT at grade. As a frequent bicyclist in Kenilworth, it is obvious that the bike trail can be relocated, resulting in a much cheaper overall project.

Henry Solmer
St Louis Park

Email 061

From: Patti King
Sent: Saturday, March 01, 2014 1:15 PM
To: swlrt; J Jabobs; annemavityslp; gregg; Sue Sanger; tpbrausen; jake@spanoforslpouncil.com; hallfinslp; rep.steve.simon; rep.ryan.winkler; sen.ron.latz; safetyinthepark; metz.robert
Cc: Patti King
Subject: I Oppose the St. Louis Park re-route option

I am a resident of St. Louis Park and I oppose the TransSystem option to relocate the freight rail traffic in St. Louis Park. I am also a mother of a 6 year old who attends first grade. When discussing this issue with him, he very clearly articulated "Why would they do that? It would be really hard for the kids to concentrate when the trains go by.". I urge everyone making this decision to think about the common sense of a 6 year old. Make the right decision for the kids, for our future.

Thank you!

--

Patti King McDaniel
(Everett's Mom)

Email 062

From: Julie Morton
Sent: Saturday, March 01, 2014 2:19 PM
To: swlrt
Subject: St. Louis Park

The "little city" of St. Louis Park has a well-respected-in-the-nation high school and school district and is a healthy city that is in constant renewal, which keeps the core strengths alive.

Dividing the city and endangering the High School with Heavy Rail Traffic would cause a huge wound in our healthy city and irrevocably and disastrously change our city into a shell of a city.

--

Julie S. Morton

Email 063

From: Angela Bern
Sent: Tuesday, March 04, 2014 6:14 AM
To: swlrt

Subject: Freight rail through St Louis Park

I'm a parent of a St. Louis Park 5th grader. She loves her friends and her school. A decision to reroute a freight train through the center of her hometown will change her life.

Her safe and happy school will change as families leave for other options. Her quiet classes will be disrupted by long and noisy trains. Her dreams of watching the local teams play sports on the high school field will be dashed.

This is an important decision for my daughter and her classmates. Please help us save St Louis Park.

Thank you,
Brett Berntsen

Sent from my iPad

Email 064

From: Mary Armstrong
Sent: Saturday, March 01, 2014 8:49 PM
To: swlrt
Subject: Freight Rail comment

Dear Chair Haigh and Members of the Metropolitan Council:

No doubt you have heard from many of our fellow Safety in the Park supporters. We would like to declare our unwavering and vehement opposition to the TranSystem proposal and, indeed, any reroute of freight rail through our city. The city of St. Louis Park, the school board and many ordinary citizens have drawn a line in the sand against this folly.

We were disappointed in the 11th-hour delay last fall when shallow tunnels were on the verge of approval. Perhaps it would be useful to remind certain leaders that the Kenilworth corridor, which has always been designated to carry freight and light rail, is a TEMPORARY bike trail as spelled out in the 1998 permit agreement. As wonderful as the bike trail is, it makes no sense to preserve if it requires forcing such painful and costly sacrifices on St. Louis Park. To that end, we would like the Metropolitan Council to co-locate freight and LRT and detour the bike trail for a short distance as necessary.

We look forward to a sensible solution for Southwest LRT. But any untenable, divisive, dangerous freight reroute option must be taken off the table once and for all.

Respectfully,

Bobby and Mary Armstrong
St. Louis Park
Proud Birchwood neighborhood residents since 2011

Email 065

From: Robert Armstrong
Sent: Sunday, March 02, 2014 5:57 PM
To: swlrt
Subject: Freight rail comment

Dear Chair Haigh and Members of the Metropolitan Council:

No doubt you have heard from many of our fellow Safety in the Park supporters. We would like to declare our unwavering and vehement opposition to the TranSystem proposal and, indeed, any reroute of freight rail through our city. The city of St. Louis Park, the school board and many ordinary citizens have drawn a line in the sand against this folly.

We were disappointed in the 11th-hour delay last fall when shallow tunnels were on the verge of approval. Perhaps it would be useful to remind certain leaders that the Kenilworth corridor, which has always been designated to carry freight and light rail, is a TEMPORARY bike trail as spelled out in the 1998 permit agreement. As wonderful as the bike trail is, it makes no sense to preserve if it requires forcing such painful and costly sacrifices on St. Louis Park. To that end, we would like the Metropolitan Council to co-locate freight and LRT and detour the bike trail for a short distance as necessary.

We look forward to a sensible solution for Southwest LRT. But any untenable, divisive, dangerous freight reroute option must be taken off the table once and for all.

Respectfully,

Bobby and Mary Armstrong
St. Louis Park
Proud Birchwood neighborhood residents since 2011

Email 066

From: Kathryn Kottke
Sent: Saturday, March 01, 2014 9:42 PM
To: swlrt
Subject: Comments on the TranSystems Report for SWLRT Freight Reroute

Dear Met Council Chair Susan Haigh and Met Council Members,

I had intended to comment on the report drafted by Jim Terry of TranSystems, but I believe the St. Louis Park city council, school board, community activist group Safety in the Park, and most critically, the Twin Cities and Western railroad have highlighted the inadequacies and inaccuracies of the document much better than I could hope to do. Rather than add to a copious list of problems with the latest proposal, I would like to comment on the process that has led hundreds of residents of St. Louis Park to this juncture. I would like to tell you about the four-year journey I have been on that has taught me lessons I will never forget about politicians and my local and state governments.

In April of 2010, I learned that the freight currently running through St. Louis Park parallel to Hwy 7 was going to be rerouted. Thom Miller and Jami Lapray organized a community meeting at the high school to inform residents about the issue. Gail Dorfman attended the meeting and asked to speak. She told a

crowd of about 100 people that this was “a done deal” and that we had nothing to complain about because we “moved next to a railroad, what did [we] think was going to happen?” I was stunned by her complete disregard for our concerns and fears about the vast differences between the trains currently running along the MN&S and the freight trains running parallel to Hwy 7. She was combative and hostile. She demonstrated no concern for our schools that would certainly be negatively impacted by these longer, heavier trains, and it goes without saying that she had no compassion for the negative community impacts we would face.

Because I live near the tracks and my children attend St. Louis Park public schools, I chose to be as involved in the process as possible, and I volunteered to represent my neighborhood on the Project Management Team (PMT) put together by Hennepin County. We residents sat through monthly meetings where we were asked to go to our neighborhoods to communicate the coming train reroute and ask for mitigation requests. I was a diligent communicator, and I spent a lot of time at parks, school functions, and neighborhood gatherings obtaining input from my neighbors about what they needed to mitigate the impacts. I also spent a lot of time communicating the need for people to come to the meetings and speak about their concerns.

In spite of the terrific public input and turnout, Kimley-Horn, the consultant hired to “deal with us,” refused to address our questions and concerns about the reroute proposal they designed. In fact, the hundreds of mitigation requests we made—like guard rails, a wider right-of-way, and fewer at-grade crossings—were completely ignored, absent from the proposal. When the process with the PMT was over, we got welded rail that would allow the longer, heavier freight to zip along the reroute at 25 MPH rather than the 10 MPH the short trains currently travel. Bob Suko, representing TC&W, responded when asked that their trains would take at least a mile to stop at that speed. It was apparent that Hennepin County officials did not care that this proposal allowed a train to travel at 25 MPH on reverse curves between two schools with blind turns—knowing that TC&W did not find the proposal safe. The safety of St. Louis Park residents clearly did not matter when the Kimley-Horn design appeared in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

I contributed comments to the SWLRT DEIS. I deeply resent having had to spend any time commenting on a DEIS that was so clearly biased against St. Louis Park in favor of “park land” in Kenilworth that is legally defined as a rail corridor. There were blatant lies in the DEIS such as 4F property affected in the Kenilworth corridor, or that the park board owned some of the land that the freight used. Houses that don’t exist were included in the Kenilworth corridor in the DEIS. I was shocked that the actual parks, real 4F land, and existing homes impacted by the reroute in St. Louis Park were not discussed. I couldn’t understand how a public document could be so clearly biased in favor of one community and against another. I could only conclude that my community does not/cannot contribute to the political funds or grease the political palms as well as the Kenwood and Cedar Lake Isles communities. It was deeply saddening to know that our children and families in St. Louis Park were going to be in harm’s way so that a wealthy few would not have to look at freight trains.

I am currently an alternate representative for St. Louis Park on the Community Advisory Committee. It is not lost on me that we have no vote, no real say in this process. Although working on the CAC is not nearly as frustrating as my experience with the PMT, I am disturbed by a number of things. You, Chair Haigh, told my community at the February 12th SWLRT meeting that the CMC voted to reject the four at-grade colocation options. I respectfully disagree with this statement. It was my understanding at the CAC meeting on July 25th, 2013 that the project office rejected the at-grade colocation options—not the CMC. We had a contentious discussion about the criteria the project office, not the CMC, used to reject

the at-grade options. I personally asked Jim Alexander why the four options were not under discussion and he told me that the Minneapolis residents expressed a “strong desire” that they not be seriously considered. I have not been able to find any votes rejecting the at-grade co-location options in the CMC minutes, and I believe it’s because the CMC members did not vote to reject those options. As with the SWLRT DEIS, St. Louis Park is not treated with the same concern for our community impacts. St. Louis Park has certainly expressed a “strong desire” that the relocation options be rejected due to safety and loss of community cohesion impacts. Minneapolis objections are in regard to aesthetic concerns, concerns I believe are relevant, but why are they more highly regarded than safety?

In addition, Jami Lapray, another alternate for St. Louis Park, requested written documentation of the alleged FTA demand that the reroute stay on the table months after Met Council engineers were able to find six viable colocation options through the Kenilworth corridor. Mark Fuhrman initially stated the demand was evident in a letter that had been copied and sent to Ms. Lapray, but when she asked him to show her the place in the letter where the FTA demanded the reroute be considered, Mr. Fuhrman stated FTA officials told him so in a phone conversation. How can we in St. Louis Park possibly trust in this process when we have been subjected to such biased, disrespectful, and deceitful treatment?

The St. Louis Park city council has been on record—in writing—that they will reject rerouting the freight through St. Louis Park if other viable options are found. Although Hennepin county officials insisted in the PMT meetings that there was no possible way to engineer co-location, six options are available. Although Hennepin county officials stated St. Louis Park agreed to take the reroute, there is no such agreement on record. Although the governor stopped the process to AGAIN restudy the reroute, there is no way to put this kind of freight over Hwy 7, between two schools, and above grade through our neighborhoods without significant safety and community cohesion impacts. And finally, although the CMC is being asked to look at two options—a reroute or shallow tunnels—there are six: a reroute, shallow tunnel, and four at-grade and significantly less-expensive alternatives.

To my dismay, I have learned more than I ever wanted to know about how politicians operate. I am disgusted by the lack of concern for the general public and the obsequious tendency to favor the wealthy few at the detriment of the “poorer” masses. I am a high school teacher, and I have spent fifteen years encouraging my students to be involved in public discourse, to exercise their civic duties. I have insisted that they are important, and they have the ability to change the world for the better. After having gone through this process, I am less confident that this is so.

I hope you have the courage to protect St. Louis Park from the dangerous and irresponsible TranSystems proposal. I hope you have the decency to consider the residents of St. Louis Park as equally important as those in Minneapolis.

Sincerely,
Kathryn Kottke
Alternate St. Louis Park CAC Representative

Email 067

From: Joe King
Sent: Sunday, March 02, 2014 11:03 AM
To: swlrt; jjacobs1956; annemavityslp; gregg; Sue Sanger; tpbrausen; jake; hallfinslp; rep.steve.simon; rep.ryan.winkler; sen.ron.latz

Subject: St Louis Park freight rail reroute

Please see letter attached in opposition of the plan for the St Louis Park freight rail reroute. Thank you.

--

joe king
group account director

To whom it may concern,

I am a homeowner in St Louis Park and I'm writing in opposition of the proposed plan for the St Louis Park freight rail reroute. I understand that trains need to travel and those tracks need to go somewhere. And I would even understand that in some cases those rails can be somewhat close to schools. But given the specifics of this plan I don't think it takes much sense to see that this is a really bad idea. The setup and proximity to the school is dangerous and distracting to children. I would not feel comfortable sending my children there.

I'm sure there is a better way.

Thank you for your consideration.

Joseph King

Email 068

From: GLORIA

Sent: Sunday, March 02, 2014 12:14 PM

To: swlrt

Subject: Freight Rail Re-route Through St. Louis Park

Met Council/SWLRT,

I am writing to you as a citizen of the Birchwood Neighborhood in St. Louis Park. The train tracks that are proposed to have much additional freight traffic routed through are just 3 blocks from my home of 28 years and will go directly next to the high school and Central Community Center among other properties. The homes along the tracks on Blackstone and Brunswick are so close to the tracks that living there would be HORRIBLE.

With all the train derailments that have occurred recently, having this possibility so close to homes and schools is really terrible.

I understand that it is proposed to close both the 28th and 29th street railroad crossings which will make it so much more difficult to get out of our neighborhood. Also, the Highway 100 reconstruction will be closing the southbound 27th street entrance to highway 100 as well. My street, Yosemite, does not go directly to Minnetonka blvd, nor does Zarthan, which already makes it difficult to get in and out of my neighborhood.

The cost of re-routing through St. Louis Park is going to be so much more expensive than going through the Kenilworth neighborhood and will be so much more disruptive, as well.

With all of these issues and more as well as the railroad's decision to not support the re-route through St. Louis Park, shows me that the decision must be to select the routing of these freight trains through the Kenilworth neighborhood.

Please take this information into account when making your final decision and don't put the children and other citizens of St. Louis Park at risk with these numerous, longer, higher-speed trains going through our wonderful city.

Thanks.

Gloria J. Murman
XXXX Yosemite Avenue South

Email 069

From: Wade & Julia Schmelzer
Sent: Sunday, March 02, 2014 5:28 PM
To: swlrt
Subject: Freight Rail Comment

To the leaders of the Metro Transit,

I feel compelled to write regarding the ongoing Southwest LRT discussions and the latest TranSystem relocation plan for St. Louis Park. A simple aerial view of the proposed re-route shows the magnitude and long-term ramifications of this route. These rail lines are extremely close to the St. Louis Park High School. As with any high school, just step outside an hour before or up to a few hours afterwards, there are always students coming and going for various school activities and sporting events. With the proposed increase in train frequency, larger freight train sizes and inherent route design limitations, the safety risks to these children would dramatically increase. Even the TC&W has expressed significant concerns regarding the potential risks of derailment when coupling the double curves of the re-route with transitioning of much longer freight trains onto these tracks. In addition to their physical safety, the proximity of these lines and increased frequency of train traffic would pose serious challenges to the teaching and learning of children, not only at the high school, but the Spanish Immersion School and Peter Hobart Elementary School.

I know the Metro Transit would like to see to the full potential of the light rail system achieved and I believe it has great benefits for the Twin Cities area. However, I would urge each of you to look in the mirror and ask yourselves "Would I be concerned about the safety and well-being of my child if they were a student there?" I'm sure your answer would be the same as those of us in St. Louis Park. So please creatively explore the possibility of making this dream a reality through co-location.

Sincerely,

Wade Schmelzer
St. Louis Park resident

Email 070

From: Martin, Cheryl

Sent: Sunday, March 02, 2014 6:05 PM

To: swlrt; Haigh, Susan; Rodriguez, Katie; Schreiber, Lona; Munt, Jennifer; Vaneyll, Gary; Elkins, Steve; Brimeyer, James; Cunningham, Gary; Duininck, Adam; Reynoso, Edward; McCarthy, Marie; Rummel, Sandy; Melander, Harry; Kramer, Richard; Commers, Jon; Chavez, Steven; Wulff, Wendy

Cc: 'ronl@senate.mn'; 'rep.ryan.winkler@house.mn'; 'rep.steve.simon@house.mn'

Subject: Freight Rail Comments

To whom it may concern:

I have been going to Freight Rail meetings for 2 1/2 years and it seems that no one, with any decision-making authority, is listening to the concerns that we the citizens of St. Louis Park have voiced, over and over again. It seems that we have to go to "one more meeting", "one more time", and express the same concerns over and over again, because, it appears that, next step in the process doesn't take into consideration any of the past comments from the previous steps. It feels like we are being "drained of energy and fight" in hopes that, if this is dragged out long enough, we St. Louis Park citizens will give up and just go away.

I was really disgusted with the presentation of the Tran-System Plan, where we citizens were led to believe that their new plan was only going to cost \$112 million versus the original re-route on the table at \$200 million. And yet, after all the expenses were compared, "apples-to-apples", the Tran-Systems plan was really going to cost \$230 million. This was outright fraud. To lie to the public about the actual cost and try to "bamboozle" us was inexcusable.

On February 6th, I was at the latest Public Hearing meeting held in the City of St. Louis Park's High School Auditorium, and I think it was very clear, that no one supports the re-route of the freight trains through our neighborhoods and our community for many, many reasons, and neither does the TC & W Railroad, who would have to give up their current location on straight tracks with up to 200 feet of open space on the sides of their current tracks, rather than the 75 ft. of open space from the tracks to our high school, and even less from some of our homeowners' homes and garages. Our City of St. Louis Park's Mayor, Jeff Jacobs, stood up and read a long statement from the whole City Council, where they all agreed, that they would not give their consent to a re-route through St. Louis Park, when there were viable alternatives available, for which there are 6 other viable alternatives available, one of which includes the shallow tunnel option, which would appear to appease most of the governmental officials.

And, there was a much cheaper alternative that had been discarded early on, that if it were back on the table for consideration, would require moving a bike path and saving millions of dollars in the process.

The Chairwoman of the St. Louis Park School Board also spoke on behalf of her school board colleagues, in which they did not give their support to the re-route, either. Our students would be interrupted many times during the day for great lengths of time while they waited for the trains to go by, so that the teachers could resume teaching. How does this help our students have a great education where they can do the best work that they can. I agree with the people who have stood up at the community meetings and said that, if the re-route was to go past our schools, then they would move out of St. Louis Park and into a better school district. I would, too. I am a Realtor with Edina Realty, with 35 years of real estate experience. When I meet with a buyer and they are trying to decide where to live, the number one criteria for choosing a city to live in is "How high are the schools ranked when compared to other school districts? Currently, St. Louis Park Schools are ranked pretty high in the State of Minnesota, and therefore, St. Louis Park is a very desirable city to live in. All it would take is for the re-route to take place and our education system would slip in St. Louis Park, with students not being able to learn, because of the many daily disruptions in their education due to train noise and vibrations, and

then fewer students would be winning National Honor Society Awards and other such awards, or fewer students would be going on to college, and then our citizens will be moving out to other communities and other school districts. We will no longer have our citizens voting for school bond issues to improve our schools, and our property values will go down.

We also had someone speak for the benefit of our community food self, STEP, whose building would be one of the businesses taken to put the re-route through the community. This is an organization that it took years for them to find a suitable location for the food shelf, not to mention that it serves a very large percentage of people living in St. Louis Park, and we cannot forsake this organization's great works and allow you to take their building for the benefit of freight rail to be re-routed .

It is clear to me that there is a "double standard" being applied to the one or two re-route options that are still on the table and the 6 co-location options that should still be on the table, if the same criteria were being applied to all options. Those options for co-location were eliminated because they would take homes or businesses. How was this a fair decision, when the re-route plans take homes and businesses. And to top that off, there is NO mitigation planned for the re-route options. Yet, there is a plan that has been removed from consideration because it would require moving a bike path, and it's projected cost was only \$35 million. This does not even compare to the immensity of taking businesses and homes in St. Louis Park, to make way for the re-route and disrupting our city's livability. Not to mention that the re-route plan runs by 5 schools and thousands of children, creates a higher level of noise due to the new inclines, and disrupts learning worse than it currently does, and creates safety hazards that even the TC & W doesn't want and says would be a high risk for derailment in the future. We should not be creating dangerous conditions, where there is none to start with. This double standard seems to mean that the rich and affluent people of the Kenwood area have more clout than the lower middle class people of St. Louis Park.

I was also very offended at Commissioner Peter McLaughlin's comments, where he refers to St. Louis Park, along with Hopkins, and other cities as the "little cities", like we do not have as much say in whether there is a re-route or a co-location route as the City of Minneapolis does. Nor does he seem to think that we have the right to voice our concerns as to what a re-route would do to our City of St. Louis Park, our citizens, our children, and it's livability. As much as I see the benefit of having the Southwest Light Rail come through St. Louis Park, I do not see the need for it at what it would cost St. Louis Park in so many ways.

One last point I would like to make against the re-route proposal. As I stated previously, I am a Realtor. I am not an appraiser. But I would like to bring up a new issue that seems to get overlooked in these meetings, and it is the de-valuation of our properties, particularly the approximate 185 single family homes, that are on the Freight Rail re-location route, plus the hundreds of other properties within blocks of these railroad tracks, tracks that were built originally to transport trains that are 40 cars long, at most, and traveling at 10 miles per hour. It would be almost non-existent for a Realtor to hear a buyer say, that they would like to live backing up to a busy railroad track, or across the street from one. Whenever I meet with a buyer and ask them to tell me about where they would like to live and the features they are looking for in a home, one thing that always comes up is that they "Don't" want to live on a busy street, for which a busy railroad track would be the same concern. If a buyer were to decide to buy a home on a busy street/railroad track they would expect to buy that home for a lot less money, than had it been on a quiet residential street. We could be talking at least 10-20% difference in value. We are already seeing this on the MN & S line with its short and slower trains. The busier the street/track, the more reduction in value for the homes next to it. The people who bought their homes backing up to the current MN & S tracks probably bought them for less than they would have, if they had been on a quiet residential street. However, to upgrade the tracks and have trains of over 100 cars long going at 25 miles per hour and carrying potentially hazardous waste, would for sure change the amount of property value reduction these homeowners would have when they go to sell their homes.

Currently, we Realtors and the sellers of homes have to disclose to a buyer any potential changes in the neighborhood or area that could affect the quiet enjoyment of their ownership of a property that they are considering buying. And this includes the potential of re-routing the freight trains on the MN & S tracks. So this is already affecting sales and property values of homes on Brunswick and Blackstone Avenues South and streets close by, because this issue is not resolved yet. The re-route, if it goes through, will affect the St. Louis Park's tax base, and it will prevent some homeowners from selling their property, and their property could go into foreclosure, if they absolutely have to sell. How are these homeowner's going to be compensated for their loss in home values/equity?

We had one woman stand up at the Feb. 6th meeting and talk about how the vibrations of the trains are already destroying her home with walls cracking. And this situation will be more prevalent along a re-route of the freight trains, as there will be more vibrations associated with the longer trains going around the curves and up the steep inclines, that will be necessary for the freight trains to make. How are these homeowners going to be compensated for the damage to their homes?

I sincerely hope that you will find a co-location solution in resolving what to do with the freight trains so that the Southwest Light Rail project can move forward.

Cheryl Martin
St. Louis Park, Mn. 55416.

Email 071

From: Reid McDaniel
Sent: Sunday, March 02, 2014 6:39 PM
To: swlrt; jjacobs1956; annemavitysl; gregg; Sue Sanger; tpbrausen; jake; hallfinslp; rep.steve.simon; rep.ryan.winkler
Subject: I Oppose the St. Louis Park Freight re-route.

I am a resident of St. Louis Park and I oppose the TransSystem option to relocate the freight rail traffic through St. Louis Park. As a parent of a SLP 1st grader I'm concerned about the impact on the schools, students, and our community.

Thank you,
Reid McDaniel

Email 072

From: Brendalee Litman
Sent: Sunday, March 02, 2014 7:17 PM
To: swlrt
Subject: It's time to forge ahead with co-location

March 2, 2014

To the Met Council;

How much time is the Metropolitan Council going to waste revisiting dangerous freight reroutes going through St. Louis Park? These options take out homes, businesses, and run close to the Spanish Immersion grade school playground and right next to St. Louis Park High, a major suburban High School

serving 1363 students. This latter factor alone makes this reroute totally unacceptable. The prospect of 100-car freight trains crossing Dakota Ave. with its thousands of high school student, bus, and car crossings daily, is frightening! When the consultant answered questions at the recent open meeting at the High School, he acknowledged that the long freight trains would NOT be able to stop to avoid hitting a stalled vehicle or person on the tracks! In addition, the vibration and lengthy, extensive loud noise from such long, heavy freight trains would be incredibly disruptive to the learning process as these trains pass next to the High School over extended periods of time.

There is no route through St. Louis Park that comes remotely close regarding safety to the Kenilworth corridor which is wide for the most part, flat, and straight. The proposed St. Louis Park reroute is narrow, has changes in elevation, runs through areas of houses and businesses along much of its route and even has reverse curves which the railroad singled out as a major cause of potential derailments. The tracks that work for a 10 or 15 car train which a conductor can stop rather quickly if he sees trouble at the Dakota crossing is a totally different animal from the long, heavy freight cars the Met Council is incredulously once again considering rerouting there.

Now that even the railroad has pointed out how this proposed reroute is totally unacceptable from a safety standpoint and doesn't meet safety federal safety guidelines, it is time for the Met Council to move on. The Kenilworth corridor is the only reasonable place for these freight trains to be and colocation is the only viable option.

Thank you,
Brenda and Ted Litman
St. Louis Park, MN, 55426

Email 073

From: sschu4
Sent: Sunday, March 02, 2014 8:39 PM
To: swlrt
Subject: SWLR routing

Good day,

This is a follow-up to my editorial in the SLP Sun Newspaper. The best route for the SWLRT is through the Kennilworth corridor on the existing at grade - ground level railroad bed. There is plenty of room for both freight and light rail at grade. This is the most cost effective and practical solution. As an avid bicyclist, I would not object to moving the existing bicycle path to make room for the trains which are a priority.

This seems to be the most sensible, the safest and cost effective solution. Please give it your earnest consideration.

Thank you,
Steve Schutte

Email 074

From: Beth Selvig
Sent: Sunday, March 02, 2014 9:54 PM
To: swlrt
Subject: Relocation of the freight rail in St. Louis Park

March 3, 2014

Dear Chair Haigh and Metropolitan Council Members,

We want you to know that we are opposed to the option to relocate the freight rail traffic in St. Louis Park by our High School. We have lived at XXXX Library Lane for going on 27 years. Two of our daughters have graduated from SLP High School and our youngest daughter is in the 9th grade at the SLP High School. St. Louis Park Schools all pride themselves in providing our students with an excellent education. Keeping that in mind, anyone who has attended the High School knows the teachers have and will NEED to continue to STOP teaching until the trains have gone by. With any increase usage in the railroad tracks, how will we maintain our excellent level of education and provide safety to our students?

We have attended many of the meetings on the relocation of the freight rail and do not begin to understand why this option is still on the table. This will have so very many long lasting negative affects on the quality of our students education, our communities quality of life, the safety of both students and community, and having an increased level of noise.

As a couple we chose to purchase a home in St. Louis Park because of the excellent schools, the safety of the community and location of the community. If the freight rail relocation goes through the SLP High School we will have no reason to stay in our St. Louis Park community.

Please will you consider another option other than to relocate the freight rail traffic in St. Louis Park?

Thank You,
Loren and Beth Selvig

Email 075

From: Steve and Jane Remiger
Sent: Thursday, February 27, 2014 10:17 AM
Cc: Haigh, Susan; sen.lyle.koenen
Subject: TCWR

Hi, please read my attachment for the discussion on the Southwest Rail Transit planning meeting. Thank you for your time. Jane Remiger

Feb. 26, 2014

Dear Committee Members;

We all struggle to find the right mix, the right fix, the right and fair way to achieve the ultimate goal, but what we are finding suggests otherwise. Let me explain; To survive we all need certain products, but it helps if it is at an affordable price. By implementing the latest plan for the rail, specifically TCWR, infringes on all people attaining products.

Let us go back to our childhood. We all played a game of train, holding on to a string of hands and running in curves and circles to whiplash the last players. The outcome was that no one could maintain the following by the pulling and surging of the motion. This is also the outcome of a train that has to follow tight curves and hills. Let common sense of our youth show the experts that such layout would be harmful and costly to all consumers, not only of rail, but of the products that they are carrying to your communities.

Whereas: TCWR provides a reliable service to transport goods and products from the west to supply the east with necessary items.

Whereas: The Southwest Light Rail Transit is still in the planning stage, all input should be taken seriously.

Therefore: We, the members of the MVRRC (Mn Valley RailRoad Coalition) strongly support the views and opinions of TCWR in regard to the grade and route that is needed for an efficient and responsible track.

Sincerely,

Email 076

From: Deanna

Sent: Monday, February 24, 2014 8:57 PM

To: Haigh, Susan

Subject: Letter regarding SWLRT project: relocation vs co-location

Greetings Ms. Haigh,

I have attached a letter outlining my concerns in regards to the upcoming decisions the Met Council has to make. I know you do not take this decision lightly, and I appreciate your time to listen to all community members.

Thank you for your time,

Deanna Plant

February 25, 2014

Dear Members of the Metropolitan Council:

I am writing this letter to address the ongoing discussion and upcoming decision about the Southwest Light Rail Transit project.

I live in St Louis Park, and I have 2 children who utilize Kids Place at Central Community Center for preschool and summer childcare. They also attend summer camps through this location. We drive the streets between Central and what would be the other side of the railroad tracks to access soccer games, the public library and varying parks.

I had a chance to review the revised plans for re-route of freight trains through St Louis Park. I was happy to see that the previously proposed high berms were out of the plans, but very disappointed that the plans still continue to run the trains very near our high school, elementary schools, preschool and Central Community center. I see more than one area of concern around safety with this plan. Yes, there are trains that run a similar route right now, but they are much less frequent, lengthy, and travel at much slower speeds. There are other issues that come to light after looking at the proposed plans. These would remove small businesses in the heart of our community, including STEP, which provides food, clothing and supplies to those in our community who are in need. This would also remove homes where many community members are currently living. And, the re-routing of traffic that would be necessary would bisect a busy, vital part of our community.

The thought that we would uproot community members, small businesses and put St Louis Park students into a potentially dangerous situation to avoid re-routing a bicycle path is frankly absurd to me. Don't get me wrong, I love to bike and run around the lakes area, but I cannot see where the trade off comes in this situation.

I was also very pleased that an environmental review was done in regards to the potential for a shallow tunnel for the light rail and that this option showed no concerns for disruption of the health of our lakes and waterways. Therefore, this option is still also a viable option.

In short, I am in favor of co-location as opposed to relocation for the above stated reasons. Please think this decision through carefully in the upcoming weeks.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Deanna Plant

St Louis Park

Email 077

From: Scott Blumhoefer

Sent: Monday, February 24, 2014 2:47 PM

To: Haigh, Susan
Subject: Southwest Light Rail

Ms. Susan Haigh, Chair
Metropolitan Council
390 Robert St North
St. Paul, MN 55101-1805

RE: Southwest Light Rail Transit System

Honorable Chair Haigh,

Heartland Corn Products offers the following in response to the Metropolitan Council's freight rail relocation report.

Heartland Corn Products is an ethanol production facility cooperatively owned by farmer producers, located in Winthrop, MN. We have been in operation since 1995, and since that time have seen our membership grow from 350 farmers to now about 900 farmers. Over that same timeframe we have doubled the workforce at our facility, and have had a very positive economic impact on the local community, contractors and service providers.

Over the past ten years Heartland Corn Products has invested over \$70,000,000 to increase local production, including improvements to ship the majority of our finished products out via railroad. With this growth at Heartland, it is critical that we maintain efficient and cost effective rail service to reach coast to coast domestic markets, as well as increasing exports. The Twin Cities and Western Railroad ("TC&W") provides this vital transportation link to our marketplace. Any changes to TC&W's route that increase costs and impact their ability to deliver goods safely and efficiently will have an adverse effect on Heartland and its 900 farmer members.

In addition to Heartland Corn Products, the TC&W provides rail service that is essential for the continued success of multiple shippers in Central Minnesota. The ability to move products and finished goods from Minnesota to national and international markets is critical for the future of our local economies.

Sincerely,

Scott Blumhoefer
Vice President
Heartland Corn Products

Email 078

From: Jason Alvey

Sent: Friday, February 21, 2014 3:10 PM

To: Haigh, Susan; roxanne.smith; Schreiber, Lona; Munt, Jennifer; Vaneyll, Gary; Elkins, Steve; Duininck, Adam; Reynoso, Edward; john.doan; Rummel, Sandy; Melander, Harry; Kramer, Richard; Commers, Jon; Chavez, Steven; Wulff, Wendy; Cunningham, Gary; THARMENING; Nancy Stroth

Cc: Jan Callison; edinamail; billjames; Peter McLaughlin; tschneider; lisa.weik; Cheryl Youakim; mark.dayton; sen.ron.latz; Steve Simon; rep.ryan.winkler; Jake Spano
Subject: Please don't let the St. Louis Park freight rail reroute take down the STEP food shelf.

I am a board member at STEP (St. Louis Park Emergency Program). I'm also a local small business owner in St. Louis Park.

The demolition of the STEP building for the proposed freight rail route would be a tragedy and I'm writing to ask you not to allow that to happen.

I joined STEP about 6 months ago and as well as my duties on the board I've been volunteering at the food shelf in many different capacities. I was immediately very surprised and impressed at just how many people STEP helps and the manner in which they do so. I know you've all seen the number, 4000 people each year, but when you actually spend some time there and meet some of those people it really brings home the importance of this organization.

When you work the front desk answering phones and receiving clients, the phone rings continuously for hours with people looking for help. People come through the door all day long, from all walks of life, many with young children. Dozens of people, more, everyday. Each person gets to spend time with a councillor before they are lead through to the food shelf and helped load their cart.

When you work in the food shelf and come face to face with the people who are our neighbors and friends, many of them have simply hit difficult times for reasons out of their control. When you actually help them pick out their food and load the bags, it's a very intimate and personal experience. Every person there depends on this service and every single person is important.

If the STEP building went down for even a matter of weeks it would mean hundreds of people in this community would suffer and struggle on a level that many of us can't really understand.

The reality though is that we may not be able to find another building that works as well as the current one does. The removal of this building may affect STEP and it's clients for years, if not decades.

"This reroute is simply a small change to the previous MN&S routing, with all the same issues and adding more. In addition to prior problems of noise, vibration, proximity to homes, commercial buildings and schools, this reroute closes major streets in St. Louis Park (Walker and West Lake Street) and takes our local food shelf building- STEP. We spent many years finding the right location for this building in the center of the city and remodeling it to fit our needs. It is on a bus line, central to our volunteer staff and the high school, and with a city parking lot to support us across the street."

The consultant who proposed this reroute is not from here and he clearly doesn't understand the impact that taking down the STEP building would have on this community.

Many of you do live here and I know you'll understand how important this is. Please, try to find a solution that doesn't take out STEP. It's much more than one building, it will damage the entire community.

Thank you for your time and what you do.

Jason Alvey,

Certified Cicerone[®]

Owner, Founder

The Four Firkins[®]

Supporting craft beer drinkers and craft breweries, one beer at a time.

Board member: STEP - St. Louis Park Emergency Program

<http://www.stepslp.org>

Helping over 4000 St. Louis Park residents in need each year.

Email 079

From: Eric Ecklund

Sent: Sunday, February 23, 2014 6:54 PM

To: Haigh, Susan; Cunningham, Gary

Subject: Southwest Light Rail

Metropolitan Council members,

St. Louis Park, Kenwood, and many other people are looking for honest answers from politicians on this controversial project, and I will give you my honest answer. I'm sure you are well aware of the history of the Kenilworth Corridor, but I think its time for a refresh. Sometime in the late 1980s as rail through the Kenilworth Corridor was being abandoned, the Chicago & North Western Railway sold it's right of way to the Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority (HCRRRA), and later the development of the Kenwood townhouses would be in place. Somewhere in this process someone was negligent in that they didn't take into consideration how valuable the corridor was for freight rail and light rail. The HCRRRA identified the Southwest Transitway as a future light rail project in 1988, with the Kenilworth Corridor serving part of the light rail's route between Eden Prairie and Minneapolis. As people began moving into the Kenwood townhouses, it didn't seem to cross their mind that there were train tracks just thirty feet away from their property and they did not look further into freight train operations on the corridor, or what its future use would be. Its also possible false promises were given that the freight trains would be moved for light rail without altering the Kenilworth Trail and their property. What they didn't know was the freight train operations were going to be rerouted through the center of a suburb on a rail corridor not meant for heavy and long freight trains. We can all agree that rerouting freight trains through St. Louis Park will never happen, no matter how much you, the members of the Metropolitan Council, are keen on doing it. So the freight trains are going to stay in Kenilworth, that much is certain. Now the question is where will the light rail go, and what will be the fate of the trail and Kenwood townhouses? I too support the Uptown route for light rail, but it appears to be unlikely considered again by you, the members of the Metropolitan Council. Whether this route will be taken into consideration again is entirely up to you. For the time being we need to look at what will be done with light rail operating through Kenilworth. Colocation of light rail and freight rail will most likely be done. As for the Kenilworth Trail, its built on a railroad corridor, not a recreational corridor. Its also a rail-trail, which means it was built on abandoned railroad right of way, and it can be rebuilt for rail if there is a need to do so. This doesn't mean the trail will be wiped out from existence. Instead, it would either be rerouted for approximately one mile, or elevated above the light rail. I use the Kenilworth Trail on occasion, and I will continue to do so whether it stays where it is, if it is rerouted, or if it is elevated or altered in someway. The Kenwood townhouses are also on the railroad corridor. Sometime between the 1980s and now, someone was negligent. It may have been the railroad who sold the land, or the developers that built

townhouses in a place that wasn't meant for development, or it could be the people who are currently living there for not considering the freight train operations and the future light rail operations on this corridor, or perhaps someone else including the Metropolitan Council. The point is that the Kenwood townhouses may need to go in order to use the Kenilworth Corridor as it has been for over one-hundred years, a railroad corridor. Yes, fair compensation would be given to the property owners. Keep in mind that not all of the Kenwood townhouses would need to be demolished for the required right of way. At this point some people may be thinking of the Rondo neighborhood in St. Paul that was split apart for the construction of Interstate 94, and think this is what is going to happen to the Kenilworth area. That the Kenilworth area will never be the same, ruined, and split apart by rail. This is far from the truth. One line of track for freight trains and two lines of track for light rail requires much smaller right of way than an eight-lane freeway. The Rondo neighborhood was a lower class area, whereas Kenilworth is a middle to upper class area. If fair compensation was given to those displaced by the I-94 construction, I certainly doubt they were better off finding a new place to live unlike the people of Kenwood if there are displaced by the Southwest Line. West Lake Street, Cedar Lake Parkway, Burnham Road, and 21st Street would remain open so communities on each side of the tracks will not be split apart from one another. People want the Southwest Line project done right, but that may require making up for wrongs done in this process, which started long ago when construction started on the Kenwood townhouses right next to the train tracks. People are looking for honest answers in this controversy, and this is my honest answer.

Thank you for reading, and I hope you, the Metropolitan Council, will make the right decision in this project.

Eric Ecklund

Email 080

From: B A Monson
Sent: Monday, February 24, 2014 4:38 AM
To: Haigh, Susan
Subject: Southwest Light Rail Line

1) Could municipal bonds be sold to offset the cost of building the Green Line? There are many Minneapolis residents who support this project and many who would purchase bonds to make it happen.

2) Perhaps the greatest opposition to the shallow tunnel proposal is the fact that the trains would have to sound their horns every 3.5 minutes as they emerge from the shallow tunnel and traverse the bridge over the channel. Could the trains remain enclosed as they traverse the bridge, thereby obviating the need to sound their horns? The bike lanes that go on top the shallow tunnels could remain on top the trains if the trains remained covered as they crossed the channel bridge.

Email 081

From: David Ruebeck
Sent: Sunday, February 16, 2014 12:07 PM
To: Haigh, Susan
Subject: SWLRT

Chairwoman Haigh,

I write to you as a proponent of efficient and responsible public transit.

The current alignment of the SWLRT is poised to cause irreparable damage to our world-class Minneapolis park system. If co-location of freight and light rail occurs, a large portion of one-of-a-kind parkland and non-motorized commuter trail will be at risk. It is unfortunate, also, that the current alignment through the Kenilworth corridor bypasses so much ridership in the midtown/uptown area.

When the SWLRT was in early planning stages 10 years or so ago moving freight rail out of the Kenilworth corridor was a critical part of Minneapolis' agreement to deem the Kenilworth alignment the so-called "locally preferred alternative." This was a compromise made by city leaders, who in truth preferred the Midtown alignment. If freight is not re-located and the Kenilworth alignment prevails, it would place excessive burden on Minneapolis and, truly, all the regional stake-holders who claim our park system is unique and worth preserving.

While tunnels of various kinds have been suggested by the Met Council as mitigation for this co-location concept, I understand there is absolutely no support for this in the legislature due to excessive cost.

Therefore, I implore you: do not allow co-location of freight rail and SWLRT in the Kenilworth corridor.

Thank you,

David Ruebeck
Minneapolis, MN

Email 082

From: Jeff Urban

Sent: Thursday, February 13, 2014 8:55 AM

To: Haigh, Susan; Rodriguez, Katie; Schreiber, Lona; Munt, Jennifer; Vaneyll, Gary; Elkins, Steve; Brimeyer, James; Cunningham, Gary; Duininck, Adam; Reynoso, Edward; McCarthy, Marie; Rummel, Sandy; Melander, Harry; Kramer, Richard; Commers, Jon; Chavez, Steven

Cc: jjacobs1956; hallfinslp; spanoslpouncil; Sue Sanger; gregg; tpbrausen; AnneMavitySLP;

rep.ryan.winkler; ronl; rep.steve.simon

Subject: SWLRT - SLP Mtg

Met Council Members,

Thank you for having the meeting in SLP last evening. Obviously, we are very proud and passionate about our community.

A couple takeaways I had from the meeting last night.

1. Ol' Fred Thompson with his spitball estimates did not come across as very credible. I wouldn't want him as my star witness. He sure did not make me feel very confident with their process

and analysis. If you are going to publish a report, the one number you may want to get exact is the distance from the tracks to the school – since it is the hottest issue.

2. Bike trail option. Yes, the shallow tunnel may be a better option, but the two best options are not the shallow tunnel and SLP. The two best options are the bike trail and the shallow tunnel. Without the Met Council admitting it, you needed one option in Minneapolis and one option in SLP. Hard to have credibility with SLP residents when this isn't acknowledged.

I didn't get a chance to speak, but I have 3 issues with the recommended SLP reroute – Analysis, Options and Community.

1. The analysis on the new, 11th hour, proposed reroute is incomplete. It lacks details in regard to safety, costs and engineering.
2. There are better options than the SLP reroute – the shallow tunnel (and the bike trail). This has already been determined with your initial recommendation. The previous decision was based on merit. Your final decision needs to, as well. Not politics.
3. The impact this would have on the SLP community is devastating. One hundred-unit freight trains going through the middle of our largest middle-class neighborhoods and passing 75 feet from our high school. This will totally change the quality of life for our entire community.

Again, I expect our Mayor and City Council to deny municipal consent if the SLP reroute is selected.

Sincerely,

Jeff Urban
Birchwood Neighborhood

Email 083

From: Leynia
Sent: Wednesday, February 12, 2014 8:18 PM
To: Haigh, Susan
Subject: freight rail

Dear Susan,

If the railroading of SLP passes, homeowners will never get our investments back out of our homes. The decrease in home values will reduce the property taxes, further spiraling down the value of our good city.

Regards,

Ellen Lipschultz
55416

Email 084

From: tjscott
Sent: Tuesday, February 11, 2014 8:53 PM

To: Haigh, Susan
Subject: MN&S North Rail line.

Dear Chairperson Haigh,

I am contacting you to voice my displeasure regarding the recent consultant's findings to reroute freight traffic via the proposed MN&S North rail line. You are exactly correct to state "hard decisions need to be made" concerning the construction of the SW Light Rail and the challenge of what to do with freight traffic. As a nearly 30 year resident of St. Louis Park, and a homeowner that lives within one block of the proposed MN&S line, I would stress to you that decisions that are made must be reasonable in scope. In my view and the view of many St.

Louis Park residents, destroying private residences and small, locally owned businesses is not a reasonable approach to public policy. As a political appointee, you do need to be sensitive to the concerns of stakeholders who will be negatively effected by the decisions you and other members of the Met Council make. I am a strong advocate of mass transit and I also support a regional approach to metro-wide public policy. However, the various proposals of rerouting freight traffic (including the most recent assessment) is an existential threat to the St. Louis Park community. The current recommendations of the MN&S line will have a deleterious impact on the quality of life and the "community cohesion" of a city I happen to love. I strongly urge you to reject the reroute plan through St. Louis Park and support the relocation of the Kenilworth bike trail and the building of a tunnel in the Kenilworth corridor to accomodate the proposed SW light Rail line.

Respectfully,

Thomas J. Scott

Email 085

From: B G ENGEL
Sent: Tuesday, February 11, 2014 9:35 PM
To: Haigh, Susan; Greg Engel
Subject: Re-routing the Kenilworth bike trail -- deserves reconsidering

Dear Susan,

I'm an avid cyclist and I really treasure the whole bike trail system. I had good conversation with Katie Rodriguez yesterday regarding a different alternative, that is, to reroute the bike trail out of the Kenilworth corridor.

Rerouting the bike trail to Dean parkway / lake of the Isles would allow both sets of rail tracks at grade level and avoid the \$160 M train tunnel and associated environmental issues.

Obviously there are some intersections to manage through Dean Parkway and to Lake of the Isles. But with some creative design it seems very feasible and would add only a short distance for bike commuters.

Admittedly, it may be slightly less convenient for bikes along that route. But my belief is that the broader bicycling community would gladly give up some convenience at Kenilworth to allow a portion of

that \$160 M to be invested in additional bicycle safety efforts and trails throughout the metro. (Recall the recent Star Trib article about bike fatality on Franklin ave).

I hope this alternative could become part of the public discourse. Thanks again,

Greg Engel
Plymouth

Email 086

From: Andrea Hjelm
Sent: Tuesday, February 11, 2014 2:58 PM
To: 'Anita Tabb'
Subject: LRT

Hi Anita,

I am one of your constituents and appreciate all of your efforts to exercise due diligence, as is the Park Board, in resolving this highly controversial issue of where the LRT is to be positioned. (Why wasn't an initial proposed route chosen through high density dwellings where passenger traffic would be maximized and rail beds already exist?)

I have been a resident of the city for many years. I have worked as an interested party on the restructuring of Lake of the Isles when we were forced to oppose the inclusion of a permanent brick structure for the warming house, dredging 2 parts water for every 1 part of land, thus taking away park land, building cement "vistas" instead of the limestone natural ones, putting in a new island that would have a road wide enough for emergency vehicles. This all was presented by Landscape Architects who were profit driven. It was eventually decided that the land was pastoral and retention of that was essential.

I know that this LRT project is a political nightmare, as state bodies would like to create jobs and collect Federal Funds. But we need to consider preservation of the beauty and uniqueness of our city.

I am a reasonable person who doesn't live directly on the route of the train, as do those who are adjacent to it, but I am concerned about the environmental impact of 81,000 passes of a train per year, right through a beautiful residential area, highly used bike and pedestrian trail, which it will impact so negatively, with the noise pollution of a whistle as it crosses streets 81,000 times a year. The track will take up precious parkland for perpetuity and totally stop usage during construction, even though alternate areas are proposed for that purpose.

It is absolutely ridiculous to consider widening the bridge over the passageway from Lake of the Isles to Cedar Lake in this prime historic area. And you are right, a "dive under the channel" and a deep tunnel are the only possible answers, other than rerouting the LRT to a high density area and retaining the current rail traffic only. I cannot imagine that a proposal for a train to be above ground anywhere in this area is reasonable!!!! Most of these residents, bike or take a bus downtown and don't even need a station!

Thank you for your attention to this matter. Let us hope that sanity prevails on the part of the Met Council, our Governor and other administrators and that this matter is thoughtfully addressed or reconsidered entirely!

Andrea Hjelm
President, Moore Creative Talent, Inc.
Resident, City of Minneapolis

Email 087 (006)

From: Curt Rahman

Sent: Tuesday, February 11, 2014 2:43 PM

To: Haigh, Susan; roxanne.smith; Schreiber, Lona; Munt, Jennifer; Vaneyll, Gary; Elkins, Steve; Duininck, Adam; Reynoso, Edward; john.doan; Rummel, Sandy; Melander, Harry; Kramer, Richard; Commers, Jon; Chavez, Steven; Wulff, Wendy; Cunningham, Gary

Cc: Jan Callison; edinamail; billjames; Peter McLaughlin; tschneider; lisa.weik; cherylyouakim; mark.dayton; sen.ron.latz; rep.steve.simon; rep.ryan.winkler; 'Jake Spano'; 'Tom Harmening'

Subject: Please do not vote to destroy the Food Shelf

I am the treasurer of STEP, the St. Louis Park Emergency Program (the local food shelf). Last night I attended the "Minneapolis" SWLRT open house which presented a new freight rail reroute proposal. Here are four key points I want to relay:

- This reroute is simply a small change to the previous MN&S routing, with all the same issues and adding more. In addition to prior problems of noise, vibration, proximity to homes, commercial buildings and schools, this reroute closes major streets in St. Louis Park (Walker and West Lake Street) and takes our local food shelf building- STEP. We spent many years finding the right location for this building in the center of the city and remodeling it to fit our needs. It is on a bus line, central to our volunteer staff and the high school, and with a city parking lot to support us across the street.
- The consultant, Jim Terry, says his plan will cost \$112 million without considering property takes. Jim has identified 7 or 8 homes and 7 or 8 businesses that have to be purchased and relocated. My estimate of the cost to buy a similar building for STEP and relocate the Food Shelf would be in excess of 3 million dollars. Multiply that by 8 businesses, add in the houses and buy out additional commercial buildings due to noise and vibration (existing traffic causes vibration that exceeds federal guidelines) and the number will certainly hit \$50 million in property acquisitions and relocations. Jim's number also does not include "year built" cost adjustments that the other plans include. So don't be fooled. This will not be cheaper. In the end, it will delay the project, still add \$200 million dollars and cost just as much if not more than the shallow tunnel.
- It was clear that Minneapolis residents do not want more train traffic in Kenwood. The shallow tunnel keeps 5 freight trains per day in Kenilworth and moves the 220 light rail trains per day underground.
- I keep hearing that EQUITY is a really big deal as a part of the light rail project. If that is true, then taking down STEP, the safety net of our community, should be a last resort. Co-location of light rail and freight in Kenilworth with a shallow tunnel is a good solution that we all need to support.

Relocation moves 5 freight trains per day to St. Louis Park and then moves 220 trains per day through Kenilworth above ground.

With relocation, Minneapolis gets massively increased above ground traffic in Kenilworth and St. Louis Park endures all the issues of relocation. Both cities lose with relocation.

Curt Rahman, Business Advisor to the SWLRT and Treasurer of STEP- the Local Food Shelf

I will leave you with an excerpt from an email I got from Dick Parsons, the Chair of the Board of STEP and the Leader of the group that found our building for us:

One of the things I learned from leading the multiple year effort that culminated in the purchase of 6812 West Lake Street, is that it was almost impossible to find buildings in SLP that were available, suitably sized, affordable, on a bus line, centrally located, with adequate parking that served STEP's needs. Obviously, STEP is not the only one impacted by this plan and is not as big a deal as the school - but it does provide service to over 4,000 people each year who are the most vulnerable in our community. I know you are very aware of the scope of STEP's services and fully supportive what it does in the community. I'll defer to you and what you think the best course of action would be to make sure STEP has a voice at the table.

Thanks for listening.

Dick Parsons, Chair of the Board of STEP

Email 088

From: Julia
Sent: Tuesday, February 11, 2014 8:29 AM
To: Haigh, Susan
Subject: thank you

Dear Ms. Haigh,

I just wanted to thank you for all the work and hours and commitment you and Met Council have put into the SWLRT. And thank you for saying that you don't see moving the train from the Kenilworth corridor as an option. I strongly applaud your commitment to this project and believe it will be an amazing, transformative piece for Minneapolis and the Twin Cities.

This is bigger than the one or less mile of that corridor that some of my neighbors are only seeing from their back windows. This is about changing how we get around, our dependence on the car and the highway system, and how we think about community. This about the future of Minneapolis, and we are all a part of it.

Thank you.

Julia Klatt Singer

Email 089 (082)

From: Jeff Urban
Sent: Tuesday, February 11, 2014 8:38 AM
To: Haigh, Susan; Rodriguez, Katie; Schreiber, Lona; Munt, Jennifer; Vaneyll, Gary; Elkins, Steve; Brimeyer, James; Cunningham, Gary; Duininck, Adam; Reynoso, Edward; McCarthy, Marie; Rummel, Sandy; Melander, Harry; Kramer, Richard; Commers, Jon; Chavez, Steven; Wulff, Wendy
Cc: jjacobs1956; hallfinslp; spanoslpouncil; Sue Sanger; gregg; tpbrausen; AnneMavitySLP; rep.ryan.winkler; ronl; rep.steve.simon
Subject: SWLRT

Met Council Members,

The purpose of this letter is in regard to the SWLRT freight re-route recommendations. In the January 30th independent report, it was stated the new proposal of rerouting the freight rail through St. Louis Park addresses many of the concerns the residents have. This is false. The new proposal is not acceptable to the residents of St. Louis Park. The reroute still has major safety issues and the cost estimates and engineering issues were incomplete. The fact that this 11th hour recommendation is even being considered is unacceptable. The letter sent to you on February 4th from Senator Latz, Representative Winkler and Representative Simon identifies these concerns in more detail.

The community of St. Louis Park is something the residents are very proud of. To run freight rail through the heart of the largest middle-class neighborhoods and our children's schools is absurd. Even the residents of Minneapolis acknowledge this. I encourage each of you to visit our neighborhoods and see first-hand the impact this option would have. I realize this is a very difficult challenge, but the options need to be evaluated based upon merit. Not politics.

I encourage, and expect, the Mayor Jacobs and the SLP City Council members to represent their citizens and deny municipal consent if this proposal is accepted. There are other options. I have also shared this message with Governor Dayton.

My family and I will be at the meeting tomorrow evening.

Sincerely,

Jeff Urban
(Birchwood Neighborhood)
St. Louis Park, MN 55416

Email 090

From: Mike
Sent: Monday, March 03, 2014 11:55 AM
To: swlrt
Subject: Freight rail reroute

My name is Michael Pliner and I live at XXXX Alabama Ave S in St Louis Park MN 55416. I am writing to say that I am against the reroute for many reasons, but the issue of safety is my overriding concern. Derailment in the neighborhood or near the several schools would be a disaster of unimaginable proportions. Please do not risk the lives of those who live in the community or the children who attend

our schools over what amounts to the politics of promises made without regard to common sense.
Thanks.

Michael Pliner
SLP, MN 55416

Sent from my iPhone

Email 091

From: Tom Cremons

Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2014 9:39 AM

To: Haigh, Susan; roxanne.smith@metc.state.mn.us; Schreiber, Lona; Munt, Jennifer; Vaneyll, Gary; Elkins, Steve; james.brimayer@state.mn.us; Cunningham, Gary; Duininck, Adam; Reynoso, Edward; john.doan@metc.state.mn.us; Rummel, Sandy; Melander, Harry; Kramer, Richard; Commers, Jon; Chavez, Steven; Wulff, Wendy

Cc: sen.ron.latz; rep.steve.simon; ryan.winkler; jacobsjeffrey; hallfinslp; Jake Spano; Sue Sanger; AnneMavitySLP; gregg; tpbrausen; Marisol.simon; Safety in the Park

Subject: SWLRT/freight rail comment

Attached is a letter concerning the upcoming freight rail routing decision. I appreciate your consideration and ask that it be made part of the official record.

Tom Cremons

Thomas Cremons

St. Louis Park, MN 55416
Feb. 26, 2014

Dear Chair Haigh and Metropolitan Council Members:

As we once again approach a decision on SWLRT routing and freight rail options, I am writing again to ask you to reject any option that includes any re-routing of freight traffic through St. Louis Park.

The latest re-route option is just a slightly modified revival of plans that have been presented and rejected in the past. Like the other plans, it has been rejected by the TC&W railroad as unsafe, uneconomical, and unworkable. Like the other plans, it is unacceptable to residents of the affected neighborhoods in St. Louis Park because of its impacts on quality of life, safety, and community cohesion. Like the other plans, it has been rejected by our city government as unsafe and destructive to our community. Like the other plans, it has been rejected by our school board as unsafe for our students and disruptive to the educational process.

There are far less expensive and less disruptive options for co-locating freight and LRT in Minneapolis which have been rejected with no real explanation or justification. Several options for relocating the bike trail are very feasible and cost effective, but are no longer under consideration. A tunnel option has been presented, which is really just a very expensive attempt to appease influential groups in

Minneapolis and to mitigate the impacts on their neighborhood; yet this has been rejected by the same people it was intended to satisfy.

St. Louis Park is a wonderful community with great schools, great neighborhoods, great people and an excellent quality of life. It does, however, face many of the issues common to inner-ring suburbs: smaller homes, smaller lots and aging housing stock. We are not a wealthy community. The impact of the re-route proposal is so permanent and will be so destructive to the things that make St. Louis Park desirable, that I fear it will tip the community into a long term and unstoppable decline. The potential benefits of light rail for St. Louis Park are far outweighed by the negative impacts of the freight rail re-route.

I feel that the Met Council inherited a plan that was seriously flawed to begin with. Some entities within Hennepin County obviously had a pre-conceived idea of what the final project would look like. They manipulated the planning and public input to achieve that outcome. The deliberate decision to exclude consideration of freight rail planning and budgeting as a part of the SWLRT planning, route selection, and budgeting process is just the most glaring example of this. The Met Council is now paying the price for Hennepin County's mistakes. That is no justification for continuing down the same path.

When this issue first arose, my primary concern was for the safety of my children in their schools, in their bedrooms, and playing in our back yard. Those children are now adults and I am thinking about retirement. It's time to remove this black cloud that has been hanging over our neighborhood and all of St. Louis Park for so many years. It's time to permanently remove the re-route option from any further consideration in the SWLRT planning process.

Sincerely,

Thomas Cremons

cc: Governor Mark Dayton
Senator Amy Klobuchar
Senator Al Franken
Representative Keith Ellison
State Sen. Ron Latz
State Rep. Steve Simon
State Rep. Ryan Winkler
Mayor Jeff Jacobs
St. Louis Park City Council
Marisol Simon FTA
Safety in the Park

Email 092

Sent: Friday, February 21, 2014 9:00 PM

Steven T. Chávez
District 15

Metropolitan Council

From: Safety In the Park
Sent: Friday, February 21, 2014 8:05 AM
Subject: McLaughlin: "little cities" should fall in line
McLaughlin: "little cities" should fall in line.

If you were at last week's Met Council Q&A meeting at SLP High School, you may think St. Louis Park concerns were firmly implanted in the consciousness of the Met Council and the other elected officials who attended the raucous meeting. Judging by today's Corridor Management Meeting (CMC), you would be wrong.

The CMC, which is scheduled to make a colocation/relocation decision by the end of March, is made up of mayors and representatives of the cities on the SWLRT line. While SLP city manager Tom Harmening stalwartly stood up for the safety and livability of St. Louis Park, Hennepin County Commissioner Peter McLaughlin and Minneapolis Mayor Betsy Hodges attempted to rip into any facts and figures presented by the Met Council's Project Office that supported Kenilworth colocation.

Thursday's CMC meeting came on top of two important recent developments. The County Transit Improvement Board (CTIB) passed a unanimous resolution vowing to pull their funding (30% of the total budget) if this freight matter isn't resolved by June. In addition this week, the TC&W railroad rejected the suggested route calling it unsafe and inefficient.

McLaughlin, obviously flustered by these developments, admonished all the "little cities", referring to St. Louis Park, Hopkins, and others, for raising concerns and questions. He also vowed to force the TC&W to leave the Kenilworth corridor via the Surface Transportation Board (STB). Our consultants believe this is an empty threat. To their knowledge, the STB has never forced a freight railroad to abandon an active rail line.

Hodges, attending her first CMC meeting, was obviously fed some poorly researched information by aide Peter Wagenius. She claimed there are schools in Minneapolis, such as DeLasalle and Edison, that are situated next to train tracks and "they're just fine". The comparison is deeply flawed of course because those schools are a minimum of 200 feet from train tracks. More important than distance though, those tracks, like the tracks near Peter Hobart, are straight, flat, don't split the campus, and don't cross student thoroughfares. Other questions by Hodges and McLaughlin showed their grasp of the project is nominal at best, such as when Hodges asked if there were passenger trains running on the MN&S.

Though SLP's concerns seemed lost on Hodges, McLaughlin, and Met Council Chair Susan Haigh, Tom Harmening pointed them out:

- Regardless of colocation/relocation, freight trains will continue to travel through St. Louis Park.
- Current traffic on the MN&S is short and light, completely different than re-routed freight.
- Current relocation cost projections don't include any mitigation for SLP, while the colocation costs are ALL mitigation in the form of a shallow tunnel.

The Met Council Project Office laid out some key facts including:

- When properly itemized and adjusted, the cost of the new Tran System's plan is actually \$230 million (up from \$112M), virtually the same as the Kenilworth shallow tunnel. That total doesn't yet include the cost for removing part of the Excel power station to make way for a freight ramp as well as half a dozen other items. These will be added to the total before the next CMC meeting.
- Only the SLP re-route affects schools. However, the SWLRT project office only counted each school as one unit, same as one house or one business. Tom Harmening had to point out that those schools enroll thousands of students.
- Countering Hodge's comments about the Minneapolis schools with train adjacencies, Harmening replied, "I'm sure there are schools in Minneapolis with freight trains near them and that's unfortunate. But why would we spend money to create an undesirable situation?"

There are a number of upcoming meetings and deadlines. Judging by today's meeting, you won't want to miss any of them including making a written comment. Written comments are due to the Met Council no later than Monday, March 3, 2014. Even if you have written in the past you need to write again. None of our previous written comments will be considered when the decisions are made about the current MN&S North re-route.

Send comment to SWLRT@metrotransit.org, subject line – Freight Rail comment

Dates, times and venues of future meetings are pending. We will send them to you as they are made available.

Email 093

From: Evan Silja

Sent: Sunday, February 16, 2014 4:14 PM

Subject: What are we trying to accomplish with Southwest light rail?

"From the very start we have asked not "How can we improve our transit network?" but "Where should we put our next rail line?" That makes no sense."

"But rail is expensive and generally only necessary to upgrade the capacity of an overcrowded route previously served by buses."

What are we trying to accomplish with Southwest light rail?

"The Southwest Light Rail debate puts transit advocates in a difficult spot. Do we champion any transit expansion even if its benefits are questionable and opportunity costs very high? Why support a major project that benefits a relatively small group of people while doing nothing for anyone else?"

About the Author:

Jeremy Mendelson

Jeremy is a traveling geographer, transit fan and bicyclist with a background in urban transportation planning and policy.

<http://www.minnpost.com/minnesota-blog-cabin/2013/11/what-are-we-trying-accomplish-southwest-light-rail>

Email 094

From: Kandi Arries

Sent: Monday, March 03, 2014 1:40 PM

To: swlrt

Subject: Comment to the TransSystem Route, Impacts to St Louis Park

The independent study period was set in motion by Minneapolis elected officials and Governor Dayton at the 11th hour after a decision was made to construct shallow tunnels in the Kennilworth Corridor. One of the intended consequences of the study period is the possibility of a freight reroute in St Louis Park was put back on the table. The freight route in St Louis Park is an at grade route. Yet, the at grade colocation options in Minneapolis have not been reopened, specifically elevating or re-routing the bike trail. My understanding is that Minneapolis is opposed to the bike trail options because of community opposition, property acquisitions, or visual impacts. These three concerns exist in St Louis Park with all reroute designs. If the same eliminating criteria is not used for the two communities, then the process is not analytical or objective. It is arbitrary and capricious to have a process for this public investment that treats two communities differently.

The TransSystem route is the 7th design that I have studied in the four years that I have been involved with the freight issue. Another way to think about this is that the community of St Louis Park has been forced to analyze and discuss a 'new design' every six months. This type of repetitive process is tiresome at least, if not abusive to the psyche of a community.

Comments specific to the TransSystem Route-

* The metric for safety requirement (Page 8) is number of at grade road crossings and number of potential train-vehicle conflicts at at-grade crossings. This is a narrow measurement of what a person in the community would consider safe and doesn't allow any measurement for the potential for train-pedestrian (or human) conflicts. The area near the high school is heavily traveled by students, bicycles, and residents by foot. Safety element should include both a measurement for pedestrian impacts and a mapping of population density, both school and residential.

* Community impacts and issues with reroute options are described on Page 19- stating that the community is opposed to the re-route because it goes through treasured features. The consultant then goes on to say that the 'connection could be an improvement if it could be engineered to not directly interfere with so many community buildings. I object to this highly subjective statement of what the community would deem acceptable. Building train designs on bridges and retaining walls is a physical separation of the community. Adding miles of fencing will be a physical obstruction. Closing four streets will be impede mobility and accessibility of the neighborhoods. One of the streets that will be closed is Lake Street where there is a thriving small business area. It is not likely that the businesses will be able to remain profitable if there is limited accessibility. Empty and vacant businesses will only decrease the livability of the community, further degrading community cohesion.

* Statement from Page 21- DEIS concluded that the Kenilworth Route impares community cohesion in Kenwood. If it is impaired in Kenwood, then it is reasonable to expect that community cohesion would be impaired in St Louis Park with additional freight. The community uses in St Louis Park include school facilities, community food shelf, adjacent athletic fields and parks. Most of these uses do not exist in the

Kenilworth so it is also reasonable to state that community cohesion impacts to St Louis Park would be greater than Kenwood.

Missing information:

- a. Traffic impact studies
- b. Noise and vibration impacts. Any reroute in ST Louis Park will be on a berm, bridge structure after climbing elevation from the current tracks. There is not enough information to know what the noise level will be as each train throttles up the structure. Without further study, it is not possible to state what mitigation is needed or what those costs are.
- c. Environmental justice impacts not taken into consideration: STEP, the St Louis Park Food shelf, is one of the building expected to acquired. The STEP program is highly regarded and supported within the community. In addition, the minority population impacts at the St Louis Park High School, Peter Hobart Elementary, and residential area adjacent to the Iron Triangle.
- d. Derailment study

The discussion of what route to study in SLP is now focused on the TranSystem Route. The route is a concept and possibly at the 5-10% design phase. The concept was done by an independant consultant and did not engage the stakeholders: City of St Louis Park, CP, TCW, or any school board representative. In comparison, the shallow tunnel study was conceived with a Issue Resolution Team with stakeholders and the current study has refined the design. The Corridor Management Committee will be asked to make a decision on a 'refined shallow tunnel study in Mpls' vs a reroute design that is not equally studied with many unanswered or unknown impacts. St Louis Park is at a disadvantage because of these unknown variables.

The TransSystem route is not acceptable and the freight should remain in the Kenilworth Corridor.

Kind Regards
Kandi Arries

Email 095

Mr. Fuhrman and Mr. Alexander--

Please find attached the Kenwood Isles Area Association response to the Draft Water Resources and Freight Rail Location Alternatives Reports commissioned by the Met Council. In sum, we firmly believe that the Met Council should honor Hennepin County's commitment to the City of Minneapolis to not colocate freight rail and light rail in the Kenilworth Corridor in Minneapolis. We believe the introduction of a shallow, cut-and-cover tunnel into that corridor represents colocation and violates that promise. Further, we believe that the planning and assessment of the shallow tunnel alternative has been hasty and incomplete and warrants further, more rigorous study if it is to be used as the basis for a \$1.55 billion investment. Our reasons for this position are described in the attached document.

Thank you for your attention. Please contact me at this address if you have any questions or need any clarifications of our position.

Larry Moran
Board Chair, KIAA

To: Mark Fuhrman, Southwest Project Office
Jim Alexander, Southwest Project Office

From: Kenwood Isles Area Association

Date: March 3, 2014

Subject: Response to Draft Reports on Water Resources and Freight Rail Location Alternatives

Kenwood Isles Area Association (KIAA) renews its strong objection to routing both freight rail and light rail (LRT) in the Kenilworth Corridor. While many reasons exist for this position, these comments refer specifically to the recent Water Resources Draft and Freight Rail Location Alternatives reports released at the end of January.

The necessity of colocating freight and light rail in the same corridor is a direct result of Hennepin County's lack of planning in designing the Locally Preferred Alignment (LPA) that includes the Kenilworth Corridor. Because of this failure, the plan to move freight to St. Louis Park has been rejected for a variety of reasons (some relevant and some not). Minneapolis renewed its objection to the colocation of both enterprises in the corridor and, as a compromise, the Met Council recommended placing the LRT in a shallow tunnel. We believe that this compromise is short sighted at best and without more complete study PRIOR TO ANY MUNICIPAL CONSENT may in the long run prove disastrous.

The conclusions of Burns and McDonnell (independent consultants hired by the Met Council) of the shallow tunnel plan and its effect on the water resources of the corridor were summarized in the presentation to the Corridor Management Committee (CMC) on February 20, 2014. To us, those findings raise more questions than provide assurances. A few of those conclusions and our concerns are:

1. "Add lateral and nested piezometers." This recommendation is meant to substantiate the conclusion that shallow tunnels will not interfere with groundwater movement and activity. Shouldn't that be established BEFORE the decision is made to bury the LRT tracks in a tunnel?
2. "Complete a comprehensive capacity analysis for sanitary and storm sewer systems." If an analysis is needed, and those systems prove to be deficient, what will it cost to upgrade them and who will pay for it? How will those costs effect the overall project budget, and shouldn't they be known before a decision is made?
3. "Complete a Phase II Environmental Site Assessment." Again, why should Minneapolis be asked to provide municipal consent for this project without knowing the results of this assessment? A Phase II study is especially important in this corridor because it carried freight traffic for many years, during a time when environmental concerns were not as important as they are now. Why would the Met Council want to go forward with this project without having the Phase II results that may show more funds will be required to clean up the corridor before any digging into the groundwater can be initiated?

Southwest Project Office
March 3, 2014
Page 2

Barr Engineering, consultants hired by the city of Minneapolis and the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, raise other issues (also described in the CMC meeting presentation) that we believe need to be resolved before the project is approved and begun. Paramount among these issues is their first concern: "The effectiveness of sheet pile sealing and seal pour performance." Barr Engineering is concerned with the effectiveness of the seals needed to connect about thirty 150' concrete, rectangular tunnels sitting in eight feet of groundwater. To us, this part of the design is the linchpin in the plan that, if it fails, may have significant and irreversible consequences for the Chain of Lakes system in Minneapolis. We believe that the risk of a failure of this design, even though it may be small, is larger than the city of Minneapolis should ever be asked to take. For that reason, and for the others listed above, we believe the shallow tunnel as a compromise to at-grade colocation fails as a viable alternative.

In addition to the water issues described above, KIAA has great concern for any permanent placement of rail in the Kenilworth Corridor. To begin with, the City of Minneapolis has been clear for many years that any placement of light rail in this corridor requires the permanent removal of freight rail. KIAA believes, like the City of Minneapolis, that the existence of light rail in the Kenilworth Corridor, either at grade or in a shallow tunnel, constitutes colocation of the two and is unacceptable. Like the city, KIAA has taken this position since the current LPA was chosen and we have not changed our opinion.

In addition to this violation of the basic premise for acceptance of the LPA by the City of Minneapolis, KIAA also believes that any plan for colocation of freight and LRT is incomplete and has not addressed important issues:

1. What measures to make freight (in addition to light rail) safe and livable in the community will be taken, and at what cost?
2. What will be the environmental impact of a tunnel option, including crash walls (impact on wildlife, vegetation, noise, and trail and park users.)
3. Who will assume liability if freight stays in the Kenilworth Corridor? Up until now, Twin City and Western Railroad (TC&W) has assumed full liability while running trains in the corridor because they believed placement of freight rail was "temporary" (according to Jim Alexander of the Southwest Project Office at the community meeting at the Jones Harrison Residence on June of 2013). Is Twin City and Western Railroad asking for another entity to share liability for any accident that happens in the corridor? If that is the case, who will bear the cost of this shared liability?
4. Why is TC&W now suggesting that a right of way of less than 25 feet from the center of their track is acceptable in the Kenilworth Corridor when it was stated earlier that 25 feet was the minimum industry standard?
5. Perhaps most importantly, what assurance will the City of Minneapolis receive that the money for shallow tunnels will be available if colocation is implemented against its will? If those assurances cannot be made, when will all the issues and concerns relating to at-grade colocation be addressed?

Southwest Project Office
March 3, 2014
Page 3

KIAA, a totally volunteer neighborhood organization, has been involved in the discussions regarding the Southwest LRT project since before the LPA was chosen. We objected to that LPA for a variety of reasons but once chosen we shifted our focus to mitigating the effect of 220 trains traveling between

two lakes and separating our neighborhood. Because members of the board, and numerous residents of the neighborhood, feel a strong sense of responsibility for our neighborhood and the environment, we have felt compelled to add our voices in defense of Minneapolis. Neighbors spent a day discussing and designing the station area. We attended numerous meetings that discussed everything from transit oriented development to effects on traffic in the neighborhood. All of these discussions began with the premise that freight would not be part of the Kenilworth Corridor if it was to be used for LRT.

In summary, now with the possibility that freight and LRT will be colocated in the corridor we must strenuously object and reiterate Minneapolis' position of no colocation. Our objection is partly based on our significant concerns around the proposed shallow tunnel for LRT. In addition, we do not believe all of the costs and effects of any colocation plan have been calculated. We believe that the risks associated with colocation, along with the list of unanswered questions, causes that plan to fail as a viable alternative.

Email 096

From: Judy Mitchell

Sent: Monday, March 03, 2014 2:47 PM

To: swlrt

Cc: Alexander, Jim; Curt Whelan

Subject: Comments on the Draft Report: Freight Rail Relocation Alternatives Study

Any of the freight rail relocation options require more study for its impact to Canadian Pacific's operation.

Judy Mitchell

Director Passenger & Commuter Services US

Canadian Pacific

Email 097

From: cheryl devaal

Sent: Monday, March 03, 2014 3:04 PM

To: swlrt

Subject: Freight Rail comment

I have lived at XXXX Brunswick Ave, St. Louis Park for the past 24 years. As a property owner and a taxpayer, I strongly oppose the "new" reroute plan proposed by TranSystems. As others have already noted, this "new" plan closely resembles other reroute plans previously examined and subsequently rejected. In its draft report, TranSystems claims to employ criteria stating that the proposed route must not unduly impact the surrounding community, and that the proposed infrastructure must be sound, meeting industry standards for safety. The dictionary defines unduly as excessively, or in an inappropriate, *unjustifiable* or improper manner. As I see it, how does one justify spending lots of taxpayer money on a route which the railroad using it has said is inferior, both in terms of safety and efficiency? In the chart on page 8 of its draft proposal, TranSystems only lists community impacts as property acquisition and traffic impacts. Really?? St. Louis Park residents have repeatedly objected to longer, faster freight cars being moved onto tracks never intended for them. What about loss of tax revenue due to lower property values? What about delayed emergency vehicle access due to roads

blocked by trains? What about damage to structures due to greatly increased vibrations? What about increased noise, fumes and other pollution from the increase in rail traffic? None of the mitigation requested by the City of St. Louis Park on behalf of its residents has been addressed. This mitigation is not frivolous and it's not merely for esthetics, but is necessary to maintain safety, livability and property values for residents of St. Louis Park.

Minneapolis appears to have mainly esthetic concerns, but St. Louis Park's concerns go much deeper than esthetics but area also for our personal safety, for damage to our homes from the greatly increased vibrations, for blocking of numerous crossings for much longer, faster, heavier trains, for possible derailment and for spills of hazardous materials on the sharp curves and grade changes, for the ability of students at our high school to receive instruction, etc., etc.

Let me ask this: If TC&W is "forced" by the Met Council (no doubt upon urging from Minneapolis politicians) to move its operations from its present location in Kenilworth corridor to the MN&S line, a route which TC&W has stated is less safe and less efficient than Kenilworth, and if a derailment subsequently occurred there, who would be responsible? Would the Met Council and/or Minneapolis be responsible for damages and/or injuries incurred by such a derailment?

One of the earliest and cheapest options identified was moving part of the bike trail, but that has been vetoed by wealthy landowners in Minneapolis and that leaves the shallow tunnel option as the next cheapest option. So, the obvious question is, why is the Met Council not pursuing the most cost effective solutions? The TC&W's current route through the Kenilworth corridor is obviously a viable alternative to St. Louis Park. These are taxpayer dollars that you propose spending. It is not fair to require St. Louis Park residents to pay a higher price for the benefits of light rail than others. What happens to the tax base of St. Louis Park when decreases in values are realized? How are property owners who have sustained losses in property value because of this government action going to be compensated for their losses?

If the Met Council can actually force a railroad to take a different route, why don't you force the railroad to take one of the western Minnesota routes, where there is plenty of flat, open land and where the sharp curves and troublesome grade changes of the MN&S line could be avoided completely? Yes, you'd have to pay the railroad, but you wouldn't have to destroy peoples' homes, businesses and quality of life here. Seriously!!

Cheryl DeVaal
St Louis Park, MN 55416

Email 098

From: Fritz Vandover
Sent: Monday, March 03, 2014 3:06 PM
To: swlrt
Cc: Jake Spano; Anne Mavity
Subject: Trans Systems re-route plan

Chair Haigh and Metropolitan Council Members:

I am writing as a member of the St. Louis Park community to urge you to reject the TC&W re-route submitted by Trans Systems. Furthermore, I am writing to urge the Metropolitan Council to reject re-route options altogether.

First, regarding the Trans Systems re-route plan, the TC&W has plainly stated that it is unsafe, inefficient, does not conform to best practices in railroad engineering and design, and they (TC&W) will invoke its right to reject this proposed route. In addition to TC&W's opposition from a business perspective, the residents of St. Louis Park are vehemently opposed to Trans Systems' re-route plan for all of the reasons that are continually cited; it would take out large swaths of homes and businesses, and it would run much larger trains (upwards of 120 cars) at higher speeds through a very dense part of St. Louis Park, among many reasons.

Given the power of the TC&W to reject Trans Systems' re-route design (and their intention to do so) and the valid opposition of the St. Louis Park community, I urge you to reject the Trans Systems re-route plan.

Furthermore, I urge the Metropolitan Council to abandon all freight re-route options in the SWLRT design. While the TC&W has stated that they are in favor of a "high berm" re-route design (<http://tcwr.net/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Civil-Design-Report-Transystems.pdf>), this design would be a travesty to our community. It would create an approximately two-story tall, 2.5 mile long earthen wall running from the southwest corner to the northeast corner of St. Louis Park. It would effectively cut St. Louis Park in half. This "high berm" design option may be agreeable to the TC&W, but by what measure would a design that cuts a dense, thriving community in two be considered viable and preferable?

I recognize that the City of Minneapolis does not want the freight rail and SWLRT to be co-located in the Kenilworth Corridor. However, the Kenilworth Corridor has been a multi-track freight rail corridor for over 100 years. And while the residential and commercial real estate has developed around the Kenilworth Corridor, there is still ample room in that corridor to accommodate freight rail and SWLRT, with the latter running at grade or in a shallow tunnel.

The MN&S corridor in St. Louis Park is a relic short line railroad from the early 20th century, thus its tiny right of way and awkward curves and grades. To think that the MN&S route can be upgraded into a major freight route is to risk making a major urban planning mistake with consequences that will last decades, negatively impact the surrounding community, and cost much more money to mitigate than anyone is currently willing to admit or budget.

Please stand on the right side of history and do not approve a freight rail re-route, starting with rejecting the Trans Systems re-route design.

Sincerely,
Fritz Vandover
Saint Louis Park

Email 099

From: Bob Wick
Sent: Monday, March 03, 2014 4:56 PM

To: swlrt
Cc: jjacobs1956; spanospcouncil; edinamail; sen.ron.latz; rep.ryan.winkler
Subject: SWLRT - Freight Rail re-route option through SLP

Dear Met Council:

Please stop your consideration for re-routing freight traffic through the guts (the residential neighborhoods and right past the High School) of St. Louis Park, and keep it where it is now (through the Kenilworth Corridor).

I've been a resident of St. Louis Park (SLP) my entire life (54 years).

In my "time", I attended Lenox Elementary School, Central Junior High School, and the St. Louis Park High School. Lenox is now a Community Center; as is Central (although part of the Central building now houses Park's Spanish Immersion School).

I've owned a house in the SLP Sorenson neighborhood (very close to both the SWLRT proposed line and the often mentioned many freight rail re-route options for Twin Cities and Western Railroad – TC&W) since 1983.

I have attended many SWLRT meetings over the course of the last year or so. At the packed Town Hall meetings at the SLP High School (approximate dates: July 18, 2013 and February 12, 2014), about 500 SLP residents each time clearly and loudly voiced their opposition to re-routing freight rail through the guts of SLP. Most recently, the citizens of SLP vigorously opposed the "TranSystems' MN&S North Concept".

Is the Met Council listening to the citizens affected by their upcoming decision, or are all these meetings just smoke and mirrors and for politics already decided?

I was disappointed to listen to some of the elected officials talk at the 2-20-14 CMC meeting at the SLP City Hall. Hennepin County Commissioner Peter Mc Laughlin says that the "little cities" need to fall in line. How arrogant was that? Minneapolis Mayor Betsy Hodges asks if passenger trains run or freight trains would run on the rail tracks in question. That was a pretty uniformed question.

Re-routing freights trains out of the Kenilworth Corridor

into SLP will affect the quality of life in SLP. SLP will have an additional 4 street closings (at least two by the high school which has 1,400+ students and teachers attending daily during the school year), will cause additional noise and vibrations through the residential neighborhoods that those trains would run, and will affect SLP's young people.

SLP Named One of the Nation's 100 Best Communities for Young People for the 6th Consecutive Time
St. Louis Park has achieved national recognition as one of America's Promise Alliance's 100 Best Communities for Young People presented by ING for the fifth consecutive time for its initiatives to help young people. The competition recognizes communities across the country that focus on reducing high school dropout rates and providing service and support to its youth.

<http://rschooldtoday.com/se3bin/clientschool.cgi?schoolname=school468>

Does the Met Council want to chance decreasing the success rate of SLP High School students?

Washington Post's 2013 "High School Challenge" Ranks St. Louis Park High School 3rd in Minnesota and 188 out of 1900 High Schools Nationwide
Calculation is based on the number of Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate and Advanced International Certificate of Education tests given at a school each year, divided by the number of seniors who graduated that year.

<http://rschooldtoday.com/se3bin/clientschool.cgi?schoolname=school468>

Minneapolis Mayor Betsy Hodges (at the 2-20-14 CMC meeting) noted that schools in Minneapolis, such as DeLasalle and Edison, that are situated next to train tracks and "they're just fine". Mayor Hodges (perhaps?) failed to note that those rail tracks are over 200 feet from those schools (not 35 feet as is the case for SLP High School).

<http://rschooldtoday.com/school468/FCK/Image/freightletter.pdf>

I suspect that those tracks (by DeLasalle and Edison), just like the tracks near SLP's Peter Hobart elementary school, are straight, flat, they don't split the school campus, and they don't cross student thoroughfares.

And ... if a poor learning environments exist in Minneapolis due to freight trains running close to schools ... it is the intent of the Met Council to create more additional poor learning environments?

Re-routing more freight trains close to SLP High School will decrease the safety of students, parents, and teachers. This is just logical. Re-routing most likely will delay people getting to school, going home from school, attending after school activities, etc.

The SLP School Board rejects the idea of re-routing freight rail traffic past the SLP High School.
<http://rschooltoday.com/school468/FCK/Image/freightletter.pdf>

The cost to re-route freight through SLP is higher than keeping it in the Kenilworth Corridor. Per the handout at the 2-20-14 CMC meeting (slide 32), the cost for the keeping the freight rail in the Kenilworth Corridor (with the shallow tunnel mitigation) was between \$235 and \$250 million. The cost for the MN&S North Route (without yet factoring in many unaccounted costs – slide 30) was \$220 - \$240 million.

The unaccounted for costs that were documented (slide 30) were: Additional retaining walls, additional right of way, freight track removal, North Cedar Lake Trail bridge, and Xcel Substation cost impacts. A few other unaccounted for cost concerns were raised but I did not note those.

The City of SLP rejects re-routing freight rail traffic through SLP. SLP never agreed to it in the first place.
<http://www.stlouispark.org/light-freight-rail/recent-news.html>

The CMC already passed a resolution (at its early October 2013 meeting at the SLP Rec Center) to keep freight rail in the Kenilworth Corridor and to implement the “shallow tunnel” option in Minneapolis (Kenilworth Corridor). The “shallow tunnels” mitigate noise, safety, etc. concerns for Minneapolis residents.

The Independent Consultant’s conclusion and recommendation regarding water resources (the 2-20-14 CMC slide #9) says that there are “No fatal flaws with the shallow LRT tunnel design”.

The citizens of SLP have clearly stated that they do not want freight rail traffic re-routed through

SLP (TranSystems' MN&S North recommendation or any of the preceding suggestions).

The School Board of SLP does not want freight rail traffic re-routed through SLP.

The City of SLP (Mayor and City Council) does not want freight rail traffic re-routed through SLP.

It's probably more expensive to re-route freight rail traffic through the guts of SLP than to keep it where it is and do the "shallow tunnels".

The quality of life and SLP's youth education can be affected by this re-route proposal.

Please stop your consideration for re-routing freight traffic through St. Louis Park. Keep the freight rail traffic in the Bass Lake Spur.

Sincerely;

Bob Wick

Email 100

From: horizongreen

Sent: Monday, March 03, 2014 5:29 PM

To: mark dayton; sen scott dibble; Haigh, Susan; betsy hodes; rep frank hornstein; commissioner mclaughlin; atabb

Cc: tina smith; swlrt; John Erickson; Nancy Green; Peter Wagenius; Alexander, Jim; Mark Fuhrman

Subject: SWLRT Joint Letter from Calhoun Isles Condominium and Cedar Lakes Shores Townhome Associations Boards

Dear Minnesota Governor Mark Dayton, Minnesota State Senator Scott Dibble, Metropolitan Council Chair Susan Haigh, Minneapolis Mayor Betsy Hodges, Minnesota State Representative Frank Hornstein, Hennepin County Commissioner Peter McLaughlin, and Minneapolis Park and Recreation Commissioner Anita Tabb:

As the SWLRT project moves to the next phase of decision making, we write to you today representing owners of 166 homes adjacent to the Kenilworth Corridor. We support withholding municipal consent by the City of Minneapolis for the purpose of re-examining alternative routes for the SWLRT. In lieu of the resolve to look for alternative light rail routes, we again express that the Shallow Tunnel option is a far superior alternative to "at-grade" light rail for our portion of the Kenilworth Corridor. The body of our original letter, dated January, 9, 2014, follows:

Dear Minnesota Governor Mark Dayton, Minnesota State Senator Scott Dibble, Hennepin County Commissioner Gail Dorfman, Minneapolis City Council Member Lisa Goodman, Metropolitan Council Chair Susan Haigh, Minneapolis Mayor Betsy Hodges, Minnesota State Representative Frank Hornstein, and Minneapolis Park and Recreation Commissioner Anita Tabb:

As elected Board Members of the Calhoun Isles Condominium Association and the Cedar Lake Shores Townhome Association, we are jointly writing to you about the proposed Southwest LRT project (SWLRT). Together, we represent the owners of 166 homes that border part of the Kenilworth Corridor portion of the proposed SWLRT line. Our homes are located along this route between the Lake St. Bridge and Cedar Lake Parkway in Minneapolis and constitute the vast majority of homeowners along this portion of the line.

If a route change or deep tunnel option are rejected, and with due consideration of all remaining options and possibilities, we have come together in the belief that the Shallow Tunnel proposal for this portion of the Kenilworth Corridor provides the best alternative for mitigating our serious concerns regarding sight, sound, safety and vibration issues related to the proposed SWLRT. As you probably know, we are arguably the closest dwellings to the existing railroad tracks and trails along the entire sixteen miles of the proposed SWLRT. This belief does not mean that all of our concerns have been safely addressed; it simply reflects the reality of the costs and options still under consideration and our assumption that the remaining issues (for example: tunnel opening location, berm and vegetation destruction, construction proximity to existing building footings and safety of the freight rail) can still be addressed or properly mitigated as more specific SWLRT design discussions occur.

We ask that you most seriously consider and eventually agree with the Shallow Tunnel option for this portion of the line. In our opinion, it is the best choice from the remaining options for our homeowners, immediate neighborhood and for the City of Minneapolis.

Sincerely,

On Behalf of the Board of the Calhoun Isles Condominium Association:

Cherie Hamilton Board President	Nancy Green Board Past President, Board Member and Chair SWLRT Committee
Minneapolis, MN 55416	Minneapolis, MN 55416

On Behalf of Cedar Lake Shores Townhome Association:

Dick Johnson Board President	John Erickson Board Vice President
Minneapolis, MN 55416	Minneapolis, MN 55416

cc: Peter Wagenius, Policy Director, City of Minneapolis, Office of the Mayor

Submitted by Shannon Green, Member of Board of Directors, Cedar Lake Shores Townhome Association, on behalf of above named Joint Letter signatories Cherie Hamilton, Nancy Green, Dick Johnson and John Erickson.

By copy of this message, dated March 3, 2014, to SWLRT@metrotransit.org we also submit this letter into public record of comment with the Southwest Light Rail Project Office.

In addition: Hard copies were mailed to Governor Mark Dayton and the governor's Chief of Staff Tina Flint Smith.

Email 101

From: Andrea Johnson
Sent: Friday, February 28, 2014 12:25 PM
To: Ginis, Sophia
Subject: Fwd: Southwest Light Rail Feedback

Hello Sophia,

Thank you for taking my call. Below is a link to the petition. The signatures are attached. If you could confirm receipt, I would appreciate it.

Best Regards,

Andrea Johnson

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Andrea Johnson
Date: Fri, Feb 28, 2014 at 11:06 AM
Subject: Southwest Light Rail Feedback
To: SWLRT

Hello,

Attached please find 269 signatures for this petition:

[http://www.avaaz.org/en/petition/Governor Mark Dayton and the Metropolitan Council Stop the Southwest Light Rail and Protect Minneapolis natural resourc/](http://www.avaaz.org/en/petition/Governor_Mark_Dayton_and_the_Metropolitan_Council_Stop_the_Southwest_Light_Rail_and_Protect_Minneapolis_natural_resourc/)

This is going to remain up and will be sent to Governor Dayton but I thought I would send in what I have in time to be counted in your feedback.

PLEASE REROUTE THIS! DO NOT TAKE THIS THROUGH MINNEAPOLIS'S BEAUTIFUL CHAIN OF LAKES!
ROUTE THIS THROUGH WHERE THE PEOPLE ARE! ON LAKE STREET, ON HENNEPIN AVE., ALONG THE
HIGHWAYS - BUT NOT THROUGH OUR PRECIOUS, PRECIOUS NATURAL RESOURCES!!!'

Thank you,

Andrea

Stop the Southwest Light Rail and Save Minneapolis's Natural Resources

Why this is important

Minneapolis is one of the world's most beautiful, livable cities because of the three lakes in its center: Lake Calhoun, Lake of the Isles and especially Cedar Lake. They are free to all to bike, to hike, to swim, to ski and to enjoy year-round. Wildlife flourishes here. You can see loons, eagles and migratory birds, and foxes, otters, and deer. This is rare for a city of our size. The foundation of this beauty was set in the 19th century by visionaries like Charles Loring, Theodore Wirth, and Horace Cleveland. They looked forward 100 years to preserve for Minneapolis a relationship with nature unequalled in other urban centers.

The Southwest Light Rail would DECIMATE this treasure.

For years, the Metropolitan Council, an unelected regional policy-making body for the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area, has been pushing for the Southwest Light Rail to go through the region so they receive federal funding. They hold "public hearings" which are little more than presentations of why they want this to "succeed." They don't listen to people who have attended these meetings for years who have been begging them again and again and again to not destroy our unusual and precious natural resources. As one woman who attended so aptly put it "What part of 'NO' do they not understand?"

The environmental studies for this project do not, in any way, shape, or form, guarantee that our precious lakes won't be wrecked by this project. They are planning on forging ahead BEFORE full environmental impact studies are completed!

Environment aside, this is going to cost in excess of \$1.6 billion. Passenger fares will only cover 30% of this cost. Taxpayers will make up the rest. On top of this, the unelected Met Council is actively hatching plans to build the Bottineau Light Rail line from Minneapolis to Brooklyn Park at a cost of an additional \$1 billion! The high cost of this fiasco will be borne by local residents and taxpayers across the state, thereby diverting money that could be spent on roads and bridges or used to lower the burden on Minnesota taxpayers.

Please sign this to save the beautiful lakes of Minneapolis, protect precious wildlife and stand up for fiscal and environmental responsibility!

<List as provided, no contact information redacted>

Name	
Brenda Adams	United States of America
Andrea Johnson	United States of America
Tom Glaser	United States of America
Gail Grabow	United States of America
Catherine Smegal	United States of America
Nancy Haik	United States of America
thad Spencer	United States of America
julian	United States of America
Nora Cronin	United States of America
Judy Ostrowski	United States of America
Amy Nankivil	United States of America
julie	United States of America
Randi Thompson	United States of America
racheike racheike	United States of America
sandra	United States of America
Maddie Haakenson	United States of America
JuliAnne	United States of America
Donna Azarian	United States of America
Rich Miller	United States of America
Susan Opitz	United States of America
Joliet hager	United States of America
Shelley McDonough	United States of America

Name	
Andrea	United States of America
Pamela Winslow	United States of America
Missy Warma	United States of America
roger jaworski	United States of America
Michael McDonough	United States of America
Michael r mcdonough	United States of America
Leslie Chamorro	United States of America
Alex Fugate	United States of America
John Bauer	United States of America
Quena	United States of America
tony barden	United States of America
Mike Fishel	United States of America
Ara	United States of America
Hannah MacLeod	United States of America
Elfrieda Gosline	United States of America
brad grapp	United States of America
Tracie Thompson	United States of America
lisa ganser	United States of America
John Berard	United States of America
Cindi	United States of America
Rachel Boyle	United States of America
Karen Hunter	United States of America

Name	
Kim	United States of America
John Bosley	United States of America
Stuart	United States of America
Marcey Mastbaum	United States of America
Jimmy Wilson	United States of America
Denise	United States of America
RB Kiernat	United States of America
Karen Antone	United States of America
Andy Chazin	United States of America
Elly	United States of America
Angie	United States of America
Amy Sundby Jeanchaiyaphum	United States of America
Doug Tanner	United States of America
Barb Hegman	United States of America
Heather Haakenson	United States of America
Kamil Ugurbil	United States of America
Katherine Grumstrup	United States of America
Scott M Weber	United States of America
Charlie Elowson	United States of America
Kit Troedson	United States of America
Eva Duckler	United States of America
Barb dahlquist	United States of America

Name	
Lisa Bailey	United States of America
Jim Schwebel	United States of America
Paige Nankivil	United States of America
Christine Hazel	United States of America
Michael Nallick	United States of America
Laurie savran	United States of America
Scott Hedberg	United States of America
Vince Peterson	United States of America
Maddie McAlister	United States of America
Lisa Tanner	United States of America
Jil Evans	United States of America
Cindy Moeller	United States of America
Susie Goldstein	United States of America
Greg Halbert	United States of America
Dallas Ward	United States of America
Sarah Kreykes	United States of America
Russell Palma	United States of America
Deb Marzec	Uruguay
Brad	United States of America
Rachel Lee	United States of America
perci chester	United States of America
Kathleen Longo	United States of America

Name	
Tom Rogers	United States of America
Jess B	United States of America
Jolene McClellan	United States of America
AMy westerlund	United States of America
Dave Picha	United States of America
Mike Siebenaler	United States of America
Judy McClellan	United States of America
Ardis Elowson	United States of America
Bradley Chazin	United States of America
Mark Peterson	United States of America
Joaquin	United States of America
Nevin Ozturk C.	United States of America
Elizabeth Collins	United States of America
Emily Galusha	United States of America
Heather Delisle	United States of America
Bette Goodman	United States of America
Erickson	United States of America
scott lloyd anderson	United States of America
Bonnie Stein	United States of America
Bonnie Blumenthal	United States of America
Robert Colwell	United States of America
Chris johnson	United States of America

Name	
Barbara Lurie	United States of America
marvin greenstein	United States of America
Andy Stillman	United States of America
Daniel Ribnick	United States of America
Gary Metchnek	United States of America
Terri	United States of America
Sandy barin	United States of America
Mary Ellen Alden	United States of America
Jeff victor	United States of America
Stephen Levitus	United States of America
Judy Laner	United States of America
Laura Knutsen	United States of America
yvonne haik	United States of America
Diane Traxler	United States of America
Renee Christensen	United States of America
Nancy Kremer	United States of America
Cinda Collins	United States of America
Doug Christensen	United States of America
Larry McMillen	United States of America
peter	United States of America
Bill Meyers	United States of America
Mary L McClellan	United States of America

Name	
Brian Fragodt	United States of America
john shorroock	United States of America
Cathy Konat	United States of America
David Engdahl	United States of America
David Ruebeck	United States of America

February 19, 2014

Ms. Susan Haigh, Chair
Metropolitan Council
390 Robert Street North
St. Paul, MN 55101-1805

Dear Ms. Haigh:

At its meeting this morning, the Counties Transit Improvement Board (the “Board”) voted unanimously to approve the following motion: if the cities along the Southwest LRT line fail to act by the end of the second quarter of this year (June 30, 2014), the Board is prepared to withdraw its financial support from the Southwest LRT project and transfer that support to the Bottineau LRT project.

The purpose of this action is to convey our sense of strong urgency that this project move ahead and show progress. There are communities with projects across the region that have agreed that the Southwest LRT project will be the next project to be funded in the region. In the absence of community partners along the Southwest LRT line that are willing to work to resolve issues, the Board will move its financial support to the next corridor in the queue.

It is critical to point out that the failure to progress jeopardizes the project’s standing in the federal funding process, as well. Congress made it very clear in MAP-21 that projects must progress or risk losing federal support. Competition for federal New Starts funding is fierce; the FTA will simply reallocate its limited federal funding to other projects across the country, if the Southwest LRT project continues to face delay after delay.

Finally, the Board urges that solutions to the complex problems facing the project reflect the understanding that costs must be contained on this project. The need for CTIB funding across the region far exceeds current resources. The Board has expended \$20 million to date on the Southwest LRT project and has awarded an additional \$30 million in funds for 2014. We expect these funds will be expended prudently and in a manner that advances the project in the engineering and design process.

While Southwest LRT will yield significant local benefits, it is also a very important regional project. We believe that it is imperative that local parochial interests and positioning are not allowed to block progress on this regional asset.

February 19, 2014
Page Two

As discussed at the CTIB meeting, the Board requests that this letter be entered into the record of public comments.

As always, please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peter McLaughlin". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent initial "P" and a long, sweeping underline.

Peter McLaughlin
Counties Transit Improvement Board, Chair

cc: CTIB Members
Metropolitan Council Members

To: Susan Haigh, Chair, Metropolitan Council Chair

From: Mark Wegner, President, Twin Cities & Western Railroad Company

RE: Response to TranSystems draft TC&W Freight Relocation Analysis

Date: March 3, 2014

Dear Chair Haigh,

As a citizen of Minnesota who regularly travels in the southwest suburbs, and endures the current traffic jams, there is no doubt that the Southwest Light Rail project would go a long way in alleviating that traffic. It is needed!

I assumed the leadership role at Twin Cities & Western Railroad Company in 2007, but had been aware of our involvement with the Southwest project since 2005. My primary concern, then as now, has been to preserve the freight rail options that our shippers have, pre LRT to post LRT.

I have long been active in the discussions, and have tried to maintain a “talk to us” approach to figure out how our freight rail traffic might be re-routed so that the LRT could occupy the corridor in which we presently operate over.

Unfortunately, the proposals that were presented to us, without our input, continued until January 2013, when the Met Council was assigned to figure out the freight rail relocation issue. To the credit of Met Council staff, they asked us in the spring of 2013 what grade and curve metrics would be needed to ensure safe passage of 17,000 ton trains.

The result, after months of analysis and reworkings, in consultation with Canadian Pacific, owner of the rail line that the reroute would traverse over, was the Brunswick Central relocation plan. This works from a physics perspective; the risk of derailment under this plan would be similar to the risk today over the Cedar Lake line (even though this relocation plan would increase operating costs to go up and down a hill where today’s route does not). The objective of a safe reroute was met. The negotiations to make it economically similar to today’s route via the Cedar Lake line would occur later (The reason to make it economically similar would be to avoid imposing new costs on TC&W’s south central Minnesota shippers).

The community looked at what a safe reroute for freight would finally look like and rejected that idea as being too impactful on the community.

It then became apparent that in the absence of that safe rerouting of the freight, the only other alternative was to keep our freight rail route where it is, which has led to intense opposition because of the original intention for that route to be temporary.

It is difficult to describe to anyone who does not operate a 17,000-ton train the dynamics and challenges of safely operating that train, which is the equivalent of 629 fully loaded trucks all in

a line. Track engineering has a lot to do with enabling the safe operation of trains of that size, which are today's standard. This is how America moves its freight.

TC&W is a main line railroad, engineered to allow 80 mph passage of trains (which occurred as late as 1960), before freight rail entered a long, downward spiral which met its bottom in 2002 and has been rising ever since.

So in evaluating the TranSystems' plan which has been presented as a viable option for a reroute, we have had our consulting engineering firm, Civil Design, comment on the specific engineering issues within the proposal. Their report has been made public with our press release last week.

When one looks at the Scope of Work "Engineering Evaluation of Freight Rail Relocation Alternatives" dated November 8, 2013 by Met Council, one reads, among other things "...conformance with other applicable standards (AREMA, MN Statute, Railroad Design Criteria)...."

It appears to TC&W that the "Railroad Design Criteria" aspect of the request for proposal was ignored in TranSystems' result. In informal discussions TC&W has had with Union Pacific, BNSF, Canadian National and Canadian Pacific, it has been clear that none of these railroads would accept the TranSystems plan for new main line construction standards.

Our approach has been, "Let's figure out a safe relocation plan for freight trains, and once we reach agreement on what is safe, we can then move to the economic discussion".

The TranSystem plan simply does not meet the safety test.

Safety must be the principal criterion for evaluating TransSystems' proposed re-route of TC&W through St. Louis Park on the tracks of the MN&S. But even if, as TranSystems argues, it is physically or technically possible for TC&W to get a train through the three reversing curves and across the undulating vertical profile of the tracks without a derailment on any given day, this does not mean that the re-route is a viable or safe option for freight rail operations long-term.

The key goal of any freight rail design is to eliminate variability. Common variables are those factors that are inherently part of the daily operating process. These variables can affect any railroad operation, regardless of track configuration. Such variables include, but are not limited to:

1. Engineer train handling
2. Track maintenance & access for emergencies
3. Track conditions
4. At-grade crossings

All designs must assume that any railroad will address these common variables to forestall accidents and operate safely.

There are, however, several other important variables introduced in the TranSystem proposal that

are not present in the current Kenilworth Corridor alignment. These we can term “special variables” and they will, in fact, compromise the long-term safety of our operation. They include:

1. A total of three reversing curves, all of which are at least five degrees
2. Undulating vertical profile with various grades of descents and ascents
3. Combination of the first two variables combined, all within 5,000 feet
4. Long-term maintenance of structures that raise the existing freight rail alignment 23 feet in the air
5. FRA requirements for railroad curves on bridges.

In most freight rail operating situations, there are procedures that can mitigate or counteract negative variables. However, in this situation, there are no mitigation procedures available because the potential problems these special variables create lie within the physics and engineering of the track alignment itself. Now, in addition to the common variables listed above—train handling, track condition, and so on---we must also account for the following:

1. Train dynamics through reversing curves
2. Train dynamics through undulating vertical profiles
3. Drawbar and knuckle strength while ascending 1% compensated grades

The proposed TransSystems route creates a combination of special variables, as well as common ones. Since no two trains are identical, we cannot predict with any degree of confidence, let alone certainty, how this unique combination of variables will affect the safety of our operations as we move freight trains through the proposed new alignment day after day.

TC&W’s safety mission—and our responsibility--is an accident and injury free work environment. We cannot simply seek to comply with minimum safety standards. TransSystems argues that each segment of its plan meets AREMA standards (which are only construction, not operating standards). But its plan ignores the 2003 AREMA “Practical Guide to Railway Engineering” that points out the many hazards associated with extreme curvatures, reverse curvatures and undulating grades. According to AREMA,

“... reversing curves should be avoided at all costs. With reverse curves, there are two dynamic components acting on a single car or rail vehicle causing a yawing effect, which is of concern. . . . The net effect is a couple about the center of the car. This compares to a car on a single curve where the forces at either end of the car are acting in the same direction and thus counter-acting one another. This couple effect greatly increases the likelihood of the train buckling and thus a derailment.”

The proposed plan includes three reversing curves in a distance of about 5,000 feet and includes seven changes in grade in a length of 16,183 feet (3.06 miles).

TC&W strives to implement best practices by identifying and removing variability in our operational process, practices, and behavior. For TC&W, nothing is more important than ensuring the safety of our employees, customers, and the communities in which we operate.

The proposed MN&S re-route directly conflicts with our safety mission simply because the question is not IF a train will derail, but rather WHEN it will derail. The alignment introduces unnecessary operating risks and safety variables not present on our current route and thus is materially less safe than the Kenilworth corridor alignment.

Our company is committed to continuous improvement in the safety of our operations. This reflects the culture and values that are essential to our company. We will not compromise that commitment. I hope this communicates our every day and long term commitment to move Minnesota's freight safely.

The TranSystems plan seems to have ignored the "Railroad Design Criteria" part of the request for proposal – our inquiries with BNSF, CN, UP and CP have indicated their main line construction standards are much more stringent than the TranSystems plan. Since we operate their locomotives and cars on our track, subject to their rules, we must adhere to their standards. This would be considered "best practices,"

We, therefore, cannot agree to the proposed TranSystems reroute that reduces safety, increases risks and violates our own core principles. To do otherwise would be a tremendous disservice to our employees, our customers, and the communities which we serve and travel through.

Our interest in accommodating our freight transportation public purpose weighed with the needed Southwest LRT continues to revolve around safe passage of freight trains. The TranSystems plan compromises safe passage of freight trains.

Thank you,

Mark

Mark Wegner
President
Twin Cities & Western Railroad Company
Glencoe, Minnesota

Email 104

From: Domres, Thomas

Sent: Monday, March 03, 2014 4:41 PM

To: swlrt

Cc: Ginis, Sophia; Alexander, Jim; O'Connell, Sam; Weyer, Chris

Subject: SPO's Response to the Independent Draft Reports

Good afternoon!

Attached are the Southwest Project Office's (SPO's) response to the Independent Freight Rail Draft Report and Water Resources Draft Report for your review and use. Please contact Jim Alexander or me if you have any questions.

Thank you,

Tom

Memorandum

DATE: March 3, 2014

SUBJECT: TC&W Freight Relocation Analysis Draft Report by TranSystems – SPO Comments

This memorandum summarizes the comments of the Southwest Project Office (SPO) regarding the TC&W Freight Relocation Analysis Draft Report. Our comments are as stated below.

- 1) Page 3 – 2nd Paragraph: The discussion on PTC should be clarified. Our understanding is that PTC is only required on Class 3 track and above which MN&S and Bass Lake Spur are not.
- 2) Page 3 – 1st Paragraph: Please revise “suburbs of Minneapolis” to say “suburbs of the Twin Cities”. Also, track is owned by Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority (HCRRA) and not Hennepin County. “Collocation” is spelled wrong throughout.
- 3) Page 4 – 2nd Paragraph: 2nd to last sentence starts out with “Staff”. Please clarify whose staff this is referencing (TranSystems?).
- 4) Page 5 – III.A: Please reference the “wishbone” as “Skunk Hollow Switching Wye” throughout the document for local consistency. 2nd paragraph references 10 cars/train. SPO was advised by CP 10-25 cars/train.
- 5) Page 6 – 1st Paragraph: Confirm the last sentence that starts with “Freight Rail Study” is meant to be the title of the next section and is one of the technical memos reviewed. If so, it should have a “Blue” heading and number.
- 6) Page 8 – Table: Suggest an additional column identifying the first 3 elements as “Tier 1” and the last 4 as “Tier 2”.
- 7) Page 8 – V.A: SPO understands from TC&W that the current Kenilworth Corridor is maintained to Class 2 standards and can operate at 25 mph but TC&W has elected to operate at 10 mph. Also, the last sentence references 4 miles of length for the corridor. Suggest that the limits be identified.
- 8) Page 8 – Consider reorganizing the description of alternatives (Section V) to bring all the dismissed alternatives forward and then include a summary sub-section in each alternative titled “Alternative Summary” where an alternative would be identified as either “no further evaluation”, “potential for further evaluation”, etc.
- 9) Page 9 – 1st Paragraph: Suggest listing your source for AADT. Consider referencing SPO 2013 counts.
- 10) Page 9 – B: In the 2nd paragraph you state that “BNSF has agreed”. Suggest qualifying this with “BNSF has agreed in concept”.
- 11) Page 10 – D: In the 2nd paragraph you reference “shuttle” trains. For consistency, suggest using “unit” trains throughout the document. In the last sentence of this section, if this is considered to be a “fatal flaw” then that statement should be added.
- 12) Page 11 – E: Same comment as above regarding fatal flaw.
- 13) Page 11 – F: In the last paragraph you mention that TC&W will lose sidings in the MN&S Reroute. For clarification, this siding storage is lost in the co-location (shallow LRT tunnels) option as well.

Page 2 of 3

- 14) Page 15 – VI: The discussion in this section should summarize the alternatives that are dismissed and conclude with a clear description of the alternatives that will be advanced to Tier 2 analysis
- 15) Page 15 – VI: No discussion on MN&S South is included. The Tier 1 screening discussion should include MN&S South as it is evaluated further in the Tier 2 evaluation.
- 16) Page 16 – Suggest adding a transition explanation to identify what alternatives are being advanced with the Tier 2 analysis. Please consider moving the table to the end of the analysis, following a similar format to the Tier 1 analysis. Please consider explaining that the MN&S North alignment includes a number of alternatives.
- 17) Page 17 – 1st Paragraph: SPO understands that the Kenilworth is maintained to Class 2 track standards.
- 18) Page 17 – 2nd paragraph mentions Class 3 standards. SPO understands that the Kenilworth track is Class 2 and will maintain a Class 2 standard.
- 19) Page 18 – B1: Suggest clarifying that “little tangent between two of the curves” is approximately 400 feet. Please consider referencing which AREMA standards do not appear to be met by this. Suggest identifying that the modified MN&S alternative modified the DEIS curve from 8 to 6 degrees and lowered compensated grades to 0.91% in this area.
- 20) Page 19 – C3: Suggest addressing the status of the skunk hollow switching wye in each of these alternatives.
- 21) Page 19 – C3: For clarification, the Brunswick alignments do not go through the Spanish Park Immersion School, but through the playground.
- 22) Page 20 – D.1: The second sentence references a maximum grade 0.47%. The discussion should specify the limits of this maximum grade or should consider the entire corridor including north of Minnetonka Blvd. where the grade is as much as 0.80%.
- 23) Page 20 – D.1: This paragraph explains that the tracks would be upgraded from Class 1 to Class 3 standards. Please address why Class 2 track isn’t sufficient for this concept.
- 24) Page 20 – D.1: This paragraph references the elimination of retaining walls if homes are acquired. Please specify the number of homes that would need to be acquired.
- 25) Page 20 – D.1: The last sentence in this paragraph states approval by CP and TC&W. SPO understands that this has not occurred.
- 26) Page 22 – E.4: In the estimate for MN&S South both a northbound and southbound connection between Bass Lake Spur and MN&S are identified. Please address why a northbound connection is included.
- 27) Page 23 – F: Please consider showing the Tier 2 matrix in this part of the report along with a discussion of the additional comparison to follow.
- 28) Page 24 – Table: The Kenilworth (shallow LRT tunnels option) includes the southerly connection and will enhance TC&W operations for southbound traffic.
- 29) Page 24 – Table: The last category appears to imply that some routes may also get longer. Please clarify what is meant by the last category in the table.
- 30) MN&S North TranSystems’ Concept: The vertical clearance under the proposed North Wye Segment structure does not appear to be adequate at the proposed trail crossing. The existing

ground elevation at the trail crossing is 910.7 and the proposed TOR is 926.5. A TPG (Through Plate Girder) bridge would likely be necessary to provide the minimum 12' clearance under the structure.

- 31) MN&S North TranSystems' Concept: It appears that the proposed MN&S North alignment could impact the Xcel substation more than identified in the draft report and we understand that Xcel is reviewing and will provide comments.
- 32) MN&S North TranSystems' Concept: There is an existing transmission line along the west side of the Xcel Substation that is not shown in the proposed design. The proposed alignment appears to be in conflict with these aerial power lines and the lines would potentially need to be relocated as part of the project.
- 33) MN&S North TranSystems' Concept: The proposed design indicates a match point to the existing MN&S at station 181+00±, 600' southwest of Dakota Ave S. The proposed profile elevation appears to be about 3.4' above the existing TOR at this location.
- 34) MN&S North TranSystems' Concept: The proposed design indicates the proposed profile matching the existing bridge over Minnetonka Blvd at a TOR elevation of 923.0. The existing bridge over Minnetonka Blvd has been replaced and is now 3.6 feet higher than originally constructed.
- 35) MN&S North TranSystems' Concept: The proposed design indicates a match point at station 266+00±, 1000' east of the Iron Triangle. However due to the elevation discrepancy at the Minnetonka Blvd bridge, it appears that the match point would need to extend an additional 700' at 0.8%. This likely would cause the retaining walls shown north of Minnetonka Blvd to be approximately 3.6' taller than shown on the proposed design.

Memorandum

DATE: March 3, 2014

SUBJECT: Kenilworth Shallow LRT Tunnels Water Resources Evaluation Draft Report by Burns & McDonnell – SPO Comments

This memorandum summarizes the comments of the Southwest Project Office (SPO) regarding the Kenilworth Shallow LRT Tunnels Water Resources Evaluation Draft Report dated January 30, 2014. Our comments are as stated below.

- 1) General: Consider reviewing SPO's response to the Barr memorandum for additional information and incorporate into the final report. For example, SPO addresses 50 and 100-year storm events and infiltration in more detail.
- 2) General: The final report should consider additional information provided to Burns & McDonnell and comments and conclusions should be revised accordingly.
- 3) Page ES-4 and Page 14: The calculation related to the tunnel surface for internal tunnel drainage was revised with addition information provided to Burns & McDonnell. The final report should consider that additional information.
- 4) TOC-2: Please correct the spelling of Jeff Voyer's name in report.
- 5) Page 13, 1st Bullet: The intent of the calculations and the description of the removal of water during construction is that Cell 1 (excavation) is representative of a quantity of water that is initially removed after excavation and after the concrete seal is in place. Cell 2 (construction) is a smaller ongoing quantity of water that will be in the construction cell during concrete tunnel construction.
- 6) Page 13, 2nd Bullet: Sheet pile joints were addressed in more detail in SPO's response to the Barr memorandum.

Email 105

From: Diana Karau

Sent: Friday, February 28, 2014 1:09 PM

To: STBhelp; Duininck, Adam; edward.reynosa; Cunningham, Gary; Vaneyll, Gary; Melander, Harry; Brimeyer, James; Munt, Jennifer; Commers, Jon; Rodriguez, Katie; Schreiber, Lona; marie.mccarts; rep.glenn.gruenhagen; Kramer, Richard; Rummel, Sandy; sen.scott.newman; Elkins, Steve; Chavez, Steven; Haigh, Susan; Wulff, Wendy

Cc: Bill Pinske; Harold Pettis; Jim Nytes; Jim Swanson; Joy Cohrs; Matt Jaunich; mwegner; tryberg

Subject: Resolution in Response to the Met Council's Southwest LRT's Transystems Freight Relocation Report

Hello:

On behalf of the Sibley County Board of Commissioners, the Sibley County Administrator's Office is sending you a copy of **Resolution 2014-26, A Resolution in Opposition to Any Relocation of Twin Cities & Western Railroad (TC&W) That Will Affect the Status Quo**, which the Board unanimously approved on February 25, 2014. We respectfully request the Met Council members to recommend that the TC&W remain in its current route.

As cited in the recent technical report from Civil Design, Inc., who reviewed in detail the findings compiled by Transystems, the operating conditions proposed by the Transystems alignment will be detrimental in every respect to current and future operating conditions for TC&W and our ability to market our products in the U.S. and beyond - will be at risk if the Transystems plan is adopted.

Questions regarding this email may be directed to County Administrator Matt Jaunich at mattj@co.sibley.mn.us or 507.237.7805.

Thank You,
Diana

Diana Karau | Administrative Assistant to Matthew Jaunich, Sibley County Administrator



*P.O. Box 52
Gaylord, MN 55334*

SIBLEY COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
RESOLUTION # 2014-26

**Opposition to Any Relocation of Twin Cities & Western Railroad (TC&W) That Will Affect the Status Quo
February 25, 2014**

Motion by Commissioner Pettis Seconded by Commissioner Nytes

WHEREAS, the Twin Cities & Western Railroad (TC&W) provides a vital freight rail link between dozens of rural Minnesota businesses and national and international markets; and,

WHEREAS, the largest 20 companies served by TC&W ship nearly \$1.5 billion in client goods from rural Minnesota communities to destinations around the globe and employ more than 2,600 Minnesota and South Dakota residents; and,

WHEREAS, TC&W shippers across western Minnesota have invested more than \$500 million on building and/or upgrading production, processing and shipping facilities along the existing TC&W route; and,

WHEREAS, these rural companies rely on TC&W freight rail service because it is the safest and most cost-effective shipping alternative available to them; and,

WHEREAS, the Metropolitan Council is currently considering route proposals for the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SLRT) project that would require the relocation of TC&W freight rail service to an alternate route that is less safe and less cost-effective than the railroads existing route; and,

WHEREAS, Sibley County relies on TC&W freight service as a partner in economic development for our County, and they are one of our community's most valued employers and an important contributor to our economic health; and,

WHEREAS, our local economy would be seriously harmed if a relocation of TC&W's freight rail route impaired the ability of Sibley County businesses and other rural Minnesota businesses to continue to ship their goods safely and cost-effectively;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that Sibley County officially opposes any relocation of Twin Cities & Western Railroad (TC&W) that would negatively affect the railroad's ability to continue to serve Sibley County businesses and other rural Minnesota businesses at the same level of safety and cost-efficiency they experience under the status quo; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this resolution be forwarded to Governor Mark Dayton, Metropolitan Council Chair Susan Haigh, local legislators and the U.S. Surface Transportation Board.

	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent
Cohrs	<u>X</u>	_____	_____	_____
Nytes	<u>X</u>	_____	_____	_____
Pettis	<u>X</u>	_____	_____	_____
Pinske	<u>X</u>	_____	_____	_____
Swanson	<u>X</u>	_____	_____	_____

**STATE OF MINNESOTA
OFFICE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR
COUNTY OF SIBLEY**

I, Matthew Jaunich, Administrator of the County of Sibley, State of Minnesota, do hereby certify that I have compared the foregoing with the original proceedings filed in my office on the 25th day of February 2014 and that the same is a true and correct copy of part thereof.

Witness my Hand and Seal of Office at Gaylord, Minnesota the 25th day of February 2014.

ATTEST:

//Matthew Jaunich//
Matthew Jaunich, County Administrator

//Joy Cohrs//
Joy Cohrs, Chair of the Board

//Lisa Pfarr
Lisa Pfarr, County Auditor

SWLRT (Green Line Extension) Comments
March 3, 2014
Jeffrey Peltola, Minneapolis resident

To whom it may concern:

I have one specific comment about the freight railroad draft report by TranSystems, and several broader remarks about what, overall, would be the ideal outcome for the Green Line Extension project.

Missing Metric – “Station Viability” or “Degradation of Placemaking Potential”:

At the initial round of townhall meetings, a major piece of input solicited (as highlighted by Chair Haigh and the facilitator) was with regard to metrics. On January 7, 2014, I was in the smaller group discussion (labeled Freight Rail Report -Table 2 in the transcript) that, coincidentally, included Jim Terry of TranSystems. Ryan Fox did the report out from the table, and his summary is accurately documented on page 18 of the transcript. There was a strong sense at the table that the proposed metrics (including, for example, safety and community cohesion) did not adequately address something very fundamental, which some called “station viability” (or, in the negative, “degradation of placemaking potential”) for short. Encapsulated in this is ease of pedestrian/bicycle access not just to the station platform, but also the ease of such activity in the station vicinity. This also goes to facilitating future transit-oriented development.

(In the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS, October 2012), Section 1.4 Project Goals and Objectives includes several items related to this. Table 11.1-1. Alternative Performance Summary, includes items related to this, under Goal 5: Support economic development, on page 11-6. The statements in the table there clearly indicate that the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) LRT 3A is superior to LRT 3A-1 (Co-location) on these metrics.)

Despite this townhall input, the draft TranSystems report does not include a station viability type of metric. (See, for example, Section IV. Screening Criteria, beginning on page 7.) Since the report was prepared from a freight railroad perspective, it may be acceptable if the final version, itself, does not include one. What is unacceptable, however, is consistently leaving this fundamental decision making factor out of other documents prepared by Metropolitan Council staff over the ensuing weeks (e.g., summary slides at recent CMC, BAC and CAC meetings). When making a billion-dollar transit investment, with the consensus acknowledgment that the quality of the stations (and their vicinity) is a paramount consideration, this metric must be a central focus. (Lately, it seems like it has been treated as an inconvenient truth.)

It would appear there is at hand what should be considered a win-win-win-win-etc solution, but many officials and advocates seem blind to it. The oddly “temporarily misplaced” (rather than “missing”) metric discussed above, helps bring it into focus.

Ideal Outcome – Related to project scope and budget:

For St. Louis Park (both north-central and eastern) as well as Minneapolis, an ideal outcome would be reflected in a project scope and budget that includes:

- Relocating TC&W railroad from Kenilworth onto existing, but improved, freight tracks in north-central St. Louis Park, generally in accordance with so-called TranSystems MN&S North Concept, including southern connect.
- Removing switching wye, opening up land for redevelopment. In addition, shifting Louisiana Avenue Station further south, closer to hospital and existing affordable housing, as has been desired by City of St. Louis Park.
- Grade-separating roadway from light-rail tracks at Wooddale Avenue (if technically feasible and not cost-prohibitive).
- Grade-separating roadway from light-rail tracks at Beltline Avenue. (Need for this is so great it should be included in base budget.)
- At West Lake Station, providing for direct pedestrian access from all directions, including north/west, forgoing the expense of, less-desirable, so-called vertical circulation.

(If, however, TC&W railroad ultimately is not relocated out of Kenilworth, then various components should not be included in the project scope and budget:

- Forgo so-called "CP swap". (If freight railroad adjacent to light-rail tracks at stations, which side on relative to each other not worth large expense.)
- For substantial cost savings, forgo southern connect and retain switching wye.
- At West Lake Station, would still be significantly better to forgo vertical circulation and provide for direct pedestrian access from north/west, with limited, defined crossings of the freight tracks.)

This concludes my comments.

March 3, 2014

James Alexander
Southwest Light Rail Transit Project
Southwest Project Office
6465 Wayzata Boulevard, Suite 500
St. Louis Park, MN 55426

Re: Comments on Freight Rail Location Alternatives Study

Dear Mr. Alexander:

Thank you for your inquiry regarding our St. Louis Park Substation. We appreciate the opportunity to give you our initial feedback and to continue our partnership in planning the Southwest Light Rail Transit line.

Xcel Energy submits these comments in response to the Freight Rail Location Alternatives Study issued on January 30, 2014. Our comments address the proposed alignment identified in this study as MN&S North – Transystems' Connection. This option has freight rail running on the west side of the substation on a bridge pier structure, clipping a portion of our property on the northwest.

This substation is a major transmission and distribution substation in the west Metro area. It is the source for both 15KV and 35 KV feeders and serves a large area including portions of Minneapolis, St. Louis Park, Hopkins, Edina, and Minnetonka. The proposed freight line re-alignment which encroaches on the substation site poses significant issues for us. This proposed route would require relocation of underground feeder duct lines, would impact normal operations at the substation and severely impede future expansion on the site which would be critical to serving future load growth for a wide area of customers. Transmission line structures near the substation may also be impacted based on required clearances from freight rail. There are many other issues regarding security, equipment access, reliability, and the risk of catastrophic events which would have to be studied in detail for us to determine if this alignment is a viable option from our perspective.

Finally, a detailed engineering study would have to be completed on the exact placement of the freight rail in order for us to provide an accurate estimate for cost impacts and to determine the technical feasibility of accommodating freight rail in this area. This study would be expensive, take numerous months to complete and we would require reimbursement.

I hope this gives you some valuable information. Please direct any questions regarding this issue to Michelle Swanson who is coordinating our communication efforts regarding this project. Michelle can be reached at 952-829-4504.

Sincerely,



Patrick Cline (on behalf of Laura McCarten)
Regional Vice President
Xcel Energy

Email 108

From: Angela Bern
Sent: Tuesday, March 04, 2014 6:14 AM
To: swlrt
Subject: Freight rail through St Louis Park

I'm a parent of a St. Louis Park 5th grader. She loves her friends and her school. A decision to reroute a freight train through the center of her hometown will change her life.

Her safe and happy school will change as families leave for other options. Her quiet classes will be disrupted by long and noisy trains. Her dreams of watching the local teams play sports on the high school field will be dashed.

This is an important decision for my daughter and her classmates. Please help us save St Louis Park.

Thank you,
Brett Berntsen

Sent from my iPad

Email 109

From: Louise Kurzeka
Sent: Tuesday, March 04, 2014 12:07 AM
To: swlrt
Subject: comments on TranSystems re-route option

The new option offered by TranSystems for re-routing freight traffic through St. Louis Park simply presents the same safety issues of previous re-route options along with a variety of new issues related to traffic disruption and displacement of one school as well as the St. Louis Park Emergency program - an essential city resource which only recently was able to buy property for a permanent home.

The most recent option for re-routing freight through St. Louis Park offered by TranSystems has solved none of the major safety issues voiced by the SLP community over the past four years and creates additional issues by displacing one school from its premises as well as the St. Louis Park emergency program - an essential city resource that only recently found and was able to purchase a permanent location. The plan also disrupts traffic patterns around the high school through road closures that would add significantly to congestion by forcing all traffic leaving the high school track side lot down Library Lane and making it impossible for school buses to efficiently line up for the end of day pick up. These circumstances will end up costing residents more in taxes to offset increased transportation costs and decreased property tax revenues from dislocated businesses.

Furthermore, I find it troubling that the Met Council has engineered an option for colocation that takes in Minneapolis residents concerns for the aesthetics of light rail trains on the landscape but has thought nothing about the aesthetics of two story berms cutting through St. Louis Park or in this case now, huge raised bridges needed to bring the track alignment on each side of Hwy 7 high enough to accommodate a reroute.

All of these options for re routing through St. Louis Park are unacceptable and need to be removed from consideration. If a second route option beyond the shallow tunnel collocation option is needed then the Met Council should look at the option for removing the bike path for the short distance required to collocate.

Sincerely,
Louise Kurzeka

Email 110

From: reneets2
Sent: Monday, March 03, 2014 10:49 PM
To: swlrt
Subject: Comments on Draft Reports

I was able to attend all the sessions, with materials, and it's my perception that the shallow tunnels serve both goals of safety and citizen satisfaction for both communities.

An E.I.S. should address historical concerns, too. Mr. Walker (of Walker Art Center fame) was a cofounder St. Louis Park, wanting the suburb to be an oasis of culture for hard-working Minneapolitans. Walker St. is named after him. It's the original, true downtown of our city, but would be chopped up by a freight rail reroute.

Thank-you, Diane S-H

Email 111

From: marc berg
Sent: Monday, March 03, 2014 9:45 PM
To: swlrt
Cc: mbergdude
Subject: SWLRT - what to do with the freight rail

Dear Metro Transit,

I understand today is the last day to submit comments on the question of the freight rail with the planned SWLRT.

I have been following this issue for the past four years, and have been disappointed to see it so often framed as the irreconcilable differences between (1) a group in St. Louis Park that wants to "stop the reroute" and (2) a group in Minneapolis that wants to "save the trail." Couldn't the wishes of both sides be met by running the SWLRT on a single track through the pinch point? Doing so would obviate any need for rerouting the freight trains through SLP, would minimize disruption through the Kenilworth Corridor, and would be done at a fraction of the cost of either the reroute or the shallow tunnel.

I have heard Mr. Fuhrman answer that single track has been considered, but was rejected early on in the process because it could make the train schedule less reliable if outbound trains have to wait at a station while inbound trains pass by. Still, I'm not sure this is an adequate reason to reject single track as an otherwise viable alternative. Was the idea of a single track through the SWLRT alignment's "pinch point" actually STUDIED, or was it summarily tossed aside because someone merely THOUGHT it wouldn't work? I would be interested in hearing more why this happened.

Marc M. Berg

Email 112

From: Sherm Stanchfield
Sent: Monday, March 03, 2014 8:03 PM
To: swlrt
Subject: SWLR Comments

To Who It May Concern,

I am a business man and have been a resident of St Louis Park for the past 30 years and have closely followed the lengthy study/planning series since the SWLR was first proposed. Up until now I have stayed on the sidelines and cannot, in good conscience, stay silent regarding this subject any longer. Following are some of my thoughts based on my observations over the years:

The current TransSystems report of freight rail options clearly outlines some of the many reasons why rerouting freight trains through SLP is NOT appropriate:

1. It isn't safe. The proposed route has several curves right near our high school and elevation changes - factors which significantly increase the risk of derailments.
2. This plan requires taking of many homes and businesses - thus diminishing the tax base in our community
3. The trains would run right next to the homes and back yards of many residents - elevated 10-20 ft above them, with retaining walls. The noise and vibrations would interfere with the residents' ability to use and enjoy their property. I am concerned that the response times for emergency vehicles will be adversely affected where neighborhoods are located near at-grade crossings. As a real estate broker, I am also concerned that this reroute will diminish the property values of these and other homes in SLP.
4. The reroute will require the closure of some of our commercial streets, such as W. Lake St, which will mean that residents will have to take a circuitous, longer route to and from their homes, and the businesses will lose customers due to the difficulty of accessing them.
5. The reroute would force the closure of STEP, the foodshelf/emergency services non-profit that serves our community. Does Met Council seriously want to be responsible for the demise of this long-standing and much-needed asset in our community?
6. The consultant seriously low-balled the cost estimate for the proposed new route by failing to include the costs of purchasing the homes and businesses, or the costs associated with mitigation of the noise, safety, traffic and other issues, or the costs of fixing the Xcel electric substation. Is it even safe for heavy trains to run right over a substation? The consultant failed to address this issue.

St. Louis Park residents have spent many years providing feedback on very similar reroute plans, all of which have been rejected for good fact-based reasons such as community safety. Enough is enough! I urge you to reject this plan and choose the shallow tunnel option in Kenilworth. That option has none of

the problems that I have listed above. It is safe, has worked well for many years, and can continue to do so. It is time to make the hard decisions and choose the Kenilworth option, which will not be disruptive to Minneapolis.

Respectfully submitted,

Sherm Stanchfield
St Louis Park, MN 55426

Email 113

From: Meg McCormick
Sent: Monday, March 03, 2014 6:20 PM
To: swlrt
Subject: Re: Freigh Rail Reroute

Dear Met Council,

I am adamantly opposed to the current proposals for freight rail reroute through St. Louis Park.

The comparisons for freight reroute to co-location must include moving the bike path.

If you had a reroute option that was as safe, as viable, as environmentally friendly and as fiscally responsible as moving the bike path, I'd listen.

However, you don't have that option and by eliminating moving the bike path from consideration, you have failed to adequately compare the full breadth of options. And you have done this without public release of your decision-making process and criteria.

The benchmark is moving the bike path.

Your favoritism toward the Kenilworth neighborhood is appalling; your lack of transparency is appalling; your total disregard in regard to St. Louis Park community concerns is appalling.

I cannot believe that we do not have other transportation projects that could use the extra \$200+ million you want to spend on freight relocation or tunnels in Kenilworth. Why are you so hell-bent on appeasing some wealthy political contributors at the expense of Minnesota's transportation future and the entire St. Louis Park community?

I urge you to discontinue your pursuit of relocation and urge you to produce a public scorecard that includes ALL options weighed equally in regard to objective criteria of safety, viability, environment and total cost. Your inability to do this and to continue to hide behind "it was a CMC decision" simply continues to highlight your political leanings and unethical behavior.

Meg McCormick
St. Louis Park, MN 55426

Email 114

From: Kersten Elverum
Sent: Tuesday, March 04, 2014 12:37 PM
To: swlrt
Subject: Hopkins Comments on TranSystems' Report

SW LRT Project Staff:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft TranSystems' report on freight relocation options. Please include the following in the record of comments:

The City of Hopkins is opposed to any freight reroute plan, including the plan as outlined in the TranSystems report, that results in an increase in the duration and the frequency of TC & W trains holding over in Hopkins. By adding one additional permission point for TC & W through a Centralized Traffic Control system, the trains that already wait in Hopkins and Minnetonka will be waiting longer and more often resulting in an increased risk of accidents, noise, traffic congestion and the visual disruption of the corridor between 5th Avenue South and the City boundary on the west.

The City of Hopkins is also concerned that bringing up the grade of the freight line beginning at Blake Road may have short-term and long-term negative impacts on adjacent properties including Westside Village Apartments. The City of Hopkins would like to better understand the construction impacts of noise and vibration as well as the long-term impacts on sight lines and distance of rail from residential units.

I realize this is coming in late – the email bounced back and I didn't catch that – but still wanted to forward our comments.

Kersten Elverum
Director of Planning & Development
City of Hopkins

Email 115

From: Snuff
Sent: Monday, March 03, 2014 11:01 PM
To: swlrt
Subject: Letter of comment
Importance: High

Please find attached my letter of comment. Thank you.

Edith Nosow
St. Louis Park, MN 55416

St. Louis Park, MN 55416
March 3, 2014

Hennepin County Housing, Community Works and Transit
Attn: Southwest Transitway
701 Fourth Ave. So. Suite 400
Minneapolis, MN 55415

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to comment on the upcoming decision in connection with the Southwest Light Rail Transit project about whether to collocate freight and light rail in the Kenilworth corridor or to relocate freight traffic to St. Louis Park. Over the past year and a half I have attended numerous meetings on the issue, including open forums in Minneapolis and St. Louis Park, several CMC meetings, one joint CAC and BAC meeting, many St. Louis Park City Council sessions, and a Transportation Committee meeting in October at which the public was invited to speak. I have already submitted a letter on the SWDEIS and comment cards. I am writing to reiterate my position that freight relocation to St. Louis Park is untenable and should be rejected in favor of one of the perfectly viable options in the Kenilworth corridor. All of the Kenilworth options are cheaper than any of the proposed freight reroutes through St. Louis Park, for which mitigation has not been included or even determined.

As a resident of St. Louis Park and a homeowner whose property is adjacent to the current MN&S line, I was distressed upon reading the evaluation of the TranSystems reroute proposal set forth in the engineering report from Civil Design Inc. of Feb. 17, 2014, commissioned by TC&W Railroad. The report rejected the reroute as being “neither efficient, safe nor cost effective when compared to the TC&W’s current route. . . . The proposed alignment by Transystems is certainly not close to an equivalent route through the Kenilworth alignment. . . .” The subsequent rejection of the reroute by TC&W is not based solely on the railroad’s selfish interests in minimizing costs, but is clearly dictated to a large extent by its fears of operating under unsafe conditions. The public interest coincides with that of the railroads in this respect: We do not want to be exposed to the increased risk of derailments, especially involving hazardous materials. There is further the problem of trains traveling at 25 mph not being able to stop for a mile.

So, I ask you, how can rerouting freight trains through St. Louis Park be justified in view of the safety and cost factors? The reroute foresees long and heavy trains, some of which carry hazardous materials, traveling through densely populated areas, in close proximity to homes, businesses, and schools. The reroute would require closing four significant thoroughfares, thus hindering emergency vehicles, delaying school buses, and forcing traffic through already congested streets. These street changes have been proposed without conducting traffic studies or adequately assessing the costs, including intangible impacts on the community; e.g., displacement of the STEP facility, division of the community, and disturbance of the character of this well-established first-tier suburb. No mitigation has been offered as compensation any of these costs. By contrast, the shallow-tunnel option in Kenilworth, at a projected cost of \$100 million, was designed to minimize the aesthetic impact of the LRT on the Kenilworth Corridor, a direct form of mitigation. I would further note that, though two additional studies were requested to ensure that the shallow tunnels would not adversely affect the lakes they would traverse, no environmental impact studies have been done evaluating the proposed reroute of freight through St. Louis Park.

As previously noted, my property abuts the raised MN&S line. My garage is only about 30 feet from the MN&S line, down a steep embankment; and my house is only 100 feet away. The tracks are already at a

height of over 20 feet—the height of my garage. The change in the nature and frequency of train traffic that the reroute entails would directly reduce the sense of safety and well-being for me and my neighbors and would greatly reduce the value of our properties. The ever-present possibility of a derailment, as well as increased noise and vibration that are inevitable with longer, heavier, and faster trains running on the MN&S line behind my house, would eliminate the comfort I enjoy in my modest home. I have invested much of my life savings into the purchase and improvement of my house and garden, the value of which would be destroyed by the freight reroute under consideration. When I purchased my home three and a half years ago, the real estate agent assured me that the St. Louis City Council would never agree to a freight reroute. Fortunately, the council still maintains the position that it will not grant municipal consent for a freight reroute as long as there is another viable option, which there is.

Through attending various community meetings regarding the SWLRT project, I have become aware of some of the concerns of other members of the community. I was most impressed by the statement of a businessman whose property is in the immediate vicinity of the high school. He reported that he had commissioned an independent noise study which found that the noise from the present trains already exceeds the federally allowed limits. The magnified noise brought by train traffic would surely cause greater disruption of teaching and studying in the schools that border the proposed reroute. The TranSystems plan suggests that trains might travel at increased speed, as well. The longer, faster trains would require a mile to stop if traveling at 25 mph, which would create a great danger in school zones.

Perhaps the worst factor in terms of quality of life that would involve me and my neighbors to the north and south of Minnetonka along Brunswick Avenue South is the proposal for the already present berms. (No, the trains would not travel at grade throughout all of St. Louis Park.) The berms would be raised another few feet, depending on the location; then the base would be widened, destroying our gardens and back yards, or some sort of retaining walls would be erected, the purpose, dimensions, and cost of which have yet to be revealed. I already have an approximately 7-foot-high wooden fence that separates my garden from railway land, which rises several more feet to the tracks. Above my garden, I now have a view of trees and sky. I fear that a retaining wall would turn my back yard into an enclosed prison yard, with no view of trees or sky. Life would be unbearable here, and I would probably be trapped because my property value would plummet and I could not afford to move. Where is there mitigation for home owners like me? There is no mention of acquiring our properties. I chose this home because of the quiet, friendly neighborhood and especially for the beautiful back yard with its birds and other wildlife. We have deer, rabbits, chipmunks, and the occasional coyote and large owl. What about them? And what about the loss in tax revenue to the City of St. Louis Park when property values drop?

I am a longtime advocate of light rail and other forms of public transportation. I also firmly believe that railroads should play an increasing role in our country for the transport of both freight and passengers. Our roads are already overly congested. Rush hour in the Twin Cities area is a test of patience. We need to stop polluting the environment with the fuel emissions from so many motor vehicles. I firmly support the Southwest Light Rail Transit Project. However, I urge you to weigh the damage you would inflict on St. Louis Park and its residents with a freight reroute when there are so much better and cheaper options in the Kenilworth Corridor for a colocation of freight, light rail, and bikes. It should be noted that there is no need for property acquisition with colocation in the Kenilworth Corridor. I would also urge you to consider some of the cheaper alternatives, such as moving the bike paths.

Sincerely,

Edith Nosow



**Minneapolis
Park & Recreation Board**

Administrative Offices
2117 West River Road
Minneapolis, MN 55411-2227

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Jayne Miller

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Pamela French



March 3, 2014

Mr. Mark Fuhrmann
Southwest Project Office
Park Place West Building, Suite 500
6465 Wayzata Boulevard
Saint Louis Park, MN 55426

Re: Comments on the Draft Southwest Light Rail Transit: Kenilworth Shallow LRT Tunnels Water Resources Evaluation (January 30, 2014) and Design Review Response for Kenilworth Shallow LRT Tunnels Technical Report (February 14, 2014)

Dear Mr. Fuhrmann:

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the draft Southwest Light Rail Transit: Kenilworth Shallow LRT Tunnels Water Resources Evaluation by Burns & McDonnell Engineering Company, Inc. (Burns & McDonnell) and the Design Review Response for the Kenilworth Shallow LRT Tunnels that was prepared by the Southwest Project Office (SPO).

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) is responsible for preserving and protecting its natural resources, parkland, and recreational opportunities for current and future generations. The Kenilworth Channel, which crosses under the proposed Southwest Light Rail Transit corridor, is a critical component of the Chain of Lakes Regional Park, receiving more than 5 million visits per year and part of the Grand Rounds Historic District. As you are aware, the MPRB took formal action on August 21, 2013 opposing the shallow tunnel (Resolution 2013-282). Then, on February 5, 2014, the MPRB adopted Resolution 2014-114, urging the Southwest Light Rail Transit Project Office to conduct a detailed engineering feasibility study and cost comparison of tunneling under the Kenilworth Channel as part of the shallow tunnel option that is being explored. Within this context, MPRB staff provides the following comments on the reports.

Draft Southwest Light Rail Transit: Kenilworth Shallow LRT Tunnels Water Resources Evaluation

The Burns & McDonnell report identified several additional action steps that should be taken to fully evaluate the shallow tunnel options. MPRB staff support the following recommendations:

- Develop a better characterization and understanding of the direction and gradient of groundwater flow and the interaction between

groundwater and surface water. This may include additional piezometers lateral to the planned route both north and south of the channel to better characterize the groundwater flow system in two dimensions, and some sets of nested piezometers to evaluate vertical groundwater flow in the Kenilworth Corridor.

- Conduct a comprehensive capacity analysis and range of scenarios to adequately understand the implications of routing water to sanitary and storm sewer systems. When conducting this analysis, consider a 100-year design storm event.
- Conduct a Phase II investigation in the Kenilworth Corridor to determine if contaminated soil or groundwater may be encountered during the construction or operation of the shallow tunnel system.
- Revise the draft Water Resources Monitoring Program document after additional characterization of the groundwater flow system has been completed. The revision should include sufficient and specific monitoring locations, parameters, threshold criteria, as well as a monitoring schedule and course of action should threshold criteria be exceeded.

Design Review Response for Kenilworth Shallow LRT Tunnels Technical Report (February 14, 2014)

On February 14, 2014, the SPO provided a technical report in response to questions posed by the City of Minneapolis and MPRB in consultation with Barr Engineering. The purpose of the SPO report was to address questions that would not be addressed in the Burns & McDonnell report. The following comments were developed in consultation with Barr Engineering in response to the SPO's report.

- ***The response provided in Section 2 (pages 1 – 4) of the SPO's report*** provides a clear and satisfactory description of the sheet piling sealing and construction. The response, however, does not provide adequate information on the life expectancy of the structures and the potential replacement plan, nor does the response define what would be considered failure of the system components. More information is needed in this regard to these questions.
- ***The response provided in Section 3 (pages 5 – 7) of the SPO's report*** provides a clear description and satisfactory response to the groundwater and surface water issues. The response, however, does not provide adequate information on how a decrease in infiltration rates will be monitored over time. Maintenance activities to remedy reduced infiltration rates and measures to be taken to prevent failure of system components are not addressed. Long-term maintenance actions and agreements for maintenance should be developed for these systems. More information is needed in this regard to these questions.
- ***The response provided in Section 6 (page 8) of the SPO's report*** does not provide a satisfactory response to potential vibration issues. The assessment of vibration impacts would normally be completed and study results/information included as part of the DEIS. More information is needed in regard to this question.
- ***The response provided in Section 5 (pages 7 – 8) of the SPO's report*** does not provide a satisfactory response to the potential ground control options and monitoring plan issues, as much of the monitoring design and activities for ground movement and vibrations are deferred

to the contractor. The monitoring and assessment program should be developed by Met Council, prior to bidding; MPRB and City staff fully expect to be involved in the monitoring plan developments should the design proceed. More information is needed in this regard to this question.

- ***The response provided in Section 7 (pages 8 – 9) of the SPO’s report*** provides a satisfactory response to maintenance issues. The response appears to suggest adequate redundancy will be designed into the system.

Again, we appreciate the opportunity to review and respond to these reports. We also appreciate the SPO’s work to address the questions that would not be addressed by the Burns & McDonnell report. If this design option moves forward, we expect the supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement to provide additional clarity on the anticipated impacts of the project. This will allow the MPRB to fully evaluate them, especially those related to Section 4(f).

Sincerely,



Bruce L. Chamberlain, ASLA
Assistant Superintendent for Planning



Hennepin County

Recycled Paper

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March 3, 2014

Mr. Mark Fuhrmann
Southwest Project Office

RE: Hennepin County comments

Dear Mr. Fuhrmann;

In response to the draft reports presenting the independent review of the freight rail and hydrology for the Southwest Light Rail transit project, Hennepin County has no formal comments on these reports. Based on the cursory review and limited time dedicated to perform these reviews, our agency acknowledges that detailed engineering and further review will be required.

As established by our multi-agency collaboration and coordination it is also our expectation that we will continue to be engaged in the detailed review by our technical review teams and staff engaged with the project team.

Should you have any comments associated to this, contact either Nelrae Succio or myself.

Debra R. Brisk, P.E.

C: HCPW – Transportation
HCPW – HCWT
HCPW – Env. Services
Commissioner McLaughlin (Chair of HCRRA and PW Committee)
Commissioner Callison
Commissioner Higgins



Minneapolis
City of Lakes

Office of the Mayor

Betsy Hodges
Mayor

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March 3, 2014

Chair Susan Haigh
Metropolitan Council
390 North Robert Street
Saint Paul, MN 55101

Re: Comments on Recent Southwest LRT Studies

Dear Chair Haigh,

I am writing to you in advance of technical comments assembled by City of Minneapolis staff on the recent freight study, water resources study, and tree inventory conducted by the Southwest Project Office (SPO) in an effort to respond to the Met Council's March 3 deadline. As discussed in previous correspondence between my office and Mark Fuhrman, these comments are not complete. In particular, these comments do not yet include the City's response to detailed freight cost information because that information was not provided by the SPO in time for review. We will provide further comments after our own in-house review and review by our hired consultants.

Last October, at the Governor's request, the Metropolitan Council slowed the Municipal Consent process and committed to conducting these three additional studies. I appreciate your willingness to take a closer look at the issues in these studies in order to ensure that the region makes an informed decision on the design of this critical project.

Of particular interest to the City of Minneapolis is the independent freight study conducted by TranSystems. We are pleased with the outcome of this study because it demonstrates a technically viable, environmentally sound, and cost-effective solution to solving the freight dilemma. I am confident that the Minneapolis City Council will approve a municipal consent package that includes the very sound, very convincing TranSystems solution.

Background

Knowing the history of this project is essential to understanding the current situation. In the late 1990s, the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) was backed into a corner while working on the rebuilding of Highway 55. MnDOT knew they needed to move freight rail out of the Midtown Corridor because the reconstruction of Highway 55 was going to sever the at-grade crossing of the highway. The government agencies involved had decided the solution was to relocate freight to the existing MN&S corridor in St. Louis

Park. But before the project began, project engineers learned that the land under the planned connection to the freight reroute – the Golden Auto site in St. Louis Park – was contaminated and unfit for construction. At the same time, MnDOT was facing a quickly approaching expiration date on the federal funds it needed for Highway 55. So the County allowed Twin Cities & Western (TC&W) railroad to temporarily move to the publicly owned rail right-of-way in the Kenilworth Corridor. The plan was for freight to stay there for a maximum of four to six years, thus allowing time for environmental cleanup at the Golden Auto site. The State of Minnesota provided substantial funds to the City of St. Louis Park for remediation, and the TC&W railroad signed an agreement with Hennepin County to move their operations to the MN&S corridor when it was ready.

When planning for Southwest LRT began in earnest in the mid-2000s, TC&W trains continued to operate in the Kenilworth corridor, having not yet been moved to the MN&S per the 1998 agreement.

LRT Alignment Decision

For many reasons, the Kenilworth Corridor was not the City's preferred route for Southwest LRT. Then-Mayor R.T. Rybak, Council Member Lisa Goodman, then-Council Member Ralph Remington and I argued that LRT should not bypass dense neighborhoods of South Minneapolis. In addition to having more transit riders than neighborhoods along Kenilworth, these neighborhoods had more potential for economic development.

So it was with great reluctance that, after years of work, the City agreed to proceed with the County's preferred alignment of Kenilworth. But we did so with the understanding that long-standing promises to reroute freight would be kept.

Following the Alternatives Analysis process, all of the municipalities along the LRT route, including Hennepin County, St. Louis Park, and Minneapolis, approved the Kenilworth LRT alignment in a vote on the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA). The LPA was rooted in and based upon the 1998 plan for moving freight being complete *before* construction of LRT. The 2010 resolution of support for the LPA from the Minneapolis City Council makes clear that its support for the Kenilworth LRT route is contingent upon implementing the freight relocation plan.

In late 2012, Hennepin County released the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Southwest LRT project. At the direction of the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), the DEIS included analysis of a scenario in which both freight and LRT would coexist in the Kenilworth corridor. This was not a concept that had advanced through the Alternatives Analysis process, nor had the project sponsor developed conceptual engineering drawings for the scenario. Since it was an obvious violation of our understanding with Hennepin County, this was not a concept that Minneapolis anticipated. Our understanding from Hennepin County is that the FTA asked for both alignments as a matter of documentation. Using layouts developed by the City of St. Louis Park, not SPO or Hennepin County, the DEIS found that co-locating freight and LRT in the Kenilworth corridor would be detrimental to the environment. It recommended the LPA as the alternative "that will cause the least damage to the biological and physical environment and that best protects, preserves, and

enhances historic, cultural, and natural resources.” (source: Southwest Transitway DEIS, October 2012, pages 11-15).

I provide this background to illustrate three important points. First, the plan for TC&W to move to the MN&S has been underway and agreed to for many years, even before the Southwest LRT project was initiated. Second, the concept of colocation was introduced for the purposes of environmental documentation, where it was soundly dismissed. Third, and most importantly, the City of Minneapolis has been and continues to be opposed to colocation as a condition of our approval for the Southwest LRT project.

The TranSystems Solution

Tasked with designing the freight reroute as part of the Southwest LRT project, last summer the Metropolitan Council put forward the “two-story tall berm option” that greatly increased project costs and imposed unnecessary impacts to neighbors along the MN&S in St. Louis Park. Simultaneously, the Metropolitan Council advanced a plan for colocation that failed to consider any impacts in Minneapolis. While the Metropolitan Council was unable to put forward a viable plan for rerouting freight, your independent consultant has succeeded. The MN&S North solution documented by TranSystems is safe, it meets national standards for freight engineering, and it provides important benefits to St. Louis Park which have not yet been shared with the public. Moreover, all of the cost estimates prepared so far indicate the TranSystems solution is significantly less expensive than the “two-story tall berm option” in construction and from a long-term operating perspective.

Safety

First and foremost, the TranSystems alternative through the MN&S corridor route is safe. In fact, it’s safer than the existing conditions on the MN&S corridor, both because it includes cutting-edge technology intended to reduce the risk of derailments and because it significantly reduces the number of at-grade crossings. According to TranSystems, these improvements would make the MN&S the “safest stretch of rail in the state.”

The City of Minneapolis does not believe the Metropolitan Council nor any of its consultants would put forward a freight relocation design that is unsafe. TranSystems provides documentation that their proposal is safe, and we are very much aware that the Metropolitan Council has not refuted it.

Community Impacts and Benefits

TranSystems MN&S North solution impacts the Lenox and Sorenson neighborhoods of St. Louis Park far less than any of the so-called Brunswick concepts advanced by the Metropolitan Council last year. In the TranSystems solution, the two-story berms are unnecessary because the new track connection lands at existing grade near Lake Street just north of the Highway 7 crossing. The TranSystems solution requires one-third of the property acquisitions of the SPO’s Brunswick Central concept. The City of Minneapolis is very much aware that the Metropolitan Council has not taken a

position that all property acquisitions must be avoided in order to build Southwest LRT. Even with the necessary property takings, the TranSystems solution is still a far more cost-effective solution than the two-story tall berm.

Relocating freight also provides a number of important *benefits* to St. Louis Park. Their solution means there will no longer be any freight switching, sorting, or blocking operations within the St. Louis Park City limits. Noise and vibration on the existing MN&S tracks will be reduced by replacing the rails with continuously welded track. *The TranSystems solution eliminates two additional at-grade freight crossings in St. Louis Park (at Wooddale Avenue and Belt Line Boulevard)*, thus reducing vehicular traffic congestion and improving overall safety. And at those same two intersections, both of which will be home to new LRT stations, the elimination of freight rail will better set the stage for full-scale transit-oriented development by improving connectivity, especially by improving conditions for pedestrians accessing the stations. In other words, the TranSystems solution offers specific local benefits to St. Louis Park that colocation in the Kenilworth corridor would not, all while ensuring that the Green Line extension is poised to maximize benefits and success for the region as well.

These benefits have not yet been shared with the public. In order to ensure that decision-makers have full information, I am assuming that the SPO will quantify the economic development benefits of freight relocation for St Louis Park as requested by Commissioner McLaughlin at the last meeting of the Corridor Management Committee (CMC).

Freight Operations

In 1998 when MnDOT was moving freight from the Midtown Corridor to its temporary location in the Kenilworth corridor, TC&W signed a trackage rights agreement, saying it would move out of the Kenilworth corridor when provided with another connection. TC&W signed another, similar agreement, in 2012.

If the Metropolitan Council builds the TranSystems MN&S North solution, the conditions of these agreements will have been met. I ask the Metropolitan Council to work with Hennepin County to bring this solution to the Surface Transportation Board (STB).

The proposed reroute meets American Railway Engineering and Maintenance Right-of-Way (AREMA) standards, which is the national safety standard for freight engineering and is the standard the Metropolitan Council called for in its published scope for the independent freight study. Given that the reroute meets AREMA standards, coupled with the fact that the reroute is comparable in length and geometry to the existing Kenilworth route, I agree with the TranSystems principal who said that he could not find any reason why the STB would not approve the reroute. As such, I would like to express my expectation that the SPO will have its consultant, TranSystems, review and formally respond to TC&W's "Engineering Review of Freight Reroute Proposed by TranSystems" prepared by Civil Design Inc. The City of Minneapolis has done so. Detailed comments from the City's expert consultants can be found in the staff report.

The Shallow Tunnels

Ostensibly, the Met Council's intent in proposing the shallow tunnels was to provide an alternative that might be seen as equal to or better than the promised rerouting of freight. While the proposed deep tunnel may have done this, partially hiding the LRT in a pair of shallow tunnels does not. The impacts of a shallow tunnel are clearly worse than rerouting the freight. Our position has been clear since the City Council's 2010 vote on the Locally Preferred Alternative: **we support the Kenilworth route for LRT under the condition that freight is relocated**. We reiterated this in our 2012 DEIS comments, and many times at many SPO-generated meetings since then. Please remember that Minneapolis never wanted LRT to be routed through the Kenilworth Corridor, but in the spirit of regional cooperation we accepted it in a joint effort to keep this important project moving.

From a broader perspective, the Kenilworth corridor runs through the Grand Rounds and the Minneapolis Chain of Lakes, both of which are considered regional assets by the City of Minneapolis, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, and the Metropolitan Council Regional Parks Plan. Over 2,000 people per day - many of them residents from well outside of the Minneapolis city limits - use the Kenilworth trail as one leg of a designated regional commuter route. The Chain of Lakes is enjoyed by millions of visitors each year and is the recipient of Regional Park funding, which is based on Regional Park plan assumptions about facilities. These treasures are part of a system of parks and natural areas that help make not just Minneapolis, but the entire region, a livable community and a competitive force on a national scale. On the whole, these public assets to the region should not be treated lightly or in casual comparison to any of the necessary takings in the TranSystems alignment. The TranSystems solution clearly and convincingly demonstrates that there is no need to put these regional assets at risk in order to construct another regional project - Southwest LRT - in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area.

The solution is quite clear. While we may not agree with all of TranSystems' analysis, they deserve great credit for developing a cost-effective and environmentally sound solution which meets AREMA standards as the Met Council requested.

To move forward, we must proceed with the idea that both the benefits and the burdens of LRT will be shared by all the cities along the line.

We will only find a resolution to the Southwest LRT situation if we are willing to tell residents of both Minneapolis and St Louis Park things they may not want to hear. I am willing to do that. During the last seven months many of my constituents have concluded that - with or without freight - LRT itself has no place in Kenilworth. They want LRT to be in a deep tunnel or rerouted to the Midtown Greenway. Despite the threat of broken promises to Minneapolis, I am reminding my constituents that Kenilworth was purchased for LRT and that even if the LRT alignment was not our first choice, the project is worth supporting.

Please send us a Municipal Consent package that features the TranSystems solution; we'll all be able to move past this stage, and we'll all be on our way to the next steps of this critical project.

Sincerely,

Mayor Betsy Hodges
City of Minneapolis

CC: Governor Mark Dayton
State Senator Scott Dibble
State Representative Frank Hornstein
Hennepin County Commissioner Peter McLaughlin
Steve Kotke, City Engineer, Director of Public Works

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Betsy Hodges". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mayor Betsy Hodges
City of Minneapolis



Minneapolis
City of Lakes

**Department of
Public Works**

Steven A. Kotke, P.E.
City Engineer
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March 3, 2014

Mark Fuhrmann
Metropolitan Council
Southwest Project Office
6465 Wayzata Boulevard, Suite 500
St. Louis Park, MN 55426

Re: Technical Comments on Recent Southwest LRT Studies

Dear Mr. Fuhrmann:

Attached you will find the City's technical comments on the Freight, Water Resources, and Vegetation studies. We appreciate the independent reviews and expert points of view on many of the issues raised with both design scenarios, relocation and colocation. The last four months have been an opportunity for reflection on work done to date, time for further community input, and expert analysis on outstanding issues. We continue to work diligently with you on creating the best possible LRT project for the state and region, and I hope our comments to the three studies assist in moving the ball forward.

You will find that the majority of our time and comments have been spent on reviewing TranSystems' independent freight study. We are pleased to see a technically viable, environmentally sound, and cost-effective solution to solving the freight dilemma. TranSystems' nationally-recognized expertise on this topic has further proved that an alternative freight alignment exists for TC&W, a position which is consistent with the City of Minneapolis' support for the Southwest LRT Locally Preferred Alternative. This route eliminates our concerns regarding the shallow tunnels, meets American Railway Engineering and Maintenance Right-of-Way (AREMA) standards, and is the best regional solution.

Once the reports are fine-tuned, our expectation is to see a Municipal Consent package with the TranSystems' relocation solution. This package will be consistent with the LPA and therefore supportable by our policymakers. We are eager to continue working with you on the 30 percent design package and into final engineering with the ultimate goal of an LRT project that best meets the goals of the project and provides the most benefit for the region.

Sincerely,

Steven A. Kotke, P.E.
City Engineer, Director of Public Works

Cc:



The comments below are based on a review of the most recent studies from the Southwest Project Office by City of Minneapolis professional staff and our expert consultants. The two consultants collectively have expertise in freight rail and LRT design and engineering and in the Southwest LRT project specifically, including steps taken nearly 20 years ago when relocating freight from the Midtown Corridor to the Kenilworth Corridor resulted in agreements between Hennepin County, the railroads and the City of St. Louis Park..

Freight Study

Operations

- **General Comment:** Appendix A is referenced but missing.
- **General Comment:** How will the track work be staged to provide uninterrupted rail service in either the shallow tunnel option or the MN&S North route. Comparing and contrasting the impacts to railroads in addition to cost is important to get a fair comparison.
- **Page 5, section A:** It should be noted that an existing easement exists through the Golden Auto site to allow for trains to be relocated onto the MN&S corridor.
- **Page 5, new letter:** The study should recognize that in 2011 MnDOT completed an Environmental Assessment regarding freight relocation and “determined that the project does not have the potential for significant environmental impact” and that a Negative Declaration Order was granted for the MN&S corridor stating that an EIS was not needed. The Findings of Fact and Conclusion document also stated that freight rail could safely be relocated in what would later become the DEIS alternative.
- **Page 5, new letter:** The study should also recognize that TC&W entered into a signed agreement in 1998 with Hennepin County in which all parties to the agreements for the relocation of CP/TC&W from the 29th Street corridor (including TC&W and CPR (Soo)) were of the understanding that the use of the Kenilworth corridor was temporary (Paragraph 5.3, HCRRRA Agreement No. A18158 dated 10 August, 1998)
 - Paragraph 5.3 reads – “TCW and Soo will vacate all use of, and permanently terminate all rights to use, the Rail Corridor [*the Kenilworth corridor – this note added*] no later than thirty (30) days after a new connection between the Soo Hopkins line (TCW’s current operating route) and the former Minneapolis, Northfield and Southern line in St. Louis Park (MNS connection), and between the MNS and the Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway (BNSF connection) becomes operational,....”
 - The paragraph goes on to say “...or at such time as any other feasible alternative to use of the Rail Corridor satisfactory to TCW becomes available and is operational. The MNS connection and the BNSF connection are shown on Exhibit D attached to this Agreement.” This added text provides flexibility for the County, as long as TCW concurred, but was not intended to be an out for TCW.
- **Page 9, paragraph 1:** To be consistent, please show the traffic counts for Cedar Lake Parkway (4,000 ADT) and 21st Street (less than 1,000 ADT).

- **Page 11, paragraph 4:** This paragraph should also note the benefit to St. Louis Park in losing the track storage along the Bass Lake Spur if the MN&S North alternative were pursued.
- **Page 15, paragraph 3:** This paragraph should also note the benefit to St. Louis Park in losing the track storage along the Bass Lake Spur if either the MN&S or UTU routes were pursued.
- **Page 16, Table:** The cost information should be corrected to show “apples to apples” comparisons.
- **Page 17, paragraph 4:** If freight is kept on the Kenilworth Corridor it should be upgraded to a Class 3 track standard and include safety considerations such as CTC and defect detection systems, consistent with what is proposed for the MN&S North corridor option. Cost estimates for the Kenilworth Corridor should reflect these assumptions.
- **Page 19, paragraph 3:** The statement “the existing proximity between the schools and railroad cannot be mitigated without extensive relocation of the railroad and/or school” may reflect the opinion of St. Louis Park residents, but it contradicts MnDOT’s 2011 Findings of Fact and Conclusions document”, which lists a number of mitigation options for freight relocation. St. Louis Park’s consultant also lists a number of mitigation measures for adding freight to the MN&S corridor found in the S.E.H. Inc. Tech Memo #4 dated April 18, 2011; revised May 31, 2011, which is referenced in the report on page 6. We suggest that the sentence be deleted or stated as a St. Louis Park resident opinion.
- **Page 20, paragraph 2:** It should be noted that the grades, curves, and compensated grades on the MN&S North concept are not just comparable to the Kenilworth Corridor but better. A table showing the grades, degree of curvature, and compensated grades for both the MN&S North option and the Kenilworth option would be helpful. A chart comparing the modified DEIS alternative to the Kenilworth Corridor was previously used in Met Council presentations to compare/contrast options.
- **Page 20, paragraph 2:** It should be noted that recommended street closures are based upon contour data and better survey data and more design work is needed to fully understand which closures are needed to accommodate the recommended design. In particular, the grades near Lake Street appear to be close to existing therefore that street closure may or may not actually be needed.
- **Page 21, Paragraph 4:** Comments pertaining to cost estimates will be made two weeks after receiving the necessary information.
- **Page 24, paragraph 1:** Is the new direct connection from the Bass Lake Spur to the MN&S route southbound required as part of the LRT project?

Community Impacts

- **General Comment:** The independent freight study was intended to be technical documentation of viable freight reroutes from an expert in railroad engineering. It was not intended to be a comprehensive analysis of the community, social, and environmental tradeoffs among the options, and should not be interpreted as such. In several instances throughout the report, the consultant reaches beyond its excellent engineering credentials and makes statements about community acceptability that are not within the purview of this study.

- **General Comment:** The report does not include an analysis of items Minneapolis considers community impacts – noise, long-term operations and maintenance requirements, loss of vegetation, bike trails, cultural significance, and visual effects.
- **Pages 7-8:** The report’s screening criteria includes phrases such as “undue hardship”, “not significantly impair”, “undue delay”, and “unduly impacted”. These qualifiers are subjective without accompanying definitions or parameters to make sound decisions.
- **Page 6:** It is important to note that SEH Tech Memo #4 also highlights the improved conditions at the Wooddale and Belt Line stations in a relocation scenario. This summary should include that point.
- **Page 9, paragraph 1:** The report discusses at-grade crossing impacts. There is a 14,000 ADT at the Belt Line freight crossing and 6,000 ADT at Wooddale. Both of these intersections would no longer have at-grade freight rail crossings in the relocation scenario. The DEIS shows 179 cars stacking northbound on Belt Line in 2030 if a freight train crosses during the PM peak and 132 northbound at Wooddale. This issue would disappear with relocation. The report should include this information.
- **Page 9, paragraph 2:** Please note that Hennepin County acquired the Kenilworth corridor in 1984 for the purpose of implementing transit.
- **Page 17, paragraph 1:** The report claims that “all three [freight, light-rail, and trail] could readily be accommodated at-grade, except for sections of the corridor get as narrow as 59.5 feet”. This statement makes it sound easy to accommodate all three modes in the corridor. This is not the case. Moreover, Minneapolis would not have supported the LPA if eliminating the trail was a consideration. Any other trail alignment will not be as efficient and safe - due to the number of at-grade road crossings – than this federally-funded bicycle commuting route. Bicycle commuters from the southwest suburbs would lose a direct commuting route through an area of Minneapolis where the on-street transportation system is circuitous due to the Grand Rounds Park System.
- **Page 17, paragraph 4:** The Kenwood community is referred to as “very proud of the neighborhood, housing stock, the natural resources and the award-winning multi-use trail”. How was this information gleaned? The paragraph goes on to discuss “the level of acceptance of continued freight traffic” in Kenilworth on the part of public meeting attendees. Community meeting input is valuable in a decision-making process but should not be the only perspectives brought to the table because many members of the public do not or cannot attend evening public meetings. Any reference to community values should be deleted from the report.
- **Pages 18-19, section C:** The Engineering analysis is primarily a summary of community perspectives and should therefore be moved to the following section on Community. There needs to be clear identification of the “many features of Saint Louis Park” that Brunswick West and Central pass through. Additionally, is there a specific action or vote referred to in the last sentence of this paragraph: “the Saint Louis Park community has rejected all of the Brunswick options”?
- **Page 19, paragraph 3:** In the Community analysis of the MN&S North alignment, there is a discussion of lack of mitigation opportunities for the proximity of the St. Louis Park schools and

railroad without extensive relocation. Freight trains have been operating adjacent to the high school since it was built in 1956. While freight carloads have been low in the last 35 years, before 1979 MN&S used this route to haul 60,000 carloads per year. This means the high school was sited next to a significantly active rail line.

- **Pages 20-21:** The MN&S North alternative results in far fewer property acquisitions than the Brunswick alternatives. Additionally, some of the property impacts are the result of street realignments that are may be unnecessary.

Conceptual Alignment

- **Sheet 1:** No comments at this time
- **Sheets 2 & 3:** This sheet shows three, 5 degree curves, which meet BNSF standards, assuming appropriate super elevation will be utilized.
- **Sheets 2 & 3:** Overhead electric line at top of sheet #2, note states “Existing overhead electric not to be disturbed”. Based on our research, this alignment will require the relocation of these overhead electric utilities (approximately 3 poles).
- **Sheets 2 & 3:** This proposed barrier wall is really a crash wall and should be designed as such. The location of this crash wall also may inhibit maintenance access.
- **Sheets 2 & 3:** The 880 feet of tangent track between horizontal reverse curves on this sheet is acceptable. The vertical curves on this sheet all meet BNSF and AREMA standards.
- **Sheet 4:** All vertical curves on this sheet meet BNSF and AREMA design standards.
- **Sheet 4:** The clearance at TH7 appears to be 17 ½'. This clearance will need further refinement when plans advance to assure compliance with MnDOT standards.
- **Sheet 5:** All 4 vertical curves meet AREMA standards, but curves 1, 3 and 4 do NOT meet BNSF standards.
- **Sheet 5:** Also note that there is a reverse curve on the EXISTING CP alignment.
- **Sheet 5:** The right-of-way north of Minnetonka Blvd assumes 150 feet, but as the alignment moves north it appears to decrease in width. We suggest a re-evaluation of ROW width at this location (north of Minnetonka) and another typical section be developed for this area.
- **Sheet 5:** There may need to be a retaining wall on both sides of the new alignment at this same location.
- **Sheet 5:** At approximately station 240+00 it appears there are additional overhead electrical utilities that may need to be relocated.

Summary Findings: Civil Design, Inc. “Engineering Review of Freight Reroute Proposed by TranSystems”

Commentary on this engineering review is focused on the facts associated with this reroute rather than the inflammatory comments contained within the document itself. There are critical errors in some of the assumptions and conclusions reached in this document and we will highlight them.

- **Page 2, paragraph 2:** The comments referencing CN standard for horizontal curves are irrelevant as CN is not involved in this matter. In addition, there are many, many examples of curves greater than 30 minutes on every railroad in the country. Of course every railroad would prefer to operate on tangent track exclusively; however that is simply impossible and impractical.
- **Page 2, paragraph 3:** Based on the information that has been provided to the City of Minneapolis and its Consultants thus far, the freight alignment within the Kenilworth corridor **does have** reverse and broken-back curves. While we do not have detailed enough information to determine exact degree of curvature or length of tangent between curves, it is clear that saying Kenilworth is “significantly” better than the TranSystems design is misleading at best. Additionally, the route required to access the Kenilworth Corridor contains sections of jointed rail and poor tie and ballast conditions, which is inferior to the proposed 136 pound continuously welded rail with new ties and ballast in the TranSystems design. AREMA and BNSF design standards have been identified as the threshold to be met with the reroute design, the Kenilworth alignment is an older alignment that is unlikely to meet either of these current design standards. The TranSystems design meets AREMA for its entire length and BNSF over much of the length. BNSF design standards are a higher standard than AREMA however, it is false to conclude that a higher standard equates to a “safer” design.
- **Page 2, paragraph 4:** We do not disagree that TC&W must wait for access rights from the controlling railroad but would like to point out that this condition exists with their current operations anytime TC&W interchanges with any Class I RR. Traffic volumes on the MN&S are less than any of the other interfaces they encounter.
- **Page 3, paragraph 3:** The quote provided by CDI in their report was in fact taken from the 2003 AREMA “Practical Guide to Railway Engineering” as noted however the statement is being used completely out of context with its original intent. In reading the original publication, the authors are clearly making reference to true reverse curves, meaning two curves with zero tangent between them. Equating a true reverse curve with that which is proposed in the TranSystems design is completely erroneous. The reverse curves in the TranSystems design have a tangent length of 880’ between them – note that the BNSF design standards, the most stringent standards being considered, call for a minimum of 200’ of tangent between curves. The TranSystems design far exceeds that requirement.
 - For the benefit of those who are not familiar with the quoted AREMA publication, here is additional material from that same publication and the same section that is partially quoted by CDI: *“To alleviate this yawing effect, all reversing curves should be separated by a tangent between the curves, though the exact length required will depend upon a*

number of factors. The AREMA Manual for Railway Engineering provides recommendations for yard tracks only, strongly recommending at least one car length worth of distance between reversing curves.” And “Tangent length between reversing curves on lines outside of yards and terminals is generally much longer. For freight, each railway has its own requirements, generally being 150 to 300 feet depending on track speed and conditions.”

- **Page 3, paragraph 4:** CDI notes that a 120 unit train is approximately 7700 feet in length and that the TranSystems alignment contains three (3) reverse curves within a distance of 5000 feet. CDI fails to note that the Kenilworth alignment contains three (3) reverse curves within a distance of 6900 feet between stations 225+00 and 294+00, and four (4) reverse curves in a distance of 6000 feet between stations 265+00 and 325+00. Both segments also include a number of broken-back curves (two curves in the same direction connected by a tangent). The impact of a broken back curve (if any) should also be considered.
- **Page 3, paragraph 5:** Yes, there will be rail wear on curves and each railroad has maintenance plans to account for this. It is a matter of the rail/wheel interaction dynamics, which cannot be dismissed, but is expected during any rail operations on curves.
- **Page 4, paragraph 1:** Technical error → Super elevation is not accurately described by the author. The parenthetical comment should read “inside rail is the profile, the outside rail is higher”.
- **Page 4, paragraph 2:** Super elevation is not costly to maintain, again it is a matter of regular expected maintenance, which is performed each day on all railroads. In addition, the super elevation on this proposed alignment is a miniscule $\frac{3}{4}$ inch with 40’ spirals at 25 mph per BNSF specifications.
- **Page 4, paragraph 3:** Technical error → The allowable rate for change in grade is .20 not .10 as stated by the author. The allowable rate is .10 for a sag vertical curve, not a crest vertical curve.
- **Page 4, paragraph 5:** The statement that the retained section on the MN&S should be widened to provide room for a service road is inconsistent with the design of the Kenilworth alignment which has very little alignment that is serviceable from the adjacent property. If no service road is required along Kenilworth, why would it be required along the MN&S?
- **Page 5, final paragraph:** The argument that the MN&S alignment will significantly impact the economics of rail operations is misleading at best. The extra length of route, even at the speed of only 10 MPH, will increase travel time between Hopkins and the current BNSF connection by less than 10 minutes. Even with the additional time to gain access from CP as well as BNSF, any delays will be minimal compared to the current delays experienced at the eastern end of the daily trip to the St. Paul Yards. From TC&W’s own admittance, current delays are almost exclusively waiting for access to the St. Paul yards and that access to the BNSF line is not the problem. Access to the CP’s MN&S line should also not be an issue considering the limited use of the line. Any minor unforeseen delays can be made up in the waiting for access on the east end. Expiration of crew time caused by delays on the east end will continue to be a problem, but it is highly unlikely this will be aggravated by the MN&S re-route.

Water Resources Study

All comments are made in reference to those posed to the SPO in a Technical Memorandum dated January 16, 2014 and the responses received by the SPO in a Technical Memorandum dated February 14, 2014.

- **Pages 1-4, section 2:** The SPO's Technical Memorandum response provides a clear and satisfactory description of the sheet piling sealing and construction. The response however does not provide adequate information on the life expectancy of the structures and the potential replacement plan, nor does the response define what would be considered failure of the system components. More information is needed in this regard to these questions.
- **Pages 5-7, section 3:** The SPO's Technical Memorandum response provides a clear description and satisfactory response to the groundwater and surface water issues. The response, however, does not provide adequate information on how a decrease in infiltration rates will be monitored over time. Maintenance activities to remedy reduced infiltration rates and measures to be taken to prevent failure of system components are not addressed. Long-term maintenance actions and agreements for maintenance should be developed for these systems. More information is needed in this regard to these questions.
- **Page 8, section 6:** The SPO's Technical Memorandum response does not provide a satisfactory response to the issues. The assessment of vibration impacts would normally be completed and study results/information included as part of the DEIS.
- **Page 7, section 4:** The SPO's Technical Memorandum states that the deep bored tunnels have been eliminated from consideration, so no further response is needed.
- **Pages 7-8, section 5:** The SPO's Technical Memorandum does not provide a satisfactory response to the issues, as much of the monitoring design and activities for ground movement and vibrations are deferred to the contractor. The monitoring and assessment program should be developed by Met Council, prior to bidding; MPRB and City staff fully expect to be involved in the development of the monitoring plan should this design proceed.
- **Pages 8-9, section 7:** A satisfactory response is provided to the issues; the response appears to suggest adequate redundancy will be designed into the system.

Tree Inventory

- **General Comment:** It would be helpful to show the layout of both the shallow tunnel option and the re-location option relative to the maps. An inventory of lost trees per option (per size category) is what is needed.
- **General Comment:** The analysis shows trees of significance as being over 12 inches in diameter, however the map only shows 6 inch diameter trees. It is impossible to see where the significant trees are located and how many there are.

Email 120

From: Palmisano, Linea []
Sent: Monday, March 03, 2014 5:40 PM
To: swlrt
Subject: Commentary submission: Southwest Light Rail

Please consider the attached as a part of my own commentary on the draft report for SW LRT.

All my best,
Linea

Linea Palmisano
Minneapolis City Council Member
13th Ward

Star Tribune
OpEd
February 28, 2014

A light rail is only as good as its stations

Amidst all the turmoil and ever-escalating tension over the proposed Southwest light rail transit (SWLRT) route, an important aspect of the discussion is being overlooked: station viability.

Where the tracks are placed is certainly a crucial decision, but passengers won't be waiting between the rails. It's time we start to focus more on the points along it.

By 2030, an expected 30,000 rides will be taken on the SWLRT every weekday. The West Lake station, in the bustling West Calhoun neighborhood, will be one of the busiest along the line. As recent tragic events have shown—and as we have been hearing for many years—the proposed station area near Lake and Excelsior streets within West Calhoun is inhospitable to pedestrians. The infrastructure enhancements that will come about with introduction of this station will bring many benefits to neighbors in this area, but ultimately, how safe can the station be if freight rail tracks—and its trains—physically stand alongside the LRT platform?

The removal of freight rail tracks from light rail stations provide more than just safety. It means a potential for greater economic development on both sides of each station. It means better access- both for cars and pedestrians, coming from either side of the station. It means faster and easier access to home, lakes, and trails for riders who depart at West Lake and 21st Street stations.

Stations are more than portals. As cities around the world have demonstrated, well-designed station areas are destinations unto themselves that drive growth. Additionally, it permits the elimination of the rail yard that straddles Belt Line Blvd., increasing the land available for redevelopment. Re-routing the Twin Cities & Western Railroad onto existing and improved tracks in north-central St. Louis Park won't divorce freight rail tracks from light rail entirely, but it reduces the number of station areas with freight by four (at least two in St. Louis Park, and two in Minneapolis). There has been much talk about "sharing the burden" of the SWLRT project between Minneapolis and St. Louis Park, but this is one area in which both cities would share an enormous benefit.

Linea Palmisano, Minneapolis Council Member, 13th Ward
Aaron Isaacs, retired Metro Transit planner

Email 121

From: jeff.nielsen

To: RutsonV

Date: 02/26/2014 10:59 AM

Subject:Southwest Light Rail Transitway (SLRT) Project and TC&W Freight Rail

Sent by: tmw

RE: Southwest Light Rail Transitway (SLRT) Project and TC&W Freight Rail

I am writing to you on behalf of the communities and members that own United Farmers Cooperative (UFC). We are a member owned cooperative that serves nearly 10,000 customers across a dozen communities in south central Minnesota. UFC has been in existence since 1915, and is owned by those we serve, providing necessary goods and services such as agricultural inputs, home heating and markets for grain.

In the past 20 years, UFC has invested over 80 million dollars of member owned capital in upgrading infrastructure to provide better access and markets for the farmers and consumers that we serve. Most of these facilities have been strategically located to effectively use rail service that is provided by Twin Cities & Western Railroad Company (TC&W). In 2012 alone, the members of UFC invested nearly 30 million dollars to build a world class grain handling facility near Brownton MN. This facility has significantly reduced the metro truck traffic while at the same time greatly enhancing marketing options for Minnesota's agricultural production. The TC&W rail has been a critical piece in getting our Minnesota farm families' crops to the best markets.

UFC depends on the TC&W for economical freight rail transportation. UFC understands that the Southwest Transit way Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) recommends a relocation of the freight rail route to accommodate the Southwest Light Rail Transit way (SWLRT). UFC further understands, based on information provided by TC&W, that the recommended freight rail relocation design as shown in the DEIS released on October 12, 2012 would result in increased costs for TC&W to operate its trains to and from UFC. These costs are not only monetary in nature but operationally challenging as well. We further understand that the most recent re-route study by Civil Design Inc. (CDI) affirmed that the options being pursued would greatly hinder our ability to access these markets safely and efficiently.

We fully understand and support the logic and efficiencies that you are hoping to gain on further expansion of the light railway. It follows the same logic that we have applied in locating our facilities along the rail. It is both economically and environmentally sound as well as significantly more efficient. However, we do not believe that it makes sense to address the transportation needs for the Twin Cities and metro area's at the expense of adversely effecting what we have built for the last several decades in rural Minnesota. In UFC's case, we even helped invest in rehabilitation of the railroad tracks known as the Minnesota Prairie Line. The access to competitive and reliable rail has meant great economic development in our small committee and has added many jobs in addition to the economic gains for our Minnesota farmers.

It is our understanding that TC&W has encouraged you to look at several alternatives that would be less intrusive on the existing freight business and that several alternatives exist that would be less costly and

more conducive to serving the needs of all parties in this situation. I have spent considerable time looking at these options and I really believe a compromise that is fair and mutually respectful can be reached. We would be happy to participate in these discussions if we can be of any assistance or relevance in this matter. The current proposal would put considerable economic and operational obstacles in place and needs to be reviewed and adjusted to be fair to all those that are affected. We hope that you will consider everyone's needs in this matter and work together for the solution.

Sincerely,

Jeff J. Nielsen
General Manager
United Farmers Cooperative

TO: Jim Alexander
Tom Domres

FROM: Carey Bretsch, PE

RE: Addendum to CDI Comments on Transystems Plan dated January 30, 2014

Although it is true that CDI is a small engineering firm and we don't have hundreds of engineers, we have railroad experience and when we need help, we know enough to ask for it. This is exactly what I did about a week ago. I asked a colleague of mine to take a look at the TranSystems plan and give me his impression.

I should preface by saying that the colleague to which I speak is a professional engineer that has been working in the railroad industry his entire 37 year career, the last 5 years as a consultant. Ray Gigear is a member of AREMA and a member and past chairman of AREMA Technical Committee 1 which determines specifications for roadway and ballast. Throughout his career, he has focused on solving complex issues with sound engineering, backed by cost-effective planning and scheduling. His experience ranges from track design to environmental permitting, railroad inspection and operations management. Prior to forming his own company, Mr. Gigear worked for Chicago & North Western Railway, Union Pacific Railroad Company, and Dakota Minnesota & Eastern Railroad, among others. I can supply a copy of Mr. Gigear's resume if you wish.

When I asked Mr. Gigear to take a look at the TranSystems design, I had every confidence that he could give me an unbiased, technical review. I was also confident that he could impart specifications of the Class 1 Railroads that were unavailable to CDI.

Although the TranSystems design was presented as complying with all AREMA specifications, that is not necessarily true. From the start of this process, we have also suggested that AREMA is just a starting point because Class 1 railroads typically exceed AREMA specifications for mainline track. However, the problem with the class 1 railroads is that they don't freely share their mainline track specifications, thus we were not able to obtain written copies of their standards.

Mr. Gigear, having worked as a track designer for the class 1 railroads, has this specific design information.

When we met several times with Mr. Terry, there was never a discussion about what the track needs were for TC&W to operate. No specifications were ever discussed nor were specific requirements of the railroad discussed. I believe that Mr. Terry was instructed to meet AREMA Standards, period. This is unfortunate since a firm as large as Transystems should have knowledge of Class 1 railroad specifications and should have applied them to any proposed design.

In past responses to preliminary designs, Mr. Wegner has referred to the physics of operating railroads. The physics refers to the physical influence of forces on track, rail cars and locomotives. The track is a fixed object over which the locomotives and cars must operate. If forces on any of these items become excessive it can lead to severe operational, maintenance and safety difficulties. The Railroad is very cautious and concerned about having to operate on track that introduces unnecessary risk.

Mr. Giegear's analysis of the Transystems design concluded several items which have been referenced in CDI'S previous reports. I will attempt to explain them to you in terms that are understandable for everyone.

1. Horizontal curves: In the Transystems design, changes in direction are achieved by use of simple curves. The rate at which the curve changes direction is called degree of curve. A simple curve turns at the same rate throughout the curve around a central point or radius point. These types of curves are fine for industrial track where the speed is typically 5 MPH or less. Considering the sharpness of the curves proposed by Transystems, superelevation will be required. For mainline railroad curves AREMA Chapter 5, Section 3.1 specifies that both ends of a horizontal curve be transitioned with spirals. A spiral curve is a curve on a plane that winds around a fixed center point at an increasing or decreasing distance from that point. The use of spiral curves at the end and beginning of a simple curve will insure that the train makes a smooth transition from the curve to the tangent or straight track. By calculation the required spirals would be either 70 feet or 80 feet depending on the curve. The installation of spirals will also reduce the tangent track between curves.

2. Placement of vertical curves: CDI has recognized that vertical geometry combined with the horizontal geometry must be compatible. The Transystems design places a number of vertical curves within the horizontal curves. The rate of change of vertical elevation change is critical to train handling. In other words, if the vertical change in grade occurs too rapidly, it can cause decoupling of cars or damage to knuckles. For the purposes of analysis and design, the Class 1 railroads have identified limits to vertical changes. CDI referenced some of these requirements in our initial reports, however with Mr. Giegear's assistance; we are now able to identify limits imposed by the Class 1 railroads. For Summit curves the limit is 0.1 and for sag curves the limit is 0.06. The length of vertical curve is limited by the change in grade divided by the limit of the curve. (see attached comments from Mr. Giegear).

The Transystems design does not comply with these limits imposed by every Class 1 Railroad in America. Mr. Giegear indicates the Transystems design has the rate of change for summits between 0.15 and 0.187 (limit 0.1) and 0.094 and 0.1 (limit 0.06) for sags. This exceeds the practices in use today across the United States.

Current Design Practice regarding placement of vertical curves as utilized by both the BNSF and the UP is to make every attempt not to place vertical curves within the body of a horizontal curve. They strongly discourage and require a design exception be submitted for approval if contemplating placement of a vertical curve within a horizontal spiral curve in any mainline track. They also prohibit vertical curve placement within the limits of any special trackwork such as turnouts, derails, etc. The Transystems design has 4 significant vertical curves within not only the body of the circular curve but also within the

limits of the required spiral curve. Additionally, the last vertical curve also appears to be within the limits of the required turnout where the TC&W enters the MN&S.

Standard of practice by all Class 1 railroads recognize that complex profiles such as those with more than three reversing grade changes exceeding 1% within a distance of 5000 feet may cause excessive in-train dynamic forces and handling problems. The design profile as presented by Transystems certainly exceeds these criteria and highlights this as a significant problem.

3. Throughout this process of preliminary design, we have recognized the issues associated with grades or slope of the rail. The current Kenilworth corridor has a relatively constant slope from west to east. This is advantageous to the TC&W since the majority of their loads travel from west to east. The Transystems design introduces a compensated west bound grade of about 1%. This has an impact on the railroad in terms of fuel use and motive power. In other words, it may be necessary to add locomotives to the train in order to pull loads up this grade.

The specific flaws in the Transystems design are physical impairments to the safe and efficient operations of the TC&W Railroad. We have in past reports referenced the need to comply with specifications of the serving Class 1 Railroads since the TC&W relies on the Class 1 Railroads to serve their customers. The above references specific flaws in the Transystems design. If a reroute of the TC&W is to occur, it must be safe and efficient to operate. The Transystems plan is neither.

Design Criteria that must be established by TC&W for their mainline track (this is not established by AREMA recommended practice). However its use and interpretation drastically effect the calculations and requirements that Trans Systems utilized in preparing their design.

For this segment of track I would recommend that TC&W establish:

Design Speed = 35 MPH

Operating Speed = 25 MPH max

Eu = Design Unbalance UPRR uses 1" and BNSF uses 2". I Recommend TC&W use 1".

Rate of Change formula for vertical curves and use 0.1 for summit and 0.06 for sag curves.

These design criteria would fall in line with the industry practice.

+++++

- **AREMA Manual Superelevation equation is as follows:**

Equilibrium superelevation shall be determined by the following equation:

$$e = 0.0007 D_c V^2$$

where:

e = total superelevation required for equilibrium, in inches.

V = design speed through the curve, in miles per hour (MPH)

D_c = degree of curvature, in degree

The total superelevation e is expressed as follows:

$$e = E_a + E_u$$

where:

E_a = actual superelevation that is applied to the curve

E_u = unbalanced superelevation (amount of superelevation not applied to the curve)

required superelevation using Trans Systems designs for 5 degree curve is 1 ¼ inches actual for 4 degree 30 minute curve is 1 inch. [(this calculation is needed to determine spiral length)]. This also requires additional future maintenance to maintain these curves especially since a portion of these curves are on bridge structure.

- **Vertical Curves**

Vertical curves as recommended in AREMA Manual for Railway Engineering are shown in the following formula:

$$L = (D V^2 K) / A$$

where,

A = vertical acceleration, in ft/sec²

D = absolute value of the difference in rates of grades expressed in decimal

K = 2.15 conversion factor to give L, in feet

L = length of vertical curve, in feet

V = speed of train, in miles per hour

The recommended vertical accelerations (A) for freight trains for both sags and summits are as follows: Recommended Vertical Acceleration (ft/sec²) Freight 0.10

*******However not any of the class 1 railroads (UPRR, BNSF, CSX, NS, CPR, CN, KCS) operating in the USA recognizes this formula for mainline use they all use the rate of change method for vertical curves.*******

$$L_{C(Sta)} = (G_1 - G_2) / r$$

where:

L_{C(Sta)} = Length of vertical curve in Stations (100 feet).

G₁ = Entering grade expressed as percent

G₂ = Leaving grade expressed as percent

r = rate of change (Summit curve 0.1, Sag curve 0.06)

This design although it exceeds the published AREMA formula (1st formula above), the Trans System design does not comply with the formula used by every class 1 railroad in America.

All the curves have a rate of change for summits of between 0.15 and 0.187 and for sags of between 0.094 and 0.10 in both cases this design drastically exceeds the practices in use today across the United States.

- **Spiral Length Requirements**

Based on AREMA Chapter 5, Section 3.1, the length of spiral shall be the longest as determined from formulas:

1. $L_s = 1.63E_u V$

2. $L_s = 1.2E_a V$

3. $L_s = 62E_a$

Calculated length is usually rounded up to the nearest 10 feet to facilitate construction.

where, E_a = actual superelevation that is applied to the curve

E_u = unbalanced superelevation (amount of superelevation not applied to the curve)

V = design speed, MPH

This design would require spiral transition curves at the entrance and exit of every 5 degree curve and would calculate to 77.5 feet in length and be rounded up to **80 feet**. For the 4-30 curve the required spiral would be **70 feet**. The Trans System analysis does not recognize this requirement or the implications that this does to shorten the tangent length between curves.

- **Minimum tangent Length**

For mainline track, the desired length of constant profile grade between vertical curves and or horizontal curves shall be determined by the following formula (but not less than 100 feet):

$$L = 3V$$

where,

L = minimum tangent length, feet

And would calculate to $3(35) = 105$ feet. Trans System design appears to meet this criterion except between reversing horizontal curves near station 170+00 they claim to have 880 feet of tangent track but when you subtract spirals it will be approximately 120-150 feet less tangent. This minimum requirement only provides for the required safe negotiation of the train cars it does not take into account any geometry caused lack of fuel saving efficiencies or increased poor train handling characteristics.

Standard practice by all class 1 railroad recognizes that complex profiles, such as those with more than three reversing grade changes exceeding 1.0% within a distance of 5000 feet, may cause excessive in-train dynamic forces and handling problems. This design profile as presented by Trans Systems certainly exceeds these criteria and highlights this as a significant problem.

- **Placement of Vertical Curves**

Current Design Practice regarding the placement of vertical curves as utilized by both BNSF and UPRR, [this requirement is their design criteria and is not a part of the AREMA Manual], make every attempt not to place vertical curves within the body of a horizontal curve, if possible. They strongly discourage and require a design exception be submitted for approval if contemplating placement of a vertical curve within a horizontal spiral curve in any of their mainline track designs, and prohibit vertical curve placement within the limits of any special trackwork (turnouts, derails, etc.). This Trans System design has 4 significant vertical curves within not only the body of the circular curve but also within the limits of the required spiral curve additionally the last vertical curve also appears to be within the limits of the required turnout.

Vertical Curves located at:

163+63	-	170+63
176+00	-	180+00
193+96	-	201+96
256+33	-	265+33

- **Compensated Grades**

AREMA manual recognizes that curvature requires additional energy to overcome and provides a calculation of 0.04 percent of equivalent grade per degree of curve to overcome this curve resistance. Westbound equivalent maximum gradient would be 1.03% and Eastbound equivalent maximum gradient would also be 1.03%. This gradient is certainly more that they experience on their existing connection and will certainly result in additional fuel use and possibly require additional locomotive assets to move the freight over this segment.

March 12, 2014

Susan Haigh, Chair
Metropolitan Council
390 Robert St. N.
St. Paul, MN 55101-1805

Dear Chair Haigh:

The City of St. Louis Park continues to be a strong supporter of the SWLRT project. We look forward to the completion of the independent Freight Rail Relocation and Water Resources Study reports with the hope that the SWLRT project can then resume moving forward.

The City of St. Louis Park submits its comments on the *draft* studies with the hope that our comments will be viewed as constructive input that is useful in preparation of the final reports. Below is a summary of our comments and attached is a more detailed list of comments.

TranSystems' Draft Conclusions

The TranSystems' study confirmed rejection of all the previously identified potential TCW freight rail routes except co-location in Kenilworth. TranSystems rated Kenilworth as strongly supporting five of six criteria; and, supportive of the sixth. The report concluded that none of the previously considered reroutes were viable for TCW trains; only Kenilworth was deemed a viable route. ***We agree with and support this conclusion.***

TranSystems added one more reroute option of its own design for consideration. It is a modification of the route that TranSystems had rejected – the MN&S DEIS route. TranSystems concluded that the concept plan it created was a viable route for TCW. ***The City of St. Louis Park disagrees with this conclusion.*** TranSystems did not have the information it needed to fully and accurately evaluate the viability of its proposed plan. If it had more complete information, it would have concluded that only the Kenilworth alternative was a viable route for TCW freight traffic.

Summary of St. Louis Park's Comments and Concerns (detailed comments attached)

1. TCW has stated the TranSystems' route is unsafe.

- a.*** With three curves on undulating grades and 5,400 feet of new bridge structure TCW correctly concluded TranSystems' route is "neither efficient, safe nor cost effective when compared to TC&W's current route." The safety risks associated with TranSystems' proposed route that consists of three reverse curves and undulating grades on a long curving bridge are heightened by the context in which this difficult section of track would exist: next to an electrical substation,

unresolved questions that complicate the SWLRT, add costs, uncertainty and time to the schedule.

6. **Complete and comparable cost estimates.**

- a. While the initial TranSystems' cost estimates suggested the TranSystems' concept plan compared to the Kenilworth Shallow Tunnel option, Met Council has provided additional information that shows the TranSystems' reroute to be \$220-240 million, or double the original cost estimate of \$112 million. The revised estimates show that at best the TranSystems' plan and the Kenilworth Shallow Tunnel option cost about the same.
- b. With a number of still unaccounted for costs associated with the TranSystems' plan including costs associated with the major electrical substation, additional retaining walls from Blake Rd to Louisiana Avenue and the North Cedar Lake Trail bridge, it seems likely that the TranSystems' plan would actually cost more than the Kenilworth Shallow Tunnel option. The access and safety issues created by freight trains passing over an electrical substation are significant unresolved questions that complicate the project and add costs, uncertainty and time to the schedule.
- c. The TranSystems plan does not include the cost of mitigation measures St. Louis Park considers vital. To fairly compare the TranSystems plan with the Kenilworth Shallow Tunnel plan, substantial additional mitigation needs to be added to the TranSystems plan. In its 2012 DEIS comments, St. Louis Park indicated that should the MNS corridor be used for rerouting trains, the cost of mitigation was almost \$50 million. Freight rail and LRT can be co-located in Kenilworth at costs as low as \$35-55 million dollars. The option recommended by the CMC to the Met Council is the much more costly, Kenilworth Shallow Tunnel option which is rich in mitigation for the Kenilworth neighborhoods. Over \$110 million of the cost of the Kenilworth Shallow Tunnel can be attributed to the mitigation of community concerns, not freight rail or LRT requirements. If the TranSystems plan is to be fairly compared to the Kenilworth Shallow Tunnel option, much more significant mitigation measures need to be added to the TranSystems plan and the cost estimate. Mitigation actions would be needed to address impacts on SLP HS classrooms and freight rail elevated above adjacent residential properties among other things.

7. **A full understanding needed of impact of the TranSystems' reroute concept on the timing and implementation ability of the SWLRT project.**

- a. The TranSystems Study appropriately included as a critical criteria for the evaluation of potential TCW routes, "The proposed route must not present obstacles to implementation which would unduly delay the re-route or the light rail project." In light of the fact that we now know that TCW has rejected the TranSystems' reroute plan, it is clear the TranSystems plan would not meet this criteria. Pursuing approval of the TranSystems plan without the support of the

railroads could take years even if successful; and, that would be after the months of additional engineering work to turn the TranSystems concept into a more fully engineered plan. These delays are potentially deadly to the SWLRT project and make the TranSystems' reroute plan unviable.

- b. The SWLRT Project Office estimates that the cost of each year of delay is \$40-50 million.

8. **The Shallow Tunnel Kenilworth option recommended by Met Council staff and endorsed by the Corridor Management Committee by a nearly unanimous vote is viable.** With the Shallow Tunnel option, St. Louis Park would continue to have freight traffic just like it does today and experience light rail traffic at-grade through the community also. The Kenilworth corridor would continue to have freight traffic as it has today and LRT would be almost entirely hidden in tunnels through Minneapolis instead of travelling at-grade. This option gives an extra \$110-125 million to the city of Minneapolis in the way of mitigation – a shallow tunnel - that eliminates nearly all noise, vibration, traffic and visual impacts of LRT in Kenilworth. The Shallow Tunnel option would cost less than the TranSystems' reroute option, with many fewer community impacts.

Viable Freight Rail Options - Cost Comparison

Rail Options	Base Cost in millions \$
<u>TranSystems Re-location Route</u>	* \$220-240
<u>Kenilworth Co-location Options</u>	
Relocate trail	\$35-40
Co-locate all at grade	\$50-55
Elevate Trail	\$50-55
Elevate LRT	\$105-110
Shortened Shallow Tunnel	\$175-195
Shallow Tunnel	\$235-250
Deep Tunnel	\$320-330

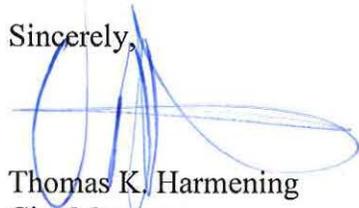
Source: SWLRT Project Office Presentations. Note – Common Freight Rail costs, \$85-90 million for Kenilworth and \$90-100 million for TranSystems Reroute included.

*Does not include cost for mitigation identified by St. Louis Park in its DEIS comments. These costs were estimated in 2012 as being almost \$50 million.

Chair Susan Haigh
March 12, 2014
Page 5

We ask that the new information now available to TranSystems be incorporated into the final report and that the conclusions of the study be revised to take this new information into account. Today, as a result of the interim studies on water resources, tree analysis, input from the railroads, the communities, Xcel Energy and the SWLRT Project Office, we know much more than we did four months ago. The facts are clear that the Kenilworth route is the safest, most efficient freight rail route, with the fewest community impacts. It is the most implementable and the only truly viable freight rail route. The TranSystems' final report should reflect these facts and the conclusion that only the Kenilworth route is viable.

Sincerely,



Thomas K. Harmening
City Manager

Enc.

City of St. Louis Park Comments on TranSystems' Reroute Plan

1. Rail operations/viability

- a) TCW has rejected the TranSystems' concept plan.** TCW's consultant states the TranSystems' plan is "neither efficient, safe nor cost effective when compared to the TC&W's current route." (Civil Design). It is inferior to the Kenilworth corridor because it is less efficient, will cost more to operate and maintain, will increase cost and potential delay to customers and will decrease safety.
- b) TranSystems' route requires over 5,400 feet of new bridge structures. Trains traveling on bridges mean a derailment could be even more disastrous.** With three curves and undulating grades, a train could be in the reversing curves and on bridges all at once, which creates a much greater possibility of a derailment. The TCW is handling longer trains with increasing frequency including unit trains of over 7,000 feet in length. Trains on elevated bridges and berms would travel close to schools, parks, residences, playgrounds, and businesses, in addition to the large Xcel electrical substation. The Kenilworth corridor does not present these kinds of issues.
- c) Requires elevated trains to travel across a portion of and above a major Xcel electrical substation, with uncertain safety consideration for both the trains and the electrical substation.** This potentially extremely dangerous situation is not one that is desirable for any community. There is not a comparable situation in the Kenilworth corridor that presents such a risk to the community at large.
- d) By operational measures, the TranSystems' Plan is not as efficient as the Kenilworth corridor.** TCW's fully loaded trains would have to travel uphill, through reverse curves versus its operations now which takes loaded trains traveling downhill through the Kenilworth corridor. Reverse curves put more pressure on longer trains causing "yawing," or pulling the same train in different directions. This strain increases the potential for derailment. It also adds extra operational costs for the railroad. TCW, just as any relocated business, should not be expected to accept an inferior replacement for the route it has today.

- 1. The TranSystems' plan does not eliminate the reverse curves or undulating tracks and bridge structures.** This configuration, with its "roller coaster" effect, is deleterious to operations and safety, and it contributed to rejecting the previous reroute options. These features are not present in the Kenilworth corridor.

2. ***The TranSystems' plan requires TCW to get permission from two other railroad's tracks (CP and BNSF).*** TCW would have to wait for permission to get on to both the MNS and BNSF tracks to continue on its route. This is operationally difficult, could delay the arrival of cargo to its destination, and would also mean trains would be idling in Hopkins and other areas, waiting for permission to proceed from CP and BNSF railroads.
 3. ***Tracks on bridge structures are difficult to maintain.*** Specialized equipment would be necessary to reach tracks on bridges. This would add cost and complexity to the maintenance of the bridges.
- e) ***The TranSystems' plan leaves unresolved the question of who would own and maintain the substantial new rail infrastructure it creates.*** The railroads have indicated an unwillingness to own and maintain any new infrastructure. On-going maintenance costs for this new infrastructure have not been quantified or added to the total project cost estimates, nor has a funding source been identified for them.

2. Significant Negative Community Impacts

The TranSystems' proposed reroute is not materially different from the DEIS re-route previously proposed and rejected by both St. Louis Park and TCW. It has significant negative impacts on the community:

- a) ***Safety is compromised.*** TCW states the TranSystems' route is not safe. It creates many conflicts and safety issues for the community with elevated trains on bridges and many more conflicts with people, homes, schools and businesses. There are increased derailment possibilities next to the Xcel substation, State Highway 7, a former Superfund site, commercial and industrial businesses, schools and homes. It is not as safe as the Kenilworth corridor routes.
- b) ***Requires taking at least 6 homes, 7 commercial/ industrial properties, 1 school and portions of at least 5 other properties. It requires 7 businesses and non-profits (including the emergency assistance program and food shelf STEP), with almost 100 employees, to be acquired and relocated.*** In addition to taking properties, the MNS passes through long standing St. Louis Park neighborhoods, right next to many homes, businesses and three schools. There are no takings and relocations of homes and businesses for the Kenilworth Shallow Tunnel route option. Only small partial property acquisitions and no relocations are needed for the Kenilworth Shallow Tunnel option.

- c) Requires raising the track elevation to 10 to 20 feet over single-family homes and yards. This new track introduces 4,500 feet of steep retaining walls.** The rail is already raised above homes in this area; raising the rail would add another story of height in back-yards and require retaining walls and berms, creating a wall behind people's homes. No such similar living environment would be created in the Kenilworth corridor.
- d) Additional Mitigation is needed.** In its DEIS comments, St. Louis Park indicated several additional items that would be needed for mitigation should the MNS corridor be used for rerouting TCW trains. The 2012 cost for these mitigation items was estimated at almost \$50 million. One important mitigation measure is to widen the corridor – now 66-feet wide - for safety purposes by acquiring approximately 41 additional homes. This would reduce the impact on existing homes and living environments, and reduce the need for difficult-to-maintain retaining walls and berms.
- e) Requires trains to pass as close as 75 feet from the St. Louis Park High School classrooms.** This disrupts learning and creates safety issues for everyone coming and going to and from the school each time a train passes. It is not desirable to increase freight train traffic by any school or major activity center; there is not a comparable situation on the Kenilworth corridor. TCW has rejected this plan because it is not safe.
- f) TC&W trains in St. Louis Park for 7,000 feet longer than today.** While Kenilworth would see trains eliminated from its neighborhood, trains would travel much further within St. Louis Park than they do now - 7,000 feet further - and very close to many homes and businesses.
- g) Proposes new pedestrian bridge near High School.** The plan does not show any feasibility of location of such a pedestrian bridge, how it would be configured or how it would be designed to actually be used. There is no obvious space available for locating such a bridge. If it is not convenient, it would not be used by pedestrians and would not be effective mitigation of the freight rail/pedestrian conflicts inherent in the TranSystems' design.
- h) Community impacts identified in table on page 8 are not comprehensive.** Not included are such implementation items as environmental impacts from the National Lead site; wetland issues; safety consideration of tracks high above neighbor's homes; road closures and circulation issues in the community; cost issues including property acquisition, park impacts and other mitigation items previously identified by the City, etc.
- i) Community Cohesiveness Impacts.** The combination of closed streets, raised track grades, increased train traffic and fencing of the rail r-o-w included with

the TranSystems' reroute would all contribute to creating a barrier to community cohesiveness and traffic mobility in St. Louis Park.

- j) *Impacts of Siding on the BNSF Wayzata Sub Ignored.*** It is understood that the TranSystems' reroute plan would require construction of a 10,000-foot long siding on the BNSF just as all the other MN&S reroute options include. There is no mention of impacts to the community from construction or use of this siding. At a bare minimum this siding would mean noise and vibration impacts of idling trains on affected adjacent homes, townhomes and condo complexes with hundreds of living units in an area where a siding does not exist today.

3. *Traffic circulation and safety is compromised.*

TranSystems proposes building new segments of road and rerouting traffic in the area between the schools (High School and Park Spanish Immersion) in a circuitous way. The proposed reroute complicates traffic movements and decreases pedestrian safety. Changes to the traffic network would also likely change driver behavior causing drivers to find new routes by cutting through neighborhoods or adding trips to Louisiana and Wooddale Avenues. A summary of concerns that would require additional analysis follows.

- a) *Eliminates key east-west connections.*** The plan disconnects both Walker Street and West Lake Street. These two streets serve as local collectors and are key connections for the homes, schools and businesses in this area. These streets carry 3,500 and 3,850 daily vehicle trips, respectively. The proposal is to reroute these relatively straight streets through a network of jogs and new intersections. Each new intersection increases the potential for vehicle/pedestrian and vehicle/vehicle conflict points. The level of service impacts to the overall transportation system would likely require road and intersection improvements in other areas of the system to handle the rerouted trips. It is unclear what type of intersection control is assumed as a part of the cost estimate. One of the consolidated crossings is at Library Lane (at grade); the other is a new frontage road (underpass). The new Library Lane crossing will mean there are two sets of railroad tracks to cross, adding to safety concerns and making meeting Whistle Quiet Zone standards more difficult. These negative impacts to traffic on Walker and W. Lake Streets impact customers of the businesses on these streets.
- b) *Library Lane at-grade railroad crossing.*** Traffic from the rerouted Walker Street would need to take a sharp turn to pass south over two rail tracks, and take a left onto Lake Street to continue east to Wooddale Avenue. Larger vehicles would be unable to make these turns, which could result in vehicles cutting through the residential neighborhood.

- c) Severing of Walker and Lake Streets creates pedestrian barriers.** These streets would be crossed by railroad tracks elevated some number of feet above the current grade of the street. It is assumed that the closing of these streets would close the sidewalks and pedestrian access in these areas as well. Pedestrians would need to walk a couple of blocks out of their way to find a way around the closed section of street/sidewalk.
- d) New north frontage road railroad underpass.** The second “new connection” would require vehicles to take a right turn and travel under the new TranSystems’ bridge and the existing MN&S bridge. The cross-section for the new TranSystems’ bridge shows only 13 feet of clearance for this new north frontage road. At least 16 feet of clearance would be required and would require additional costs not included in the estimate. The proposal includes a “jump span” on the existing MN&S bridge. It is not clear what the proposed width of this road is, if there is a sidewalk, or what the boulevard areas would be under this “jump span.” Additional information would need to be provided. The property to the east of the existing railroad bridge has a parking lot and driveway where the “potential bus accessway”/ north frontage road is proposed. Further investigation is needed to determine the property impacts to this business by this proposal.
- e) Increases the potential for cut through traffic in the High School parking lot.** As a result of the closure of key east-west street connections, the most direct route for Lake Street traffic (2,950 daily vehicles) is the High School’s parking lot. This parking lot is used by students and teachers and passes within 10 feet of the school building. The driveway at Dakota Avenue is crossed by many students as well; making this a de facto city street would cause safety and traffic congestion problems.
- f) TranSystems’ bridge over Highway 7 and the South Service Drive.** Over \$50 million from the Federal government, MnDOT, Met Council, and City funds have been spent on the reconstruction of the Highway 7 intersections at Louisiana and at Wooddale avenues. The MN&S bridge is the east construction limit for the Highway 7 and Louisiana project, currently under construction. The new Louisiana exit ramps begin about 250 feet west of the proposed TranSystems’ bridge. The TranSystems’ plan requires State Highway 7 to be lowered 3 to 4 feet. To make these grades work would require tearing up 1,000 to 1,500 feet of the new highway between these two interchanges. It is unclear from the TranSystems’ plan if this is possible without impacting the newly constructed exit ramps at Wooddale. The plan also calls for the lowering of the existing south service drive. Lowering the south frontage road would impact driveway access

to the businesses on the south side of the road. It is possible that this would require the reconfiguration of existing parking lots. It is unclear if this is included in the plan.

- g) Contaminated Soil.** The Reilly superfund site is located at Highway 7 and Louisiana Avenue. In addition, the National Lead site, located just south of the Xcel Substation is another former superfund site with known contaminated material. Lowering Highway 7 and completing utility relocations in this area will require contaminated soil removal. During the design of the Louisiana interchange project, extensive soil borings were done throughout the construction limits. These were used to determine the location of the contaminated soils and groundwater, so that an estimated cost for removals could be developed. Over the course of construction, additional contaminated soil and groundwater has been found, doubling the quantity of contaminated soil and groundwater requiring remediation. The initial cost for 70,000 yards of contaminated soil removal was \$1.75 million; additional remediation costs have added \$2 million to the construction project. Extensive soil review will be needed to adequately estimate the potential contaminated material costs for the TranSystems' proposal.
- h) Traffic Delays.** Today the MN&S rail alignment averages 2 trains per day. These trains are usually 8 to 12 cars long (about 480 to 720 feet). The TranSystems' proposal would add 4 to 6 trains a day to this alignment. It is our understanding that the additional freight trains could be as long as 7,000 feet (1.3 miles). TC&W is concerned about the alignment and grades of the new tracks and these concerns may cause the Engineers to operate trains at slower speeds. A train of this length, travelling at 10 MPH, could block all at grade railroad crossings near the high school for almost 10 minutes. If this were to occur during critical times of the day, it would disrupt buses, parents, students and emergency vehicles trying to get to the schools within the corridor.
- i) Public utility relocations.** There are fiber optics, water, sanitary sewer and storm sewer located within the corridor of the freight rail realignment. It is unclear if the cost to relocate this infrastructure is incorporated into the cost estimates for the project.

4. Cost

The TranSystems' report fails to include an effective or accurate cost comparison between its suggested route and the previously identified routes.

- a. ***The TranSystems' cost estimate does not include property acquisition, right-of-way, relocation costs, permitting, any special costs associated with construction on the former National Lead site, wetland mitigation, the North Cedar Lake Trail bridge and other items.*** Not including these costs gave the impression to the public that the TranSystems' reroute was a far cheaper alternative than the Kenilworth options. With the Metropolitan Council's revised cost estimate, the TranSystems' route is more appropriately compared but is still missing items that could be costly. The TranSystems' route – even with a revised Met Council estimate - is clearly not the least expensive option (see table below).
- b. ***The TranSystems' cost estimate does not include mitigation needs identified in the past by St. Louis Park for mitigation should the MNS corridor be used for rerouting TCW trains.*** In its DEIS comments, St. Louis Park indicated several additional items that would be needed. The 2012 cost for these mitigation items was estimated at nearly \$50 million. These mitigation items include creating a 100-foot wide corridor in the single-family area of the rail line. Additional mitigation actions would be needed to address impacts on SLP HS classrooms and freight rail elevated above adjacent residential properties among other things. To fairly compare the TranSystems' plan with the Kenilworth Shallow Tunnel plan, substantial additional mitigation needs to be added to the TranSystems' plan.
- c. ***Comparison of options.*** Freight rail and LRT can be co-located in Kenilworth at costs as low as \$35-55 million dollars. The option recommended by the CMC to the Met Council is the much more costly, Kenilworth Shallow Tunnel option, which is rich in mitigation for the Kenilworth neighborhoods. \$110-125 million of the cost of the Kenilworth Shallow Tunnel can be attributed to the mitigation of community concerns, not freight rail or LRT requirements. If the TranSystems' plan is to be fairly compared to the Kenilworth Shallow Tunnel option, much more significant mitigation measures need to be added to the TranSystems' reroute plan and the cost estimate.
- d. ***The costs and impacts of "clipping" a corner of Xcel Energy substation are not included.*** A full response or cost estimate from Excel has not been received but building a freight rail bridge over even a small piece of the Hwy. 7 substation is a substantial and costly undertaking. Overhead feeder lines are present along the TranSystems' alignment, and what may look like a vacant piece of the substation site may well contain important below grade infrastructure. In addition to acquisition costs, mitigation and safety measures would be necessary to have rail run so close to an electric substation. The access and safety issues created by

freight trains passing over a substation are significant unresolved questions that complicate the SWLRT, add costs, uncertainty and time to the schedule.

- e. ***Precisely how the estimates were prepared and what was included in calculating the costs has not been provided.*** Costs were approximated in the report from TranSystems’ and sources were not from primary sources, but estimated from secondary sources such as Zillo and Google maps. This is not considered adequate for a professional cost estimate.
- f. ***The TranSystems’ cost estimate used different percentage markups for engineering and contingencies than the Met Council estimates, making it difficult to compare costs.***
- g. ***Substantial changes were made to original estimate.*** Met Council has provided additional information that shows the TranSystems’ reroute to be \$220-240 million, or double the original cost estimate of \$112 million.

Viable Freight Rail Options - Cost Comparison

<i>Rail Options</i>	<i>Base Cost in millions \$</i>
<i><u>TranSystems Re-location Route</u></i>	<i>* \$220-240</i>
<i><u>Kenilworth Co-location Options</u></i>	
<i>Relocate trail</i>	<i>\$35-40</i>
<i>Co-locate all at grade</i>	<i>\$50-55</i>
<i>Elevate Trail</i>	<i>\$50-55</i>
<i>Elevate LRT</i>	<i>\$105-110</i>
<i>Shortened Shallow Tunnel</i>	<i>\$175-195</i>
<i>Shallow Tunnel</i>	<i>\$235-250</i>
<i>Deep Tunnel</i>	<i>\$320-330</i>

Source: SWLRT Project Office Presentations. Note – Common Freight Rail costs, \$85-90 million for Kenilworth and \$90-100 million for TranSystems Reroute included.

**Does not include cost for mitigation identified by City of St. Louis Park in its DEIS comments. These costs were estimated in 2012 to be almost \$50 million.*

5. Other viable options/alternatives exist and must be considered.

- a) *TranSystems' Plan is more costly than Kenilworth alternatives.***
- b) *TCW and the other railroads agree Kenilworth is a viable freight rail route.***
- c) *TranSystems has acknowledged that freight rail in the Kenilworth Corridor is viable and may be the best option.***
- d) *Six viable combined LRT and freight rail options in the Kenilworth corridor are less costly than the TranSystems' route and should be considered. In fairness to the taxpayers of the region, these co-location solutions should be reconsidered if lower cost is a motivating goal.*** The table above shows the cost comparison of all of the viable alternatives.
- e) *The regional trail was permitted as a temporary use.*** The Trail Permit Agreement between the Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority and the City of Minneapolis in 1998 for the Kenilworth Trail states that the corridor was acquired, "specifically and solely for the purpose of constructing a light rail transit system...and it is Permitter's intention to allow Permittee to use the Premises only until, in Permitter's sole discretion, it is needed for that purpose." Clearly the regional trail could be relocated to accommodate LRT.
- f) *The Kenilworth corridor is not considered "temporary" by MnDOT.*** MnDOT has stated that, "the word 'temporary' does not appear in any Mn/DOT document concerning Hiawatha or the Kenilworth freight improvement project" (document available upon request). Freight rail is not considered temporary, and can remain in the Kenilworth corridor.
- g) *The Shallow Tunnel Kenilworth option recommended by Met Council staff and endorsed by the Corridor Management Committee by a nearly unanimous vote is viable.*** With the Shallow Tunnel option, St. Louis Park would continue to have freight traffic just like it does today and experience light rail traffic at-grade through the community also. The Kenilworth corridor would continue to have freight traffic as it has today and LRT would be almost entirely hidden in tunnels through Minneapolis instead of travelling at-grade. This option gives an extra \$110-125 million to the city of Minneapolis in the way of mitigation – a shallow tunnel - that eliminates nearly all noise, vibration, traffic and visual impacts of LRT in Kenilworth. The Shallow Tunnel option would cost less than the TranSystems' reroute option, with many fewer community impacts.

6. Impact of pursuing the TranSystems' reroute concept on the timing and implement ability of the SWLRT project.

a) *The TranSystems' route would present major delays in implementing SW LRT.*

The TranSystems' study appropriately included the statement that the "proposed route must not present obstacles to implementation which would unduly delay the re-route or the light rail project" as a critical criteria for the evaluation of potential TCW routes. In light of the fact that we now know that TCW has rejected the TranSystems' reroute plan, it is clear the TranSystems plan would not meet this criteria. Pursuing approval of the TranSystems' plan without the support of the railroads could take years even if successful; and, that would be after the months of additional engineering work to turn the TranSystems' concept into a more fully engineered plan. These delays are potentially lethal to the SWLRT project and make the TranSystems' reroute plan unviable.

b) *The SWLRT Project Office estimates that the cost of each year of delay is \$40-50 million.*

7. Errors, omissions and unexplained assumptions

a) *Report title, author and date needed.*

b) *The EAW study conducted by Hennepin County in 2011 is not noted.*

c) *Page 3 states there is a "preference to segregate freight traffic from transit." This is not an agreed upon governing principle of the project and should not be a factor in this evaluation. Under all options freight rail and transit will share the same corridor in Hopkins and St. Louis Park.*

d) *Page 5 neglects to mention that this study resulted in SLP opposition to more freight rail traffic on MNS.*

e) *Page 6 #4 Tech Memo 4 should note that this analysis did conclude that co-location in the Kenilworth Corridor is feasible.*

f) *Page 7 – How was screening criteria developed? Who developed?*

g) *Page 7 Section F - A reference to higher TC&W operational costs is noted but this information is not quantified. No entity has been identified that would reimburse such costs to TCW for on an on-going basis.*

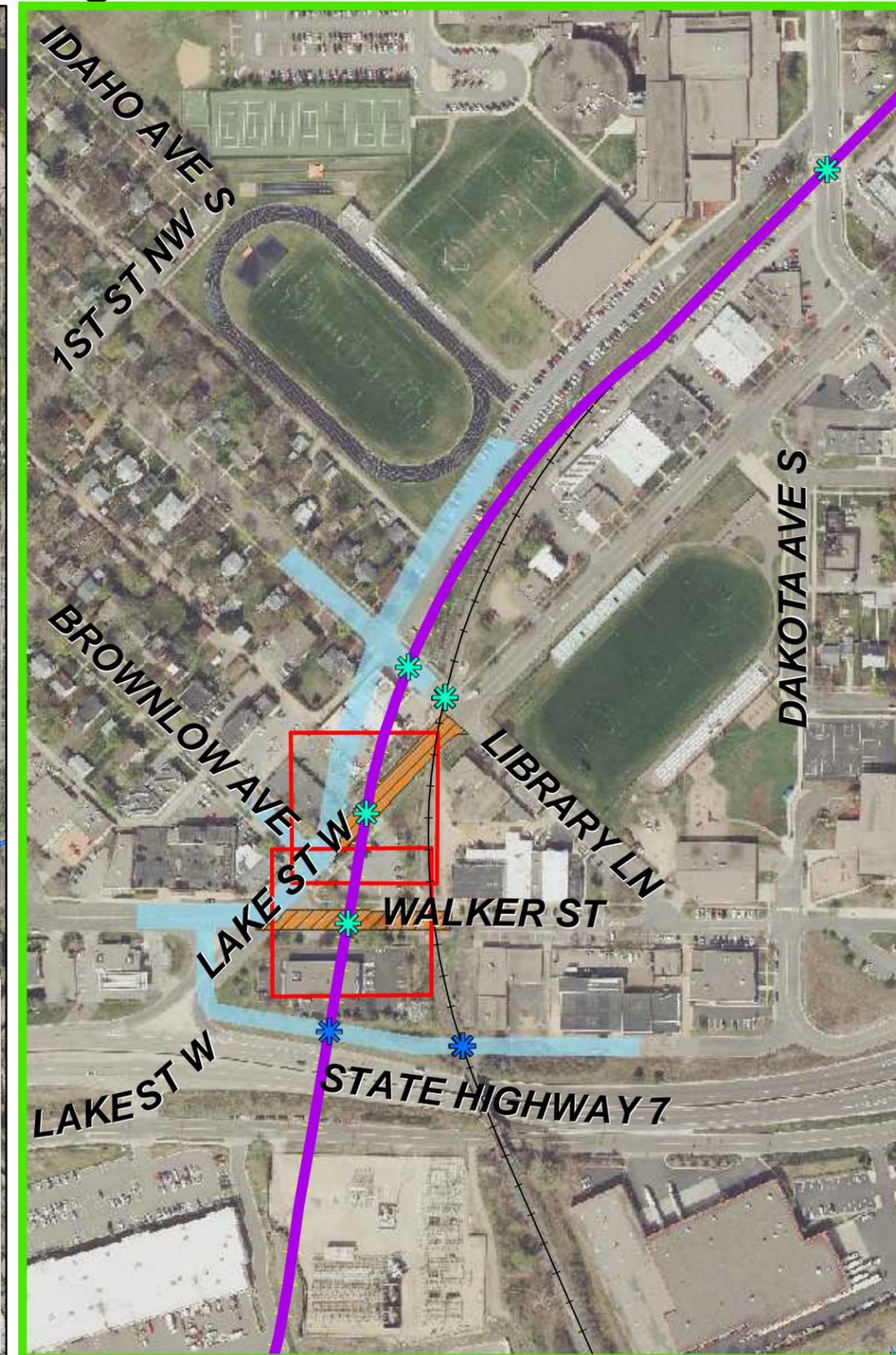
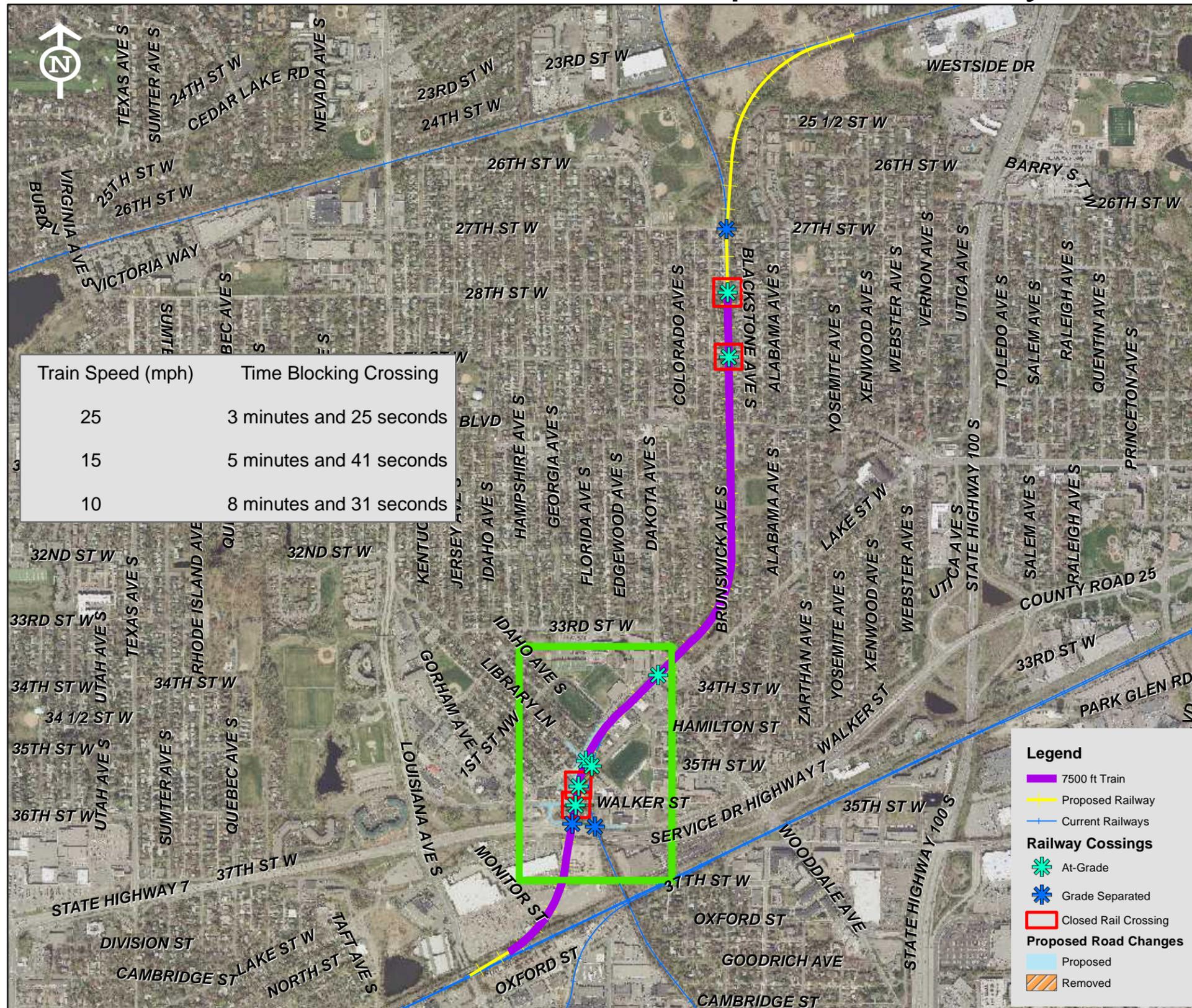
h) *Table on page 8 does not include several metrics or measurements, including environmental clean-up costs, wetland mitigation, acquisition, community cohesiveness, impacts on residential property of rail being raised higher,*

property takings, impacts to businesses, and impacts to circulation for residential neighbors, schools and businesses.

- i) Screening table on page 14 is not well explained. Shows supporting goals but does not appear to state what the goals are, making it difficult to review evaluation.*
- j) Page 15 states that the Kenilworth route “demands that TC&W operate over BNSF’s busy Wayzata Subdivision and by “Target Field” – this is the same in the TranSystems’ reroute as well.*
- k) Table on page 16 is difficult to understand. Costs are shown as NCN without explanation of the acronym.*
- l) Page 17 notes “The Kenwood community is very proud of the neighborhood” and this should be equally noted for St. Louis Park neighborhoods, or removed from the report.*
- m) Costs for Kenilworth options are shown to be \$20 million to over \$300 million with no documentation as to where these numbers came from.*
- n) Page 20 states “a retaining wall is needed to allow for the track raise....” Unclear what this means and it does not state how much the track would rise next to the single family homes in St. Louis Park. This is very relevant to understanding the impacts on St. Louis Park homeowners.*
- o) Page 20 stated the both CP and TC&W “concur that the geometry of the concept is acceptable.” The railroads have publicly noted they did not “concur.”*
- p) Page 21 states that a corner of the Xcel Energy electric substation site would be “clipped,” however it does not note how much of the site and what the impacts to Xcel would be. The alignment may also impact the new development west of substation (Highway 7 Corporate Center).*
- q) Page 21 states that “the hospital is planning an expansion;” this is in error and is not the case at this time.*
- r) Page 21 states that the DEIS “concluded that the Kenilworth route impairs ‘community cohesion’ for Kenwood.” There was not any substantiation for that conclusion, and not the equal conclusion for the impairment to St. Louis Park’s community cohesion with a reroute.*
- s) Page 21 states “the MNS would built as a passenger route” – is the statement supposed to say it “was” built that way?*
- t) Page 21 acknowledges that 66 feet of railroad right-of-way may be inadequate; the report does not address the inadequacy of the 66-foot wide right-of-way of the MNS alignment, nor suggest what width would be appropriate.*

- u) Page 21 states that "additional property would have to be attained." Is "acquired" what is meant?*
- v) Page 21, the text refers to 12,000 feet of replacement storage tracks for the TC&W but the estimate states 18,000 feet is needed.*
- w) Page 22 notes that fencing should be included along the r-o-w; this would be impractical near the High School.*
- x) Page 24 notes enhanced warning devices would be necessary however they are not included in the cost totals for a reroute.*
- y) Page 26 shows a number for homes within 150 feet of rail tracks. It is noted that Zillo.com and Google Earth were the sources for this information, and counts and distances were "estimated." These sources are not acceptable to use to obtain an accurate comparison. This information has been precisely counted and collected by the City of St. Louis Park and the SPO and the report needs to revise these numbers to be accurate. The numbers also need to account for and include the townhomes, condos and single-family homes along the BNSF that would be impacted by the new siding and increased train traffic.*
- z) The reported number of property takings is inaccurate. St. Louis Park understands through SPO that 15 full and five partial property takings would have to occur. This information needs to be accurately noted in the report.*
- aa) Page 25 and page 26 - Traffic and crossing impacts were inaccurately counted because the traffic that would have to be rerouted through other streets in St. Louis Park was not included. This information needs to be accurately assessed and reported.*
- bb) The plan does not show the impacts to the North Cedar Lake Trail. Previous studies show a grade separation of the trail in the Iron Triangle area. The cost for this trail bridge is not included.*
- cc) The cost estimate allows for \$3.5 million for a train control system. There are no details on how this cost was computed. TranSystems assumed that the system would be control by CP's dispatch center but there is no discussion if that center has capacity, or if CP is willing to operate and maintain the system. There would be a need for a minimum of 4 turnout control points and 3 advance approach signals. Depending on the design, each control point costs upwards of \$1 million to install.*

Train Crossing Wait Times with a 7500' Train on the Proposed TranSystems Alignment



St. Louis Park Comments on Kenilworth Tree Inventory Report

From Jim Vaughn, Environmental Coordinator

- I wonder how many of the elm are Siberian elm? My guess is the majority are Siberian elm (which is considered an invasive species in MN).
- A significant tree \geq 12 inches, but doesn't talk about condition rating (disease presence, quality of tree, cankers present, storm damage, dying (% crown present/alive) leaning (like all box elders do), et al.), where many trees, if condition rated, would be eliminated as desirable/significant.
- I would guess most of the larger diameter trees are cottonwood and most of the 12-24 inch DBH trees are closer to the 12 inch end than the 24 inch end.
- Tree & Vegetation area is most likely typical urban wooded area composed of garlic mustard, buckthorn, boxelder, Siberian elm and cottonwood; after all, this is an old railroad corridor without much new landscaping planted, except a few trees and some native grasses/forbs some time ago.
- The total number of cottonwoods seems high (particularly for this type of area/geography) compared to the other species identified.

St. Louis Park Comments on Burns and McDonnell

From Phillip Elkin, P.E., Sr. Engineering Project Manager

Overall, the findings of the draft report support previous studies concluding that the construction of shallow light-rail tunnels would have minimal impact on water resources. Previously, concerns were raised on the impact this project would have on the chain of lakes water levels, groundwater table impacts, and post construction stormwater management.

The report findings confirmed previous opinions and studies in that:

- Advanced construction practices to be employed will pose "little impact" on groundwater levels
- Dewatering required in post construction conditions will be a small fraction of overall chain of lakes water budget and not impact lake levels. In addition, previous reports may have overstated the volume of water to be discharged due to underestimating waterproofing measures.
- Proposed sheet pilings are unlikely to "block" groundwater flow due to the surrounding soil conditions.
- It is feasible to incorporate best management practices (BMPs) that will address long term stormwater runoff treatment and flood management.

While the report found that the construction and design concepts were sound, it did recommend that additional information be gathered on the groundwater behavior by adding testing points and continued monitoring. Additional studies will also be needed to determine the performance of tunnel waterproofing and post construction dewatering needs and routes.

The report also recommended the completion of a Phase II environmental investigation, to determine if contaminated soils and/or groundwater exist in the proposed construction area.

Understanding that the design and construction plans are in concept stages; at this time there do not appear to be any significant roadblocks which would make this project unfeasible from a water resources and environmental standpoint.



Southern Minnesota Beet Sugar Cooperative

P. O. Box 500, 83550 County Road 21, Renville, Minnesota 56284

March 11, 2014

The Honorable Governor Mark Dayton
130 State Capitol
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. BLVD
St. Paul, MN 55155

Ms. Susan Haigh, Chair
Metropolitan Council
390 Robert St. North
St. Paul, MN 55101-1805

SOUTHWEST LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT

Dear Governor Dayton and Chairperson Haigh:

My name is Kelvin Thompsen, President and CEO of Southern Minnesota Beet Sugar Cooperative ("SMBSC"). SMBSC is a beet sugar producer that is owned and operated by 500+ farm families since 1975. The current factory site was chosen back in 1975 due to its location on what was then the Milwaukee Road, which is now Twin Cities & Western Railroad Company ("TCW"), due to the economic benefits of shipping by rail. SMBSC employs approximately 300 full-time benefit rated employees and an additional 400 seasonal employees during harvest. SMBSC is an important part of the Renville County tax base by paying \$1 million annually in property taxes. SMBSC contributes \$21 million to the local economy in payroll and on average \$150 million is returned to shareholders who reside within the 17 county area. Total economic impact is approximately \$900 million considering each agricultural dollar rolls over 5-6 times.

On behalf of SMBSC's 500+ grower owners and their families, 700+ employees and their families and our sugar/co-product customers, I am writing to inform you that SMBSC is deeply concerned about the route of the Southwest LRT and specifically the reroute of the TCW. SMBSC utilizes TCW's service to transport inbound raw materials necessary for the processing of sugar beets and to ship our finished products: sugar, beet pulp pellets, raffinates and molasses to our domestic and international customers. The value of the products SMBSC ships and receives on the TCW exceeds \$170 million annually. It is critical to SMBSC that TCW has a safe, efficient and economically viable route into the Twin Cities. Economically competitive rail freight transportation is vital to SMBSC's long-term sustainability.

In 1999/2000, SMBSC's 500+ farm families invested in excess of \$100 million into their facility at Renville based on the long-term availability of TCW's competitive rail freight service. Any changes in TCW's

route that increases costs and reduces the railroad's ability to deliver goods safely and on time will jeopardize the economic sustainability of SMBSC.

SMBSC greatly depends on the TCW to access our domestic and foreign customers. SMBSC's rail customers are not accessible in an economical manner by truck. SMBSC greatly depends on the TCW to have a safe, economic and viable route into the Twin Cities to connect with all rail carriers which include: BNSF Railway, Canadian Pacific Railway, Canadian National Railway and Union Pacific Railroad. SMBSC strongly opposes any reroute of the TCW that does not allow for the safe, economic and sustainable transportation of our grower owners sugar, co-products and inbound raw materials.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please feel free to contact me for any additional information. My email address is kelvin_thompson@smbc.com. Also, my office phone number is 320 – 329 – 4125.

Sincerely,

Southern Minnesota Beet Sugar Cooperative



Kelvin Thompson
President and CEO

Comments Received via Postal Mail

February 1, 2014

Governor Mark Dayton
130 State Capitol
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.
Blvd
St. Paul, MN 55155

Senator Amy Klobachar
1200 Washington Ave. S
Room 250
Minneapolis, MN 55415

Senator Al Franken
60 East Plato Blvd.
Suite 220
St. Paul, MN 55107

Mayor Betsy Hodges
City Hall
350 S. 5th St., Room 331
Minneapolis, MN 55415

Mayor Jeff Jacobs
City Hall
5055 Minnetonka Blvd.
St. Louis Park, MN 55416

Commissioner Gail Dorfman
Hennepin County Government
Center
300 South 6th Street
Minneapolis, MN 55415

Superintendent Jayne Miller
Minneapolis Park and Recreation
Board
2117 West River Road
Minneapolis, MN 55411

Chairman Tom Downs
Metro Transit
560 Sixth Avenue North
Minneapolis, MN 55411

Chairman Susan Haigh
Metropolitan Council
390 Robert St. North
St. Paul, MN 55101

Greetings from a Concerned citizen,

The problem of routing the Southwest LRT line through the Kenilworth corridor has simmered for months with no resolution in sight. Neither expensive tunnels nor expensive rerouting of freight trains through St. Louis Park seems to be acceptable.

Here is an alternative, as illustrated by the attached page. Put the LRT tracks next to the freight tracks in the Kenilworth corridor and use light-weight, relatively inexpensive bridging over the LRT tracks to support the LRT power lines and an overhead bike/pedestrian path.

This overhead bike path could be very simple, but it could also be more elaborately landscaped as Minneapolis' answer to New York's High Line Park. In either case, bicyclists and pedestrians would find it thrilling to be at tree-top level with LRT trains speeding below them.

A further alternative is to put the LRT tracks on bridging above the bike path, similar to Chicago's Elevated line. However, the bridging would have to be much stronger and much more expensive.

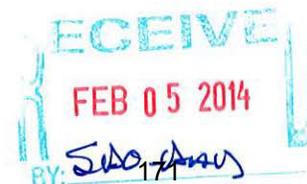
Feel free to use these ideas and the accompanying illustration. I am at your service.

Sincerely,

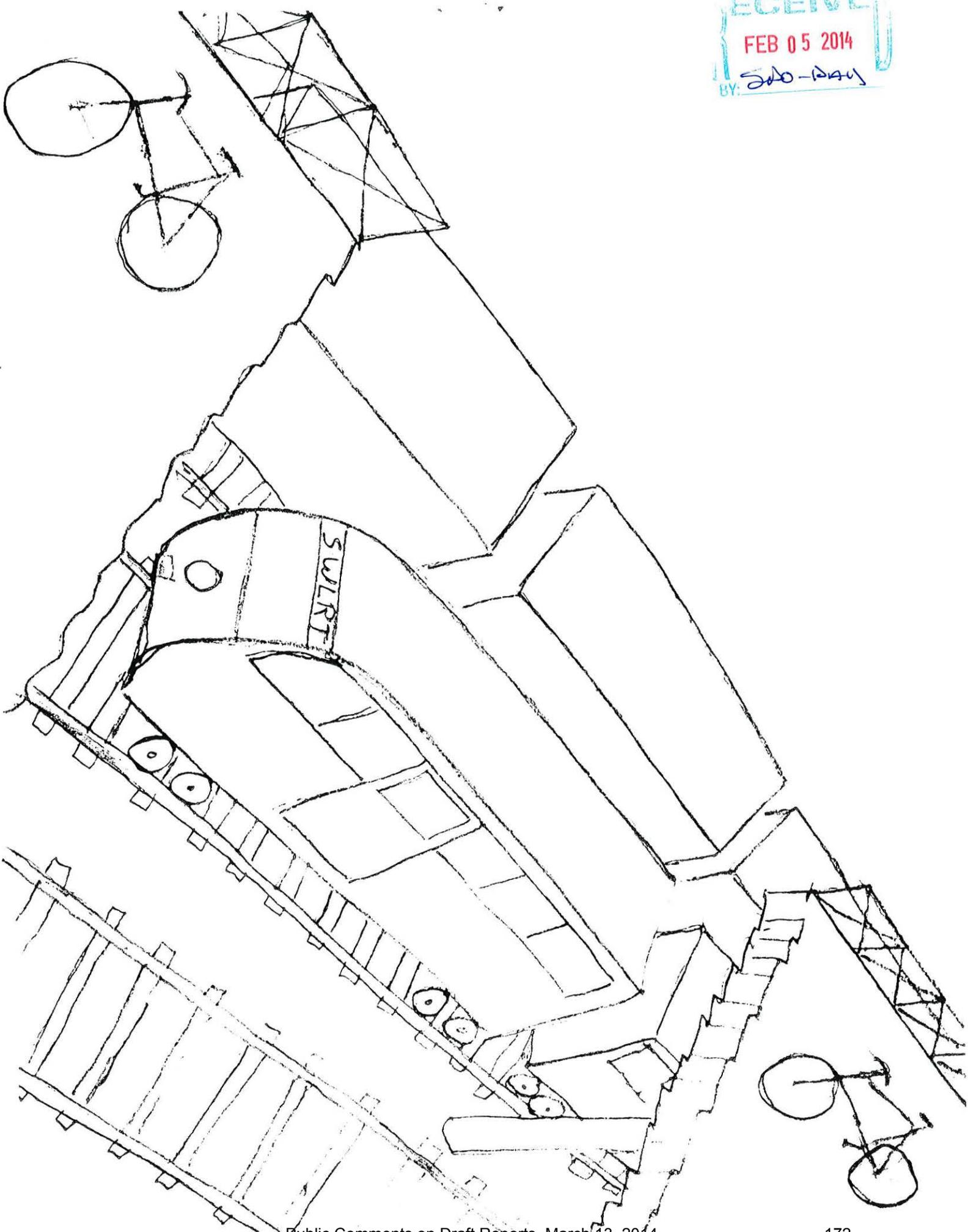
Richard A. Demers
Richard A. Demers



cc: Scott Gillespie
Editor
Star Tribune
425 Portland Av. S.
Minneapolis, MN 55488



RECEIVED
FEB 05 2014
BY: SJO-PAY





St Louis Park Public Schools

Achieving success, one student at a time.

District Offices

6425 West 33rd Street

St. Louis Park, Minnesota 55426-3498

952-928-6000 phone

952-928-6020 fax

www.slpschools.org

February 12, 2014

Susan Haigh, Chair
Metropolitan Council
390 Robert Street North
Saint Paul, MN 55101

Metropolitan Council

FEB 18 2014

Received Chair's Office

Dear Chair Haigh and Metropolitan Council Members:

The St. Louis Park School Board is opposed to the TranSystem option to relocate freight rail traffic in St. Louis Park, traveling only 35 feet from our high school parking lot and within 85 feet of classrooms. The proposal substantially and unacceptably increases the safety risks to our students and families, and creates negative educational impacts. Moreover, the report proposing relocation is riddled with factual errors, and fails to consider any of the concerns we raised in our previous letters of October 31, 2008, June 13, 2011, and July 11, 2013.

Apparently the authors of the report never visited the affected St. Louis Park schools. For example, the chart on page 27 refers to Central Junior High which closed in 1980, but 500 elementary (Park Spanish Immersion, 'PSI') and another 500 preschool students are housed in the Central building today. The chart also refers to St. Louis Park Independent Study, a reference which is unclear to the district today, but may refer to short-lived alternative programs at the high school.

Most importantly, the measurements are inaccurate as well. The St. Louis Park High School is listed at 115' from the MN&S tracks when in reality the high school parking lot is approximately 35' from the centerline of the tracks. The southeast corner of the building is 75' from the centerline to the tracks, and there is classroom space within 80-85' of the tracks.

Significantly, the TC&W does not approve this reroute proposal. Mark Wegner, President of the TC&W said a preliminary look at the latest plan shows it shares some of the elements of the rejected options, citing curves and changes in elevation that pose safety hazards. President Wegner said the plan still poses a risk of derailment for modern trains with 110 cars that stretch and bunch up in and out of curves and up and down elevations. (Star Tribune, February 6, 2014)

Given these errors, we are particularly troubled by the very short time frame allowed to consider this very conceptual report, and the Metropolitan Council's plan to choose an option without fully studying the safety, educational, environmental, and traffic impacts of this new proposal. Nor do we know the cost of this route. We will summarize the concerns we have based on the limited information available, including those related to possible mitigation, in this letter.

Increased Safety Risks for Students

Our primary concern is always the safety of the 1450 students in our high school, the over 500 students in each of the elementary schools located very near to the reroute, Peter Hobart and Park Spanish Immersion (PSI), and the hundreds of preschool students also located in the Central Community Center.

The proposed upgrade of the MN&S track to 25 mph, coupled with the restricted view a train engineer has around the curves as the train approaches the Dakota Avenue and Library Lane crossings, will limit the time and distance the engineer has to stop the train in the event of an emergency. This creates a significant safety risk because not only do students have to cross the tracks on Dakota Avenue to reach the athletic field, there is a McDonald's restaurant directly across the tracks which is frequented by many students and staff.

Drawings of the proposed closing of Lake Street indicate that the reroute would convert the southeastern high school parking lot into a public road. If so, this road would pass within a few feet of the high school running track and the actual high school building. This is a stunning suggestion. This new street would end at Dakota Avenue just at the point where the track also intersects with Dakota, as described in the previous paragraph.

In addition the reroute proposes closing some or all of Walker Street, Lake Street and Library Lane, critical streets in our current transportation system that requires a tightly timed bus route linking PSI and the high school. The road closings and tenfold increase in trains (both in length and frequency), as well as the construction process, pose significant operational concerns to the St. Louis Park School District. The School District has staggered school start times so the same buses can run several routes; thereby reducing transportation expense and freeing up money for classroom teachers. The blockage of key intersections with traffic delays will upset the timely running of the bus routes, in turn disrupting school start times and raising safety concerns for children left waiting on street corners for delayed buses. This is an added safety concern, especially during our Minnesota winters.

Any adjustments in the bus transportation design and schedule due to traffic delays will increase district transportation expenses and pull dollars away from the classroom. Restricting railroad operations for 30 to 60 minute windows twice a day is one option that could help. We expect that compensation for any related increase in transportation costs would be part of the mitigation.

Educational Harm

The initial studies found a net gain in noise based on a conservative estimate of the combined traffic of the current and future operations. However these are measures of the average noise over a 24-hour period, which is not what brings the learning process in a classroom to a complete halt. It is the intermittent noise of a train that currently causes instruction in the high school classrooms near the tracks to halt, an experience that would be extended in its frequency and length.

In addition, we already experience problems with ceiling mounted projection equipment in the southern part of the high school due to vibrations from passing trains. This, too, would increase, causing additional educational interruptions and expense to the district.

While a quiet zone near the high school has been mentioned, it would involve barriers that would make it impossible to turn left from Dakota into one of our two parking lots. This lot is next to the entrance to our athletic facilities and is used by many school buses as well as cars each day.

Our letter of June 13, 2011, discussed possible mitigation steps including building new classrooms on the north side of the building, replacing windows and adding air conditioning, as well as using cement ties for the track. Yet we do not know if those will be sufficient for now or the future, because there have not been any long-term estimates of changing rail traffic. The report notes that the rail industry is growing, tracks are becoming sparse (increasing use of existing tracks), and the trend is toward heavier loads, longer trains (the report notes 125 car trains), and heavier locomotives. At a minimum the noise, vibration and safety impacts of this new design ought to be studied before a decision is made about this proposal.

Community Harm

The rerouting of the track southwest of the high school harms our community by potentially isolating the athletic field and eliminating the already tight parking. While we often refer to it as the football field, it is our stadium field. It is the site of physical education classes for elementary students at PSI in Central, decades of high school graduation ceremonies, and practices and games for our soccer, lacrosse, football and other teams. We recently installed artificial turf as a cost of \$1 million to increase school and community athletic and recreational use of this asset. The noise from the increased freight traffic and reduced access risks making this community asset unusable except for the most basic recreational uses.

The reroute still requires berms, which increase the risk to students and community members passing to and from our stadium field, PSI and Central Community Center and the high school. Noise will travel further, and any derailment risks trains rolling further from the track. While we

trust safety will be a priority in design, derailments are a fact of life and no one can guarantee they will not occur.

Our district relies heavily on the generosity of our community members, both residents and businesses, who have supported school levy referendums for many years. This proposal eliminates homes and businesses, thereby reducing the tax base, which could have a long-term impact on district finances, affecting our ability to serve our students. In particular we are concerned about the proposed loss of the building housing STEP, the St. Louis Park food and clothing service for low income families, many of whom are students in St. Louis Park schools.

Setting Priorities

None of this happens in the Kenilworth corridor. Should the St. Louis Park option be adopted, the message sent by the Metropolitan Council to the youth of our community will be that freight trains are more important than our children. That's not what we believe in St. Louis Park, where we receive national recognition annually for our "Children First" philosophy and practice. We expect similar consideration from the Metropolitan Council.

For all of the reasons given, including safety, educational, noise, vibration, environmental, and operational impacts and the increase to our costs that takes funds out of the classroom, we the members of the St. Louis Park School Board, on behalf of the children of St. Louis Park schools and our entire community, urge the Metropolitan Council to colocate freight rail and reject the St. Louis Park re-route option.

Sincerely,



Nancy Gores, Chair

Ken Morrison, Treasurer

Bruce Richardson, Director

Julie Sweitzer, Vice-Chair

Joe Tatalovich, Clerk

Karen Waters, Director

Jim Yarosh, Director

cc: Superintendent Rob Metz
Governor Mark Dayton
State Representative Steve Simon
State Representative Ryan Winkler
St. Louis Park City Council Members
U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar
St. Louis Park Schools Staff
Twin West Chamber of Commerce
Parents of St. Louis Park Students
Katie Hatt
Ben Schweigert
Editor, The Patch

Mayor Jeff Jacobs, St. Louis Park
City Manager, St. Louis Park Tom Harmening
Gail Dorfman, Hennepin County
State Senator Ron Latz
U.S. Representative Keith Ellison
U.S. Senator Al Franken
St. Louis Park Public Schools Foundation
Anne Mavity
Ken Kalesh
Marion Greene
Editor, Sun Sailor



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Minneapolis, MN 55428

Metropolitan Council

www.bellcomb.com

FEB 18 2014

763.537.0200

Received Chair's Office

February 12, 2014

Susan Haigh
Chair
Metropolitan Council
390 Robert St. N
St. Paul, MN 55101

James Brimeyer
Metropolitan Council
390 Robert St. N
St. Paul, MN 55101

Dear Chair Haigh and Councilmember Brimeyer,

I am writing concerning the Southwest light rail project and debate over the location of the rail, light rail and bike trail.

A bit of background on me since I do not believe we have met. I live in the Lowry Hill area of Minneapolis at 1767 Fremont Avenue South. I am an avid biker in the summer that uses the Cedar Lake and Kenilworth trail often. I have several friends who live close to the lakes and are part of the organizing effort to either dig a big tunnel or have the light rail line go somewhere else. I am the founder of Bellcomb which is a company that designs and produces lightweight structural panels for industrial uses with plants in New Hope and Golden Valley and can produce close to 50M square feet of panel annually. I am also on a number of nonprofit (and for profit) boards and commissions including being chair of the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council which oversees the habitat portion of the Legacy Amendment. And I have watched this Southwest light rail debate rage on with battle lines drawn for too long.

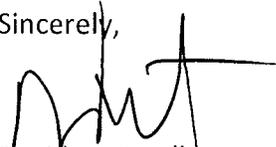
My own belief is that the Twin Cities waited too long to get serious about transit issues. I travel close to 200,000 miles a year around the world and US and therefore visit a diverse quantity of cities on a continual basis. Vibrant cities on all continents are those where transit is an integral part of the community. I am delighted that we are finally making this investment in our infrastructure generally and happy to pay for it.

Obviously, the Southwest light rail project is one you probably wish was just behind you. The community NIMBY reaction to this is both predictable and distressing at the same time. The involvement of the public does bring up questions that are overlooked but also brings out the worst in people who simply do not want change of any kind. I would almost bet that many of the people who are simply against this project around Cedar Lake were not happy when the bike trail went in originally thinking it would affect their privacy and subject their neighborhoods to more crime and undesirable people gaining access.

From a big picture view, what I see is a project that brings great benefit to the community we live in and has a choke point that is being used to try and delay and derail the project. The issue of not enough space for rail, light rail and biking has led to you having to explore very costly alternatives (short and long tunnel). As a bike rider, I enjoy the trail where it is but also know if an alternative were developed we would all adjust. The two options I have thought about (and I am sure there are others) include rebuilding Burnham Road into a shared bike and auto road (maybe even widening it a bit onto private property) until it goes over the tracks and then reconnect it to the existing trail or upgrading and improving the existing trail as it goes around the west side of Cedar Lake.

My real issue is the cost of the options you are looking at. \$150M to \$300M (the prices I have seen in the paper) is not peanuts. I want to suggest that closing the existing bike trail and investing even half of that in biking/hiking trails about the Metro area would be a very significant overall enhancement to the community if you take a broad view of this. Why is this not part of the debate?

Good luck as you continue to be on the hot seat with this issue. But please do something and get this part of the light rail system built as it will enhance our community. Don't let those opposed rule the day as they are a vocal minority and we need to do what is right overall rather than what is right for a few.

Sincerely,

David Hartwell



Administrative Offices
2117 West River Road
Minneapolis, MN 55411-2227

Operations Center
3800 Bryant Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55409-1000

Phone
612-230-6400
Fax:
612-230-6500

www.minneapolisparcs.org

President
Liz Wielinski

Vice President
Scott Vreeland

Commissioners
Brad Bourn
John Erwin
Meg Forney
Steffanie Musich
Jon C. Olson
Anita Tabb
M. Annie Young

Superintendent
Jayne Miller

Secretary to the Board
Pamela French

February 12, 2014

Susan Haigh, Chair
Metropolitan Council
390 Robert St. N
St. Paul, MN 55101

Metropolitan Council

FEB 18 2014

Received Chair's Office

Re: Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) Resolution Regarding Conducting a Detailed Engineering Feasibility Study and Cost Comparison of Tunneling Under the Kenilworth Channel as Part of the Shallow Tunnel Option

Dear Susan Haigh:

On February 5, 2014 the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) adopted Resolution 2014-114, urging the Southwest Light Rail Transitway Project Office to conduct a detailed engineering feasibility study and cost comparison of tunneling under the Kenilworth Channel as part of the shallow tunnel option that is being explored (see attached resolution). The MPRB is responsible for preserving and protecting its natural resources, parkland, and recreational opportunities for current and future generations. The Kenilworth Channel is a critical component of the Chain of Lakes Regional Park, which receives more than 5 million visits per year and is part of the Grand Rounds Historic District.

The shallow tunnel option currently proposes bridging freight rail, light rail and a trail over the Kenilworth Channel. The MPRB is deeply concerned about impacts to the park and recreational land, user experience, and historic character of the channel.

Section 4(f)(1) of the Federal Transportation Act requires a finding of no feasible or prudent alternatives to the use of parks and historic sites before the Secretary of Transportation (Secretary) can approve the use of such property for transportation purposes and the attendant expenditure of federal transportation funds. To ensure alternatives can be effectively compared, the MPRB is requesting a detailed engineering feasibility study and cost comparison of tunneling under the Kenilworth Channel as part of the shallow tunnel option be conducted. We respect the project timeframe and are proactively making the request at this time, rather than waiting until the Met Council is seeking comments this spring on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

Thank you for serious consideration of the Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board's request.

Sincerely,


Liz Wielinski, President
Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board of Commissioners

cc: Minneapolis Delegation



Offered by: *Anta Tabb*

Seconded by: *John Erwin*

Resolution 2014-114

Resolution Urging the Southwest Light Rail Transitway Project Office to Conduct a Detailed Engineering Feasibility Study and Cost Comparison of Tunneling Under the Kenilworth Channel as Part of the Shallow Tunnel Option

Whereas, The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) was created by the Minnesota Legislature in April 1883 and has the authority to manage and operate park lands;

Whereas, On August 21, 2013, the MPRB Board of Commissioners passed Resolution 2013-282 stating a position on the preliminary engineering options for the proposed Southwest Light Rail Transitway (LRT) through the Kenilworth corridor;

Whereas, The resolution stated support for relocating freight rail, support for leaving freight rail in the corridor and placing LRT in a deep tunnel, and opposition to keeping freight rail in the corridor, placing LRT in shallow tunnels and daylighting the LRT trains over the Kenilworth Channel;

Whereas, Section 4(f)(1) of the Federal Transportation Act requires a finding of no feasible or prudent alternatives to the use of parks and historic sites before the Secretary of Transportation (Secretary) can approve the use of such property for transportation purposes and the attendant expenditure of federal transportation funds;

Whereas, Section 4(f)(2) of the Federal Transportation Act imposes a duty on the Secretary to utilize all possible planning at the earliest stages to minimize harms to parks and historic sites before the Secretary can approve a route;

Whereas, The Board asserts that there may be a prudent alternative within the shallow tunnel option that has not been reasonably studied that would dive the tunnel under the Kenilworth Channel;

Whereas, The Board asserts that this option must be reasonably studied to meet the spirit of the Federal Transportation Act and to evaluate feasible and prudent project alternatives;

Whereas, The Board reaffirms its earlier position in Resolution 2013-282; and

Whereas, This resolution is supported by the MPRB 2007-2020 Comprehensive Plan, which envisions "Dynamic parks that shape city character and meet diverse community needs;"

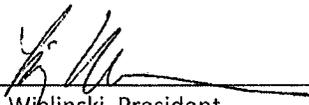
RESOLVED, That the Board of Commissioners urge the Southwest Light Rail Transitway Project Office to conduct a detailed engineering feasibility study and cost comparison of tunneling under the Kenilworth Channel as part of the shallow tunnel option; and

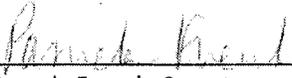
RESOLVED, That the President of the Board and Secretary to the Board are authorized to take all necessary administrative actions to implement this resolution.

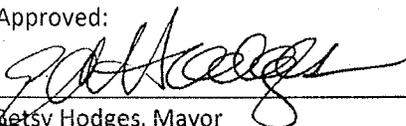
Vote:

Commissioner	Aye	Nay	Abstain	Absent
Bourn	x			
Erwin	x			
Forney	x			
Musich	x			
Olson	x			
Tabb	x			
Vreeland	x			
Wielinski	x			
Young	x			

Adopted by the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board
In formal meeting assembled on February 5, 2014


Liz Wielinski, President


Pamela French, Secretary

Approved:

Ketsy Hodges, Mayor



City of Franklin
320 Second Ave. E.
P.O. Box 326
Franklin, MN 55333-0326
(507) 557-2259
Fax: (507) 557-2255
E-mail: franklin@mchsi.com
Web: franklinmn.us

The City of Franklin is an equal opportunity employer and provider.

February 27, 2014

Ms. Susan Haigh, Chairman
Metropolitan Council
390 Robert St. N.
St. Paul, MN 55101-1805

Metropolitan Council

MAR 3 2014

Received Chair's Office

Dear Ms. Haigh:

Re: Response to the Met Council's Southwest LRT's Transystems' freight relocation report

As mayor of the city of Franklin and a member of the Minnesota Valley Regional Rail Authority, Franklin opposes any relocation of the Twin Cities and Western Railroad (TC&W) that would negatively affect the railroad's ability to serve our rural Minnesota businesses at the same level of safety and cost-efficiency.

The Twin Cities and Western Railroad (TC&W) runs directly through the city of Franklin and provides a vital freight rail for local and area businesses. In Franklin, Envirotech Services, a recent addition to the Franklin business community, uses the rail line to transport chemicals used for producing dust control materials.

Although light rail transit seems to be a metro area issue, the impact of decisions made will affect many rural communities, employees and their families, and could jeopardize shipments of customer goods. Our local economy, as well as many rural Minnesota businesses, would be seriously harmed if the TC&W freight rail route is impaired.

Sincerely,

Ronald Degner
Mayor



P.O. BOX 9 · STEWART, MINNESOTA 55385
Phone 320-562-2413 · Toll Free 1-800-422-3649 · Fax 320-562-2125

Governor Mark Dayton
130 State Capitol
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd
St. Paul, MN 55155

Metropolitan Council

MAR 3 2014

Received Chair's Office

Ms. Susan Haigh, Chairman
Metropolitan Council
390 Robert St. North
St. Paul, MN 55101-1805

RE: Proposed Southwest Light Rail Transit System and requested relocation of the TC&W freight rail services.

First, I would like to commend both of you on expanding the light rail services for the Minneapolis/St. Paul areas and bringing transportation to the outer rings of the metro areas. Understandably, this will provide economic transportation to a number of people and also help retail businesses and businesses in general recruit and retain more employees. Not to mention the decreased traffic congestion which is apparent in the Minneapolis/St. Paul areas and the obvious decrease in the maintenance of our current highway system in those areas.

However, with the request to relocate the TC&W freight rail services in my opinion is not a viable Solution or option. Based on the research I have done and talking with TC&W officials, it appears there will be a significant cost to TC&W to accommodate this request. Obviously, those increased costs and expenses will be passed on to the end users like us, leaving us no choice but to pass the increases to the ultimate end user, which in our business are individual farmers, farm cooperatives, and ethanol plants. With our current expansion by the river in St. Paul (to be completed by the end of year 2014), we expect our rail traffic to increase significantly. Based on that, any increase in costs and/or loss of efficiencies will have a significant impact on not only our business, but the customers we serve in greater Minnesota, nationwide and also our international customers.

Seems to me, requesting TC&W to relocate and incur substantial costs and losing efficiencies in their operations will cause us to look at utilizing more trucking, which the way I see it is counterproductive to what you are trying to accomplish with this light rail system. Managing our supply chain and timing of deliveries is imperative to our success and profitability.



P.O. BOX 9 · STEWART, MINNESOTA 55385
Phone 320-562-2413 · Toll Free 1-800-422-3649 · Fax 320-562-2125

Before any decisions are made, or mandates are put into place, please look at the bigger picture and all of the participants that will be affected by your decisions. During these tumultuous economic times, we need to look at the impact your decision has not only the metro area, but greater Minnesota in regards to business profitability and employment. Which it appears to me under the current proposal, jeopardizes both.

Thank you for taking the time to review our concerns. Feel free to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely;

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Larry Schuette". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Larry Schuette
General Manager
Form A Feed, Inc.

CC: Mayor Betsy Hodges
Barbara Johnson
Lisa Goodman
Rep. Frank Hornstein
Sen. Scott Dibble
Rep. Andrew Falk
Sen. Lyle Koenen
Jake Spano



36327 US HWY 71
Redwood Falls, MN 56283
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02-27-2014

Metropolitan Council

To Governor Mark Dayton and Met Council Chair Susan Haigh

MAR 3 2014

SUBJECT: Response to the Met Council's Southwest LRT's Transystems' freight relocation report Received Chair's Office

Step Saver was founded in 1995 in Wood Lake MN which is located on the MPL which is serviced by the TC&W. Step Saver started out with a new service of delivering bulk water softener salt. Step Saver is now located in Redwood Falls, MN and has made a significant investment in a rail site located in Morton MN which includes a unload, storage and reloading facility, adjacent land next to the MPL rail, and a new building which will house our shop and new offices. Total investment will be near \$500,000.00 by year end 2014.

To understand what Step Saver's service provides, is providing a salt delivery service that delivers water softening salt in the bulk form as opposed to what used to be delivered in plastic bags. All our water softening salt originates from the great Salt Lake UT. Step Saver's ability to bring in its product by rail is absolutely vital as it would have a devastating effect on Step Saver if our freight rates would be increased as Step Saver will bring in more than 30,000,000 lbs of salt during the year 2014. Truck freight is not even a consideration as rates would devastate Step Saver. The difference in acquiring a new customer or maintaining a current customer can be as narrow as a 10th of a cent per lb.

The cost-effectiveness of TC&W's freight has given Step Saver the ability to serve customers as far west as Sioux Falls, SD, Brookings, SD and all of SW MN. Step Saver delivers salt to hospitals, hotels, nationally known food processors that have tens of thousands of employees, to municipalities, and thousands of residential customers.

I understand the importance of light rail for the future, but the decisions made could have a paralyzing effect on the future of Step Saver on its current business and its future growth potential. Step Saver is opposing the Transystems plan.

Yours Truly

Charles J Steffl, President & CEO



Metropolitan Council

MAR 3 2014

Received Chair's Office

Governor Mark Dayton & Met Council Chair Susan Haigh,

The reason I am writing to you is regarding the future of the TC&W railway. This rail line is vital to our future here at Equity Elevator & Trading Co. in Wood Lake as we have plans to grow by adding on a rail load out to better serve our customers. We are a small independent co-op that has been around for nearly 102 years. The patrons have a lot of pride in this elevator and feed mill. This is why we are showing you the same poise on why we need this railway to survive and prosper.

In the past 10 years, we have spent a few hundred thousand dollars to keep the rail in its current condition. It would be a big disappointment to see our patron's money go to waste when there is clearly something that could get done at this point. To make changes to the route of the TC&W would do nothing but endanger the chance for our patrons to have their co-op evolve into a thriving co-op in the rapidly changing world of agriculture. We smaller co-ops have a hard enough time growing to be set back by such a matter as losing our rail. If this were to happen, it would surely mean that our plan of expansion would be down sized to the point to where we wouldn't be as able to accommodate our patrons - therefore jeopardizing our future as a co-op!

We understand that the light rail is a vital part of the metro, but we also want to remind you that our rail in southwest Minnesota is essential to our survival as a small co-op. We are asking you to take a close look at the proposed changes to the TC&W railway and what the costs will be to the people that work so hard in rural Minnesota.

Thank you for your time and consideration in such an important matter!

**Travis Magoon, Grain Merchandiser
Equity Elevator & Trading Co.
Wood Lake, MN**

SERVICE • STEWARDSHIP • SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

RENVILLE COUNTY

Commissioners

COMMISSIONERS

February 27, 2014

District 1

Randy Kramer

The Honorable Susan Haigh
Chair of Metropolitan Council
390 Robert Street North
St. Paul, MN 55101

Metropolitan Council

MAR 3 2014

Received Chair's Office

District 2

Bob Fox

Dear Ms. Haigh:

This letter is sent to you in support of Twin Cities and Western Railroad's efforts to oppose any relocation of TCW's freight rail route that would negatively affect their ability to continue safe and cost effective service to Renville County businesses and other rural Minnesota businesses.

District 3

Paul Setzepfandt
Vice Chair

Enclosed is our Resolution 8-14 adopted by the Renville County Board of Commissioners in support of TCW. We respectfully request your support and assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,

Sara Folsted

District 4

John Stahl
Chair

Sara Folsted
On Behalf of the Renville County
Board of Commissioners

Enclosure (Renville County Resolution 8-14)

District 5

LaMont Jacobson

Letters and Enclosure sent to:
The Honorable Governor Mark Dayton
Senator Lyle Koenen
Senator Gary Dahms
Representative Andrew Falk
Representative Paul Torkelson

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Sara Folsted

John Stahl, Chair
Renville County Board of Commissioners
Renville County Government Services Center
Suite 315
105 South 5th Street
Olivia MN 56277-1484
Phone: 320-523-3710
Fax: 320-523-3747



John Stahl, Chair
Renville County Board of Commissioners
Renville County Government Services Center
Suite 315
105 South 5th Street
Olivia, MN 56277-1484

Phone: 320-523-3710
Fax: 320-523-3748

Affirmative Action - Equal Opportunity Employer

RENVILLE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
RESOLUTION 8-14

WHEREAS, the Twin Cities and Western Railroad (TC&W) provides a vital freight rail link between dozens of rural Minnesota businesses and national and international markets; and,

WHEREAS, the largest 20 companies served by TC&W ship nearly \$1.5 billion in client goods from rural Minnesota communities to destinations around the globe and employ more than 2,600 Minnesota and South Dakota residents; and,

WHEREAS, TC&W shippers across western Minnesota have invested more than \$500 million on building and/or upgrading production, processing and shipping facilities along the existing TC&W route; and

WHEREAS, these rural companies rely on TC&W freight rail service because it is the safest and most cost-effective shipping alternative available to them; and,

WHEREAS, the Metropolitan Council is currently considering route proposals for the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SLRT) project that would require the relocation of TC&W freight rail service to an alternate route that is less safe and less cost-effective than the railroad's existing route; and,

WHEREAS, several Renville County businesses rely on TC&W freight service, and these businesses are among our community's most valued employers and are important contributors to our economic health; and,

WHEREAS, our local economy would be seriously harmed if relocation of TC&W's freight rail route impaired the ability of Renville County businesses or other rural Minnesota businesses to continue to ship their goods safely and cost-effectively;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Renville County Board of Commissioners officially opposes any relocation of Twin Cities and Western Railroad (TC&W) that would negatively affect the railroad's ability to continue to serve Renville County businesses and other rural Minnesota businesses at the same level of safety and cost-efficiency they experience under the status quo; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that copies of this resolution be forwarded to Governor Mark Dayton, Metropolitan Council Chair Susan Haigh, local legislators and the U.S. Surface Transportation Board.

Adopted by the Renville County Board of Commissioners the 25th day of February, 2014.

Paul Setzepfandt, Vice Chair
Renville County Board of Commissioners

Sara Folsted, Renville County Administrator

March 3, 2014

Governor Mark Dayton
130 State Capitol
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd
St. Paul, MN 55155

Ms. Susan Haigh, Chair
Metropolitan Council
390 Robert Street North
St. Paul, MN 55101-1805

Metropolitan Council

MAR 5 2014

Received Chair's Office

Dear Governor Dayton and Chair Haigh:

On behalf of the Minnesota Agri-Growth Council, an organization representing Minnesota's agriculture and food sector, I am writing in response to the Met Council's Southwest LRT's Transystems' freight relocation report and in opposition to the Transystem plan.

As you're no doubt aware, Minnesota's agriculture sector ranks second only to the manufacturing sector in terms of economic impact. A key to the competitiveness of Minnesota's agriculture sector is the availability of safe, cost effective, and efficient transportation systems to help move agriculture products to market, as well as move important agriculture inputs into rural Minnesota communities, including those along the Twin Cities & Western (TC&W) Railroad.

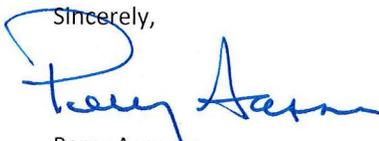
Minnesota's agriculture sector produces commodities and related processed products destined not only for U.S. markets, but around the world. To meet this growing demand for food and agricultural products, numerous agriculture-related businesses along the TC & W line have made significant investments in recent years to better utilize this transportation system and improve efficiencies in loading and unloading products onto rail cars. Beyond efficiency improvements, the ability to utilize larger unit trains to ship agricultural commodities and processed products such as canned vegetables, sugar, ethanol, etc. has also helped reduce the need to transport these products on Minnesota's already burdened road and bridge system.

The Transystems proposal contends that the re-route for the TC & W is a viable option; however, it would only be so for smaller car trains, not for the unit train facilities that utilize 80 car rail trains or more to transport products.

Light rail transit may be perceived by some as only a metro issue; however, any decisions made in terms of the route of light rail and the potential re-routing of the TC & W rail line must take into consideration the impact these decisions will have on dozens of rural communities, as well as farms and agribusinesses for which the TC & W serves as a vital link to national and international markets.

In conclusion, the Minnesota Agri-Growth Council opposes the current Transystems proposal, and urges the Met Council to explore other avenues to ensure that the TC & W line can continue to serve its customers in rural Minnesota by providing a safe, efficient and cost-effective transportation option.

Sincerely,



Perry Aasness
Executive Director
Minnesota Agri-Growth Council



HEARTLAND CORN PRODUCTS

53331 State Hwy. 19 • P.O. Box A • Winthrop, MN 55396
Phone: 507-647-5000 • Fax: 507-647-5010

February 26, 2014

Surface Transportation Board
Attn: Victoria Rutson
Office of Environmental Analysis
395 E Street, SW
Washington, DC 20423-0001

RE: Southwest Light Rail Transit System

Ms. Rutson,

Heartland Corn Products offers the following in response to the Metropolitan Council's freight rail relocation report.

Heartland Corn Products is an ethanol production facility cooperatively owned by farmer producers, located in Winthrop, MN. We have been in operation since 1995, and since that time have seen our membership grow from 350 farmers to now about 900 farmers. Over that same timeframe we have doubled the workforce at our facility, and have had a very positive economic impact on the local community, contractors and service providers.

Over the past ten years Heartland Corn Products has invested over \$70,000,000 to increase local production, including improvements to ship the majority of our finished products out via railroad. With this growth at Heartland, it is critical that we maintain efficient and cost effective rail service to reach coast to coast domestic markets, as well as increasing exports. The Twin Cities and Western Railroad ("TC&W") provides this vital transportation link to our marketplace. Any changes to TC&W's route that increase costs and impact their ability to deliver goods safely and efficiently will have an adverse effect on Heartland and its 900 farmer members.

In addition to Heartland Corn Products, the TC&W provides rail service that is essential for the continued success of multiple shippers in Central Minnesota. The ability to move products and finished goods from Minnesota to national and international markets is critical for the future of our local economies.

Sincerely,


Scott Blumhoefer
Vice President
Heartland Corn Products



HEARTLAND CORN PRODUCTS

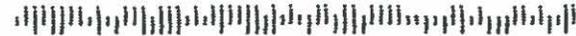
53331 State Hwy. 19 • P.O. Box A
Winthrop, MN 55396



Surface Transportation Board
Attn: Victoria Rutson
Office of Environmental Analysis
395 E Street, SW
Washington, DC 20423-0001

MAR 5 2014

204230001



Harvest Land Cooperative
711 Front Street
P.O. Box 278
Morgan, MN 56266-0278
(507) 249-3196

March 4, 2014

Metropolitan Council
MAR 7 2014
Received Chair's Office

Governor Mark Dayton
130 State Capitol
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd
St. Paul, MN 55155

Ms. Susan Haigh, Chairman
Metropolitan Council
390 Robert St. North
St. Paul, MN 55101

Dear Governor Mark Dayton and Met Council Chair Susan Haigh:

I am writing to strongly discourage the reroute of the Twin Cities & Western Railroad from its current track through the Kenilworth Corridor in Minneapolis for the accommodation of the Southwest Light Rail Transit system. This letter should not be brushed aside or taken lightly, as it represents the thoughts and concerns of not only our employees at Harvest Land Cooperative, but also hundreds of patrons, as well as thousands of citizens of the rural communities we reach.

Harvest Land is a diversified, progressive, farmer-owned cooperative. Headquartered in Morgan, MN, we have locations in Springfield, Comfrey, Morton, Blomkest, and Wabasso. Our Morton grain elevator is situated on the Minnesota Prairie Line (MPL), a branch and affiliate of the TC&W. Over the past several years, our cooperative has constructed substantial additions to our Morton facility, resulting in an increased grain capacity of 1.5 million bushels. As the MPL has made significant progress in updating their railroad lines through our facility, we have been preparing ourselves to market a large portion of our grain by rail out of Morton in the near future. However, the proposed reroute of the TC&W would be detrimental to that market.

Changing the route of the TC&W would result in a *far* less efficient, less safe, and less cost effective railroad. Any of those factors alone could jeopardize the long-term viability of the freight service. However, this proposed plan involves all three, thus affecting everyone connected to the TC&W. The rail market involves numerous long stretching lines that link many communities together. Because of this, one decision truly causes a domino effect, which amplifies as it continues down the line. The TC&W serves and connects over 50 communities first-hand, not to mention the towns and people

that are connected to and affected by those 50-plus. In the last two decades, shippers have invested more than \$500 million in facilities on the TC&W line. If the line is rerouted and the freight service becomes more costly and less efficient, all of those shipment facilities as well as the communities that rely on them will pay for it. Skyrocketing freight costs and squeezing margins will be inevitable.

The consequences of the plan to reroute the TC&W are enormous. The effects will not be seen by citizens of the Twin Cities alone; the biggest impact will be felt in our state's heart, its countless rural communities. I am asking you to leave the freight rail line as is. Let's find a way for the SLRT and the TC&W to co-exist, so that we can benefit all the citizens of this great state we call home.

Sincerely,

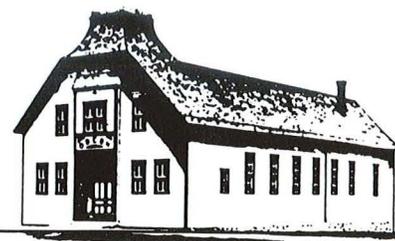
A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dennis Schreier". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Dennis Schreier
General Manager
Harvest Land Cooperative

cc: Mayor Betsy Hodges
Ms. Barbara Johnson, President, Minneapolis City Council
Ms. Lisa Goodman, Minneapolis City Council
Rep. Frank Hornstein
Sen. Scott Dibble
Rep. Andrew Falk
Sen. Lyle Koenen
Mr. Jake Spano, St. Louis Park City Councilman

City of Belview

PO Box 159 • Belview, MN 56214



“The City of Belview is an equal opportunity employer.”

Metropolitan Council

MAR 10 2014

Received Chair's Office

March 3, 2014

Ms. Susan Haigh, Chairman

Metropolitan Council

390 Robert St. North

St. Paul, MN 55101-1805

Dear Ms. Haigh;

We are writing to you today in response to the Met Council's Southwest LRT's Transystems' freight relocation report.

The City of Belview is an agricultural based community located in Redwood County. Belview is on the west end of the 98 mile long MN Prairie Line. The MN Prairie Line connects to the TC&W at Norwood Young America.

From an economic development standpoint, along with a ten ton road, access to three phase power, and natural gas, the rail line is an important factor in our hopes to attract future agricultural based businesses to locate to our community. The rail line would allow them to ship their products to the metro area and possibly on to the global market. In our community, the TC&W is a vital link for our farmers to be able to get their crops to market.

We strongly believe that the TC&W should not be forced to re-route their existing rail line to accommodate the light rail. Understandably, the light rail transit is important to the metro area but they are not the only ones affected. When making your decision, please consider all of the present and future businesses located along the MN Prairie Line and TC&W that depend on the rail's ability to move their goods in a safe, cost effective and timely manner.

Yours truly,

Mayor Marlo Sander

City of Belview



Farmers Co-operative Elevator Co.

1972 510th Street
Hanley Falls, MN 56245-0059
507-768-3448

Cottonwood	507-423-6235
Echo	507-925-4126
Ghent	507-428-3255
Granite Falls	320-564-3834
Minneota	507-872-6134
Minnesota Falls	320-564-3835
Montevideo	320-269-6531
Taunton	507-872-6161

March 5, 2014

Ms. Susan Haigh, Chairman
Metropolitan Council
390 Robert St. North
St. Paul, MN 55101-1805

Metropolitan Council

MAR 10 2014

Received Chair's Office

Dear Chairman Haigh,

Please allow the Twin Cities & Western Railroad (TC&W) to operate on its current route. The TC&W services three of our Elevator locations: Echo, Minnesota Falls and Montevideo. It is of utmost importance that the TC&W maintains their current operational efficiencies for our future.

We have several million dollars invested in our current TC&W & MPL locations and are planning a large multimillion dollar project based on our current TC&W market access. If this domestic and global marketplace access is made more costly, our business would be negatively impacted greatly.

The grain trade is a high volume-low margin business and pennies per bushel make huge differences in profitability. Please do not cause FCE and other TC&W shippers to be less competitive in the marketplace.

I would like to remind you of the safety aspects of the routing options and also remind you what the cost is to build and maintain roadways. If you change the current TC&W route, you will cause more grain to be trucked on our State of Minnesota roadways.

The Farmers Cooperative Elevator Company of Hanley Falls (FCE) is located in West Central Minnesota and has facilities in eight communities. Our sales last year were over \$311,000,000 and we represent over 1,500 farmers.

On behalf of our FCE Patrons/Owners, we ask that you listen to the Twin Cities & Western Railroad and its affiliates and maintain the current route through the Kenilworth Corridor.

Feel free to contact me with any questions or comments.

Yours Truly,

Scott Dubbelde, General Manager
Farmers Coop Elevator Company
507-768-3448
fce@mvtvwireless.com



Fairfax PO Box E Fairfax, MN 55332 507-426-8263	Gibbon 40 W. Park Drive Gibbon, MN 55335 507-834-6534	Hector PO Box 338 Hector, MN 55342 320-848-2273	Buffalo Lake PO Box 99 Buffalo Lake, MN 55314 320-833-5321
Cosmos	Lake Lillian	Darwin Stewart	Eden Valley

March 6, 2014

Ms. Susan Haigh, Chairman
Metropolitan Council
390 Robert St. North
St. Paul, MN 55101-1805

Metropolitan Council

MAR 10 2014

Received Chair's Office

South Central Grain and Energy (SCGE) is a Cooperative located in South Central Minnesota. We are locally-owned by over 1,300 farmer producers.

Transportation is huge to us and a high percentage of our transportation use is the Twin Cities & Western Railroad (TCW). Rail transportation allows us and our farmers to access markets all over the USA and the world. This is crucial to our farmers and our Cooperative.

The issue of Southwest Light Rail Transit line and the implications it causes the TCW and the relation of increased costs to SCGE and its farmer owners needs to be considered carefully. We have invested over \$8 million dollars in the last couple of years to be able to ship shuttle trains to create benefits for our farmer producers. The grain industry operates on pennies. A few pennies amounts to millions of dollars in additional costs to SCGE and our farmer producers every year.

Agriculture is a large part of our state's economy and cost effective transportation is very important to the viability of our farmers and ag business. We respectfully request that you and the SLRT planners/decision makers consider the implications of the SLRT project in regard to agriculture in our rural communities, to our farmer producers, and to our farmer-owned Cooperatives. There needs to be a way to do the project but not at the expense of our farmer producers and agriculture.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

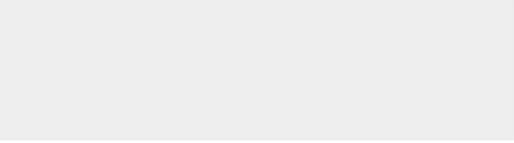
A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Eugene Lutteke".

Eugene Lutteke
General Manager

Comments Received via Online Submission Form

SWLRT: Comment on Draft Reports

Submission Date	2014-02-20 17:10:33
Full Name (optional)	Barry Fitzpatrick
Address (optional)	City: St. Louis Park State / Province: MN Postal / Zip Code: 55426
Subject (optional)	Freight Rail Location Alternatives Study
Comments	<p>I support the colocation of SW LRT and freight in the Kenilworth corridor. Having lived in both NY and Boston, I have seen first hand how well freight and commuter trains can operate side by side.</p> <p>I have also seen the long term benefits of rail to a community in its culture and its economy. This project will improve the entire region, even those areas that do not have a LRT stop will benefit.</p> <p>The tunnel impact on the Lakes will need to be considered, but again having grown up along the Hudson River and having lived in Newton, MA between their Green Line, which runs along their Emerald Necklace string of parks, I have seen that colocation of the environment and transportation infrastructure is doable.</p> <p>As I have watched this dialog develop I have witnessed a lot of emotion from both sides. We are now at a point where action is needed and the emotional attachment must give way to practical issues and fact so decisions to can be made.</p> <p>Having said this I will provide my (sometimes emotional) arguments against colocation.</p> <p>I fully support the running/walking/biking trails in this area. I and my family use them regularly. I talk to people from other states/cities about how these trails are part of the culture of this area. I do not believe that colocation will change that culture. It is true that the Kenilworth trail will look different but the trail is not going away and it can still be designed to be appealing to the senses and maintain capacity for the current and projected users.</p> <p>The suggested reroute would significantly disrupt the culture of St. Louis Park.</p> <p>The colocation would significantly disrupt some individuals in the Kenilworth corridor.</p> <p>It will not disrupt the culture of that neighborhood.</p> <p>Mayor Jacobs has laid out a very clear and concise list of facts and reasons that the reroute would be detrimental to this community. He has also provided the Met Council with a message that is fully supported by this community.</p>



That message is that it municipal consent will not happen should it now be concluded that freight rail traffic should be rerouted in St. Louis Park.

SWLRT: Comment on Draft Reports

Submission Date

2014-03-03 17:28:55

Address (optional)

City: Minneapolis
State / Province: MN

Subject (optional)

Freight Rail Location Alternatives Study

Comments

It's time to stop the process. If the commitment to Minneapolis to move freight rail can't be fulfilled, and if the St. Louis Park route is not to that City's liking, then the route needs to be re-thought. Although it may look bad to start over, it's going to look a lot worse if the shallow tunnels fail to be workable for engineering reasons and you have to call a halt at that point, and there simply isn't room for co-location at grade, at least not if you care about safety. Do you want your legacy to be a blight on the Minneapolis environment for a lightly used route at a horrific cost? This is not government at its best.

One minor note: when the numbers are presented to the Met Council, you need to include the cost of the safety upgrades for the Kenilworth freight route in order to have an "apples to apples" comparison.

SWLRT: Comment on Draft Reports

Submission Date	2014-03-01 09:59:45
Full Name (optional)	Carol Nulsen
Address (optional)	City: St. Louis Park State / Province: Minnesota Postal / Zip Code: 55416
Subject (optional)	Freight Rail Location Alternatives Study
Comments	<p>As a current resident of St. Louis Park and a future resident of Minneapolis in 2015 who currently uses the trail along the co-location, I believe we need to site the light rail as soon as possible.</p> <p>The TransSystems plan recently released is incomplete and inaccurate-a very drafty draft indeed. Data used to base report conclusions (distances from buildings, parking lots etc) needs to be field checked before publishing. Cost estimates need to fully take into account land buyouts of residents, businesses and the nonprofit STEP(which, after many months of an agonizing search for a location to meet its needs, found one and just moved). There are no wetland mitigation costs, nor any detailing work on a Superfund site nor clipping a major Excel Energy substation. Safety concerns also need to be addressed. Noise and vibration issues at the St. Louis Park high school should be considered.</p> <p>The Southwest Corridor Management Committee has already (nearly unanimously) recommended running the freight through the Southwest corridor with light rail buried in tunnels. The Met Council also approved this. The Twin Cities Central and Western Railroad has stated the TransSystems plan is not viable for it.</p> <p>Let's move ahead, site the light rail along the existing freight corridor in Minneapolis where costs are fewer, disruption to children, other citizens and business is less, and safety is less compromised.</p> <p>At the same time, I am concerned about the potential environmental quality impacts that may be incurred with this option. Let's use government money to consider this issue thoroughly rather than hiring consultants to write inadequate plans strictly for political purposes.</p> <p>Thank you.</p>

SWLRT: Comment on Draft Reports

Submission Date	2014-02-19 18:26:26
Full Name (optional)	Carol Whote
Address (optional)	City: Minneapolis State / Province: MN Postal / Zip Code: 55405

Comments

My husband and I live near the proposed penn station. As a recent retiree, with a working husband, I see the SWLRT as a big benefit not only to the overall sustainability of high density multi-income and multigenerational housing, but personally, as a way we can drop one car and decrease our overall carbon footprint. Currently my husband has to bike to Target Center to take light rail to his work in Bloomington. In winter this does not work. I bike most places for errands and fun in good weather, but at 68, would rather take light rail downtown and the airport in winter. There is no good bus service where we are. we have attended several citizen meetings where the focus was to let the antis have their say. We were frustrated because we wanted to say how useful it is and will be, even through it may add some to ambient light and maybe more watchfulness in using the Cedar Lake Trail, which we use constantly. We were upset to hear wealthy people say that light rail was only for low income people, with no opportunity for middle income people like us to say how useful it would be for us.

For example, i may need chemo this summer. If I can jump on the light rail, ride to or near Regions, bike the rest of the way, it will be easier on my husband and safer for me not to drive. We also bike the kennilworth trail constantly in good weather. Sure the trail will change to be more "urban" but we understand that we do not live in the country. As the population increases and we try to use energy more efficiently, our environment will evolve.

With careful planning this will be a net gain. To expect no change is 1. selfish and 2. short sighted. In the end there will be unhappy people, but I believe in "the greatest good for the greatest number". So far MN has done a good job of this balance and I very much appreciate the staff efforts to accommodate the ,ost voices as possible.

SWLRT: Comment on Draft Reports

Submission Date	2014-02-13 13:54:01
Address (optional)	
Subject (optional)	Freight Rail Location Alternatives Study
Comments	<p>Should freight traffic remain in the Kenilworth Freight Rail Corridor or be re-routed into the heart of multiple St Louis Park residential neighborhoods?</p> <p>Keeping Freight Traffic in Kenilworth Freight Rail Corridor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Zero houses will be destroyed-Zero businesses will be destroyed-Zero schools will be impacted-Zero playgrounds will be destroyed-Zero parks will be destroyed-There will be no street/sidewalks closed forever-There will be no increase in freight rail traffic-There will be no increase in noise, vibration or pollution-IT WILL COST SIGNIFICANTLY LESS TO SIMPLY ADJUST THE BIKE TRAIL FOR 1/2 MILE <p>Moving Freight Traffic into the Heart of St Louis Park Residential Communities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Numerous homes will be literally destroyed-Hundreds of homes will be impacted-Numerous businesses will be literally destroyed-Hundreds of businesses will be impacted-Multiple schools will have freight rail running with 75 feet of where children are learning-Multiple playgrounds will be literally destroyed-Multiple parks will be literally destroyed-Numerous streets/sidewalks will be closed forever-Freight rail traffic would increase tenfold over current conditions-Noise, vibration and pollution would increase tenfold over current conditions-THOUSANDS OF CHILDREN WILL BE AT RISK ON A DAILY BASIS <p>Bottom Line: St Louis Park will NOT provide municipal consent if the re-route through their residential community is pursued. There are MANY other viable options that exist that would prevent freight rail from being re-routed through the heart of St Louis Park communities. The Mayor and City Council went on record stating that since there are other VERY viable options for freight rail, they will NOT provide municipal consent for a re-route. This has been the city's position since 2001 and it will NOT change.</p>

SWLRT: Comment on Draft Reports

Submission Date	2014-02-13 13:35:50
Address (optional)	
Subject (optional)	Freight Rail Location Alternatives Study
Comments	<p>JIM TERRY IS A LIAR!!</p> <p>Jim said this is a "new" plan for freight rail re-location. This plan is terrible and 99% identical to previous plans! Does it still require freight traffic to run through the heart of St Louis Park neighborhoods? Yes. Does it still require freight traffic to be elevated through areas of St Louis Park? Yes. Does it still require freight traffic to run directly next to multiple schools? Yes. Does it still require freight traffic to run directly next to hundreds of homes? Yes. Does it still require the closure of streets/sidewalks? Yes. Does it still require the literal destruction of numerous businesses? Yes. Does it still require the literal destruction of numerous homes? Yes. Does it still require excessive noise, pollution and vibration in a residential neighborhood? Yes. Does it still require freight traffic to increase tenfold? Yes. Does it still require putting thousands of children's lives at risk on a daily basis? Yes.</p> <p>Jim said the President of TC&W approved of his "new" plan when in fact the President of TC&W said the "new" plan has the same issues and concerns of previous plans. The President of TC&W DID NOT approve of the "new" plan!</p> <p>Jim said the "new" plan should satisfy 80% of St Louis Park concerns when he presented it at a community meeting. The Mayor of St Louis Park listed out an extensive amount of issues with the "new" plan and said it DID NOT satisfy the longstanding concerns of the community. The Mayor received a standing ovation for making these comments.</p>

SWLRT: Comment on Draft Reports

Submission Date	2014-02-13 13:20:29
Address (optional)	
Subject (optional)	Freight Rail Location Alternatives Study
Comments	<p>Here are a few drawbacks to re-routing freight rail traffic through the heart of multiple residential neighborhoods in the St Louis Park community.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The trains path is currently rejected by the TC&W RR due to high risk of derailment.2. The trains will run less than 75 feet from our high school, about the length of one rail car.3. The trains will run adjacent to 5 schools and thousands of children.4. The trains will run across Dakota Av. S where children/school buses cross in mass.5. The trains will wipe out the STEP food shelf.6. The trains will separate our high school from our athletic field.7. The trains will wipe out several long standing SLP businesses.8. The trains will create extremely high levels of noise and vibration next to our high school.9. The trains noise will increase massively over today due to the planned track incline.10. The trains will run on dangerous reversing curves.11. The trains can turn south next to Methodist Hospital and across Excelsior Blvd.12. The trains will run on berms north of the high school in residents' backyards.13. The trains will close Walker St, Library Ln, 28th, 29th streets14. The trains will run an average of 253 railcars a day, vs. 28, a nearly tenfold increase.15. The train track may someday be opened to the busy BNSF to the north.16. The train track will cost \$100-\$200 million dollars vs. moving the bike trail-\$35 million17. The train track will be forever. Federal laws protect train tracks in perpetuity.

SWLRT: Comment on Draft Reports

Submission Date	2014-01-30 19:17:55
Full Name (optional)	Chris Bower
Address (optional)	
Subject (optional)	Freight Rail Location Alternatives Study
Comments	<p>In the 2010 Comprehensive State Rail Plan, a Mankato to Twin Cities passenger rail route was identified as a Phase 1 Priority (implementation within 20 years). The rail plan identified improvements to the Dan Patch Line (MN&S) as a component of that route to a Minneapolis terminal.</p> <p>Were the impacts to this future passenger rail use considered in the alternatives analysis?</p> <p>Please consider those impacts (positive or negative) in your analysis of the MN&S line options and the Chaska Cutoff. The MN&S South alternative should warrant more detailed analysis since it shares most of the community, environmental and engineering challenges identified for passenger rail use in the state rail plan.</p> <p>Thanks, - Chris</p>

SWLRT: Comment on Draft Reports

Submission Date

2014-01-30 22:15:20

Address (optional)**Subject (optional)**

Freight Rail Location Alternatives Study

Comments

I am sick and tired of the little people getting the short end. thanks to some spoiled and selfish people in the rich area of Kenwood some of my Park neighbors are about to lose their homes, jobs and schools. just so the spoiled rich people can have that precious bike trail. last time I checked people can ride on streets as well as a trail. at least they will have a home to come home to and a job. I bet if St.Louis Park was as powerful this debate would have been resolved when it should have been. I will not ride the light rail if it destroys people home and takes away their jobs.I see nothing wrong the the shallow tunnel. I will not ride the light rail if it destroys any part or takes away any school property,homes and or jobs. It is sad that people are more worried about some trees than people's home and jobs. another thing to note is that I will not vote for anyone who wrecks St.Louis Park property and takes away people jobs. People at McDonals don't make that much to begin with. ANd now people want to take that as well. These people lives arfe going to change forever and thanks to a train. So sad!!!!!!!

SWLRT: Comment on Draft Reports

Submission Date	2014-01-31 14:42:07
Full Name (optional)	Rya Fox
Address (optional)	City: Minneapolis State / Province: Minnesota Postal / Zip Code: 55416
Subject (optional)	Freight Rail Location Alternatives Study
Comments	<p>I take exception to the disregard of station viability in the TC&W Freight Relocation Analysis [DRAFT] and request that the final report incorporate metrics that fully evaluate "the proposed route must not unduly impact the surrounding community," listed in Section IV. Screening Criteria.</p> <p>At the 7 January 2014 Community Meeting Met Council solicited comment on proposed metrics being considered for use in this report. The "Freight Rail" table I sat at discussed at length the impacts of having freight rail directly adjacent to station platforms. We felt at minimum the elements "Safety Considerations" and "Community Impacts" should be expanded to include station viability in the metrics, if not called out as its own element. Station viability includes direct access to the platform from the surrounding community, re/development opportunities, visual and safety impacts.</p> <p>The call for revisions to these metrics was read aloud to Chair Haigh and the community as part of the feedback/summary portion of the open house. The written request was recorded by Met Council Staff and submitted on physical comment cards.</p> <p>This freight rail relocation report is intended to primarily inform the successful implementation of the LRT line. Impacts to its success are currently not adequately measured. Please take this opportunity to include station viability within the Screening Criteria section of the final TC&W Freight Relocation Analysis.</p>

SWLRT: Comment on Draft Reports

Submission Date

2014-02-02 21:09:19

Full Name (optional)

Marianne Kaufmann

Address (optional)

City: St. Louis Park
State / Province: MN

Subject (optional)

Freight Rail Location Alternatives Study

Comments

We don't live close to the schools but feel that a train near an area where there is a lot of pedestrian activity (especially children) is ill-advised from every angle. The disruption of traffic and lack of reasonably safe access to schools and businesses should not need to happen. Other alternatives must be chosen.

M. Kaufmann

SWLRT: Comment on Draft Reports

Submission Date	2014-02-02 21:30:26
Full Name (optional)	Leah Ford
Address (optional)	Postal / Zip Code: 55416
Subject (optional)	Freight Rail Location Alternatives Study
Comments	<p>I find the results of this "study" both clear and ludicrous. It clearly states the only reason to move the freight to St. Louis Park is to preserve "community cohesion" for Kenwood. If "community cohesion" is so important to Minneapolis (and apparently the Met Council) how is this ignored for St. Louis Park? Running all that freight right between the elementary school & high school in St. Louis Park, through many homes & business, and at grade where it will irrevocably snarl traffic across the city, will ruin any sense of community in St. Louis Park. The favoritism shown to Minneapolis by both the Governor and the Met Council throughout this process is unreal, unfortunate and disappointing. I can assure you that I will continue to fight the re-rout and share the ridiculous nature of this process via all channels at my disposal.</p>

SWLRT: Comment on Draft Reports

Submission Date	2014-02-03 06:18:38
Full Name (optional)	Janet Weivoda
Address (optional)	City: St Louis Pk State / Province: MN Postal / Zip Code: 55416
Subject (optional)	Freight Rail Location Alternatives Study
Comments	<p>It would be reprehensible for the Met Council to consider the latest proposal as a safe and adequate solution to the freight issue.</p> <p>Why is it an acceptable solution to need to permanently close streets in St Louis Park, run trains AT GRADE close to the high school and Spanish Immersion school, the Central Community center, the community food shelf, Peter Hobart Elementary School, the Metropolitan Open School, as well as MANY business and single family homes. There would be many business and homes taken for this latest proposal.</p> <p>Any derailment would most likely be a lethal accident. How can this possibly be safer than keeping the freight traffic in a FREIGHT CORRIDOR like Kennilworth?</p> <p>I would hope that the answer would be clear to Met Council that the least expensive and safest choices are to keep freight and light rail in the Kennilworth corridor and to make whatever necessary alterations to the trails. I say this as a daily user of those trails.</p> <p>I know that a decision to change the actual route of SWLRT is not being considered, but it is my opinion that if the goal is to have a transit system that people will use (that is the purpose of spending 1.25+ BILLION dollars), why not run it down the HOV lanes of 394? Make people choose to give up their vehicles and want to take the train! Other major cities have made this choice and it works well for them.</p> <p>I would hope that Met Council will decide that there are other options besides rerouting traffic that was never designed for the MN & S spur to be sent there, even if it means losing our current position for Federal funding to be sure that it's done right and is a meaningful addition to transit for the area it is meant to serve.</p>

SWLRT: Comment on Draft Reports

Submission Date	2014-02-03 08:25:57
Full Name (optional)	Mary Gaines
Address (optional)	City: St Louis Park State / Province: Minnesota (MN) Postal / Zip Code: 55416
Subject (optional)	Freight Rail Location Alternatives Study
Comments	<p>Hello,</p> <p>The draft proposal of routing freight trains through St Louis Park, taking out hundreds of family homes, destroying business properties, creating unsafe school grounds, is unconscionable when there are alternatives that are safer, cheaper, and less intrusive to the communities. Add to that, that the costs have not been included, and I would like to understand how this compares to the cost of moving a bike trail. Without that, this is misappropriation of taxpayer dollars. Please respond to the following questions: 1. What is the exact full cost of the re-route, including home takes, business takes, cost of school safety measures to be built, appropriate noise and vibration abatement measures, and safety mitigation equal to what the Kenilworth Corridor currently has; 2) How does this cost compare to a) moving the bike trail, b) shallow tunnel, c) co location of freight and light rail through Kenilworth Corridor</p> <p>Please make these accurate including a 3rd party accounting audit, and make the numbers public.</p> <p>Thank you, Mary Beth Gaines</p>

SWLRT: Comment on Draft Reports

Submission Date	2014-02-03 11:44:31
Full Name (optional)	Bert Schmitt
Address (optional)	City: St Louis Pk State / Province: MN Postal / Zip Code: 55416
Subject (optional)	Freight Rail Location Alternatives Study
Comments	<p>It's been 4 long years and the reroute alternatives get more asinine with each new study.</p> <p>Why you ask ? Because of the lack of common sense and the inability to move a bike trail.</p> <p>Let's move the bike trail (not eliminate it) and let the residents of St Louis Pk and Kenwood get on with their lives and save the taxpayers millions on dollars in redundant studies.</p>

SWLRT: Comment on Draft Reports

Submission Date	2014-02-03 14:52:03
Full Name (optional)	Sharon Lyon
Address (optional)	Street Address: Louisiana ave City: St. Louis park
Subject (optional)	Freight Rail Location Alternatives Study
Comments	<p>The newest recommendations are the most ridiculous of any proposed so far. What are people thinking!!!! The disruption, noise, home demolishments, street closures, increased risk to residents and children....well, it is insane.</p> <p>Stop the insanity, keep the trains where they are and figure out what to do about LRT or scrap the whole thing. Insane, costly, ineffective study.</p> <p>I am a resident of SLP and am totally opposed to a reroute through this community.</p> <p>Sharon Lyon</p>

SWLRT: Comment on Draft Reports

Submission Date	2014-02-03 20:23:27
Full Name (optional)	Aaron Hulett
Address (optional)	
Subject (optional)	Freight Rail Location Alternatives Study
Comments	Met Council, please do not make a rash decision to re-locate freight rail based on the push-back of one wealthy neighborhood. I love the bike trail, but accommodations can be made. Make the decion based on the wisest use of funds.

SWLRT: Comment on Draft Reports

Submission Date	2014-02-05 20:36:57
Full Name (optional)	John Koehler
Address (optional)	
Subject (optional)	Freight Rail Location Alternatives Study
Comments	<p>Even though, as a retiree, I'm unlikely to use Southwest Light Rail, or to feel much impact from the proposed St. Louis Park freight reroute, I'm in favor of getting light rail moving and strongly opposed to tearing up part of our city to create traffic jams on Lake Street near the high school.</p> <p>The best place for freight traffic is exactly where it is now, in the Kenilworth corridor, and only Governor Dayton's concern for the welfare of a rich Minneapolis minority is supporting the current debate. I also am a frequent user of the Cedar Lake trail link that runs parallel to the railroad tracks, but would be happy to give that section up if it would accomplish the other goals.</p>

SWLRT: Comment on Draft Reports

Submission Date	2014-02-06 11:17:38
Full Name (optional)	Richard Adair
Address (optional)	City: Mpls State / Province: MN Postal / Zip Code: 55405
Subject (optional)	Freight Rail Location Alternatives Study Water Resources Evaluation Kenilworth Tree Inventory
Comments	<p>It is unconscionable that a relatively small group of people, mostly living near the Kenilworth corridor, should be able to deprive a large and growing metropolitan area of the substantial benefits of an integrated rail transit system. These include economic growth, less traffic congestion, the ability of low income people to access jobs, and reduced carbon emissions with millions of fewer commutes by automobile.</p> <p>The legitimate objections have been addressed, one by one.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Insufficient study of freight rail re-route options (accomplished)2. Effect on nearby lakes (essentially, none)3. Loss of trees (mostly young "volunteers" that can be replaced)4. Noise (shallow tunnels)5. At-grade crossing at Cedar Lake Pkwy (eliminated)6. Alternate route through Uptown (rejected for very good reasons in public planning process)7. Loss of "park-like" feel for recreational users (bicyclists OK with a more urban experience). <p>Although I live nearby and often bike in Kenilworth, I strongly SUPPORT THE TWO-TUNNEL OPTION and so do many of my friends.</p> <p>There will always be a few loud local objectors. Time to get the support of the new Minneapolis city council members and move forward!</p>

SWLRT: Comment on Draft Reports

Submission Date

2014-02-06 18:26:28

Full Name (optional)

Mike Robbins

Address (optional)

City: St Louis Park
State / Province: Minnesota
Postal / Zip Code: 55416

Subject (optional)

Freight Rail Location Alternatives Study

Comments

Please don't reroute the freight rail through SLP. STEP--St. Louis Park Emergency Program is a vital community effort and would be very sad if it had to move. Why can't the bike path be moved? It would save tons taxpayer of money.

Thanks,

Mike

SWLRT: Comment on Draft Reports

Submission Date	2014-02-08 20:48:34
Full Name (optional)	Fred Mutchler
Address (optional)	City: Saint Liuis Park State / Province: MN
Subject (optional)	Freight Rail Location Alternatives Study
Comments	<p>A few background facts to 'set the stage' for my comments:</p> <p>* I and my wife have lived in St. Louis Park for over 40 years. We're currently in our 2nd home as owners and we've both lived in other homes with the Park as well. It's a great community with an excellent history of metro area municipal cooperation on all levels.</p> <p>* With a background in geography, city and urban planning, and an interest in community development, I read and study any and all of the plans and proposals that come up as projects are being readied that will impact St. Louis Park.</p> <p>* I was a member of the original SLP Vision committee back in the early 1990s. I've stayed in touch with the tenets of that 'future look' and always cheer when I see developments that harken back to the original ideas of that vision.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>* I am very opposed to the reroute through Saint Louis Park. I firmly believe it will be extremely detrimental to the sense of community we've been building here in the Park for decades. While the railroads have played a huge part of the history of SLP, the current rail lines we have now are at the proper scale and usage rate for a suburban community like ours. To add to the number and size of trains, especially in the location proposed, will place a clear (and unprecedented) 'dividing line' through the heart of vibrant neighborhoods that can never be reclaimed.</p> <p>* The impact of a reroute like the one proposed will be felt for decades to come - perhaps felt for more time than the impact the existing lines have had over the past century or more up to this point. Over the past 40 years, the rail line sin SLP have been reduced, eliminated, and curtailed in order to add biking and walking trails as well as green space. THAT is what the Park is about - NOT adding more trains and traffic and potential problems.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>* My wife and I had plans to retire in a few years here in the Park. We have made the decision to not stay - and in no small part to the development of the SW corridor and the increase in resulting taxation that will bring to every homeowner that lives within the impacted areas. I firmly do not believe in public subsidies for a project that benefits a very small segment of the population with a greater cost to all. If the new 'system' was to be user-fee supported and much lower-impact than a rail line, then no problem. Basically I've been opposed to the SW corridor period. It's always been a non-starter for me on a number of levels. The reroute proposals have only solidified our decision -</p>

we're going to get out before the impact in taxes and noise and blight gets too bad.

* I have been actively, yet quietly, verbalizing (in our neighborhood and across the city) the ideas against any reroute here in the Park. I have yet to hear from anyone that they are in favor of more trains and more noise and more 'issues.' NO ONE wants the reroute here in SLP - especially after they hear of and realize the impact it will have on their way of life.

* I feel that the railroads and the politicians - and the Met Council here in the Twin Cities for sure - have too much 'power of decision' when it comes to these issues that affect people in established communities all in the name of "progress." Having a background in urban/regional planning, I know from experience that it's not always about the logical thing. One has to place a higher consideration on the overall impact on the communities at large - and not to the detriment or advantage of any one city. The 'power pack' influencers in Minneapolis and on the Met Council should not have final say over our lives here in SLP, Edina, and beyond.

The combination solution and tunnel-style tracks are clearly the 'most logical' solution.

- Fred Mutchler

SWLRT: Comment on Draft Reports

Submission Date	2014-02-11 07:23:32
Full Name (optional)	carole clemens
Address (optional)	City: st louis park State / Province: mn Postal / Zip Code: 55426
Subject (optional)	Freight Rail Location Alternatives Study
Comments	<p>It seems to me, after months of trying to follow the goings on about the freight relocation, that minds had been made up months ago and everyone with the power of decision making had decided that the location with the poorer residents would bear the burden of the freight trains so that the rich folk can enjoy their quiet and amenities loaded neighborhood. That so much attention has been lavished on trying to bury the noise and protect the bike lanes of the few and powerful is typical of where our society has gone. Let the poorer and therefore less powerful people bear the burden of faulty decision making. That an entire suburb will become uninhabitable seemed to weigh nothing in the equation of rich versus poor. It is a shameful comment on our society that no one even seems to realize that this is what is actually going on. Tree inventory indeed. What about a student and resident inventory in St Louis Park?? Who is counting the small businesses that will go out of business just to protect the leisure time activities of the richer folk?? SHAME SHAME SHAME ON ALL OF THOSE WHO HAVE THE POWER TO DECIDE>.</p>

Comments Received via Phone Call

Voice 001

Professional Instruments is not interested in selling their building to SWLRT or moving. The building on Lake is an essential part of their operations and was built by their father in 1950. They employ over 50 people in their facilities and disruption to their current buildings puts their employees and the companies that they sell to locally or internationally at risk.

Based on the originally LRT planning done by Hennepin County they decided to consolidate four buildings into the remaining three to be out of the fray of our project. Since the spring of last year, now all of their remaining buildings have been “targeted” at some point in the planning process. This has created a logistical and planning nightmare for them as they have waited for decisions to be made. It took them over 5 years and considerable expense to move specialized equipment and set-up their current operations and they do not want to undertake a similar change again.

Comment Cards

**02/10/14 SWLRT Town Hall Meeting
Dunwoody College of Technology, Minneapolis**

MPLS- 01

Feb.10

Either solution needs EXCELLENT design and mitigation. We have not seen a commitment to this.

MPLS- 02

Ten years is nothing. If you don't like the job Quit.

In 1988 my husband and I purchased a house abutting the corridor. We knew there was a railroad there. We also knew it was to be a transit corridor (trains were not allowed then). We didn't (& don't) mind the railroad. Maybe 20 year ago When Hennepin County needed a way to get TC&W trains off the greenway so they could bridge Lake Street. The neighborhood was told by ELECTED OFFICIALS the trains would be rerouted once they Golden Auto site was cleaned up.

We think this promise should be honored. So we can have access to transit.

The Area Adjacent to the Kennilworth Corridor is a transit desert. (Look at #26 schedule.)

The responders failed to answer questions. I don't know if it was on purpose but responders should have asked if the askers Question had been answered.

MPLS-03

2/10/14

- Build the Shallow Tunnel
- DO NOT Reroute freight

MPLS- 04

2/10/2014

The Southwest Light rail is important to the vitality of Minneapolis & the Twin Cities. It will provide transportation to the elderly in Bryn Mawr

It also will make it possible for North Siders to get to the Suburbs to get jobs.

MPLS- 05

2/10/14

The SWLRT project team is terrific! And, Jim A seems to have a rock star following ☺

MPLS-06

2/10/2014

I fear your plan for a shallow tunnel will not be funded & then will be stuck if co-location freight & light rail.... Relocate the freight AS PROMISED so we don't get stuck w/ Two TRAINS at grade + NO trails... an awful scenario not difficult to imagine.

MPLS-07

2-10-14

- If freight is moved 40' west in the Kenilworth corridor, you need to buy-out the property owners on the west.
- Deep bore LRT in Kenilworth & leave freight as is for now.

MPLS- 08

2/10/14

Co location – not good for the Regional Park!!!

Protect the Natural Resources.

MPLS- 09

10 Feb 2014

1. The response for not revisiting the LPA is short sighted and misguided
2. The freight rail relocation analysis is an expensive waste. The consultants limited choice of possible routes is disappointing. Very short time for analysis.
3. How much is the Met Council wasting on the Grass Roots PR firm? NO added value in our opinion.
4. NO mitigation strategies for petroleum or ethanol accidents from freight traffic only a few feet away – no emergency exits

MPLS- 10

2/10/14

It seems very apparent that you will not abort this route or this project no matter what! I am frustrated. Who thought it was a good idea to put LRT through a greenway & over waterways?! What about the turtles, fox, deer, loons, birds, agrets, blue herons?

MPLS-11

2/10/14

Why was the final planning of freight, reroute left to the very end of the planning process? Were Hennepin County planners and Met Council plan incapable of doing the freight analysis competently? It is said that the best route was chosen when in fact you haven't found a workable route even yet.

MPLS- 12

Clearly no input makes any impact – 4 years and while everyone comes out – nothing we have said has had any impact at all

MPLS- 13

2/10/14

1. Please take away the freight lines as was previously promised
2. NO co-location!
3. Phase 2 water research should be completed before a project decision can be reached
4. We should have the results of the DEIS before a decision is made.

MPLS- 14

2/10/14

We must not have co-location. The shallow tunnel is co-location! Freight Rails must not be moved closer to homes in order to co-locate in Kenilworth. Co-location with shallow tunnels will permanently damage the natural environment. Hundreds of mature trees will be gone. Freight closer to homes with no tree breaks! In & out of a tunnel is disastrous!!!

MPLS- 15

2/10/14

Outside the box thinking should be used!

Look at taking the LRT down the greenway & let the freight stay on the Kennilworth. Use a frequent bus or trolley from Henn or Lyndale area to take LRT riders to all parts of down town.

*We need to protect the Regional Park!

MPLS- 16

2/10

Putting the LRT at grade through the Kenilworth Corridor reminds me of the Joanie Mitchell song: "They paved paradise and put up a parking lot." What a Terrible shame to destroy a beautiful area.

MPLS- 17

2-9-14

Re Route the LRT

Bad plan through residential neighborhoods & parkland. What part of NO don't you understand? Back to the drawing board, please.

Run LRT where people live & where small & neighborhood businesses can develop. The people do not support SWLRT. Political enforcement is not democracy.

MPLS- 18

Why is the cost of facilitating the railroad in this location puzzle a part of the cost of this project? This is a public transportation project – not a \$\$ project to serve RR needs – The RR's they have an entirely different set of rules & regulations & seem to be independent decision-makers.

MPLS- 19

10 Feb 2014

Insufficient modeling & testing of the effort of an a natural disaster has not been completed. Give-changing climate patterns. The project team should present to the public what would have to take place to corrupt our beautiful lakes and the dry basements of our neighbors. This should take the form of a stress test. Probabilities and outcomes should be disclosed and discussed with the public.

MPLS- 20

Feb 10, 2014

We have these public involvement processes to avoid the outcome for which we are headed: a small group disproportionately bearing the negative impacts of the project while realizing few of the benefits. With the elimination of the 21st Street station (which I agree with) you deprived Kenwood residents of the benefits of the SWLRT. Concurrently, your plan increased the negative impacts on the neighborhood. Your plan should spend as much time, money and attention on mitigating negative impacts as you are saving by eliminating 21st Str. Station, as is @ stake from Feds and as you are prepared to spend for suburban enhancements. As it stands, you propose to add noise and pollution to the neighborhood, endanger our lakes and destroy our bike path, all while cutting us off from access to the SWLRT. \$140M for a deep tunnel seems entirely reasonable.

MPLS- 21

2.10.2013

This is nothing but a disaster –a waste, a horrendous waste of taxpayer dollars and a CATASTROPHE for the environment! This WILL NOT SERVE either the people or suburb, or Minneapolis! END THIS BOONDOOGLE NOW or Reroute to Lake, Hennepin, Lyndale or Nicollet-ANYWHERE There's actual PEOPLE and our precious lakes are not as risk!!

Sincerely,

MPLS- 22

Feb 10 2014

Please stop this alignment. Please move it to a neighborhood that needs transit.

MPLS- 23

2/10/14

Reconsider the alignment. Locate the rail where people live--.

MPLS- 24

2/10/14

Municipal consent is being asked for from communities all along the SWLRT route; why is Met Council positioning a negotiated “buy” of the critical consent “paying for” another mpls project (such as, the Midtown Greenway/Trolley Project)?

These decisions need to be made in the purest sense, not because they are gained by political buyout. Integrity!

MPLS- 25

2/10/14

re: Kenilworth

Slides of artist renderings of all scenerios – aka SLP.org would be very helpful.

Although it’s obvious that nothing we have to say holds any sway.

What’s at stake: is an extremely beautiful, heavily-used public space that adds great value & property value to the metro area.

Comment Cards

**02/12/14 SWLRT Town Hall Meeting
St. Louis Park High School**

SLP-01

2-12-14

These meetings are such a waste of time. There are hidden agendas of the Met Council-> to the point they are working our city when proposing the re-route. The Kenilworth option is the only option. There is nothing there except some shitty apts & nothing to see. Yet you would rather destroy a school & community. Just try it & see what happens.

SLP-02

2-13-14

It's simple. Keeping freight in Kenilworth corridor is the safest, least intrusive, and most viable alternative. Move the bike path!

SLP-03

2/12/14

Kenilworth Corridor is clearly the choice! Cheapest, Safest, Least Impact (only bicycle trail impacted), Serve the most people, Most Direct Route, Fastest to So Suburbs, and Mostly in place. No Question!

SLP-04

2-12-2014

WE DON'T WANT THE FREIGHT RAIL REROUTE.

SLP-05

2-12-14

- Leave freight as is, Deep bore for LRT under the Kenilworth channel
- OR re-route LRT to population centers-Uptown, Eat Street & Mpls Conv. Center
- All world class cities connect LRT to their convention centers
- Eden Prairie businesses are then directly connected to Conv. Center & Airport

SLP-06

2-12-14

The TransSystem reports leave many unanswered questions on traffic flow through the Lake St./Walker Ave/Dakota Ave. area. The treatment of Hwy 7 frontage road in front of my building at 6416 Hwy 7 has a major impact on the property, yet appears to be based on no examination of elevations and conflicting transit flows. It really calls into question the thoroughness and validity of this study – and its value to ongoing SWLRT discussions. This is just one example of the many areas in which the study appears to be careless & hurried

SLP-07

2/12/2014

long-time SLP Resident

"We don't need a train running through the center of St. Louis Park" I don't want to lose my apartment and I don't want the railroad to take away homes, schools, and McDonalds. STOP

SLP-08

2-12-14

The cost is just too high to build and maintain the train.
Rapid Bus Service makes much more sense!"

SLP-09

2-12-2014

THE MET COUNCIL CONTINUES TO BE NON-RESPONSIVE TO US, AND IN LOCK-STEP.

SLP-10

Feb 12'2014

As a business owner affected by these plans it is very frustrating to make plans regarding the future of our business. Prior to a year ago all signs pointed towards development was going to be towards the North side of the tracks. All that changed a year ago, to the point of all 3 of our properties have been targeted at various points.

- What will happen to the access to our property at the corner of Lake St & Brownlow?
- Is there going to be a service road at the level of highway 7 under the bridge near Walker St?
- Why isn't the bike trail reroute on the table?

SLP-11

2/12/2014

Can you put freight rail in the tunnels in Kenilworth?

- run light rail at grade (quieter)
- hide freight rail in tunnels
- no reroute necessary

SLP-12

February 12th, 2014

I have little doubt that this hearing is just as much a sham as all the other hearings and reports have been. Time after time, a freight reroute has been shown to be impractical, more expensive than collocation and markedly less safe. Yet, the county keeps cooking the books and hiring new consultants in an attempt to fit a square peg into a round hole.

The continued re-evaluation of freight reroutes has served to erode this entire community's faith in our elected AND appointed officials, our state agencies and even in the democratic process. You have driven a wedge between Minneapolis and SLP which will take DECADES to heal, if they are ever actually healed.

SLP-13

2/12/2014

WHY IS THE ST. LOUIS PARK PLAN ON THE TABLE WHEN A VIABLE SAFER RAIL CORRIDOR IS AVAILABLE IN MINNEAPOLIS?

HOW MUCH DO I NEED TO CONTRIBUTE TO GOV. DAYTON'S CAMPAIGN TO HAVE THE FREIGHT REROUTE TAKEN OFF THE VIABLE OPTIONS LIST?

SLP-14

2-11-4

The closing of 29th & 28th may not seem important and you say you will put a thru on 27th. 28th Street is the main entry for emergency vehicles to the Birchwood Neighborhood. 27th will not be as close or quick – you need to rethink this.

SLP-15

2.12.14

THE REASON FREIGHT REROUTE IS STILL ON THE TABLE IN SPITE OF VIOLENT COMMUNITY OPPOSITION IS THAT SOMEONE'S GOAL IS TO CREATE A PRISTINE, FREIGHT FREE KENILWORTH CORRIDOR IN ORDER TO PROTECT VERY VALUABLE REAL ESTATE INVESTMENTS ADJACENT. MIGHT BE MET COUNCIL MEMBERS, MIGHT BE HENNEPIN CTY COMMISSIONERS OR THEIR FRIENDS OR RELATIVES. WE DON'T KNOW EXACTLY WHAT IT IS. YET.

SLP-16

Feb 12/14

RECONSIDER THE LPA – REVISIT LRT IN UPTOWN TO CBD –

SLP-17

2/12/14

This "new" option from TranSystems is just a slight redo of the other option with berms. It still necessitates a huge NO to this reroute for safety, cost, community impact. Please take the relocation option off the table for good!

SLP-18

2-12-14

IF THE PLAN/DESIGN IS NOT TO UNDULY IMPACT THE SURROUNDING COMMUNITY, HOW IS THE REROUTE STILL ON THE TABLE? IT TAKES NUMEROUS PROPERTIES AND BUSINESSES, BLOCKS/CLOSES ROADWAYS, IMPACTS SCHOOLS AND TRANSPORTATION TO THE SCHOOLS, AND PUTS OUR KIDS IN HARMS WAY. WHAT IS YOUR DEFINITION OF UNDULY IMPACTING A NEIGHBORHOOD? PLEASE CONSIDER MOVING A BIKE TRAIL OR USING AN EXISTING CORRIDOR FOR THE FREIGHT RATHER THAN DESTROY A COMMUNITY.

SLP-19

2-12-14

Kenilworth Corridor Vegetation Inventory. Why is there no St. Louis Park Safety Inventory?

Mitigation re: freight re-route. Where's the data? Why aren't mitigation costs included in the re-route cost totals? Why is there no St. Louis Park Cost Mitigation Inventory (over please)

Can you guarantee that St. Louis Park will be as safe as it is now, if freight traffic is re-routed? If not, why not?

What are the current railroad standards for putting rail past schools & in residential neighborhoods?

Besides safety & mitigation costs, what are the livability costs and standards?

SLP-20

2-12-14

1. WOULD IT MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE TO THE RAILROADS IF THE LRT DID NOT GO DOWN KENILWORTH?
2. WHAT IMPACT WILL THERE BE ON THE SHALLOW TUNNELS WITH VIBRATIONS FROM THE TRAINS?
3. HOW WILL THE HEAVY RAIL AFFECT HOME VALUES FOR THOSE WITHIN 2-4 BLOCKS OF THE RAILROAD LINES?

SLP-21

2/12/14

The Kenilworth Corridor was chosen for faster commuter times from Eden Prairie to Minneapolis. However, there is already express bus service from the southwest suburbs to downtown. Could the

Uptown route for light rail be reconsidered, and more express buses offered and commuter rail service between the southwest suburbs and Minneapolis?

SLP-22

At the last meeting, we were asked what we wanted to see from the process. Unless we are going to go back and start with the selection of the LPA and compare costs and community impacts with the freight rail included in the analysis, I don't care about the process. Unless we are going to really look at the least expensive options, I don't care about the process. The process for years was manipulated and skewed to produce a pre determined outcome.

I do care about the result. The result I want to see is a safe, livable community in St. Louis Park that is not irreparably damaged by this proposed reroute.

The various reroute options that have been presented over the years have been shown to be unsafe, uneconomical for the railroad, hugely expensive and destructive to our community. Yet every time we turn around, we see the same plan wrapped in different colored paper. It's time to remove the dark cloud from our community and let us take down our signs and do things beside attend meeting after meeting. Take the reroute option off the table for good.

SLP-23

2/12/14

If the same criteria was used for the MN&S as other routes, the MN&S would be eliminated also. Community impacts & taking of property being some. We again lose homes, business & this time a school. Then cost. This is not a 'reroute' but a major construction of a new railway, since the MN&S is not adequate. There were absolutely no details presented about the reroute other than a line on Google maps. There is no way to inform anyone about this 'new concept'. I have also seen two other maps/drawings that have not been presented. This is a major impact to our community yet information is being withheld.

SLP-24

Feb 12 2014

Why isn't the plan to move the bike trail back on the table? It MUST be! Don't play politics with St. Louis Park children's safety and SLP quality of life. This "plan" to re-route freight to SLP is UNJUST, This "plan" to re-route is inadequate to even consider – it is very unconvincing – it is irresponsible – it is unethical.

SLP-25

2/11/14

The shallow tunnel & freight through Kenilworth seems to meet the needs of all communities. They do not unduly impact either St. Louis Park or Mpls. Fair is fair!

SLP-26

2/12/2014

SLP residents are flabbergasted as to why a reroute through St. Louis Park is still on the table. There are, in fact other viable options. Moving a small section of the trail remains the least expensive. Kenilworth corridor is not an official Park Land. It has always been, from its inception, a corridor for trains! Don't compromise the viability and safety of St. Louis Park & it's children!

SLP-27

2-12-14

The delay and this report are insulting. The passage of the shallow tunnel option was nearly a done deal and seems to have been swept aside for politics. DO NOT reroute freight rail through St. Louis Park. We will not rest until this terrible, dangerous, expensive option is 100 percent off the table. NO back-room deals, no loopholes. I almost cannot believe the words "objections to (moving the bike trail) included visual impacts and difficulties getting on and off the trails..." Unbelievably small potatoes compared with the berms, noise, disruption, vibrations, potential derailment, and loss of homes and businesses being proposed in St. Louis Park.

Enough Already!

SLP-28

February 12, 2014

The Kenilworth Corridor & the upper chain of lacks are beautiful places for residents in this area. Do not destroy it by putting LRT at grade. A shallow tunnel costs \$ but it solves all of our problems w/freight, safety & keeping this area quiet & beautiful.

SLP-29

2-12-14

When was the last time a ridership study was done to project the volume of use of the Lightrail line, given its current route through the Kenilworth corridor? That study should be done now, so the cost of building & operating the line, per rider, can be projected; and based on that analysis it should be determined if this project is cost effective public transport.

SLP-30

2-12-14

The Met Council claims they want to engage the public, but ignores the fact that the most common complaint in Mpls is that we want the LRT alignment to change because it isn't the best alignment in terms of when density & ridership. The Met Council repeats that to go back to the LPA will mean we would fall out of the federal queue. I have written to Peter Rogoff (DOT head) to ask if he will hold our place in line while we go back to the LPA because the freight issue was never dealt with. If the MET Council & all public officials were to ask if the clock could be stopped and hold our place in line, perhaps we could go back to the LPA and get a better more successful alignment. This would mean the freight could stay in Kenilworth. If the freight stays-LRT must go. If you try to move freight to St. Louis Park you won't get municipal consent. If you collocate in Mpls through Kenilworth, you won't get Municipal consent. The ONLY option where you'll get municipal consent is if you change the LRT alignment

SLP-31

2-12-14

In Minneapolis there is concern over changing the aesthetics of Kenilworth Corridor. In St. Louis Park we are worried about derailments and train traffic affecting the safety of our children and a quiet learning environment in our schools.

SLP-32

2/12/14

Given the recent derailments of freight trains around the country often carrying noxious and explosive cargo, how can you ignore the potentially catastrophic consequences of running heavy, 115 car freight trains at 25 mph right by a large metropolitan high school, St. Louis Park High?! Relocating freight from a freight yard, the straight, level, with Kenilworth corridor to St. Louis Park with its narrow, curved track

bed which changes grade and runs through neighborhoods & by schools makes no sense! What's more the safety concerns of St. Louis Park are hardly allayed by the Transsystem option!!

SLP-33

2-12-2014

The Kenilworth Corridor options (collocation) STRONGLY SUPPORTS THE GOALS across the board. both the shallow tunnel option & the cheaper all above grade w/relocation of bike trail option. MN&S South alternate does not strongly support even one of the goals. Trees can be replanted-I am fine w/shallow or even deep bored tunnel plans - & willing to pay w/my tax dollars.

SLP-34

2/12/14

Please stop re-stating facts that we have known for years & that we are frequently updated/reminded of. Please focus on ACTION steps for resolution of freight issue. Shallow tunnel or moving bike path are viable options wheras re-route has too many safety issues. Bike riders like myself will use a relocated path, but, freight re-route & high berms will create a division of SLP Standards of living.

SLP-35

2-12-14

Mpls options were eliminated due to the taking of properties. However now the re-route through St. Louis Park that does require the taking of properties is back on the table. The same criteria that applies to Mpls, must be applied to St. Louis Park to be fair.

SLP-36

2-12-14

Bring back the bike route option and moving the bike trail. It is the most cost effective options for co-locating the light rail and freight rail. It does not require taking properties. It is the lowest cost alternatives and needs to be reconsidered. We asked the question several times about why the option was taken off the table. The Met Council danced around the question without answering it honestly. They seem to have a memory lapse on the issue.

SLP-37

2-12-2014

Why not up the greenway or up high 394 The greenway – Please Please Please consider this; why one rich neighborhood to another, when you could have multicultural ridership and leave Kenwood & SLP out of it.

SLP-38

2/12/90

Please put the LRT up in the greenway. The fight would be over and people in non affluent neighborhoods could have transportation.

SLP-39

2/14/2014

The CMC needs to reconsider the option to move the bike path and ALL options must be included in the final report with OBJECTIVE criteria applied to ALL with no criteria left out. Be Transparent!

SLP-40

2-14-2014

As a St. Louis Park taxpayer and resident since 1970, I would like to affirm our wonderful school system and community. I do not favor any more freight rail near our schools.

SLP-41

2/12/2014

As a long time resident of St. Louis Park and PA announcer numerous High School athletic events. I strongly oppose the rerouting of freight rail through the city. My girlfriend, who lives at the corner of Lake St & Library Lane would lose her home as well as many other residents and it would also raze other businesses in the area. I feel that collocation is the best potential solution for LRT. We don't want SLP to suffer because of this loss. We want it to prosper and make it a viable community for residents. As for the stadium, the proposed reroute would take away the newly installed turf field which is also used by community groups. It would deny future athletes the opportunity to use the turf.

SLP-42

Feb. 12, 2014

St. Louis Park has been named one of the Top 100 Communities for Kids for 6 years running. This demonstrates our community's commitment to putting Children First. We ask that you also put our Children first!

Thank you-

STEP Volunteer & SLP Parent

SLP-43

12-FEB-2014

SWLRT is a mistake our population density of around 6,000 is far short of the 14,000 needed for "viability" (a word you like)

Buses cheaper, more flexible and people would like them better if they had to pay the unsubsidized cost.

SLP-44

2-12-14

This entire process has been an extremely frustrating process. I have attended these meetings for almost four years and have felt that my voice and comments have been ignored. The comments are not addressed and questions are not answered honestly

SLP-45

2-12-14

The new re-route does not clearly identify or include if it does not cost estimates for the acquisition of properties and businesses nor does it include any costs estimates for mitigation or safety or environmental. There needs to be noise and vibration studies.

SLP-46

2/12/2014

-Why won't you hold a vote on LRT and put it on the ballot. With a \$1.8 billion price tag, why isn't this being voted on by the public?

-With the increase of population estimated for communities along the Lightrail corridor, has any consideration been made on the impact of increased school enrollments and the impacts it will have on each school district?

-Since trains run on electric power it will have an impact on power stations throughout the Twin Cities. Will you need to upgrade power stations to meet the needs of light rail trains and if so, who is going to pay for these upgrades?

-My other concern is that Light Rail needs to be refurbished and updated every 30 years at a cost equal to or more than the original cost to build

-The Urban Land Institute says the minimum density needed to support light rail is 14,720 people per square mile. The population density along the proposed LRT route is only 5,600 per square mile according to the federal transit administration. Without the population density for this to succeed, why is LRT being forced on us?

-Lastly, the Met Council is overstepping its boundaries & authority by forcing Light Rail on the Twin Cities.

SLP-47

Prepared Comments from St. Louis Park Mayor Jeff Jacobs

Metropolitan Council SWLRT Town Hall/Community Meetings

Feb. 12, 2014

Good evening. My name is Jeff Jacobs and I'm the Mayor of St. Louis Park. I'd like to welcome you to our community and thank you for listening to the comments and concerns that you're hearing tonight. Most importantly, I'd like to thank you for listening to the facts.

I stand here before you tonight not just as a longtime mayor and resident of St. Louis Park, but as a representative of a unified St. Louis Park City Council that has been a consistent supporter of the SWLRT project. We have also been consistent in our long-standing position that we will not support re-routing freight rail traffic in our community if other viable options exist. And we repeat that position tonight.

The St. Louis Park City Council is united in its belief that a decision on a freight rail route must be decided on the facts which have emerged over months and months of study, discussions and deliberations.

Please indulge me as I share some of these facts.

The TranSystems plan for rerouting trains in St. Louis Park is not materially different from the plans that have already been rejected.

It also fails to include an effective or accurate cost comparison between its suggested route and the previously identified routes. For example, the TranSystems cost estimate does not include:

- the cost of property acquisition or relocating residents, businesses or the community's emergency assistance program and food shelf called STEP;
- it does not include additional costs for construction on the former National Lead superfund site or costs of mitigation for lost wetland or the many other mitigation needs previously identified; and
- it does not include any costs for the so-called "clipping" of the Xcel Energy substation.

But even though we don't know yet what the cost of the TranSystems plan would be, we do know that there are at least five viable combined LRT and freight rail options in the Kenilworth corridor. And, in fact, TranSystems has acknowledged that routing freight rail in the Kenilworth Corridor is viable.

So let us be very clear about the two freight rail options before you, and what it would require to undertake the at-grade LRT and TranSystems St. Louis Park plan as compared to the Kenilworth freight rail and LRT options:

The TranSystems St. Louis Park plan requires taking homes and businesses. The Kenilworth option recommended by the Corridor Management Committee does not.

The TranSystems plan requires over 3,000 feet of new freight rail bridges. The Kenilworth options do not.

The TranSystems plan requires lowering a state highway by three to four feet. The Kenilworth options do not.

The TranSystems plan requires the construction of 4,500 feet of retaining walls. The at-grade Kenilworth options do not.

The TranSystems plan would require closure of important local streets and rerouting traffic circuitously around schools and within neighborhoods. The Kenilworth options do not.

The TranSystems plan would require raising the elevation of the tracks, which in some places will be over 20 feet above adjacent single-family yards. The at-grade Kenilworth options do not.

The TranSystems plan would require elevated trains to “clip” a major Xcel substation site. The Kenilworth options do not.

And the TranSystems plan has trains that will pass close enough to a high school to disrupt learning and create safety issues each time they pass. The Kenilworth options do not.

There is an option that has already been proven as viable, recommended by Met Council staff and endorsed by the Corridor Management Committee by a nearly unanimous vote: freight rail continuing to exist at grade and the use of shallow tunnels for LRT in the Kenilworth corridor.

The Met Council has indicated its goal is not to select the cheapest route to accommodate freight and light rail, but to select the best overall solution. This shallow tunnel option is not the least expensive option, but we believe the shallow tunnel option meets this goal. We also believe this option is fair to both Minneapolis and St. Louis Park.

Under that plan:

- St. Louis Park would continue to have freight traffic just like it does today and experience light rail traffic at grade through the community too.
- The Kenilworth corridor would continue to have freight traffic just like it does today. And light rail trains would travel through the Kenilworth Corridor too, but they would be almost entirely hidden underground instead of travelling past homes and valued green space.

The shallow tunnel plan has been on the table for months. It’s undergone intense scrutiny and it has enjoyed strong support from corridor leaders. It is a sound solution selected through a transparent and thorough process.

If that process can't be respected and a reroute through the core of St. Louis Park is back on the table, then all of the less costly Kenilworth options need to be back on the table too, including freight and light rail both at grade.

All of these facts make clear that there is a fair, viable option for locating both freight and light rail in the Kenilworth Corridor. If instead those facts are ignored and the rerouting of trains in St. Louis Park is viewed as the chosen option, it will be difficult for the St. Louis Park City Council to see a path forward to municipal consent.

In closing, let me say once again how much we appreciate you taking time to listen to our community. We look forward to working with the Metropolitan Council to bring the SWLRT project to completion. Thank you.

SLP-48

February 12, 2014

Susan Haigh, Chair
Metropolitan Council
390 Robert Street North
Saint Paul, MN 55101

Dear Chair Haigh and Metropolitan Council Members:

The St. Louis Park School Board is opposed to the TranSystem option to relocate freight rail traffic in St. Louis Park, traveling only 35 feet from our high school parking lot and within 85 feet of classrooms. The proposal substantially and unacceptably increases the safety risks to our students and families, and creates negative educational impacts. Moreover, the report proposing relocation is riddled with factual errors, and fails to consider any of the concerns we raised in our previous letters of October 31, 2008, June 13, 2011, and July 11, 2013.

Apparently the authors of the report never visited the affected St. Louis Park schools. For example, the chart on page 27 refers to Central Junior High which closed in 1980, but 500 elementary (Park Spanish Immersion, 'PSI') and another 500 preschool students are housed in the Central building today. The chart also refers to St. Louis Park Independent Study, a reference which is unclear to the district today, but may refer to short-lived alternative programs at the high school.

Most importantly, the measurements are inaccurate as well. The St. Louis Park High School is listed at 115' from the MN&S tracks when in reality the high school parking lot is approximately 35' from the centerline of the tracks. The southeast corner of the building is 75' from the centerline to the tracks, and there is classroom space within 80-85' of the tracks.

Significantly, the TC&W does not approve this reroute proposal. Mark Wegner, President of the TC&W said a preliminary look at the latest plan shows it shares some of the elements of the rejected options, citing curves and changes in elevation that pose safety hazards. President Wegner said the plan still poses a risk of derailment for modern trains with 110 cars that stretch and bunch up in and out of curves and up and down elevations. (Star Tribune, February 6, 2014)

Given these errors, we are particularly troubled by the very short time frame allowed to consider this very conceptual report, and the Metropolitan Council's plan to choose an option without fully studying the safety, educational, environmental, and traffic impacts of this new proposal. Nor do we know the cost of this route. We will summarize the concerns we have based on the limited information available, including those related to possible mitigation, in this letter.

Increased Safety Risks for Students

Our primary concern is always the safety of the 1450 students in our high school, the over 500 students in each of the elementary schools located very near to the reroute, Peter Hobart and Park Spanish Immersion (PSI), and the hundreds of preschool students also located in the Central Community Center.

The proposed upgrade of the MN&S track to 25 mph, coupled with the restricted view a train engineer has around the curves as the train approaches the Dakota Avenue and Library Lane crossings, will limit the time and distance the engineer has to stop the train in the event of an emergency. This creates a significant safety risk because not only do students have to cross the tracks on Dakota Avenue to reach the athletic field, there is a McDonald's restaurant directly across the tracks which is frequented by many students and staff.

Drawings of the proposed closing of Lake Street indicate that the reroute would convert the southeastern high school parking lot into a public road. If so, this road would pass within a few feet of the high school running track and the actual high school building. This is a stunning suggestion. This new street would end at Dakota Avenue just at the point where the track also intersects with Dakota, as described in the previous paragraph.

In addition the reroute proposes closing some or all of Walker Street, Lake Street and Library Lane, critical streets in our current transportation system that requires a tightly timed bus route linking PSI and the high school. The road closings and tenfold increase in trains (both in length and frequency), as well as the construction process, pose significant operational concerns to the St. Louis Park School District. The School District has staggered school start times so the same buses can run several routes; thereby reducing transportation expense and freeing up money for classroom teachers. The blockage of key intersections with traffic delays will upset the timely running of the bus routes, in turn disrupting school start times and raising safety concerns for children left waiting on street corners for delayed buses. This is an added safety concern, especially during our Minnesota winters.

Any adjustments in the bus transportation design and schedule due to traffic delays will increase district transportation expenses and pull dollars away from the classroom. Restricting railroad operations for 30 to 60 minute windows twice a day is one option that could help. We expect that compensation for any related increase in transportation costs would be part of the mitigation.

Educational Harm

The initial studies found a net gain in noise based on a conservative estimate of the combined traffic of the current and future operations. However these are measures of the average noise over a 24-hour period, which is not what brings the learning process in a classroom to a complete halt. It is the

intermittent noise of a train that currently causes instruction in the high school classrooms near the tracks to halt, an experience that would be extended in its frequency and length.

In addition, we already experience problems with ceiling mounted projection equipment in the southern part of the high school due to vibrations from passing trains. This, too, would increase, causing additional educational interruptions and expense to the district.

While a quiet zone near the high school has been mentioned, it would involve barriers that would make it impossible to turn left from Dakota into one of our two parking lots. This lot is next to the entrance to our athletic facilities and is used by many school buses as well as cars each day.

Our letter of June 13, 2011, discussed possible mitigation steps including building new classrooms on the north side of the building, replacing windows and adding air conditioning, as well as using cement ties for the track. Yet we do not know if those will be sufficient for now or the future, because there have not been any long-term estimates of changing rail traffic. The report notes that the rail industry is growing, tracks are becoming sparse (increasing use of existing tracks), and the trend is toward heavier loads, longer trains (the report notes 125 car trains), and heavier locomotives. At a minimum the noise, vibration and safety impacts of this new design ought to be studied before a decision is made about this proposal.

Community Harm

The rerouting of the track southwest of the high school harms our community by potentially isolating the athletic field and eliminating the already tight parking. While we often refer to it as the football field, it is our stadium field. It is the site of physical education classes for elementary students at PSI in Central, decades of high school graduation ceremonies, and practices and games for our soccer, lacrosse, football and other teams. We recently installed artificial turf as a cost of \$1 million to increase school and community athletic and recreational use of this asset. The noise from the increased freight traffic and reduced access risks making this community asset unusable except for the most basic recreational uses.

The reroute still requires berms, which increase the risk to students and community members passing to and from our stadium field, PSI and Central Community Center and the high school. Noise will travel further, and any derailment risks trains rolling further from the track. While we trust safety will be a priority in design, derailments are a fact of life and no one can guarantee they will not occur.

Our district relies heavily on the generosity of our community members, both residents and businesses, who have supported school levy referendums for many years. This proposal eliminates homes and businesses, thereby reducing the tax base, which could have a long-term impact on district finances, affecting our ability to serve our students. In particular we are concerned about the proposed loss of the building housing STEP, the St. Louis Park food and clothing service for low income families, many of whom are students in St. Louis Park schools.

Setting Priorities

None of this happens in the Kenilworth corridor. Should the St. Louis Park option be adopted, the message sent by the Metropolitan Council to the youth of our community will be that freight trains are

more important than our children. That's not what we believe in St. Louis Park, where we receive national recognition annually for our "Children First" philosophy and practice. We expect similar consideration from the Metropolitan Council.

For all of the reasons given, including safety, educational, noise, vibration, environmental, and operational impacts and the increase to our costs that takes funds out of the classroom, we the members of the St. Louis Park School Board, on behalf of the children of St. Louis Park schools and our entire community, urge the Metropolitan Council to colocate freight rail and reject the St. Louis Park re-route option.

Sincerely,

Nancy Gores, Chair

Ken Morrison, Treasurer

Bruce Richardson, Director

Julie Sweitzer, Vice-Chair

Joe Tatalovich, Clerk

Karen Waters, Director

Jim Yarosh, Director

cc: Superintendent Rob Metz

Governor Mark Dayton

State Representative Steve Simon

State Representative Ryan Winkler

St. Louis Park City Council Members

U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar

St. Louis Park Schools Staff

Twin West Chamber of Commerce

Parents of St. Louis Park Students

Katie Hatt

Ben Schweigert

Editor, The Patch

Mayor Jeff Jacobs, St. Louis Park

City Manager, St. Louis Park Tom Harmening

Gail Dorfman, Hennepin County

State Senator Ron Latz

U.S. Representative Keith Ellison

U.S. Senator Al Franken

St. Louis Park Public Schools Foundation

Anne Mavity

Ken Kalesh

Marion Greene

Editor, Sun Sailor

Transcript of Public Comments

**02/10/14 SWLRT Town Hall Community Meeting
Dunwoody College of Technology, Minneapolis**

Panel:

- Metropolitan Council Chair Sue Haigh
- Metropolitan Council Member Gary Cunningham
- Metropolitan Council Member Adam Duininck
- Metropolitan Council Member Jennifer Munt
- Della Young, Environmental Consultant, Burns & McDonnell
- Jeff Thuma, Hydro-Geologist, Burns & McDonnell
- Jim Terry, Freight Rail Consultant, TranSystems
- Jim Alexander, Director of Design and Engineering, Southwest LRT Project Office
- Mark Fuhrmann, Project Director, Southwest Project Office
- Dan Cramer, President of Engagement, Grassroots Solutions

Verbal Comment 01

Commenter: What happens with the phase two of the studies where you are worried about contamination? What happens if you do not have a way to mitigate those issues?

Jim Alexander: Part of our process, we would ordinarily go through an environmental site assessment, phase one. What that is a paper study to take a look what type of contaminants may be in the ground along the alignment and subsequent to that information will help inform a phase two, which will look at the soils themselves, we will do explorations to see the soils, so folks know what a phase one and two environmental site assessment will look like. Those are part of any project of this magnitude. And so if we go through a phase two and we find containments that helps inform us on the cost of the project as we get into construction so that we know what we are up against when we are digging into the ground. It also helps us understand how we deal with construction. If there are certain contaminants that we need to have special treatment for, or we need to have special disposal for those types of materials. It is to help us understand what type of risks we have as we move into the construction phase of the project.

Verbal Comment 02

Commenter: My questions relates to the recommendations. Are these, do these recommendations need to be satisfied before a decision is made on the route?

Jim Alexander: I would just point out that most, if not all of the recommendation that have been made, we are already looking to implement. Like for example, Della Young spoke of the 50 year flood design, we have already bumped that up to 100 year design as it is really inconsequential, just an incremental difference that doesn't really impact the project. So we are moving forward with the recommendations in our design.

Verbal Comment 03

Commenter: Thank for your presentation, Della. Could you say more about what these infiltration chambers are, and where they would be located and how many you would need along the tunnels?

Della Young: I will start with what an infiltration chamber is and Jim can address the rest, the design we looked at addressed placing infiltration chambers but not the specific locations because the phase two will help guide where those would go. But, an infiltration chamber is an underground box with sand and gravel and other course materials to help filter the water, so as the water comes in, it will go through the sand layer and then go into ground water

Jim Alexander: In terms of the location, we have not yet gotten to that stage of where they will be located and how large they will be. They will likely be close to the portals if we can but we need to look at the design as we move forward. Particularly on the southern section, it is a little tight in the Right of Way so we need to find opportunities to locate these.

Verbal Comment 04

Commenter: Thank you, I have questions and comments about, well more about the route. If...

Dan Cramer: We will have an opportunity to go on to more general question after the presentations of the reports if you could save your comments until then.

Commenter: Ok, kind of relates to the water but ok.

Dan Cramer: Well if it relates to the water, go ahead.

Commenter: Well, I just want to know why we are risking contaminating our water, how expensive is it going to be to deal with all of this and if we are looking at going in a tunnel, why put the tunnel by the water, there are so many other places in the city that we could put tunnels and then there won't be stations for people to ride in that section anyway. I don't understand why put the tunnels by the water and risk an unforeseen problem like that apartment did. That was unforeseen; they only anticipated doing that for a couple months. So my question, why tunnel and risk our water?

Jim Alexander: Maybe I could speak to the 1800 Lake situation that was mentioned. Maybe everyone doesn't know what the situation is there. Basically, it is a condominium that is northeast of Lake Calhoun and it is down into the ground water and there is about 180 gallons per minute being discharged with that construction now it is in operation. This project is anticipated to be on the order of maybe 10-15 gallons per minute of discharge into ground water, to give you an idea of the order of magnitude difference between the two. What we are designing this project to accommodate for the groundwater. The type of construction is not really out of the ordinary, we have seen this done in LA, done in St. Louis in Canada, Winnipeg, Austria. In fact, with these types of projects, we have two lines of defense to really prevent ground water from entering the tunnels; some of those projects only have one line of defense and are working successfully. So I am not sure if I have answered all of your questions, maybe you have more a philosophical question about tunneling.

Chair Haigh: I believe that the question you are asking is: "why are we doing a tunnel here?" The tunnel here is to accommodate both the existing condition on the trail and the freight rail that is already on the corridor and allow for continuation of the use of the trail for bike and pedestrian use. So the tunnel is to accommodate both of those uses in the area with this alignment.

Verbal Comment 05

Commenter: I am curious about how much additional study would be needed to evaluate the impact on ground water or lake water for putting a tunnel underneath the channel? As opposed to running freight and light rail above the channel.

Jim Alexander: We actually looked at a deep bore tunnel and many of you know that was one of our options. Essentially, we would have a deep tunnel along the full alignment as well as under the channel and that was brought to the Corridor Management Committee that was mentioned, in the September

time frame and primarily, as I recall, due to the cost that option was voted to not proceed for the project.

Commenter: That wasn't my question.

Dan Cramer: Restate the question then.

Commenter: How much additional consulting work will be needed to evaluate, would be needed, to evaluate putting a tunnel underneath the channel.

Della Young: That is something we did not look at when we, our specific look was at the shallow tunnel option. If that was to be proposed there would need to be an additional look and what that would take. There are different professionals to look at the situation. We did not look at that.

Jim Alexander: I would just say going back the timeframe of the summer. Both of those options of the shallow tunnel and the deep bore tunnel were advanced equally as we looked at the options.

Verbal Comment 06

Commenter: I just wanted to understand the underground infiltration chambers and that you are doing a 100 year design versus a 50 year design and what the difference was?

Della Young: In looking at the analysis that was done for the project. It was statistically insignificant the difference. Something like .26 arches feet of volume versus .3. As it relates to design, the error factor it just lead itself to say, go with the higher event because if you rounded it up you would be at the same number for the small areas that are actually draining to the portal areas.

Commenter: You are just saying that there would be more draining in a 100 year event than a 50 and so you are just making more areas for them to go into?

Della Young: To some degree. So usually what is done for these projects is you look at the area that is draining to your device, so in this case you have a storm water infiltration chamber and there is an area going to it, so you simulate a rain coming from 50 year event and a 100 year event and you design for that volume. Given the difference in the numbers that they looked at, they were so close that it just made sense to go with the higher number.

Verbal Comment 07

Commenter: Thanks for the presentation. Could you go to the slide that says a "project understanding construction"? Yeah, I have a question about the actual construction of the shallow tunnel. When we talked to other engineers at public forums, there was mention that the shallow tunnel was above the water table. But this suggests that during the excavation that there would be water coming in during construction. I am wondering what impact that would have on construction costs and the construction timetable? And then I have another question about where the egress emergency exits would be along the two tunnels and how that is mitigated for water entrance.

Della Young: If I understood the first question, it had to do with whether or not the shallow tunnel would be below the water table correct?

Commenter: Yes, you show a lot of water here, like a big bath tub.

Della Young: What is happening there is there are parts of the project that will be in the water table and what they are going to do is put sheet pile down and then they are going to seal the bottom. So there will be ground water around the tunnel but it won't be in the tunnel. So this picture is just what happens before the water in the cell is removed, before they go onto the next cell to complete the segment.

Commenter: So what do you do if the freight tracks are just a few feet away from that?

Della Young: The train tracks, if I understood correctly, are moved or nine feet or something like that.

Jim Alexander: Yes, in the southern section where there is a narrower Right of Way we move the freight rail tracks over about three feet to the west to accommodate construction, this is temporary.

Dan Cramer: I am going to move us on.

Commenter: But the other question about the emergency exits. Where would those be?

Jim Alexander: I can address that. Our current design looks at having portals between the west and east bound tracks but the actual exits for our patrons if that needs to be done, they would be coming out of the portals. Remember, there are two tunnels and there is about a 2,200 foot long tunnel on the southern section, south of the channel and north is about a 2,500 foot section.

Verbal Comment 08

Commenter: Thank you, Della. Two quick questions: What is the impact of the soil contaminants on the water, if you look at that when do the cut and cover tunnel? What does that do to the lakes? And then when is Phase Two done? Is it before construction, during construction, after construction?

Della Young: Phase Two is done before construction because it helps guide construction and for your question relating to soil contamination and things like that, that would come out of the Phase Two report and they would be able to address the situation so you are not having contaminated soil or water conditions. I will turn it over to Jim.

Jim Alexander: Yes, as we work on the project we will work with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, as well as the DNR, the Watershed District and the Park Board and the City, and so as we embark on our Phase Two, we are actually looking to go out on procurement this year to get that work done. We should have that wrapped up by the end of the year, well before construction so that it can help us with that construction phase.

Verbal Comment 09

Commenter: I just want to make sure I understand this. This is a cut and cover tunnel, you would be building the U first and then capping it? How deep is that cross section in the water level?

Della Young: It varies, as the proposed design was, that they are below the water table. But we didn't get to that, would it be 10 feet or 15 feet, Jim might have more information.

Jim Alexander: We have been showing a cross section in other open houses, where we have an excavation, I should say the tunnel is about 24 feet deep and so the ground water level about up to, about 1/3 of, that first 3rd from the bottom. Essentially what she is taking about with the cells, we would

have sheet pile walls, a box that is about 130 or so feet and so we would have a series of boxes as we progress from one end to the other. Does that make sense?

Verbal Comment 10

Commenter: Well, first of all Jim and Mark thank you for all your hard work. I do appreciate it. I have two questions? One, how do you make a decision by March 14 or 15 or whenever it is, if we have all these unanswered questions and number two take the money out of the deep bore tunnel, which I don't agree with your numbers, and put it towards the shallow tunnel, would that solve many of the issues with the shallow tunnel that we are talking about tonight?

Chair Haigh: The first question was about how do we make a decision by the end of March based on comments we get today and the St. Louis Park meeting and discussions we have at the Corridor Management Committee. We hope to make that decision by the end of March.

Commenter: Phase Two is not going to be done by the end of March.

Chair Haigh: We would expect Phase Two to be done at that point that we would be making a decision. That would not be a normal process at all. That is something that would get done as we go further into engineering. We will absolutely do a Phase Two, but that it is not even appropriate to think that is would be done at this stage.

Dan Cramer: We can come back to the tunnels during our open section.

Verbal Comment 11

Commenter: This may be a question for the decision makers. Are there any conditions that would preclude going forward with this? Like could you hit a financial wall and say too much is too much?

Chair Haigh: I think right now, I don't think anyone has made up their mind about what they are going to do with this project. I think we are trying to get this information so we have good information to make a decision. So, yes, cost is important, safety is important, community impact is important. I am pleased that we have had this water resources report that provides additional information on the reports that we have. It is good news that we are hearing in this report

Dan Cramer: As a reminder for this section, if people could stay focused on the water reports. We will have plenty of time for all other topics.

Verbal Comment 12

Commenter: Thank you. I am trying to do some quick math here. You got about 4,700 feet of tunnel. This is a water question, and you have 150 foot sections and you have about 25 sections. I am trying to figure out, if you are drilling with eight feet of water, the bottom eight feet. I don't need to know all the technical answers, but then you need to connect those? What is the chance you get leakage, like the big dig in Boston? Where you have leakage at all of those joints and while you don't like the term dewatering, what does that do to the tunnel?

Della Young: As the project is proposed they have things in place to be able to address that specific question. They will have elements, like sealants in those areas and they are proposing a real way to look at the situation. We are not, as we looked at this project, the constructability concerns is where Jim and

his team will look closer, but looking at how much water can actually get into this tunnel as proposed, it is not an active dewatering situation.

Verbal Comment 13

Commenter: The only amount of water I heard tonight was 15 gallons. I mean how expensive this is going, I think that is absurd. I just want to mention that there has been so much manipulation of ground water in this area. Cedar Lake used to drain northeast into Basset Creek. When 394 was built the two springs were killed, the Great Medicine Spring in Theodore Worth Park and Glenwood Spring into the sewer system, 2 and a half million gallons a day. I am looking at this and seeing water hit a wall and I am wondering where that water is going to go? Is it going to under, no because that is water pressure, what is that going to do to the surrounding areas? There are rain events that we can't even imagine, if we keep having the weather we have been having. This is a permitting meeting, we can mitigate anything, we can manage the water. I don't know, I think nature bats last.

Dan Cramer: I didn't hear a question in the statement so we will move on.

Verbal Comment 14

Commenter: This is a follow-up question to the Phase Two. How will Municipal Consent be handled since Phase Two is completed after the request for consent?

Jim Alexander: We again, our normal process, we did this on Central Corridor, we went through this preliminary phase of engineering, we went to municipal consent with the two cities and the County and the site assessment, came later, after that. The site assessment, the environmental site assessment is really to identify contaminants out there to understand what we will be up against when we construct. When we see contaminated materials we will have to deal with those and we have to understand how to dispose of those and how much will that cost. If we are going to own the property, eventually with the light rail, we need to understand what will be exposed to as an owner of that property with the contaminants. In terms in the Municipal Consent, it really doesn't play a part in that process.

Verbal Comment 15

Commenter: So the Met Council is going to be looking at a 100 year event instead of a 50 year event but I can't say I am terribly impressed because we are seeing 100 year drought and 100 year floods every couple years. What I am wondering is whether, if you are doing any more extreme scenario planning for, you know, a flood or some kind of other disaster that we might encounter.

Jim Alexander: I would say we are using the current state of practice. In fact, it has been using the Atlas 14, which might not mean a whole lot to folks, but that is a new standard that is being used for the 100 year flood design and we are using that. That is the current state of practice.

Dan Cramer: So we have about five more minutes for water.

Verbal Comment 16

Commenter: This may seem a little extreme but when I look at it and we are getting creative with ideas, it appears at one point, when I look at this, it is almost like a boat and is there a chance that the water level could actually physically raise the whole unit. I mean on, I just wonder.

Della Young: Jeff is my hydro-geologist.

Jeff Thuma: That is a good question. There is, would be some buoyancy effect, much like a boat and part of the design is to, with the concrete that will be at the base will be a weight so that it is not lifted and that goes into the design, I believe. Is that correct?

Jim Alexander: Yes, our design accounts for buoyancy. So if we have any part of the structure that is under the ground water, things would have a tendency to float, so it has to be heavy enough to keep it down in place. We don't want our structure to be moving.

Verbal Comment 17

Commenter: What was the new standard that you just mentioned?

Jim Alexander: It is called Atlas 14.

Commenter: Ok, so in the past, speaking to what this women behind me spoke to. There have been so many occasions that we are caught by surprise, and so is Atlas 14 at the level of basic compliance or is actually thinking far enough out that it might consider an extraordinary event that we might have not seen so far?

Jim Alexander: That is a difficult question to answer the way you put it. I would say that we are following the current state of practice. The Atlas 14, I don't know, Della, when that came to play?

Della Young: Last year.

Jim Alexander: Just last year and so we are designing to the current state of practice. Just know, your question about the ground water, we have been working with the Park Board to get historical data, so that we understand where the ground water has been level wise, the database has at least 100 years, and we will continue to monitor the ground water as we go through design and get into construction. When we are in operations we will continue to monitor that to ensure things are at safe levels.

Dan Cramer: We have time for one more question on water.

Verbal Comment 18

Commenter: Thank you. Based on what happened to homes along 394, what impact will water displacement and dewatering during construction have on nearby homes given that this being built kind of right next to foundations? And also who would be liable? What, my understanding is that homes in Bryn-Mawr were damaged, homes in Golden Valley were damaged and there was no liability held by MNDot and so what would be the liability and what did your studies find in terms of the homes where this water is being displaced to?

Della Young: Specifically to the evaluation of that was done, we were looking to see if there would be any blockages of flow and if the water can get to where it normally goes and based on course sand aquifer that is below the shallow tunnel, the water is going be able to do what is has historically done. As it relates to the construction and liability, I will have to turn that over to Jim.

Mark Fuhrmann: Thank you. I would just add that, before we start construction on any of these big projects, we do a pre-construction survey of all the adjacent properties and that sets the baseline of the condition of those properties prior to construction so it easier then to assess whether if there has been any impact to those adjacent and abutting structures throughout the course of construction.

Water section concluded. TranSystems Consultant presented draft freight rail routing report.

Verbal Comment 19

Commenter: It is not clear from your map which is new, what is new rail, new track and what is existing track?

Jim Terry: Any particular area you are talking about?

Commenter: The map you showed. I assume all that you showed on that map is new track and everything else is existing?

Jim Terry: Are we talking about the Kenilworth Corridor or St. Louis Park?

Commenter: St. Louis Park

Jim Terry: It is a complete rebuild on the Canadian Pacific portion. By the time I have an elevation getting on the railroad.

Commenter: How much built is not an existing corridor?

Jim Alexander: Hey Jim, you may want to turn to slide 56 and show the map that he is refereeing to.

Jim Terry: Well that does not show all of it. How much of it is on new corridor? Ok, so let's take a look, I break off of this switch by the football field, from here to here is not on current railroad Right of Way. Now on the north end of this connection there is another good third of a mile where a railroad connection was, the iron triangle, and it has been removed. So, depending on new build and what you consider new build, less than a mile.

Commenter: And how many additional trains per day will go through this?

Jim Terry: Right now the Twin Cities & Western runs two interchange trains a day and an interchange train goes to St. Paul and comes back so you could count that as two and they do twice a day, so that is four trains, in addition they normally have a shuttle train, every day on average. I see that business growing so that is five, in addition, today the Canadian Pacific runs two short trains, 15 cars a piece. So that would be total of seven trains a day.

Verbal Comment 20

Commenter: Thank you for explaining all of that to us. Quick question, you outlined the safety enhancement for St. Louis Park, if Minneapolis is forced to co-locate both Southwest LRT and freight, are you recommending those same safety enhancements?

Jim Terry: Thank you for asking that question. You are 100% correct. It needs to be done to upgrade the rail system, period. Yes.

Verbal Comment 21

Commenter: Thank you, I just wanted to follow-up on a comment you made about the housing units and I think we were all surprised that were more housing units affected in Minneapolis but when you talked

about St. Louis Park, I think you said that a portion of the housing was in the 150 feet and the reason I am asking is because I saw some maps, early on that look like, maybe you are talking about backyard garage structures, are you talking about actual housing?

Jim Terry: In St. Louis Parking, I am talking about housing. I did it off an aerial, could I have mistaken a garage for a house, yeah, and that is kind of what I am saying. I am saying about 140 houses, which may be a little high. I was trying to error on the high side.

Commenter: Then I have a follow-up question. So much of the safety considerations, I am trying, I suppose you are talking about, the possible of derailment and then you also addressing proximity to houses but I am wondering, is anybody addressing the fact that if you do have the co-location in Kenilworth, you got proximity not only to houses but to bicycles and pedestrians and even where the two trains, the freight and the light rail would cross the channel, you have got even boaters underneath so?

Jim Terry: In my study, I did not look at the effect of, as we said, of tunnels or anything like that. But, having listened to what I heard at the Town Hall meetings, it is one of the reasons that safety should be brought over here, let's face it, we got bicycles pretty close to the railroad, we need to make sure that don't have the interference between the trains and the bicycles on the Kenilworth. Again, I did not look at the tunnel and I did not look at deep tunnel, shallow tunnel or moving the trail.

Dan Cramer: Jim did you have something to add to that? No, ok.

Verbal Comment 22

Commenter: Question to relocate the rail, is it also to relocate the light rail or is it to keep the light rail in Kenilworth and separate from the freight train?

Jim Terry: Well...

Dan Cramer: I am going to have Jim Alexander take that question.

Jim Terry: Okey doke. I will answer for you my part of it after the meeting if you like.

Jim Alexander: Yes, the focus on the study with Jim was to look at if there are any areas that have been studied in the past or anything new for where the freight rail could be located, so it is really a freight rail question.

Verbal Comment 23

Commenter: This might be a policy question related to the rail and also to the water study. Shouldn't some of these questions, like the safety, well all kinds of questions, be a part of the Environmental Impact Study and are we undergoing a supplemental or a Supplemental Draft Environmental Study and if so, if this stuff is suppose to be a part of that, when does that happen and when does it need to be completed?

Mark Fuhrmann: The FTA has requested of Met Council to undertake a Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Study and that is underway in terms of drafting that document. In terms of timing, that is looking to be provided to FTA for their review and comment here as we speak. I would guess, I cannot speak for FTA, but that I would guess we would be looking at a summer 2014 publication of the Supplemental DEIS.

Commenter: (Inaudible)

Mark Fuhrmann: Did everyone hear that question? Could you please Jeanette?

Commenter: I am asking if the report that is being drafted now, will that address some of the questions about safety, if the rail is relocated, safety if the rail is co-located, and other environmental impacts on the various areas where the rail, where the freight rail and tunnels would be located and so forth.

Mark Fuhrmann: The question focuses on the Supplemental DEIS?

Commenter: Do these options needed to be included in the SDEIS?

Mark Fuhrmann: The answer to what is included in the SDEIS and what is not is partially informed by what Met Council ultimately decides is the final resting place for the freight rail and what kind of configuration, and if light rail, which is approved for the Kenilworth Corridor, how light rail resides in the Kenilworth Corridor. So we have more exchanges with the public and that will help inform the Council's deliberations in the coming weeks.

Verbal Comment 24

Commenter: As we are talking about safety with the heavy rail, specifically at the pinch point in the Kenilworth Corridor, but throughout the area, as you add fencing and security walls or whatever, how do you do it in such a narrow spot because the train right now is practically outside the townhouse windows. Where do you add any kind of security without destroying the whole look either at the housing or at the trail?

Jim Alexander: That is why we are purposing the LRT tunnel. The tight space she is referring to is to the southern section, south of Cedar Lake Parkway where the Right of Way gets down to about 59 feet. And so as we have been looking at the design, I don't know if you were with us last summer, but we had various designs and in some of those designs we were taking a lot of homes, and we were trying to find something that wasn't so impactful to homes and we came up with the shallow LRT tunnel and it would fit the freight rail safely with the LRT in tunnel and the pedestrian trail up on top.

Commenter: But as a follow-up, knowing all of that and seeing where the train is right now, is there enough room to create the safety areas on either side of the train and the walls that you would need and the fencing because all you have to do is stand in one of the townhouses right there and see that there is no room and that it is being at the other side, it is being built at the base of the grain elevators. So how do we accomplish all of that?

Jim Alexander: Well ma'am, that is just part of our process in the engineering phase, as we have done survey to understand how much space we have, we have had engineering look at how much space we need and how much space we have and we have done designs to make sure that we fit through the area.

Verbal Comment 25

Commenter: This is probably really stupid question, but here it comes, you got about seven trains running on the heavy rail, when a train comes through, cars wait until the train goes through. Can you

use the same track for the light rail and just delay in the schedule? Is there too much variation in the schedule, would this never work, have you look at it all?

Jim Terry: That was not a bad question by any stretching of the imagination. Congratulations for asking a good question, generally speaking the light rail as you know will have an electrical canopy above it. There are times when it will conflict with the height of the freight rail so that makes it problematic. Physically the track, same track, 4 foot 8 and a half gage, same ties, that type of thing, could be the same rail. If it works for freight it would work for light rail, similar in size, shape, description, just they don't mix well, ok. Diesel power versus electrical power is the issues. Good question.

Jim Alexander: I would just add to that, with our schedules both the freight and the light rail, it just doesn't mix. Freight has any chance that any time during the day that they will need to run those unit trains for example. As the residents know, as I know, I live close to this area, I hear trains in the middle of the night, they come at 2:00 a.m., they could come at 10 a.m. Our schedules require that we stick to a schedule and make sure our trains run on-time with our entire system. It would just not be practical.

Verbal Comment 26

Commenter: Hi, I have a question sort of in the dumb question category. Has anybody looked at, at the alternative of the Midtown Corridor, taking the light rail, down the Midtown Corridor and then having it stop somewhere, Lyndale or somewhere and uses buses or trolley cars to get people downtown? Because even if you take the light rail downtown, you will still need to get on a bus to get to a lot of the downtown offices.

Gary Cunningham: Ok, that wasn't a dumb question at all, in fact we are now in the process of conducting an alternatives analysis to determine whether streetcars could go along the Greenway that would connect to Southwest and connect to Hiawatha line and in doing that it would serve all of the folks in Uptown area, in the Phillips area, all the way over to Hiawatha. Now we haven't, a final decision hasn't been made, but the analysis is near complete and in the next few weeks we will, the community policy group that has been meeting will be voting and moving that forward for consideration, both by Metropolitan Council as well as the Cities and the County.

Commenter: Would that make the light rail not go through Kenilworth? (Inaudible)

Gary Cunningham: This is the streetcar, it is a different thing but it does connect up to both of those systems.

Commenter: But I am saying, can't we just cut the light rail off and not have it go through Kenilworth or downtown and have the light rail go down the midtown Greenway and pick up with alternative ways to get people downtown from there.

Gary Cunningham: That is not what we were considering when we were considering the alternatives, so it was not part of the studies.

Commenter: Would it be a good idea to look at so we would need to put light rail through the Kenilworth trail?

Gary Cunningham: I would say we are going to look at all of the options and make some decisions about what is best for everyone in the region and not just a particular section of the region.

Dan Cramer: I would say, let's stay focus on freight rail. Any other questions that come up we will talk about in our last section.

Verbal Comment 27

Commenter: I just want to make sure I understand this. The freight train is not going to be running over the tunnels, the tunnels are going to be separate? Is the freight train going to be running above the light rail tunnel?

Jim Alexander: Under the shallow LRT tunnel, the freight rail would be essentially where it is today, specifically on the south segment, south of Cedar Lake Parkway. Next to that there would be a tunnel with two LRT tracks and on top of that the trail would exist.

Commenter: Ok, is it because you just said a couple minutes ago, which prompted the question, there is not enough room, there is 59 feet and you are saying for all three modes but there is room for two modes essentially.

Jim Alexander: Essentially, we had an option out last summer, where all options were at-grade. In order to do that we would need to acquire townhomes or condo silos to the east and so the shallow LRT tunnel option does not take any home through there so that is the options that we had recommended to move forward.

Commenter: So there is room to have the freight rail and the tunnels side by side in the 59 feet?

Jim Alexander: That is correct, with the trail on top.

Verbal Comment 28

Commenter: Have the, has this area considered what Washington DC does, which is to prohibit the worse type of freight going through the downtown but route it on more miles on existing track around the city? The second question is, as I understood what he presented, even to make safety, make the tracks safe, it is less expensive to route it through St. Louis Park then the present route through Kenilworth. Is my understanding of what you said correct?

Jim Terry: In my \$112 million dollar number that I put up there, I better make sure everyone understands that that is without property and there are property takes that are needed to make what I am proposing work. I don't know the value of property is here, I could tell you for Kansas, so it is north of the 112. Your second question was, has anyone considered what to do with what they do in Washington DC, the Twin Cities & Western really only has one connection right now and that is all is proposed to have one connection. Now they don't carry a lot of what you would call prohibited traffic, they are agricultural based, grain etc, no but I don't see how that would be practical in this particular case.

Commenter: So just to clarify, the number you gave for the present alignment of the train was higher than the number then you gave for the St. Louis Park?

Jim Terry: The number I gave for Kenilworth was based on the numbers I heard that included the deep tunnel, the shallow tunnel; I did not look at the cost of the Kenilworth. I do have a \$20 million number in there to cover the safety improvements that I am going to recommend for the Kenilworth, either way

that is where that number came from. But I, you could ask me what the tunnel, the shallow tunnel would cost, I heard it at the last meeting.

Commenter: What I am asking you, I thought I saw, improvements to the rail road which are necessary through the Kenilworth Corridor to make it safe would cost, that is was even higher than the St. Louis Park number.

Tim Terry: No ma'am it shouldn't have been. We can talk about it more after the meeting. It would be less expensive.

Chair Haigh: I think it would be helpful, I am going to ask the project staff to respond to the cost number because one of the pieces of work that will have to go on now is to take the information that we have from the concept report that Jim has referred to and add to it the property acquisitions, make sure we are doing the same analysis for this new alternatives on cost as we have for the rest of the project. So that is the step that needs to happen now and hopefully we will get that sometime in the next week, two weeks, within two weeks for sure. So we ensure that we are using the same methodology, which is required by us by our federal funding partners as we put together these project cost.

Dan Cramer: Jim, Mark, anything to add. Ok, moving on.

Verbal Comment 29

Commenter: Would you please address the freight rail issue between 21st Street and Cedar Lake Parkway? After talking to the engineers at one of the other meetings, it was explained to me that freight rail would be relocated to the west 10 feet and up to 40 feet to the west permanently to allow for the corridor to handle co-location and the bike trail. Additionally, please discuss the 88 foot wide bridge over the channel to accommodate freight rail, light rail and the bicycles.

Jim Alexander: I will tackle the first one, if my memory serves me correctly, might not be exact on the number because it has been a while since I looked at it. At the south section, the freight rail is going to be in about the same location once everything is constructed, as we head further north, by the time we get to the bridge as we cross the channel, the freight rail is going to be about 40 feet over to the west from where it is located today. There is a swath of property that runs along the Kenilworth Corridor that is owned by BNSF that we would look to acquire for that purpose. As we continue up further to the north, I don't know exactly where they spot is precisely, but between Burnham and 21st we are getting back to the where the rail road is today and so as you progress further up to the Cedar junction, it is essentially untouched. Do I have that right Paul? Yes. And so your second question, you might have to remind me.

Commenter: The 88 foot wide bridge over the Kenilworth Channel. Supposed to have a six foot gap in the center and how will that affect the experience of the park? I know that is not your prerogative but do you anticipate that that would create a problem and if you would answer that?

Jim Alexander: What he is speaking of, when we cross the tunnel with the shallow LRT tunnel configuration, currently today there is a bridge that carries the freight and a bridge that carries the trail and that is on the order, if I remember correctly it is about 45 feet in width. If we were to build the shallow LRT tunnel it would end-up being about 85 feet all told. I don't remember the gap necessarily. There is the freight bridge and then there is a LRT and trail bridge. In terms of the experience that would

be part of the Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement to identify impacts from that particular design assuming that design does move forward.

Commenter: If I could follow-up on that 40 foot number, you mentioned that the freight rail would have to be moved 40 feet to the west. To accommodate that you would have to bulldoze quite a bit of vegetation, vegetation canopy, woods and forest through there and put the freight rail 40 feet to the west and yet you can't re-vegetate because of the 25 foot set-back from the centerline and so all the talk of re-vegetating the corridor when actually it is too narrow between the two shallow tunnels to re-vegetate and as we have talked about the 59 ½ foot choke points the reason it is that narrow because when Hennepin County bought the corridor for transit and rail banked it, that is your term, they immediately went off and sold a portion of the corridor to allow for the construction of the red townhomes, the St. Louis townhomes or whatever they are called. We have the pinch point because Hennepin County made the decision to sell off the land long before a bicycle trail went in, that is why we have the pinch point. If you could address how you would re-vegetate after moving the freight trail 40 feet to the west.

Jim Alexander: In terms of what the vegetation would look like that would be the next set. We have already done an inventory. We have that report in the back. There are 480 or so, what is classified as a significant tree by Minneapolis code, which is essentially 12 inches or more in diameter. If we move forward with the shallow LRT tunnel design, we will work with the local community to the Park Board and the City to understand what that design would look like in terms of, where we can have vegetation, what type of vegetation that could be and move from there with the design.

Verbal Comment 30

Commenter: I have a follow-up question about the lines as they run by the townhomes. You have mentioned that the space fits for the freight as well as the shallow tunnels, at the same time the safety enhancements are new information. Have you re-looked at the fit with the new information of the safety enhancements and will you be able to do that and will you be looking at design considerations that will allow for livability for the homes on both sides of that part of the corridor?

Jim Alexander: Yes, in terms of the safety aspect that Mr. Terry has spoken of, we don't see that would impact the width requirements, most of those elements would be accommodated within the Right of Way we have today.

Commenter: The design and the part of the question that had to do with design consideration with the aesthetics with the safety enhancements?

Jim Alexander: In terms of the safety enhancements, I don't think I can mix those with how people perceive or relate to rail. We would again be working with the community, with the Park Board, with the City to come up with a design that would hopefully meet the needs of the folks through there. We still have freight rail under that design, we would have LTR in a tunnel and the trails up on top.

Verbal Comment 31

Commenter: I have a question about the St. Louis Park freight rail line. The orange is further south, is the existing and the one right above the proposed?

Jim Terry: Correct.

Commenter: What kind of guidelines do you use to decide which homes and properties are removed or which need to be removed for there to be enough space for that relocation?

Jim Terry: Ok, I went through there and made an estimate and that estimate I told everybody was seven homes and a similar number of businesses that would be impacted that would have to be relocated.

Commenter: Is there like a certain amount of feet on either side of the rail line is kind of standard?

Jim Terry: You find some railroads are narrow as 66 feet, but you are really looking for 100 foot, 50 foot on either side of the railroad, kind of what I thought we would have. Once you get up on a bridge structure, it gets much narrower and you don't need that much, single track 25 feet, it is going to vary through there.

Verbal Comment 32

Commenter: Regarding the proposal for the St. Louis Park option, at what point does TC&W weigh in on that? Will that happen before a decision is made on where freight is going to end up?

Jim Terry: I can't speak for the TC&W but I would say they are certainly studying that to take a look. I kind of thought that they would be getting back to us pretty quick to be honest with you.

Jim Alexander: Part of our process, what the project office did last year, we worked with the railroads to find what would be acceptable to them. If you look at where freight would be relocated to somewhere else, that freight rail company needs to endorse that plan to petition the Surface Transportation Board to make that change to abandon that track, so the railroad needs to weigh in on whatever relocation design is going to be considered.

Verbal Comment 33

Commenter: I don't know if this a follow-up or not, but I was wondering who besides TC&W, who has to make a decision, and does TC&W in effect make a decision about whether they would accept this new proposal in St. Louis Park?

Mark Fuhrmann: The two directly impacted freight rail road operations are TC&W and Canadian Pacific.

Commenter: Does that mean that both would need to agree before a reroute would be accepted?

Mark Fuhrmann: As we understand it, yes.

Jim Terry: Na', I agree with that.

Verbal Comment 34

Commenter: The first question in the orange viable line you are proposing that is a relocation outside of the Kenilworth Corridor, correct?

Jim Terry: Correct.

Commenter: Then the next question goes to the engineers at the tables. What happens then in the Kenilworth Corridor? Is there a shallow tunnel or are you back to co-location at the ground level?

Jim Alexander: We would have to go back to where we were with the LPA, the LRT would be at-grade through the Kenilworth Corridor.

Verbal Comment 35

Commenter: He sort of asked my question which is that, it would be very nice if the freight rail was relocated to St. Louis Park so that the Kenilworth Corridor could still have the light rail at least in a shallow tunnel, if not a deep tunnel, so you could maintain having a park-like area. To destroy the Kenilworth Corridor and put 220 trains a day going through at-grade is hardly an improvement even if you move the freight; it is destroying a beautiful area.

Verbal Comment 36

Commenter: I am Peter Wagenius from Mayor Hodges' Office, my friend Davis asked a question earlier and I don't know why it wasn't answered, so I am going to answer it. Friend you asked about walls, fences in that events that there is co-location of both freight and LRT within the Kenilworth Corridor and what I want to make sure people understand is that if that were to occur, if both freight and LRT were located in the corridor and the LRT was in a pair of two shallow tunnel that would require significant walls in order to make that work, at each of the portals and each of the shallow tunnels has portals has two portals, each of those four portals would be 270 linear feet and this can be corrected if someone else has better information. But we have been told those four portals together equals 1080 feet of crash wall or retaining walls. I am talking about one portal at the south end and two and three to the north and to the south of the channel and a fourth at the far north end, so that is four walls, 270, and we are told those would be six feet high, perhaps on a two foot berm and four of them together we consider them to be a significant thing to be accommodating into what is currently a park like setting. I also have to state for the record. The city does not agree with Jim Alexander's characterization with, that the approval of both railroads is required. We would like to work with the railroads, absolutely. We want a design that works for them because a design that works for them is more likely to get approval from the Surface Transportation Board but the Surface Transportation Board is the decider, not the railroads, but the Surface Transportation Board is the decider. If the City of Minneapolis had been told that the railroads would have veto power the City would, never would have agreed to support the Kenilworth alignment.

Verbal Comment 37

Commenter: This is really a process question, when the Governor asked the Met Council last fall to reevaluate some of these options and thank you for the reevaluation that has been done. But, can I ask you why I was told that you already looked earlier, you already look at the tunnel underneath the channel and had rejected it last summer. Well the Governor did not tell you to reject it when he asked you to stop the process and look at it again. Why haven't you looked at it again, given what the Governor has asked you to do?

Chair Haigh: The proposal before us is really, I think you are asking, why haven't we in fact looked again at the deep tunnel is that?

Commenter: (Inaudible)

Chair Haigh: The proposal to not look further at the deep tunnel was eliminated as it presented to us by the Corridor Management Committee and ultimately to the Council because of the extreme cost and its impact in its design and construction. During that period of time, rebuilding the West Lake Street Bridge and a verity of factors were considered by all the elected officials that serve on the Corridor

Management Committee. It is very expensive and not a good option for the impact from construction in that corridor. That was really it.

Dan Cramer: We have about five more minutes left in our rail segment. Then we are going to open it up.

Verbal Comment 38

Commenter: I will try to be quick. The first part of my, it is not really a question; it is sort of a warning. I would suggest that you have, if you haven't had already, have a title search done on the strip of land that the BNSF thinks they own. The County is showing it as Park Board Land and my experience in the City where I used to work, BN did not know what they owned. They once sold a piece of their main line. The other question I have is that if you shift, if you shift physically, if you shift the freight line 40 feet west, will you still clear the west abutment of the Burnham road bridge?

Jim Alexander: I will tackle the first question. In terms of doing a title search that is a normal part of the process that we do along the whole project. In terms of a title search for that property, we did see a discrepancy of that ownership. We have confirmed that it is owned by BNSF. I am not quite clear what you are asking on the second question.

Commenter: There is, the freight rail would be shifted west 40 feet in the area immediately, in the area north of the Kenilworth.

Jim Alexander: At the channel.

Commenter: At the channel, would it return to its current alignment before the Burnham road bridge, or because?

Jim Alexander: It returns to the alignment before the Burnham road bridge that goes over the corridor.

Commenter: Right but there is enough room?

Jim Alexander: Yes, a lot of survey out there and we have a pretty good handle on what is out there and we do believe that it will work.

Verbal Comment 39

Commenter: Thank you, is it Jim, Jim this would be for you. In regards to the trains, will the length of the trains increase, will the speed increase and will the usage multiple, right now seven times a day, can it increase to 40 times a day? Will the length of the train be longer and the speed, because I guess if you increase the track age, make it stronger, it can go to 10 miles an hour to 25 miles an hour?

Jim Terry: Your observations are correct. We are designing it for an increase speed 25 miles an hour, it is kind of what the Twin Cities and Western tracks are design for. They have some 25 some 30 and a little bit of 40, so you are correct, we are looking at this at 25 miles an hour. The other questions is could there be more trains, yes. I think you will see the shuttle trains growing in length. There is a practical limit to how long a train actually can be and we are kind of approaching the limits on that now. But the answer to your question, the rail road industry is growing. Well, oh, hypothetically anything is possible, the Royals may win the World Series this year but you know there are, hypotheticals are hard to answer but I will say this to you. As the shuttle and unit trains become more prevalent you will see the interchange trains kind of dropping in size. You know it today, if Twin City and Western they run 75 and

a 75 and then a 100 car train, you could see some of that 75 get reduced because that business, that grain, is going to go to the shuttle trains.

Dan Cramer: So if we can thank Jim for his presentation. He will remain here if there are additional freight rail questions.

Verbal Comment 40

Dan Cramer: I am going to use the facilitator's privilege and start with the most frequently asked question at the last meeting, the Minneapolis meeting, which has been alluded to in other questions today. Why given all the challenges with this, why can't another route all together be considered at this point in the process? I will let Council Members respond to that because it came up a lot at the last meeting.

Chair Haigh: I will take a stab at that and see if any my colleagues want to join me. We have been at this process for well over a decade trying to pick this alignment and through a long process of study we have been eliminating various alternatives that had too much impact on communities, that were too costly, that were ridership was not as good and after a long period of study on this work we have come up with this particular alignment. Of course because it is already in a rail corridor it makes it a good choice for light rail in this corridor. It is flat, it goes right into the city and when you are trying to build a project of this magnitude and scope to last for many, many years, it really is a challenge to build a project in a fully built, in a dense community like Minneapolis, like St. Louis Park, so that is really some of the considerations we looked at. We looked at many, many alternatives. I know on the Corridor Management Committee over the last two year feel this is really the best alignment for LRT. We have this one remaining issues that we need to resolve in this project before we can get it going. I think that this alignment for this mode is the right one. There might be other corridors that are really important for streetcar, for BRT, for just plain old bus and those are good too. But really our task is always trying to pick the right mode, the right corridor, the right cost at the right time.

Dan Cramer: Any other Council Members want to add to that?

Adam Duininck: I will add to that, about the Chair's comments about the right mode in the right corridor. We have had many conversations with policy makers with the City and the County that are interested in seeing streetcar and arterial bus being built out. We think those modes match those corridors much better. Nicollet corridor, Midtown has been alluded to. One study is complete, one study is about to be complete. There are a couple other corridors that we talk about but they fit better for arterial bus or streetcar.

Verbal Comment 41

Commenter: I got a three minute comment. I have been working on a transit revolution plan and I am advocating that we demand transit revolution. This whole thing started when we were invading Iraq and Afghanistan, we thought we were going to have an empire, we thought we were going to get oil out of Iran. Ridiculous. We now have a trillion dollar deficits. We are in a much different environment. We are dealing with situations where China is competing with us, we can't create jobs. Let me just lay out a few points about this transit revolution and then lay out some alternative plans for Southwest Rail. We need to have Metro Mobility size vehicles running every five minutes, when you have vehicles running every 10 minutes that's a transit tax, you drive people away from transit. We need to have more people working, let's hire drivers at 17 dollars an hour, part time and provide 5 minute service. We need to also take a look at the route. I have got a plan were we can use the existing route up to West Lake, Calhoun

and then let's go down the Greenway, let's pave it, grade it and use it. Get buses running in these Metro Mobility sized every five minutes, let's go to Uptown Station. There are three roads that cross north/south. We will go under those with light rail. We can run on existing route from St. Louis Park, Highway 100 to I-35W and we are talking about building a transit like 46th Street, so let's build one at I-35W with a ramp going up and the buses can go up that ramp and they can go right downtown on the MnPASS route which is already guaranteed congestion free. From Shady Oak Road, let's run it down Shady Oak Road and have about 11 or 12 stops, including four stops in the Golden Triangle. We need to, to rethink where we are going with transit. Our challenge in the future is how we are going to figure in automotive driving that is going to be coming in. How do we provide faster service? How are we going to provide transit service so people don't need to use cars? One challenge that I have run into is, and I use the bus a lot, is how do you shop using the bus? You can't get a shopping cart on. We accommodate buses; let's figure out a way to let people shop when they are using buses. We need to rethink this whole thing. I think what we are doing right now it is very questionable in terms of the commitment about eight hundred million dollars between the State and the County. In terms of my proposal would cost about 100 million dollars and it will be a system that we can implement elsewhere, again at low capital costs. Let's put people to work driving. Let's rethink this whole approach. Let's use the Greenway path and connect this to the main stops in Minneapolis, instead of going down a wilderness in the Kenilworth Trail.

Verbal Comment 42

Commenter: I hope I will be much shorter, but I so appreciate what you said and he said a lot of the things that are on my mind. So my question is: if this has been 10 years in the process and I really just got involved in this maybe about four years ago, which was around the time the decision was made to go through Kenilworth? I don't know. I am wondering how old the information is that informs this decision and is this going to be obsolete before it even gets going? I am asking the six of you, is there any point or any information that you would be willing to entertain a different route and say I know we have put a lot of work into this, I know it means starting back at square one or square two but, is there anything that would, that you would be open to considering something else or are you absolutely stuck on this route because I also agree this is going through a nature area? We see deer all the time there. It, Cedar Lake, is the most natural lake of the City lakes left. It just sickens me to think we are going to ruin it and with light rail going through, I don't care if it is in tunnel or on ground level, but it is going to drastically change that whole environment. So I am just wondering how the decision was made, with 10-year old information is any option to consider another route? Thank you.

Chair Haigh: I will jump in. I do not favor looking for another route for LRT in this corridor. I think this is really been studied a lot by a lot of people that have worked very, very hard at it. I understand that if this is the decision that we end up making that there will people that disagree and will say if they were the policy maker they would choose to make a different decision. I think this problem we are trying to solve here though, is a very important one and I think we have made good progress getting additional information. I look forward to getting to hearing that we are going to have at St. Louis Park as well as this week, to hear what community members have to say about this other alternative concept for relocation of freight rail.

Jennifer Munt: I concur with Chair Haigh. I am not looking for a different route, but I am looking for resolution to freight location. I like to acknowledge some people in the audience. They are the members of our Southwest LRT Community Advisory Committee. I have been going to meetings constantly for the last three years. Many of them have spent an entire decade trying to pick the correct route. If you folks serve on the committee would stand, I value the service that you put in. Dan, I think it is important to

say we haven't made a decision yet. We felt that it was really important to do both of these studies, to give assurances that if the shallow tunnels are chosen it won't harm our lakes. We now know that it doesn't. We also needed to make sure some of the alternatives for freight were not overlooked. We found that one was, now what we need to do is, we need to go back and take a look at the costs and the impacts and we need to hear from the community members that were here about how that is going to affect you. At the end of the day, what we are looking for is a solution that's going to stand the test of time. We are looking for a solution that the community will embrace because we don't build these lines to humor ourselves. We build them so people will ride. Now, I am somebody that views the Southwest line as an equity train, as an opportunity train. It is a one seat ride that will connect from Eden Prairie to Minneapolis and all the way to St. Paul. All of the decision that we are making is about what maximizes opportunity along this light rail line.

Verbal Comment 43

Commenter: Hi. I still haven't heard a good answer on the deep tunnel. It feels like this Locally Preferred Alternative is quite the misnomer. Light rail coming through our park system is akin to running a trail, a train at-grade through Central Park. Minneapolis Park System, your park system is being destroyed. So, and not only that, the people that love the parks and many of them live around them are here, are fighting for the park, your parks, and were not even given a station on this train. We are not even given a station. We can't even use this thing, ok. So why don't you call it a commuter rail for the Eden Prairie folks and put it in a deep tunnel and everyone is happy. St. Louis Park is happy, we are happy, we don't get a station anyway so the money thing, my understanding is that Eden Prairie spent a whole lot of money or you guys spent a lot of money to reroute around a sensitive park land around there but we are not getting the same consideration. I just think we feel that, Minneapolis residents feel that we are not being taken seriously. We are at the end of this process when everything is all decided and now it is going to be literally railroaded through our neighborhood and our parks, our world famous parks.

Adam Duinick: I'll respond. The main obstacle for the deep tunnel frankly is the funding. Both from a capital from an, not as much operating, but from a capital perspective looking at the total budget of the project, we need to figure out who is going to pay the state share, the County share, HCRRA and CTIB and match it with the 50% Federal match. Doing something like the deep tunnel drove up the project budget that wasn't comfortable for people, not just in Minneapolis and St. Louis Park but people in Ramsey, Dakota and Anoka County. That is just the reality. I sympathize with folks that want us to look closer at the deep tunnel but it just wasn't a reality.

Commenter: 300 million dollars.

Verbal Comment 44

Commenter: I guess I am here to represent young professionals of Minneapolis. I know that certainly the light rail is a commuter served for suburban commuters, what I am interested in knowing is how the Metropolitan Council will make that up to residents to Minneapolis, lifelong residents that are interested in transit reliance? Specifically speaking, how will the at-grade LRT or the shallow tunnel LRT affect the Midtown Corridor Streetcar and then what commitments can you make to those streetcar investments so that we can have an equitable transit system for people that chose to be transit reliant?

Chair Haigh: I am going to defer a little bit to my colleagues that have been working a lot on the Midtown Corridor. I do think the Southwest LRT project is an essential component for an effective community, or travel or transit in the Midtown Corridor. I see them as being very, very linked. I am going to send it over to people spending a lot of time on that.

Gary Cunningham: I am defiantly committed to streetcars as a mode of transportation, as well as light rail within our area. You know, people that travel to other cities, they see these other cities making these major investments in transit and transportation. Part of why they are doing it and why we need to do it is because we are investing in 50 years from now, 100 years from now, for what this city and what this place will be. We won't be able to compete unless we have a robust transit system in this area, so I am very committed. But with the streetcars I think we are going to face the same situation with the tunnel and this is that there are going to be some folks that will say that the streetcars are not something they want to support. So for me, all this to work, I think I need some commitments from people that we are going to build the whole system out and not just pieces of the system. As we move forward with this, I am concerned that at the end of the day we won't be able to build out the streetcar system like we want to. We need to ensure that not only is this line in Southwest going from Eden Prairie to Minneapolis that it is also going the reverse direction too and there are jobs and opportunities for people that are going that direction as well. I just want to put that on the table as we think about this. I want to be clear; I have not made a decision. No decision has been made from me on this and that I am listening and hearing all the opinions as we go through this so that when do get to a decision, everybody's voice is at the table.

Verbal Comment 45

Dan Cramer: I have a written question that was given to me to read that I think relates to the question that was just asked. I will try to do it justice, it says: Municipal Consent is being asked for from communities all along the Southwest light rail route. Why is the Met Council positioning a negotiated buy of the critical consent from the City of Minneapolis in exchange for Met Council paying for another Minneapolis project such as the trolley down the Midtown Greenway? In a sense, are those being traded against each other?

Chair Haigh: Those are defiantly not being traded against each other. What is important though, as we have tried to work on this process, both with our local Issue Resolution Teams involving all the professional staff among the cities and counties and local elected officials, we would like every city along this line to support this project. This is a very, very important investment for the region. So we would like to get every City's support and we are gratified they have actually supported this alignment for LRT. We have resolution of support from all the cities and we still have this remaining issue that we need to try to get resolved and that is the process that we are in today. How to pay for streetcar going forward, tough issue. Got to get a new source of funding for transit and transportation to be able to fund streetcar going forward. We cannot do it with the existing resources that we have in the system. So it will be really important challenge for all of us, working together, particularly as we think about this future and how important this is to the younger transit users that really find it an attractive mode for livability in this community.

Adam Duininck: I just want to clarify my last comment too because this question speaks to it more. The transit coalition, the transportation coalition in the region is fragile, so we have to be moving forward in a way so that everyone feels like something is happening in their part of the region. To the question about whether it is being traded. It is not being traded against but the fragility of the transit coalition in the region, if something happens with Southwest because one community digs in against another or vice versa. We just need to be really aware of that. Everyone appears a transit advocate. Many of you are. Many of the policy makers that we have been meeting about Southwest in general, have started from a place of: solve this project because we need to keep the momentum of the region going forward so that we are building the regional system.

Verbal Comment 46

Commenter: I would just like to ask us all to take a step back and look at this in the really big picture. The Metropolitan Council, you people, are the only ones that really can adjust, weigh, balance the views of everybody. I go to the St. Louis Park meetings, they think we are nuts, they think we are selfish. I ride my bike in the Kenilworth Corridor and I ski and I walk every day. The Met Council is the one body that can weigh everything including for the deep tunnel people, the willingness of Republican Legislators to fund this stuff. I appreciate what you do. No one is going to get everything that they want. My personal benchmark is if I get 80% I think we should grab it and go. I am going to use my gray hair a cautionary tail. 40 something years I lived in a metropolitan area of 3 million people that was, had a, was prosperous, vibrant, progressive, beautiful park system. It had one of the best orchestras, maybe the best orchestra in the world. Sound familiar? This was Cleveland, Ohio. Cleveland allowed, or circumstances caused a huge gap between the haves and the have-nots in Cleveland and one fine day in 1967 Cleveland exploded, rioting, gun fire within the City. It was really tragic what happened in Cleveland. It has come back since then. What does transit have to do with it? An integrated transit system gives everybody a sense that we are in the game. You can get to work, you can get to school within a reasonable period of time and get back and still take care of your kids. It is essential that we build this. I think we all have to say, if I get 80% of what I wanted that is good enough for me.

Verbal Comment 47

Commenter: Just wondering if we have a map any place that will cover from say Hopkins to downtown? I lived in Minneapolis, surrounding areas for over 70 years and it took me 15-20 minutes to figure out which way this map was situated. I am used to having north at the top. But, it would help me, I know, to figure just where the lines are, where they are planned. All of that kind of stuff, just to be able to connect the dots between Hopkins and Twins Stadium. Just that far, it would really, really help.

Dan Cramer: Mark, Jim resources that would be available to answer questions like that.

Mark Fuhrmann: A great resource for everyone to check on is our website swlrt.org and there we have many maps and your specific area of interest is the eight most eastern miles of the Southwest alignment, so I would encourage everyone to go to swlrt.org and lookup many maps that we have posted on the website.

Verbal Comment 48

Commenter: I have been at a few of these meeting where someone in the audience has said Eden Prairie got 300 million dollars to change their route so that it didn't affect their trails and no one ever responds. I want to know if it is true. How did that decision get made and did someone at the Met Council sit down and say Eden Prairie should have 300 million for that, but Minneapolis should not have 300 million for what we need?

Chair Haigh: No, it is not true. The issue that I think that you are addressing is a change in alignment, in deciding on the alignment during the AA. The decision that was made on the route was really to connect it to jobs, to riders in Eden Prairie. It was not mitigating an issues regarding parks or park usage. I think that is really an inaccurate piece of information that has been floating around so I want to answer that definitively for you, no. There is not.

Commenter: You mentioned jobs; my understanding is that the route isn't even going to Eden Prairie Mall where the jobs are.

Chair Haigh: The job centers on this corridor are in many, many locations, certainly in the Opus area and the United Health Campus. There are 200,000 jobs along this corridor and that is expected to grow 60,000. So these are not just jobs in retail centers. They are jobs, are well paying and that are really important for the economic prosperity of the region.

Verbal Comment 49

Commenter: I want to thank everyone that has worked on this for the last 10 years as you say. I feel a little cheated by these documents. I think you owe us a little more than these draft documents. I suspect that there is a lot more cost in each of these options than is addressed in these documents. That is the first thing. The second thing is that it seems obvious that the light rail in the long term should go where people live. The Uptown was rejected 10 years ago, but look at how it has changed. How many units? Maybe this is what you should do, study the number of new residential units that have been built along the Greenway in the past 10 years and how many are going to open up and how many along the Kenilworth Corridor. I know it is a challenge and an ugly process to go through to find a route through the City of Minneapolis. But it really should be done. You owe it to us because this alignment, the Kenilworth was devised based on faulty information and a faulty process and I hope you admit that. This shouldn't have happened, this debacle so to speak. The Kenilworth Corridor is precious; it has become more precious over the last 10 years. When it was a rail corridor that is what it was, but those that use it on a regular basis appreciate it as a significant part of the Minneapolis Park System. It is sort of like closing off Nicolet Avenue for the K-Mart. This is the kind of planning decision that this will lead to. You will look back in 20 year and say what where we thinking. When the option, challenging those it may be, costly as it may be, we are going to build tunnels, how closely. We are going to realign freight rail through St. Louis Park possibly. Why put the money into those costs when you divert those costs and put it towards something much more meaningful and create a transportation system that carries more people.

Verbal Comment 50

Commenter: You have said that the Met Council is going to make a decision on freight rail at the end of March. After that, you need to finish preparing and finishing a Supplemental DEIS, have a public involvement period then finish, then finish a final EIS, have a public involvement period. Prepare and finish a Record of Decision, corresponding state document, possibility withstand a legal challenge the loser of that Met Council decision and then you need to get a Full Funding Grant. So when are you going to be getting a Full Funding Grant Agreement from the FTA and Municipal Consent from the cities?

Mark Fuhrmann: To the two-part question, let me take the nearest process first, which is Municipal Consent. Once Met Council makes that decision, currently targeted for late March, then Jim and his design team will distribute the Municipal Consent plans to the five cities and Hennepin County for their review an approval and that is about a two and a half month processes through May and early June. To your second questions about a Federal Full Funding Grant Agreement, right now we have that targeted for the tail end of 2015.

Verbal Comment 51

Commenter: At every one of these, either Chairman Sue Haigh or Jennifer Munt or somebody gets up and says we want community input and at every single meeting the community input has been that the alignment is wrong. We do not feel heard, you are not listening. You just said in your remarks, Sue, that you want to get community input but that you have decided on the alignment, that you were not going to change our mind, so we are all wasting our time and it is too bad.

Adam Duinick: I do want to respond. We are here tonight because we responded. We could have made a move last summer, late last summer. I was one of the people on the Council that took a lot of heat for standing up and saying we need to look at some other things. I just want to be clear that there is a response, from my colleagues, from the staff and the Project Office. The comments do not go unnoticed, the feedback gets listened to. We are listening. And the question of alignment, the reason that has not changed is the federal requirements with the FTA and other decision that have been made leading to this process. There were pieces that we could look at. The LPA decision has already been made. To undo that would be going to the end of the line at the federal queue.

Verbal Comment 52

Commenter: I would just like to say that I am from Bryn Mawr and I am over 65 and a good many people have left Bryn Mawr that are over 65 because they do not have transit. Secondly, we are the stop on the Penn Avenue, is open way for the north side to get out to the jobs in Eden Prairie. The people on the north side need access to Eden Prairie to get jobs that allows them money, it allows them opportunity, it allows them education. The north side needs this. The elderly in Bryn Mawr need this so that we do not need to move out to another area. So we appreciate that it is going through. Thank you.

Verbal Comment 53

Commenter: Is there a place on your website where we can see budget data and data the projections are based on, like we are looking at a real business?

Mark Fuhrmann: I'll start and maybe Jim can expand to say that on our website we have our summary level budget data that we did share with the Corridor Management Committee last September and October, where we quantified what the estimated cost would be for shallow tunnel, for Brunswick Central freight rail relocation and other options that were also considered through last summer and fall.

Commenter: But is it structured like an actual business, like a real business budget?

Mark Fuhrmann: The question was- is it structured like a real business budget? It is structure on a summary level for people who are not so familiar with this large infrastructure projects. It does not have the line item by line item breakdown by specific construction cost, contingency costs, design costs, property costs. We do keep it at a summary level.

Commenter: Inaudible

Mark Fuhrmann: Project Office and some of the folks in the room tonight have been asked to come and talk with Project Staff about the more detailed line itemized budget and we would be happy to do that with anybody that is interested in that level of detail.

Verbal Comment 54

Commenter: Thank you. Prior to 2006, the Southwest LRT line, route 1A, had a budget of 864 million, you can go to southwestlrt.org and find that, subsequently that route 1A went through Bear Path, a single family community in Eden Prairie and there was no political support for light rail what so ever in the southwest suburbs until Bear Path said in their residential neighborhood, we don't want it and what happened? It dogged lagged to the west and south for an additional 300 million dollars and that route is 3A, the one we are looking at right now. Additionally, it went from 864 million or 900 million and then to 1.2 billion in 2006 and that is the project that the Met Council inherited, that is why you are hearing the

Met Council not knowing of any of the details prior to 2006 and they just recently took it over in the last couple of years. Now in addition, in the Corridor Management Committee process the last couple years, Eden Prairie is being allocated an additional 70 million dollars, it used to be 150 million but when the Eden Prairie Mayor was out of town it was cut back 80 million to add 70 million dollars for their enhancements along their route, so that is an addition 370 million dollars for Eden Prairie. That is all factual you can look it up at southwestlrt.org and all the minutes of the Corridor Management Committee, distinguishably chaired by Mrs. Haigh. Additionally, the railroads will receive 200 or more million dollars to satisfy their needs somewhere. We should leave the freight rail where it is for now and build the deep tunnel underneath the channel and maybe if feasible, a shallow tunnel to the north. That would be a win, win situation for Minneapolis and St. Louis Park and it would prevent the stacking and shifting of trains in the Hopkins area, which the Council Member, I am not sure of her name was so concerned about at the last Corridor Management Committee Meeting. With the St. Louis Park freight rail alignment there will be shifting in Hopkins to their dissatisfaction.

Dan Cramer: I don't think I heard a question.

Verbal Comment 55

Commenter: But in terms of the last word on funding, I mean we can push, I mean, you could push for a shallow tunnel or a deep tunnel but my understanding is that if you don't get the funding then we are stuck with two trains right? I mean we still have the alignment. If you decide to push for shallow tunnel and the legislators will not fund it?

Dan Cramer: Can we clarify the funding process for this?

Chair Haigh: Well, we are still in the process of, we do have a commitment from CTIB, County Transit Improvement Board, for the 30% share for the Southwest LRT project and 10% from the Hennepin County Rail Regional Authority. That is 40% of the cost. We have another 47 million dollars from the State towards their 120 or about 115 million and we are working on a plan to secure the additional revenue of the State's share until the transit sales tax gets past.

Verbal Comment 56

Commenter: I am going to be talking about community impact and kind of a cultural or historical perspective here. Across the way from us is the Walker Art Center and Mr. Walker, this is like the late 1800s, he saw that Minneapolis was a very hard working city. It was industrial engine and he thought that there should be a cultural and artistic oasis and he was one of the founders of St. Louis Park. We have that Walker Street that was named after him and so, and that was the original downtown. St. Louis Park, everybody is always asking where is the downtown in St. Louis Park and that is it, Walker Street, and so it, the true downtown. We already have a rail line that is crossing it but to have another one is just chopping up that historic street. They would be taking away seven homes and seven businesses in that area so I think it is a community impact that isn't good. I think both communities should get together. I kind of don't like us apart but I bet that as humans getting together, we could come to some compromise. I think you would be surprised.

Verbal Comment 57

Commenter: So, at one of the most recent community meetings I was at, a comment came up that, concerning the shallow tunnel and the feasibility of it going through the Kenwood Corridor. The comment was along the lines that we should be very skeptical that there is any support in the Minnesota State Legislature to pay for the shallow tunnel. My question is: how do you see this? Is it really feasible politically, regardless of what the Met Council decides?

Chair Haigh: Well, I am not going to answer for the legislators and many are in the room tonight. They are always trying to balance many competing demands for resources and we continue to think this is a really important resource, in that it is important for the region and our economy. We will continue to bring that argument forward as we work with our legislative leaders and we have gotten a lot of support from the Legislators along this corridor to get this issue resolved so we can move forward.

Verbal Comment 58

Commenter: Thanks, point of clarification. Given that freight rail would be relocated to St. Louis Park and you talk about the LRT at-grade, can you talk about grade separation at Cedar Lake Parkway Crossing?

Jim Alexander: Yes, that is something that we explored with the Park Board and the City. We have a design that if freight rail was not located in the Kenilworth Corridor, we would essentially build a lid for Cedar Lake Parkway to go over the LRT at that roadway. It would be essentially be at-grade elsewhere through the Kenilworth Corridor.

Commenter: And that was a done deal and in the budget?

Jim Alexander: Yes, if that is in the budget, if it is a done deal. As we progressed on the project, the Project Office moved towards a recommendation of the shallow LRT with freight staying in the corridor, so it did not carry forward. As pointed out by the Council Members, no decision has been made on that scope.

Commenter: Is it either or?

Jim Alexander: Presuming if there is a way to move freight rail outside of the Kenilworth Corridor, I would presume that we would go back to our design that we suggested to have LRT at-grade, except for Cedar Lake Parkway. That would certainly need to be brought forward for consideration.

Dan Cramer: So, I know there are other questions but we are now at the end of the three hour meetings.

Closing remarks given by Dan Cramer:

- Evaluations of meeting and comment cards pointed out to attendees.
- Comments and final reports will be posted online shortly. People can submit comments until March 3 also at the project website.

Transcript of Public Comments

**02/12/14 SWLRT Town Hall Community Meeting
St. Louis High School, St. Louis Park**

Panel:

- Metropolitan Council Chair Sue Haigh
- Metropolitan Council Member Gary Cunningham
- Metropolitan Council Member Adam Duininck
- Metropolitan Council Member Jennifer Munt
- Della Young, Environmental Consultant, Burns & McDonnell
- Jim Terry, Freight Rail Consultant, TranSystems
- Jim Alexander, Director of Design and Engineering, Southwest LRT Project Office
- Mark Fuhrmann, Project Director, Southwest Project Office
- Ann Wiesner, Principle, Grassroots Solutions

Verbal Comment 01

Commenter: With the light rail running so close to those tunnels, what's going to be the impact as far as vibrations, as far as leakage, as far as how they're going to stand up to those vibrations?

Jim Alexander: That is something we will be looking at as we do the structural design for the tunnels that will carry the LRT. So everybody understands the configuration through the Kenilworth Corridor under that proposed plan, the freight rail would be located at-grade essentially pretty much where it is located today, I'm talking about the piece south of Cedar Lake Parkway. Then there would be a tunnel for the two LRT tracks right adjacent to that to the east and right on top of that the trail. So we will have to design that tunnel to accommodate the vibration from the freight that runs through there as well as the LRT.

Verbal Comment 02

Commenter: My question is, where there actual borings done to see what the water levels are in between the chain of lakes, the two lakes, at the time? It doesn't sound like there was any actual drilling or borings to see what current water levels are, is that part of your analysis?

Della Young: There were water level information provided as part of the report and we do have that in the draft report.

Jim Alexander: Yes I can answer that, we've actually put in thirteen of those piezometers that have been spoken of along the linear length of the route through the Kenilworth Corridor. We've also done, I believe its forty-six, explorations in that area essentially between Penn Station and West Lake. And based on the recommendations that Burns & McDonnell's are making, calling for maybe some additional of those piezometers going crosswise, east to west if you will, we will be doing that as well. I would just say we have a very good handle on the soil and ground water conditions through there. Let me just also add that we would pursue a monitoring plan through design as well as through construction and into operations so we understand, have a baseline for where that ground water is and be able to monitor that during construction and also monitor it during operations.

Verbal Comment 03

Commenter: You said that in your analysis you identified no fatal flaws, there's a lot of degrees shy of fatal. Do you categorize the flaws you did identify as minor, inconsequential, medium?

Della Young: They were minor, inconsequential.

Verbal Comment 04

Commenter: This is maybe less to do with the water but could the tunnel be built, this is an engineering question, could the tunnel be built continuously across the, enclosed continuously across the lakes so it doesn't have to come out? You know right between where it comes out and where it goes, could it be enclosed the whole time?

Jim Alexander: Yes, I believe what is being spoken of is between Cedar Lake and Lake of the Isles, there is a water channel and we formerly had a proposal for a deep bore tunnel which essentially would have done just that. Starting at West Lake going all the way up to approximately to where the shallow tunnels end, about one thousand feet north of 21st Street and would have gone under that water channel as well. That was one of the proposals put forward back in September, I believe, the Corridor Management Committee had indicated that we should no longer pursue that primarily due to cost.

Verbal Comment 05

Commenter: Hi, thank you, can you describe those infiltration chambers a bit more in detail?

Della Young: Yes, the infiltration chambers that are being proposed are, they are underground, for a lack of a better term, boxes that water would be able to go in and there is sand and media where the water would be able to go through it and go into ground water.

Commenter: So the ground water level is below that?

Della Young: Correct.

Commenter: Does the bottom of the tunnel, grade of the bottom, ever breach the ground water level?

Della Young: It does.

Commenter: But you said you're not doing dewatering in the tunnels.

Della Young: Right, the way the design is set up is that they are going to be putting these cells in place. There is going to be this sheet pile wall and then there's going to be the bottom and its going to keep the groundwater out. And out of the chambers, let me rephrase, not the chambers but the cells, they're going to take the water out and continue building the cells that way, but there's not going to be any more water coming in there. For the infiltration chambers, as we understand it, that is going to be closer to the ground so that water that comes in will have to be pumped into the infiltration chambers to be able to filter through and get down to groundwater. So there is a separation as proposed.

Commenter: And where are those pumps? Like at what elevation? I'm confused.

Jim Alexander: Perhaps I might intervene. We have not gotten that far in the design but we would intend to locate those infiltration chambers close to the portals, there are four under this proposed design, so they would be located near there. And I think just for a little more clarification, the design that is being proposed is intended to really block out all groundwater, but anything you put down into the ground there is always going to be, expected, some kind of seepage and that's the analysis we had done and the analysis that Burns & McDonnell had taken a look at, what we had done to verify. Our assumptions are valid in terms of seepage. Water may end up getting into the tunnel and so these

infiltration chambers are designed to catch any ground water that might get through the first line of defense, that sheet pile wall, before it gets into the tunnel, we could transport it back into the ground so there isn't that delta in the water level, overall water levels out in the Kenilworth Corridor. Hopefully that helps explain it, our design on the chambers will come forward if we do end up with the shallow LRT tunnel as part of the project. As part of our engineering analysis, we would define where the chambers are going to go and that would be part of our design.

Commenter: Thank you for that clarification. Then my question would be then how do you deal with the separation you achieve there in water level between say Lake of the Isles and Cedar Lake, which is what that tunnel will separate, right those two lakes, doesn't that create a separation of the connectivity of those water levels, doesn't it exist does it not?

Jim Alexander: Well its, essentially what this would involve is a tunnel that is about twenty-four feet down below the ground surface. The groundwater we believe is about a third up from the bottom of that. And so this is an area where its primarily sandy material and as Burns & McDonnell validated, at least in my interpretations of their report and what Della's been reporting and our belief as well, is we've done all these borings to understand the groundwater and soil conditions. Groundwater will freely flow underneath that tunnel and go to the other side if it does transport that way. So it really came to the question that was raised, is there going to be any flooding or any damming of people's basements for example, and we believe there will not be. And I believe the Burns & McDonnell report did validate that premise.

Della Young: Correct.

Verbal Comment 06

Commenter: Sarai Brenner from Minneapolis, and I'm just wondering if you can guarantee that the lakes will not get more polluted because of these tunnels and can you guarantee that the water will not go into people's basements because of these tunnels? Can you guarantee that?

Jim Alexander: Well I'm going to be reluctant to guarantee that but I will say that the chances of flooding anyone's basements is practically non-existent and the chance of transporting any contaminants into the ground water or the lakes is practically non-existent as well.

Verbal Comment 07

Commenter: Actually I have a question about, did Minneapolis do a water study before they allowed Knox and Lake to dump 240,000 gallons of water a day into the lagoon? I mean our lakes are precious and I understand people's concern, all over our metro area we have great lakes but we're talking kind of a different situation here and that Minneapolis allowed and still allows a huge amount of untreated water to be dumped into the lagoon.

Jim Alexander: Well, I can't really speak for the city. Are you referring to the 1800 Lake Street? Just so ever body is aware, it's been put out, there is a condominium or apartment complex about, just northeast of Lake Calhoun that has recently been constructed and the construction goes down deep into the groundwater level. And what is currently occurring right now is there is a discharge of about 180 gallons per minute. That has to go somewhere so they're transporting it over into Lake Calhoun. It was raised as an issue earlier last year when it was being discharged into a lagoon just between Lake of the Isles and Lake Calhoun and it was melting the ice. And so that was one of the concerns the City came to us because they don't want that to happen again. I can't really speak for that project and what the City

had done or not done but because of that project there is kind of a heightened awareness of, we need to be walking carefully, as we look at any designs that may go down into the groundwater and how we deal with that.

Verbal Comment 08

Commenter: I have a curiosity about the pumping system, if the pumping system will be able to accommodate flash flooding conditions like a six inch rain fall or something or would that shut down the drain system in the tunnel?

Jim Alexander: Well in terms of the flash flooding, we're talking such low values that we don't anticipate that being an issue in terms of flooding the trains but we will have certain redundancies in the design to accommodate that because we don't want our trains to be in water as well. Water and electricity doesn't mix very well and we'd soon to keep those dry and keep our customers moving.

Verbal Comment 09

Commenter: Hi, where are the costs for maintaining this or fixing it if something breaks, how are the dollar amounts figured into ongoing budgeting overall?

Jim Alexander: I will start with that and maybe Mark wants to chime in. But as we develop this project or any project, we develop operations and maintenance program and an understanding of how much cost we have, so as we develop the design we have to anticipate what those costs are going to be to run those pumps, run the lights, run the electricity, so that will be factored in to our overall project as we move this project forward.

Mark Fuhrmann: I would just add to what Jim said that we have the Blue Line and we've had that in service a little over nine years. So we have experience maintaining a tunnel, the two tunnels underneath the airport. So we know what it takes to maintain those tunnels and certainly serve the track and clean those tunnels out. So we can apply those costs and we have for our operational costs forecast if tunnels were to occur here for the Kenilworth shallow tunnels.

Verbal Comment 10

Commenter: Just a quick question regarding the 1800, how much of the data was used for your study as far as the hydro, 'cause I know there was quite a bit of study for 1800 before it was done?

Della Young: Correct, as we looked at this project we reviewed the information that's out there by Barr Engineering Company and looked at their data to see.

Commenter: Actually it was Braun.

Della Young: If that was applicable in this situation, but we did review the data report that's out.

Commenter: Ok, so as far as the flow rates, the anticipated flow rates, cause you mention 1800, I know for a fact it was peaking at 400 this summer from 1800 so how does that affect as far as the tunnel and have you guys thought about re-injection wells?

Jim Alexander: I'm not sure if I really fully heard the question, can you repeat that?

Commenter: As far as the maximum flow rates that were recovered out of 1800, they were, sometimes they reach 300 – 350 gallons a minute, which is quite a bit for a re-infiltration cell, have you guys thought about re-injection wells instead of cells?

Jim Alexander: I'm not sure what you mean by injection wells in this case but would just say that the amount of discharge we would anticipate both between the sheet piles and the tunnel itself and within the tunnel is on the order of fifteen gallons per minute or less that we would anticipate. Injection wells, I'm not really sure, following what your question is on that, you might have to clarify that.

Commenter: Often, as for dewatering you can re-inject back into groundwater, as far as having a re-injection well. That was one of the options discussed with 1800, I'm not sure where it went or not. So just kind of re-circulate it back in the groundwater.

Jim Alexander: Right, well that's what we intend to do with the infiltration chambers that, during construction, Della had shown the cells, we would take, we would be removing the water inside those cells and discharging that with appropriate measures during construction. But once we are all said and done, any ground water that comes through those sheet piles that will remain in place and the concrete tunnel that would essentially be re-entered into the ground through those infiltration chambers so we are not taking that out of the system. Any water that goes inside the tunnel, we're required to dispose of that through a sanitary sewer, but again those rates are very, very low.

Verbal Comment 11

Commenter: I think my question was misunderstood or I didn't state it clearly enough, I know you will be coming up with a number for what it's going to cost to maintain the tunnels or fix repairs as they're needed, that you'll do that. But I'm wondering, is that going to be a separate number that's going to be looked at when comparing all the numbers for everything that's being considered here, is that going to be a stand-alone number that you know, here's how much it's going to cost to dig the tunnels and here's how much it's going to cost on an annual basis or whatever to maintain them that, a number that would not be present if the tunnels were not built, that's what I'm curious about and if you have a general ballpark idea given your experience with the tunnels at the airport what that number might be?

Mark Fuhrmann: Our focus to date has been on the capital construction cost for the assorted options. To your specific question about operating and maintaining tracks and tunnels, what we have found with the Hiawatha Blue Line tunnels is that the cost to maintain the track in the tunnels is very similar to maintaining the track at-grade. The real only change element for the tunnels is to have the pumps, when they do need to be activated in the event of a heavy rain squall and so they're not operating all the time, and annualized it's a very modest incremental cost for tunnel maintenance.

Verbal Comment 12

Commenter: Good evening everybody. Hello everybody. How are you? Thank you for coming this evening. I am Jeff Jacobs and I'm the Mayor of St. Louis Park and I want to thank you all and welcome you to our community and thank you for coming Chair Haigh and members of the Met Council and Jim Alexander and Mark Fuhrmann, it's great to have you here. Most importantly, I'd like to thank you for listening to the facts here this evening. You can tell, those of you who know me in St. Louis Park, I have a script this evening which believe me is a good thing. So I'll say that but I wanted you to know something very important this evening. Generally in St. Louis Park when council members speak we speak for ourselves, we talk about we our one of seven. Tonight ladies and gentlemen I want you to know this is from all of us, this is unanimous.

I stand here before you tonight not just as a longtime mayor and resident of St. Louis Park, but as a representative of a unified St. Louis Park City Council that strongly believes that Southwest light rail will be a significant asset to the entire region. We have been consistent in our long-standing position that we will not support re-routing freight rail in our community if other viable options exist. And we repeat that tonight and there obviously are.

The Council is united in its belief that a decision on a freight rail route must be decided on the facts which have emerged over many, many months of study, discussions and deliberations.

I have my script so here it goes.

The TranSystems plan for rerouting trains in St. Louis Park is not materially different from the plans that have already been rejected.

It also fails to include an effective or accurate cost comparison between its suggested route and the previously identified routes. For example, the TranSystems cost estimate does not include:

- the cost of property acquisition or relocating residents, businesses or the community's emergency assistance program and food shelf called STEP, they spent 35 years trying to find a home for themselves now you'd relocate them;
- it does not include additional costs for construction on the former National Lead superfund site or costs of mitigation for lost wetland or the many other mitigation needs previously identified;
- it does not include any costs for the so-called "clipping" of the Xcel Energy substation which is right on highway 7.

But even though we don't know yet what the cost of the TranSystems plan would be, we do know that there are at least five viable combined LRT and freight rail options in the Kenilworth corridor. In fact, TranSystems has acknowledged that routing freight rail in the Kenilworth Corridor is viable. Tonight we heard that.

So let us be very clear about the two freight rail options before you, and what it would take to undertake the at-grade LRT and TranSystems St. Louis Park plan as compared to the Kenilworth freight rail and LRT options:

The TranSystems St. Louis Park plan requires taking homes and businesses. The Kenilworth option recommended by the Corridor Management Committee does not.

The TranSystems plan requires over 3,000 feet of new freight bridges. The Kenilworth options do not.

The TranSystems plan requires lowering a state highway by three to four feet. The Kenilworth options does not.

The TranSystems plan requires the construction of 4,500 feet of retaining walls. The at-grade Kenilworth options do not.

The TranSystems plan would require closure of important local streets and rerouting traffic circuitously around schools and within neighborhoods. The Kenilworth options do not.

The TranSystems plan would require raising the elevation of the tracks, which in some places will be over 20 feet above adjacent single-family yards. The at-grade Kenilworth options do not.

The TranSystems plan would require elevated trains to “clip” a major Xcel substation site. The Kenilworth options do not.

And the TranSystems plan has trains that will pass close enough to a high school to disrupt learning and create safety issues each time they pass. The Kenilworth options do not.

There is an option that has already been proven as viable as recommended by Met Council staff and endorsed by the Corridor Management Committee by a nearly unanimous vote of fifteen to one: freight rail continuing to exist at-grade and the use of shallow tunnels for LRT in the Kenilworth corridor.

The Met Council has indicated its goal is not to select the cheapest route to accommodate freight and light rail, but to select the best overall route. This shallow tunnel option is not the least expensive option, but we believe the shallow tunnel option meets this goal. We also believe this option is fair to both Minneapolis and St. Louis Park.

Under that plan:

- Park would continue to have freight traffic just like it does today and experience light rail traffic at grade through the community too.
- The Kenilworth corridor would continue to have freight traffic just like it does today. And light rail trains would travel through the Kenilworth Corridor too, but they would be almost entirely hidden underground instead of travelling past homes and valued green space.

The shallow tunnel plan has been on the table for months. It’s undergone intense scrutiny and it has enjoyed strong support from corridor leaders. It is a sound solution selected through a transparent and thorough process. And I do want to thank Chair Haigh for running that process, that was difficult, you had to bear, you bore a lot of slings and arrows of outrageous fortune doing it and I admire that.

If that process can’t be respected and a reroute through the core of St. Louis Park is back on the table, then all of the less costly Kenilworth options need to be back on the table too, including freight and light rail both at grade.

All of these facts make clear that there is a fair, viable option for locating both freight and light rail in the Kenilworth Corridor. If instead those facts are ignored and the rerouting of trains in St. Louis Park is viewed as the chosen option, it will be difficult, shall we say for the St. Louis Park City Council to see a path forward to municipal consent. And by difficult, I mean the level of difficulty you might have by playing the Hungarian Rhapsody on the piano with a broken hand.

In closing, let me say once again how much we do appreciate and we do, for you taking time coming down here this evening and listening to our community. We look forward to working with the Metropolitan Council to bring the SWLRT project to completion.

So once again I want to thank Chair Haigh, the members of the Met Council, Mark Fuhrmann and Jim Alexander for coming here tonight, we really thank you for this. Thank you. We know you’ll do the right thing. Thank you much.

Verbal Comment 13

Commenter: Thank you, I have a three part question, first has the Twin Cities & Western provided their assessment of the TranSystems' plan, their official assessment? Secondly, if the Twin Cities & Western rejects the TranSystems' plan concept what's the Met Council's next moves, specifically would they consider going to the Surface Transportation Board asking for adverse abandonment of the Kenilworth Corridor? Third, if the Twin Cities & Western conceptually agrees in concept with the TranSystems' plan how long would it take to complete the necessary detailed engineering for the Twin Cities & Western to officially sign off, would it allow you to still meet the end of March decision period for making the reroute decision for the Met Council, thank you?

Jim Terry: Let me start with answering as much of that as I can.

Chair Haigh: Jim, those are my questions to answer and I'll try and do that. As to your first question, no we have not received any formal correspondence from TC&W on their response to it and we hope to get that soon, I think they're working on that. Second, I think your second question was if we get a response from them and they say they accept this, what would it take for us to re-engineer that, how long would that take. I'm going to ask Mark to respond to the time length question on that.

Mark Fuhrmann: Thank you Madame Chair, we would say that this plan as brought forward by TranSystems here really is, say Jim, three-four-five percent developed.

Jim Terry: Something less than ten, I will agree with that.

Mark Fuhrmann: And so it would take a number of months to further define and develop a more detailed design plan of the TranSystems' concept. I would guess certainly three months or so. We would have to engage all of our partners including St. Louis Park and the freight railroads through that process.

Jim Terry: That would be optimistic. Again, need the hard survey, work it all together, I would lean a little bit more towards four or five months Mark. Making it happen somewhere in that area.

Ann Wiesner: So I think the third part of that question was related to the decision making process and how those two things match up.

Chair Haigh: So I think your question had to do with what role the Met Council play with respect to the STB process if it was necessary to go to the STB for the abandonment. We are looking at that process right now, we are consulting with experts we have hired who work with the STB in Washington DC and we really haven't come to a final conclusion on that. But we'll be working with Minneapolis, Hennepin County, and St. Louis Park to better understand that.

Verbal Comment 14

Commenter: Hi, I'm a resident of the Brunswick, the Bronx neighborhood in St. Louis Park, my property actually backs right up onto the tracks. And on slide forty-one it talks about how the route must not unduly impact the community and I'm here to tell you I'm impacted now. And I've lived in the neighborhood for eight years now, I really wasn't aware of all the on-goings with the train at the time I bought my home, it went by twice a day at nine in the morning and one in the afternoon and after many years it started coming by in the evenings at five or six and in the last several years it comes by anywhere between 10:30 and 11:30 at night with more frequency now on the weekends. They woke me

up out of a dead sleep at 12:30 in the morning a few nights ago, which is the latest they've come by. You know so I'm already impacted, my house vibrates every time the train goes by. I can only imagine what it's going to be like with longer, faster, more frequent trains. There is things you guys don't hear about and if it weren't for Safety in the Park, I wouldn't have really even known about this issue. You know my neighbors homes won't sell, one of my neighbors' dog was hit and killed by the train a couple of months ago. You know where is, you talk about impact to the community, where is the outreach trying to find out this information other than these meetings because I hear a lot of the same things but not the full impact to the community and how all the changes to the freight reroute would happen. So, what's going to happen, I'm not going to be able to sell my home if, in a few years, the situation is changed with the freight train.

Jim Terry: Alright, let me try to address your question, taking it one at a time as best I can. I'm sorry that when you bought your house you didn't know, or say there's probably some real estate agents in the room who may not have told you that the track was back there. In addition the frequency of the trains, let me be the first to tell you right now, CP runs basically the schedule you're talking about, it's kind of whenever the business is and again there is not going to be a lot of regularity, so.

Ann Wiesner: So Jim, I just want to see if we can condense this question into, it sounds to me like you're asking when you talk about impact on the community, exactly what elements are you talking about when you define impacts on the community. I think it would be helpful, does that seem accurate to you? I just want to make sure we're staying tight here, so can you just tell us specifically when you talk about impact on the community what were the elements that you looked at?

Jim Terry: One of the things that we wanted to look at and the way we did it was we literally took the railroad and went 150 feet on either side of the existing railroad. There were about 140 homes that were on either side of the railway and we said those are going to be affected as far as the community is concerned. I'm sorry about the fact that you bought by the railroad if you didn't know the railroad was there. What we're trying to do, engineering wise, is basically take the track and level it out, put continuous welded rail back there, eliminate the need for blowing at 28th Street and 29th Street, the crossings by putting in that underpass in at 27th Street. So we are trying to mitigate some of the issues but yes you are right there will be more trains coming through there. There could be more even if we don't do this, you do understand that, ok.

Verbal Comment 15

Commenter: I just wanted to support the woman that just spoke. I do not live on the edge of the railroad tracks. I believe she lives on the west side of Highway 100, I live on the east side of Highway 100 and I too have been impacted on a regular, every single week, basis, not being able, being woken from sleep multiple times a night when the train comes through between 10:30 and 12:30 in the morning. This is a working community, we have a hospital in the area, a lot of people are healthcare employees and you don't want those people who are attending to you when you are ill in the hospital to have lack of sleep. So I would like you to always be considering the people that are maybe not at the tracks but also a distance from the tracks that are being impacted and woken up on a regular basis. This is not a new, this is not an existing frequency of trains that have been coming through there, this has changed in the last six months to a year. When I bought my house on this west side of Highway 100, I would hear the whistle blowing at a nice convenient maybe 6 PM hour and thought isn't that quant. I don't mind listening to a train blow but when it's waking me up between 10:30 and 12:30 at night and I've got to be working as a nurse the next day that's going to impact the community.

Jim Terry: Let me answer her real quickly.

Ann Wiesner: I think people want to keep moving unless there is a specific question.

[Inaudible speaking]

Verbal Comment 16

Commenter: I live on the railroad but my question is actually related to the high school and the learning environment of our high school. And so I'm just curious, this just came on, I'm just curious with the frequency of trains and the length of the trains, the timing, how long would it take I guess for each train to cross within seventy feet of our high school and how many times a day would that happen within the school day? So how many minutes out of their school day are they affected by noise and vibration? Thank you.

Jim Alexander: Well I'm not going to have that calculation on how long, the longest train as we understand from Twin Cities & Western and what they run, they have a 113 car train. And as I understand the design concept would be 25 mile per hour, I frankly cannot do, I'm not going to be able to do the math right today, maybe Jim may have access in his head about how long that would take.

Jim Terry: Five to seven minutes.

[inaudible]

Jim Terry: Correct.

[inaudible]

Jim Terry: Right now there are two and the Twin Cities & Western runs about five a day, so that would be a total of seven. And they do run anytime.

Jim Alexander: Maybe I could speak to that, as we presented this issue last year, we talked about the Twin Cities & Western frequency and based on the information they had provided. They essentially have two trains per day that they run on their own and that's seven days a week and that's morning and night, going to St. Paul and coming back. Then on average, on average there's between five and six of these unit trains that go through at anytime of the day. So on average there is currently about twenty trains per week but we've been advised by TC&W as well as the other railroads that could be subject to change, but that was what we reported last year. If that helps.

Verbal Comment 17

Commenter: Thank you. Good evening, my name's Lynn Carper. I live in the northeastern part of the city adjacent to the Burlington Northern tracks. Mister Terry, I would like to address safety issues and I have a couple of questions around them. First of all, are you familiar with the most recent article in the magazine called Trains that came out in March that discusses both oil trains and the safety of tank cars?

Jim Terry: Not specifically that particular article.

Commenter: Well essentially what the article is saying is the AAR, the Association of American Railroads, feels that the current tank cars are deficient and they're proposing new standards for them so that

when they do come off the rails they do not rupture, they do not leak, and they do not explode as easily as they do now. Each one of these tank cars that we are looking at has 25,000 gallons of ethanol in that which is equivalent to about the same capacity of about 2,000 automobiles. Each of these tank cars weigh approximately a quarter-million pounds. What we're looking at in the northern area is the establishment of an additional siding that comes off of the MN&S, you're familiar with that correct?

Jim Terry: That's correct.

Commenter: Did you account for the cost of that in your cost projections?

Jim Terry: Yes sir, I did.

Commenter: Now you are also familiar with the accident that occurred in Casselton, North Dakota at the end of December where a multiple cars of a tank train were struck by a passing BNNSF train, where one of those cars came off and collided with a car that was parked at the siding. The point I'm going to be making is that you are going to be creating exactly the same circumstances for the BNNSF with a new siding there with high speed trains passing parked oil trains there. If you lived within a hundred feet of this situation and knowing that at Casselton they evacuated a five mile radius, what would you want done to protect your home adjacent to these tracks?

Jim Terry: Well, I'm one of the guys that live within a hundred feet of an active railroad. I live within a hundred feet of Union Pacific's Sadiyah [SP] sub-division, thirty-five trains a day operate on it, so I would want the same safety issues handled, completed, that I've got on the track that runs by my house and that's some of the things I've suggested on the slide.

Commenter: I didn't see anything that was suggested for that type of a passing siding and I'm sure that your train existed before you moved in, this is something new that's coming to our neighborhood and we have an opportunity to provide the proper mitigation that you would feel safe with if you could have the ideal mitigation, I want to hear what that might be?

Jim Terry: To answer your question, you are correct, that was a double tracked railroad when I purchased the property a few years ago. It was not something that was added on, you are correct.

Commenter: So you still cannot state that there should be any additional mitigation that you feel would be appropriate there when you build a new situation that might be hazardous?

Jim Terry: Well I haven't, I don't know what mitigation that they're going to use specifically on that siding. I put a cost in there to represent that siding but as far as looking at the specifics on it I did not do that. I'll be glad to do that.

Commenter: So mitigation is not part of what you provide in your estimate?

Jim Terry: I don't believe, the definition of mitigation we won't go there, but I don't know it was in that ten million dollar figure. I just haven't broken that down enough to give you a good answer on that. Jim, do you know what was involved in that ten million dollar estimate?

Jim Alexander: Well Jim, I don't know if I can speak for your estimate.

Jim Terry: That was, I took that from another estimate that was already published in a study.

Commenter: To move down the tracks a bit, but still a safety issue, down the tracks to the high school area and now we're going to talk about the concept of grade reverse curves and the stringing propensity of a train wanting to straighten itself off on curves and on high grades. How thoroughly did you look at that and how concerned might you be that these deficient tank cars could come off the track adjacent to the schools and now we're looking at the situation very similar to the one at Lac [moderator interrupts].

Ann Wiesner: Sir, I'm going to ask you to wrap up.

Commenter: In Canada, where forty seven people died when a train came off adjacent to where they were.

Jim Terry: Alright, to try to answer your questions, we looked intensely at the grades, in fact that was the focus of our project, one of the main focuses. We were able to reduce the grades down to about half of what had been shown in a majority of these projects and got them down to very comfortable grades for a freight railroad. We were also able to lengthen the tangent, the straight track for a lack of a word to describe it, between the curves and reduce the length of the curves so that we were able to reduce the effort that you are trying to describe and we engineered it well beyond the AREMA standards through that area.

Verbal Comment 18

Commenter: Thank you. Thom Miller from Safety in the Park, and I just wanted to make one thing clear because there has already been a couple questions about TC&W. For those of you who don't know, at the CMC, the Corridor Management Committee meeting the president of TC&W has preliminarily rejected this plan, calling it unsafe because of the S-curves and the grade changes. So I just think that's something everybody should know at the beginning of this Q&A section. But my question is for Mr. Terry, Mr. Terry the 112 million dollar estimate that you've placed on the MN&S North plan, does that include the southern arm as well the arm that goes on to the MN&S south?

Jim Terry: Yes it does.

Commenter: Ok, so 112 million dollars is what TranSystems has estimated at this point for both of those sections of the track. The Met Council came up with an estimate of about 200 million dollars for the Brunswick Central Plan, which is the plan we all know which had the berms. The only difference between the two estimates or the two track plans is the berm that goes through or was planned to go through the Spanish Immersion Elementary School. So I have a hard time understanding when the Met Council started with 200 million dollars for the MN&S north then they added another 30 million to put on the MN&S south, the southern arm, we now have a total of 230 million, a huge gap between that and the 112 million dollars that TranSystems has estimated. Because there is no itemization on your report, I don't understand how there can be such a huge gap. So my question is, I understand that TranSystems makes a large part of its revenue on building bridges and ramps for freight railroads and I also understand TranSystems did this study for about 50,000 dollars, which is a very low for any consultant for this sector of the economy. Is it possible that this 112 million dollar bid is actually a bid not an estimate so that TranSystems could place itself in bidding to get this work once the Met Council chooses this plan?

Jim Terry: The answer is no.

[inaudible]

Jim Terry: I don't know where the 200 or the 230 I think you were referred to, where that came from. I started with a clean sheet of paper, took my team's design and started it, counted spikes, bolts, rail, ties, bridges, bridge type lengths and to say that it's just a version of the Brunswick with the high berms, I would not describe it as that. We start back at almost to Blake Road, and if you're familiar with the railroad its dropping off as its going towards the east. Instead of coming half way down somewhere near Louisiana Street and starting back up to get up and over Highway 7, we kept the railroad basically level taking the grade up so we could take some of those issues out of there. I don't feel like a comparison with the elevated Brunswick Central corridor is comparable.

Chair Haigh: Jim can I, I just want to get this over to Mark a second to answer because we have additional cost estimates that we will need to do on this concept.

Mark Fuhrmann: I would only add that the Corridor Management Committee was very clear a week ago that they have asked staff at the project office to do that cost comparison, apples to apples, and so we have Mr. Terry's, the benefit of his cost build up that he was just itemizing but we will then add additional costs so that it will then be an apple to apple comparison of how we built out the prior costs that we shared last summer.

Verbal Comment 19

Commenter: I'm just, I'm curious, every time Hennepin County drafts one of these plans we have a whistle free zone by our high school and I'm wondering in what world is it a good idea to run a 20 kiloton freight train at 25 miles per hour past a bunch of hormone addled distracted teenagers and not warn them with a horn?

Jim Terry: One of the issues with a quiet zone is that if someone is trespassing on the railroad you do sound the horn.

[inaudible]

Jim Terry: No it's not completely, in an emergency you blow the whistle.

Verbal Comment 20

Commenter: Thank you, I'm Nancy Gores and I am Chair of the St. Louis Park School Board and like the Mayor, I am authorized for the first time as one person to speak for all of our Board because we feel strongly about this TranSystem option. I hesitate to call it a plan because you know how much more work needs to be done on it before you give it any serious credibility as a viable alternative. I want to welcome you to our high school, we love our high school. This is our one high school and we want to protect it. We love our students and we want to protect them and so I have a letter for you that details all our many concerns but I'm going to talk about two in particular; safety and educational impact. First is the educational impacts, and I think it was eluded to by someone in the back. When you run a 113 car train by our high school eighty feet from a classroom you can't look at sound analysis that does averages, you have to look at the sound analysis when that train is going by and how long it takes that train to go by. I think Mr. Perry said six minutes, I think we are currently seeing seven trains a day potentially. As we know, once we give the railroad their rights they can do anything they want so be careful on our behalf. That adds up to a lot of educational time lost because when that train is running

by the classroom education stops. There's no teaching, there's no learning. You multiple those minutes you come up with a lot of time lost over the course of a year. That is an educational impact that's just not acceptable. The other educational impact that I'm going to highlight is kind of the double whammy if this plan goes through. We have the light rail we want to do and that will have construction impacts and then if we do this there is a freight rail construction impact and our streets and our transportation system, our disruption and delays for our busing will go on I fear for years. Certainly, a very long time. Every added delay in transportation costs us money because we have to pay for that and when you have less efficient transportation the money tends to come out of the classroom. It comes out of fewer teachers and larger class sizes with an educational impact that is just not acceptable and if you do both it's a double whammy for us that is just not fair to our students. And then there's the safety concern. You've got, I'm glad you're here Mr. Perry because you saw how close that track really is to our high school, much closer than the numbers in this report. And you saw, since you're here today, you saw where our McDonald's is, you know where our stadium field is, you know we've got an elementary school not far away. To reroute more train traffic and longer train traffic here really increases the safety risks to our students and I'm not the only one concerned about that, the president of the TC&W has said that in the Star Tribune, his quote is in our letter to you, but, he talks about curves and less distance for the engineers to see, added safety risks, and added derailment risks. Not ok for our community, certainly, not ok for our students. So in summary, because I know you've got a lot of people here that want to talk, I've heard about you know the phrase, throw somebody under the bus, this plan, this concept, this premature idea raises so many safety concerns, educational concerns, that it is throwing our children under the train tracks. It is not ok to throw our kids under the train. This is an idea that we reject and we really hope that you recognize this as a bad idea, bad public policy, not what Minnesota stands for, and will pick an alternative that is better for everybody. Thank you.

Verbal Comment 21

Commenter: Hi, my name is Kathryn Kottke and I am a CAC member, I think it's Community Advisory Committee, I'm not really sure what the full name is. I want to talk about the safety enhancement slide and I don't have a question for Jim Terry but I have a comment if you could flip back to slide 57. I just don't find these to be enhancements. First of all the crossing closures, I understand you're closing four out of six crossings. You are redirecting traffic through our neighborhoods. We right now can barely fit one car through the streets because of the snow. The kind of traffic you're running through the neighborhoods is dangerous, potentially fatal. I also want to comment on the inside guard rails, the fencing, and the pedestrian bridge. I would like to comment that that's insulting. That is not a safety enhancement. If we have a derailment no guard rail, no level of iron wrought fencing, and no pedestrian bridge is going to protect our children. I also want to comment on a walking tour that Safety in the Park gave, one of the comments that a Minneapolis person asked us was why did you build the high school so close to the tracks. I think that was a legitimate question and I think the reason why we did it is because it's a passenger line, it's a very small train, it's not unsafe. My question to the Met Council is why would you reroute a freight train so close to our schools? That's it.

Chair Haigh: I want you to know that the decision to look at all of the reroute alternatives was done with the idea of making sure that we had examined every single possibility. We've not yet made a decision, we're here to hear what you have to say and I appreciate that.

[multiple inaudible speakers]

Verbal Comment 22

Commenter: Hi, I just want to offer one layperson's impression of this whole process. I've been thinking a lot about the idea of viability relative to this process. Viability can be a very effective weasel word and can be used quite effectively to promote an agenda other than one's, the public's interest. It's a word that says trust me dear citizen for I know better than you. Viability implies that wisdom, thoughtfulness, good council, and sober judgment have gone into a decision making process. Yet time and again we've seen simple cost-effective solutions to the freight issue dismissed without explanation. Not viable we're told while the costliest, most disruptive and dangerous alternatives are put forward again and again as being the only viable alternatives. By what standard of viability can the safety and quality of life of an entire city weigh less heavily than the placement of a section of bike trail? Citing viability without further explanation, without revealing the criteria used to reach a decision gives cover and legitimacy to decisions that cannot pass the smell test of decency and common sense. It's been clear for a long time that powerful interests want to force a reroute down our throats with little regard for the impact such an action will have on this community. For them the ghettoization of St. Louis Park is a foregone conclusion. All that's lacking is justification for the deed. I thank you for your time.

[inaudible]

Ann Wiesner: So the question again was, can you restate the question for me?

Commenter: In short the question is why is it that cheaper less effective options are constantly put forth while such as the bike trail, we can remove it, one option I'm curious about is why can't we run the train rather the light rail on a single track for a quarter mile rather than move the bike trail or the freight trains? I lived in San Diego on a freight rail line that did just that, or a light rail line that did just that and those trains ran on time every day, every hour. So I don't see how that option is untenable yet the proposed reroute here with its clear and obvious dangers is something that's constantly put forward again and again.

Chair Haigh: Let me begin first by, I wanted to answer, actually I'm going to ask Mark to answer the question about the single track first then I will answer the other question about the policy question, about why the bike trail is no longer being considered as an alternative.

Mark Fuhrmann: To the single LRT track idea. That was considered by Metro Transit and the project office last year and our assessment of that is that it does create unreliable service for light rail. We've looked at others, I've actually ridden the San Diego system one day and I'm familiar, but other systems that have tried that, such as Baltimore, which I'm very familiar with ultimately then double tracked that to provide the reliability for their riders. So operationally we did not consider that long term feasible.

Chair Haigh: And then if I can, the Corridor Management Committee including all of the elected officials who sit on that, looked at the alternative of the bike trail removal, realized there was property impacts for that, there were acquisition of homes for that [inaudible comments from audience]. I just want to try and explain to you what the thinking was at the time, this alternative of course was not on the table at the time. And we made a decision that was really not a viable alternative that [inaudible comments from audience].

Ann Wiesner: Hang on, wait, wait, wait. I'm gonna ask you to wait to be recognized. [Audience members yelling]. So, I'm just gonna ask that we try to wait until your recognized. I know it's difficult but if we all just start standing up and yelling questions we're not going to get anywhere real quickly. So let's get

back to the Chair and let you finish, please if we can try to refrain from interrupting each other that would be great.

Chair Haigh: I believe that the members of the Corridor Management Committee felt that the shallow tunnel was the better alternative in the Kenilworth Corridor because it allowed for the bike trail to stay. It did not require property takings and it really protected the resources of the lakes that are important to people who use the bike trail and the lakes. That is not to say that the issues you have raised are not important, they're very important and that's why we are here to hear what you have to say and to listen to your concerns.

Verbal Comment 23

Commenter: My name is Jackie Olafson and I'm the director of STEP and I want you to know that STEP is one of the buildings that would be demolished if this happens and I want you to know what happens at STEP because it's more than a building it's a sacred place in this community where over 4000 people each year turn to STEP for food, clothing, transportation and above all a listening supportive professional presence by social workers who help them find rent assistance, find emergency assistance for their utility bills, help them find food support. We have over 200 volunteers, over 8000 donors. This is a small community with a big heart who cares about people and this building took 39 years to find and to actually pay for by the community. It belongs to the community, it is for the community and it represents the health of this community. So I urge you to listen to me with your hearts as well as with your heads and make a good decision for this community. Thank you.

Verbal Comment 24

Commenter: Hi, my name is Meg McCormick, I'm a 28 year resident of St. Louis Park. I've been waiting patiently for about 15 years for the Met Council to come up with an objective comparison of co-location and relocation options. I've been patient, I've been respectful and I have not participated in some of the seemingly inflammatory language associated with this issue. I've stayed out of that because I've been waiting. I've been reasonable, I've been respectful and my perspective is a little bit different than some of my neighbors in that I believe, I truly believe, if there an objective comparison and I mean truly objective, and the analysis showed that the relocation option was better than the other options with objective criteria of safety, technical viability and yes I want a definition, environmental impact and cost I would support that. But you have not been able to show that. In fact I would be supportive of that relocation but you have failed. You have not been objective. Visual impact as stated as a response to Minneapolis and St. Louis Park questions is not objective criteria. Whether or not people like the option is not objective criteria. I'm done with you. I'm done waiting. I'm done being respectful. You have forced my hand. Your failure to be objective in your evaluation of all options based on safety, technical viability, environmental impact, and cost is in my opinion unethical. I will be filling a complaint with the Government Accountability Office, the Office of Budget and Management, and the Minnesota Ethical Practices Board because I believe your behavior has been unethical. You have caved to political pandering and you have failed to be objective in your criteria. The bike path, moving the bike path has got to be part of your final comparison. Thanks.

Verbal Comment 25

Commenter: My name is Janet Ostfield [sp] Viavotta [sp] why I'm married 23 years you'd think I'd remember my married name, Janet Vivotta [sp]. I've been a resident of St. Louis Park for the last 21 years and I don't live on the railroad tracks but I'm three blocks off the tracks. And I'm disappointed, I'm disappointed to be here again. Because after analyzing these routes for over 15 years, a new study has been commissioned and a solution has been found. Well, not really new, its slightly different but still

permanently closes streets, requires the acquisition of several homes and businesses, divides our neighborhoods, and runs vicariously near the Spanish Immersion School and the St. Louis Park High School and closes our community food shelf. I'm disappointed because the new study by design took little consideration to the concept of co-location of freight and light rail even though this acceptable for most of the western portion of the proposed SWLRT route. I'm disappointed because the same criteria used to eliminate several co-location options in the Kenilworth Corridor are apparently not valid reasons to find this current new solution unacceptable. I'm disappointed because apparently biking and walking trails, which I use on a regular basis, daily basis in nicer weather, which could be easily moved are more important than the safety and sense of community of the residents of St. Louis Park. Not to mention that this is the least expensive choice. And I wonder if all facts and circumstances and costs regarding freight relocation had been included in the original proposal to the FTA would they have given the same green light for this project. I'm disappointed because if in fact our concerns fall on deaf ears and then to add insult to injury, it's been proposed that I will get to pay additional sales taxes to help pay for this new route. This impacts me both as a consumer and as a business owner. I'm disappointed because a minimum cost of 1.2 billion dollars, being one of the most expensive in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area, and I quote from yesterday's paper, Sue, chairman, you were quoted, that you don't favor looking for another route, quote unquote for light rail. Isn't it more important to make a good decision, something residents and citizens will applaud as a valuable way to spend our hard earned tax dollars, something that really moves our city into the forefront of public transportation, that makes our city desirable. I'm disappointed because although the trend is to convert rails to recreational use, the Kenilworth Corridor is a freight corridor and it's an appropriate place for this kind of freight train to be considered. The MN&S spur on the other hand was built as a passenger train route, it has many at-grade crossings, runs between residential backyards and within 80 yards of our high school. Even now with the current freight traffic, teachers at the school need to stop teaching when a train passes. These trains are approximately 20 cars in length and pass 2-3 times a day. The proposed trains will be 100 plus cars in length and pass 4-6 times per day at potential more than twice the speed of current trains. How disruptive will that be? Would you want your child going to a school where that was the status quo forever? Make the right choice, keep freight in a freight corridor, if there can't be any agreement on the light rail, continue to make the right choice and find a new route. Don't spend our tax dollars and jeopardize our standard of living at the same time. We need to make smart decisions. This impacts decisions of transportation for the City of Minneapolis and the entire seven county metro area. We don't have the resources of New York City, we can't afford to make this kind of error in judgment. I would rather go back to the drawing board than this kind of monumental mistake.

Verbal Comment 26

Commenter: I just wanted to have a little bit more of a conversation and I want to go back to that bike trail and why we're not moving it. So your first answer was about the CMC and how they did not support moving forward with some of those other alternatives. Really, I think a more honest way to say that is the CMC passed a resolution that moved the shallow tunnel forward but also in that same resolution it was voted 15 to 1 to take the reroute off the table. I have not seen any resolution, any vote, really any discussion about taking, elevating the bike trail or moving the bike trail off the table, so can you maybe kind of restate what you meant about the CMC supporting taking those alternatives off of the table.

Chair Haigh: I guess the question that you're asking is, is currently is the relocation of the bike trail on the table? It is not because of the recommendation by the CMC to adopt the shallow tunnel as an alternative, the alternative that was recommended to us at the Council. As we continue with this work, what we're doing is really trying to find a viable alternative for LRT in this corridor so that it is something all of the cities along the corridor have passed resolutions to accept LRT in this corridor. So we have this

one last issue we are trying resolve of the many issues that we have resolved on this project and that really is: what do we do with the freight rail? Do we keep it in the current Kenilworth Corridor in its current alignment or do we look at this relocation alternative? That's really the policy question before us. That's why we're here tonight to hear what you have to say about it.

Commenter: Ok, maybe I didn't phrase the question correctly but the question was, or maybe the statement and I want you to explain it to me is the CMC passed a resolution to take the reroute off the table, to stop studying it. The CMC never passed anything that said to take the bike trail or elevating the bike trail or moving the bike trail off the table. So can you explain to me again why are we continually studying the reroute when there was a resolution passed by the CMC to stop studying it but we're not studying these other alternatives?

Chair Haigh: I don't know if, I feel like I keep trying to answer that question and maybe you don't like the answer that I'm giving you but it is, it was an alternative that the CMC did not feel was the best alternative, they felt that the shallow tunnel was the best alternative.

Commenter: But they passed a resolution to take the reroute off the table so why is it not important that they did that?

Ann Wiesner: So are you asking the question?

Commenter: I just want a real answer.

Ann Wiesner: So can I just, just to gain clarity here, are you asking if the CMC passed a resolution saying we should no longer continue to consider the reroute why is it still on the table? Is that the question? Ok.

Chair Haigh: The reason it's on the table as I've stated earlier, is to respond to a request from legislators and local elected officials, the governor's asked, the governor asked us, asked me as his appointee to go back and do this additional work and that's what we're doing.

Commenter: Did the governor just ask to study the reroute or did he ask you to take a look at everything?

Chair Haigh: What we were asked to do is what we've done, which is to do the additional water resources work, to engage a freight rail expert to look at the freight rail alternatives. There was no request for us to look again at the bike trail issue.

Adam Duininck: I'll try to jump in to answer it a little bit more thoroughly, it's the same point, but there were multiple groups of elected officials, city, county, state legislators all involved in looking at the scope we're going to re-examine. It wasn't just folks from Minneapolis, it wasn't just folks from St. Louis Park, it was a big broad group and it involved staff teams from all the local units of government too.

[barely audible]- St. Louis Park too?

Adam Duininck: Yes, of course

Verbal Comment 27

Commenter: Yes, can I ask my question and by the way I went to this high school. I have two kids in this high school. We live right on the border of Minneapolis and St. Louis Park about a block and a half from where the line is. We use the trails, kids went to Park Spanish Immersion, can kind of see both sides of this in terms of Minneapolis and St. Louis Park. But I think the important question isn't how we, isn't how decisions were made. My question is, is there any way that moving or elevating the bike trail can be put back on the agenda and if so, what would that take?

Chair Haigh: I guess really it would be people on the Corridor Management Committee suggesting that that was an alternative we should consider again. Perhaps that will come up. I don't know that it will.

Verbal Comment 28

Commenter: Well we certainly heard a lot of nonsense from on high haven't we? So let's ask the real experts about the effect of a reroute through St. Louis Park. Let's ask the community of St. Louis Park, do you want a reroute through your community?

[multiple audience answer's: no]

Commenter: Let's hear it again, do you want a reroute through your community?

[multiple audience answer's: no]

Commenter: Then let's speak with one voice, won't you join with me, hell no get out we don't want no reroute, hell no get out we don't want no reroute, come on, hell no get out we don't want no reroute.

Ann Wiesner: I'm going to ask.

Commenter: Hell no get out.

Ann Wiesner: I'm just going to ask that we move on so people can have an opportunity to speak.

Commenter: Hey I can use my three minutes, you tried to engineer this to your advantage and I'm not letting you have it.

Ann Wiesner: So...

Commenter: You have pushed us around for over four years, do not dare to call us uncivil.

Ann Wiesner: I'm not calling you uncivil. I'm just suggesting that we try to use as much of this time as possible.

Commenter: So then let's get some real answers and give me my three minutes, I didn't even use my three minutes.

Ann Wiesner: If people want to.

Commenter: My question was to the people of St. Louis Park. Supposedly you want our opinion. I think you got your answer.

Verbal Comment 29

Commenter: Hi, I promise I do have a question. I live on Library Lane, I can see the train tracks now pretty close to the high school. Moved here about three and a half years ago because it was safe community, I was a single woman purchasing my first home. Loved it, great commute time, it's been an amazing, I have, like, the best neighbors a person could ask for. So now that I hear all this happening and I look at this helpful chart on page sixteen with circles and colors, I see Kenilworth has quite a few of these white circles that means strongly supports goals, whereas some of the other ones do not have white colors. So, since I'm only a lawyer, not a chart interpreter, can you explain to me why the conclusion of the report states there really are no preferable routes when we heard in the presentation today that there is really nothing stopping Kenilworth and there's a whole bunch of white circles? So why am I continuing to hear the same conversation, because literally the only argument I've heard in favor of or against I guess having it stay in Kenilworth is that there was an agreement maybe fifteen years ago, I don't know I was too young to know that, that they were promised the trains would leave? And I've been asking for a different answer for that question so maybe you can actually give me one today as to why again we're not just hopping on board this Kenilworth option and saving all of our precious time and your time and moving on with progress?

Chair Haigh: Well thank you, again I just want to emphasize that yes the Corridor Management Committee recommended to the Council that the co-location of the freight rail in the Kenilworth area is an alternative that is viable, and it is a recommended alternative. So, yes we are considering that. We have this step that we need to go through to gather this input to really understand this other alternative then we will have to ultimately make a decision.

Jennifer Munt: Folks I would like to add one piece. I'm Jennifer Munt, I Co-Chair of our Community Advisory Committee and I want to explain what we're doing here. What you heard tonight is an independent consultants report. Now the Met Council needs to take a look at that report, cost it out, understand the impacts, what we're hearing loud and clear from you tonight is that there are huge safety concerns regarding the reroute through St. Louis Park. We need to hear the community input. We need our technical staff to take a look at what Jim Terry is recommending. And then make a decision based on that. I know you've had a lot of meetings, a gentleman at our last meeting came to me with the receipts of all the babysitters he had hired. We get it that people are exhausted by the process but what we need to do is hear your input before Jim Terry's draft report becomes a final report. And I also want to tell you that our decision isn't just made with aerial photographs. All of my Met Council colleagues have toured the different alignments, we understand this in terms of people. You've got representatives, both Minneapolis and St. Louis Park do, on our Community Advisory Committee. We've worked together as a group that's tried to find a solution because people on both sides of this issue feel passionately about it and what they've told us is, we love our communities and we want you to protect them. I'm looking for a solution that helps us do that. We've taken tours as a Community Advisory Committee with Safety in the Park, with folks along the Kenilworth trail. We understand this on the ground. The gentleman, the great organizer who led the chant, I stood in his yard to understand what it means living as close to the freight trains as he does. We understand this from a human perspective, we want to understand it from a dollars and cents perspective and we want to apply criteria that will allow us to choose the best decision because we understand we're building a light rail line that's going to stand the test of time and we're making a decision today that will affect generations to come.

Verbal Comment 30

Commenter: I'm looking at the handouts from tonight. And the first one, responses to community questions from the Minneapolis Town Hall Community Meeting on January seventh, on the back page,

question ten and the last two sentences, the safety of transit customers and the residents of surrounding areas is the Metropolitan Council's top priority, all design and engineering decisions on the Southwest LRT project are made with safety in mind. On the first page of the responses to the St. Louis Park meeting on January ninth under number two, in the middle, during discussions of LRT in the Kenilworth Corridor the community expressed its preference for design alternatives that did not require the acquisition of homes and also supported keeping bike trails in the corridor. So it sounds like the community input was given a lot of weight and I think it's fair to say the St. Louis Park community preference given our Mayor was here representing the entire City Council and our School Board President was here representing the entire school community that the St. Louis Park community preference is to not have a reroute. So why is rerouting still on the table but moving bike trails is not on the table?

Ann Wiesner: So I think, I think we continue to circle around that question.

[inaudible audience members]

Ann Wiesner: I'm going to let you all respond if you'd like to, but what I'm hearing the answer is, the Met Council has been asked to look once more at these options and they were not asked to look again at moving the bike trail.

[inaudible audience members]

Ann Wiesner: I think the process for that is to have the Community Advisory Council make that recommendation, is that correct?

Chair Haigh: I think that the issue that is probably behind the question that you're asking is, the City of Minneapolis, from what we have heard on the Corridor Management Committee, is not in favor of the reroute of the bike trail, ok.

[inaudible audience members]

Chair Haigh: Ok, I'm just telling you the reality, and so the shallow tunnel alternative provides for the co-location of the freight rail in the corridor. The reroute of the bike trail provides for LRT at-grade with the freight rail in the corridor and I don't think that is an option that Minneapolis had indicated that is there top option.

Verbal Comment 31

Commenter: So I would like to review a few points that I think illustrate the absurdity of the reroute still being on the table here. And this is from the Met Council website. The reroute would confiscate at least forty-six private homes and businesses, it would cost over two hundred million dollars compare that to co-location moving bike trails or elevating bike trails, which would cost thirty-five to fifty million. That's just a hundred and fifty million less. Zero confiscations of private property or businesses. To echo what the lady in the middle just said, if you look at number two, and the top of page two, number two it says the design concept for elevated trails was one of the possible technical solutions presented by Southwest LRT design staff, objections to this concept included visual impacts and difficulties getting on and off the bike trail. So you can design a train that has all kinds of s-curves, dangerous ups and downs undulations but you can't design a bike trail with on and off ramps. And because of that we eliminated it that's ridiculous. So, understand to your point the CMC should be here and I know you're tired of

hearing about the bike trails, they should be here then. The litmus test for the elimination of elevated trails was it's visually.

Chair Haigh: I just wanted to say that I believe there are members of the CMC that are here tonight.

Commenter: They should be up front. And respond to that. Ok. I'm just about done here. So the thresholds for dismissing a bike path option are very easily met while reroute options despite the fact that they compromise the safety of the school children and build rails where they don't exist now is impossibly, impossible to meet it seems. And the bike trails need to be back on and you know what we could improve the bike trails. The Minneapolis Park Board owns the property on Cedar Lake including now where private homes enjoy Cedar Lake all to their own enjoyment on the east side. The Park Board should put the trails right there. Interestingly enough the former Park Board President is one of those private homeowners as is a current Park Board Member. It's time to put a bike trail right there.

Verbal Comment 32

Commenter: [inaudible] I'm a railroad engineering expert. I've have been consulting for fifteen years, I also spent fifteen years designing locomotives, so I know a little bit about what I'm talking about. My question is for Mr. Terry, he said earlier that eight thousand foot train, twenty-five miles per hour, five to seven minutes, that's very nice and I like the speed, I want to know how long it takes to stop that train and if a car is stuck at Dakota Avenue, where the engineer would have to start applying the brakes to stop the twenty thousand ton, one hundred thirteen car train to not cause an accident at Dakota?

Jim Terry: Obviously the shuttle train to stop an accident like that would be very, it'd be very difficult there's no doubt about that. That's why I'm a proponent of fencing the right-of-way to keep the kids off the railroad track. What you're pointing out Tom is probably correct. If that is the speed that the railroad is operating, a loaded freight train is difficult to stop. No doubt about it. It's tougher to stop a hundred car loaded freight train than it is a fifteen car train that CP's running today. That is some of the reasons why safety is so important to this thing and the criteria.

Commenter: [inaudible] Trains can stop in a hundred feet. They can stop what they can see. They stop when they go to McDonald's for lunch, the locomotive engineers. That's the real problem and I don't, I think one of the reasons that Jim and Mark have looked at different route, people might not like berms but their trying to get away from the blind curves and that's what one of the real problems is. And I think where you're kind of missing the boat is it's not that eight thousand foot trains can go twenty-five miles an hour and only take six to seven minutes. You talked earlier also about quiet zones and I've investigated a lot of accidents that were in quiet zones and I've heard a lot of horns. There's a lot of reasons why engineers blow their horns and an engineer and a conductor are similar to pilots on an airplane, they can travel exactly as fast as they think they should and they can blow their horns if they think they should and I think the problem is you're going to end up with the real engineers, the locomotive engineers from TC&W, slowing their trains down going through here and they'll have them going six to eight miles an hour because they're going to want to be able to stop those trains. Now you get into a situation where you got twenty to twenty-two minutes of stopping that's going to be a problem for ambulances and other things and now you're going to have a real problem that some of the other people talked about, education, you're talking about twenty to twenty-two minutes. I've done all the calculations. I wrote a thirty page report for the DEIS. I don't see much difference in your design over the DEIS and my report still stands.

Verbal Comment 33

Commenter: I'm going to refer also to some response community questions. And thank you for bringing it up, it says during discussions of LRT in Kenilworth, Kenilworth community, which I'm assuming is Minneapolis members expressed preference for design alternatives that did not require the acquisition of homes. I understand that some alternatives were taken off the board because they required the taking of homes. And I asked this at the previous two meetings and I haven't gotten what I think is a good answer. If that is the criteria that is acceptable in Minneapolis should that same criteria be applied here? Those were alternatives taken off because they required the taking of homes so they were taken off. This looks like you're going to be taking homes so by the same criteria should this not also be taken off?

Chair Haigh: I think that the issue you're raising is exactly the type of community impact the Corridor Management Committee will consider. They'll look at the number of property takings, they'll look at the proximity to the school, they'll look at the impact on safety in the community. We've not done that for this alternative yet. This is in a preliminary stage. I'm sorry if that makes people frustrated but this concept that has been developed is, still needs to go through that community impact and safety analysis process that the Community Advisory Committee will do, we haven't done that yet. This process, today, is helping to inform that. So I just don't want you to think it's not going to happen. Your input into that is what will help us inform that decision making at the Community Advisory Committee.

Commenter: Let me repeat my question, why is the criteria different?

Chair Haigh: It isn't different. We haven't gotten to that assessment yet. The property takings, whether it is in St. Louis Park or in Minneapolis, and the alternatives will be evaluated and the impact of it, just like we did with the other alternatives. So don't think that it won't count because it will count. I think it's a very important issue.

Verbal Comment 34

Commenter: Thank you for letting me speak. This may be a little disjointed because I didn't write anything down, however, I think I share a lot of people's frustrations here. I mean, my main problem is when I first heard about this I reached out to the first elected official I could find, which happened to be our County Commissioner, whose running for re-election, who told me flat out county commissioners have no say on what happens with this, which later I found out to be a little bit untrue. Now we're back here talking about rerouting again. You know I've lived in St. Louis Park a long time, we moved out and came back so we can raise our family, would have a safe community. It's even to the point where my kids go to the same daycare that I went to and because I wanted them to have the same experiences that I had. However, we're talking about putting freight rail either through their walking path to school, next to potentially their elementary school or next to the high school. You know, I trust the engineers here to try to come up with something safe, however at this point I don't trust the Met Council to come up with a safe decision for people here in St. Louis Park and I hate to say it but I feel like it's because my home is not worth as much as the homes in Kenwood. And to that point, because I don't trust your timeline, I don't trust your decision making on this, unfortunately we've called it quits on St. Louis Park and we will be moving because we were either going to move up or move out and this whole process has solidified us to move out.

Verbal Comment 35

Commenter: What potentially could be hauled on these trains that are going to be coming through our neighborhood?

Jim Alexander: If I understood the question, what is going to be hauled on the trains, is that correct? Yes, on the freight trains? We understand that Twin Cities & Western, if you're talking about the TC&W trains, they currently haul grain, they haul ethanol, they haul coal, and other products, but those are the three main that we understand they carry.

Verbal Comment 36

Commenter: Thank you, I'm Susan and I live on Library Lane. I have good news because if I'm connecting the dots. Somebody here said that the train, freight option, was taken off the table because it necessitated the removal of homes. Well this new thing that he's talking about, that Mr. Terry is talking about means some homes will be removed. So applying that logic, we're off the hook? Right, am I right?

[inaudible audience members]

Ann Wiesner: So I think, I think what I am hearing them say is that the analysis that that previous route went through resulted in them taking it off the table because of the requirement that it would mean taking property. This new option has not gone through that process yet. And so that will be a consideration as this new idea, this new concept goes through that same analysis. Is that accurate, is that an accurate characterization?

[inaudible audience members]

Ann Wiesner: So I think, I'm going to go back to recognizing speakers but I think the reason again that we are here talking about this particular concept is because the Met Council was.

[inaudible audience members]

Gary Cunningham: So my name is Gary Cunningham and I represent Minneapolis both south central Minneapolis, downtown Minneapolis, north Minneapolis and Robbinsdale on the Council. And I just want to say that I have not made any determination. I'm listening to all sides of this issue and as this comes before us we want to have full information before we take a vote on what we decide around what we do. So we are not, we're not at a point of making a, I'm just telling you from my perspective as somebody that represents Minneapolis that I'm trying to look at this from all points of view. Trying to look at it from how it affects the region as a whole, as well as how it affects you and what you're doing. So this information that you're giving us is important information at the same time no decisions have been made from my point of view about how we're going to go forward with this. So, I just want to put that on the table so people know this is a deliberation that's going on here not a conclusion.

[inaudible audience members]

Ann Wiesner: Ok, Tom, I really, there are people that have been waiting, really want us to.

[inaudible audience members]

Verbal Comment 37

Commenter: Now I get to put my hand down and the blood will come back. You're actually doing an amazing job, so props to you. So I think ample time has been given to all the negatives, I'm genuinely curious about what the Met Council feels would be the compelling points for our City Council to give Municipal Consent? And I appreciate that's somewhat speculative at this point but genuinely like in

three or four bullet points what do you think would compel them to give Municipal Consent because obviously it's a threat to withhold it so what would compel it?

Chair Haigh: I just don't really want to speak for the St. Louis Park City Council, I think that's a decision for them to make and for them to tell us.

Adam Duinick: I'll give the one positive I know about why we're doing the studies in the first place, which is to find a solution that moves the project forward. As frustrating as this night has been, as frustrating as the last two months have been, when we started down this process of looking at the freight study, the water study, and the vegetation study, the whole premise of it was everybody along the line from St. Louis Park into Minneapolis, city, county, and Met Council said you know there's challenges in this project, there's no perfect solution but the best outcome is still a project. And I hope that is still the case, I believe that the best outcome is still a project happening and so if there's a viable way to do it in St. Louis Park we'll find out as we move the concept into an apples to apples comparison. We'll do the same exercise in the shallow tunnels.

Jennifer Munt: Ann can I just chime in on that last question? Folks I'm going to be real honest with you. There's five cities along this light rail line. Each city has its own hopes and dreams and wants and needs and it's almost like putting together a Rubik cube. To find a solution, a scope and a budget that works for all five cities. We're really trying to make this work and in terms of this being political, it's political to that extent. But because some people have more money or perceived to have more influence that does not mean that they have more influence over my vote and my decision. The reason I'm here tonight is to listen to everybody who is impacted by this. Here everyone has a voice and everybody's voice should be respected and taken into consideration when we make this decision.

Verbal Comment 38

Commenter: Thank you, my name is Louis Tresika [sp], I'm a lifelong resident of St. Louis Park. I'm not going to tell you how long that life has been. But before I ask my question, I really have a question for you Mr. Terry. I just wanted to say I hope the Met Council members will understand that the level of anger and frustration in this room is directly related to things that came before your more recent involvement. That there was a foundation of not getting answers for years, I'm not talking about months since last July, years, and I hope you will take that into consideration as you understand and evaluate the passion that's here. So Mr. Terry back to work for you, here's my question, I am a professional organizer by my trade so I love your charts, I love charts and graphs, I was looking at your tier two screening chart in the draft and I see that by use of your full moon, new moon, and half moon kind of process here that the two options, the option you are offering and the Kenilworth Corridor. When we look across the board under the tier two screen of options of engineering, safety and community that those two options are the only ones that had a couple of new moons and half moons meaning they were strongly supporting the goal or supports the goal. Now stay with me, if I understand correctly the goal is if we are looking at community, that particular metric or that particular element, you're saying that the proposed route must not unduly impact the surrounding community? That's the goal, am I understanding that correctly?

Jim Terry: Go ahead, that's correct.

Commenter: That's correct, ok. So here's what I'm trying to understand, under the impact your metrics are property acquisition, and traffic impact in particular, road closures and road travel criteria, so when you discounted the MN&S south line you said that it was very problematic south of St. Louis Park

because of curves, at-grade crossings and so for. But yet that does exist in your option as well. So here's my question, what kinds of numbers went into it strongly supports, it partially supports or it does not support? In other words, how many road closures, how many homes, what are the numbers of those specific things to measure for community impact so we can understand why certain things were blocked out as not meeting the goal at all and some were partially meeting the goal?

Jim Terry: Fair question. Let me take them one at a time if I can. And if I miss some let her have the mic back. Starting with homes, there were about 350 going south out of here that fell within that 150 foot either side of the main line issue. The curves going south and the grades going south are more sharper curves, more reverse curves, the grades are tougher for a freight train going south than they were coming north. So those problems were much more. Traffic wise there were a number of more crossings and if you go by the daily traffic counts there were like five or six times as many vehicles as...

Commenter: I'm not asking you in comparison. I'm asking you was it? 349? That would have meant it would only have been a partial impact and at 350 it became a full impact that it could not be done? Is it five road closures that are ok but ten are enough? Is it five at-grade crossings that are ok but at ten it's not? I want to know the criteria numbers that you used in order to make that evaluation for it strongly supports the goal, it supports the goal or it does not support the goal.

Jim Terry: Alright, for St. Louis Park north, the MN&S north route it looked like there were seven homes that were affected and roughly the same number of businesses depending on how you count parking lots and other things here. When you went south to engineer the curves out that I was describing the numbers went almost to a hundred. So did I put a specific number in there no, but when it was like seven to a hundred that was pretty evident that was a huge community disruption. I know to the seven people that live in the houses I'm talking about that it is going to be big disruption, don't get me wrong.

Commenter: What about for your option, this new alternative, then again how does that compare to Kenilworth and where is the line in the sand?

Jim Terry: Well, as I said to you, Kenilworth works fine for the freight railroad.

Commenter: I'm trying to understand, I'm not saying the overall decision. I'm looking at this one thing.

Jim Terry: My understanding is there are really no home, if I'm hearing things right, that are being taken in Kenilworth.

Commenter: Ok, so what is the, because in Kenilworth your saying with community that reroute option only supports the goal and what I read from your report wasn't anything in that number for community on page seventeen, it doesn't seem to indicate anything. In particular the saying is this many at-grade crossings or this many, so how did you get to that partial as opposed to fully supporting the goal when you looked at the Kenilworth?

Jim Terry: If there were no impacts I would say.

Commenter: So why on community does it not say strongly supports the goal?

Jim Terry: On the Kenilworth, cause there were the issues that I heard at the open house we held in Minneapolis.

Commenter: Ok, so the issues you're stating here were, they express flexibility with co-locating freight, light rail and the trail? They said others were open to options for moving the trail, elevating or so for. I'm not seeing anything here that says that you weren't and by the way you, there's a supposition that you have in this statement that says since the Kenilworth Corridor was the only supposed to be used for freight service temporarily, that I mean assumes a fact. I would really encourage you to look at that change that.

Jim Terry: Ok, that's why we're having this conversation.

Commenter: So, you're not really giving any specific things like it is if you look at the MN&S south with as many homes as it was.

Ann Wiesner: So it sounds to me like one of the feedback, one of the pieces of feedback you'd like to give before this report becomes final was to clarify what the ranges look like?

Commenter: The specific numbers.

Jim Terry: That's fair enough.

Verbal Comment 39

Commenter: Ok, I would like to share, I have never shared before and I want to stand up and share. You said you wanted to hear from us. My husband and I have moved into St. Louis Park eight years ago, we love it here, we're not planning on moving. We live in a townhouse development on twenty-seventh and Alabama and we have the MNS, MN&S, I can never pronounce it, that is up on the hill and it runs what a couple times a day and we have got townhouse, our garages are cracking. The foundations are splitting because of this little MNS, MN&S train that is coming through and my concern and I want people to know this, you said you wanted to hear from us, their now moving this heavy industrial train several feet closer to the townhouse association. It is going to be right behind our garages, ok, right now we have people that come into the community they walk their dogs on this walking trail, I hear, maybe this has changed but before I talked to an engineer, their building nine foot berms here on this walking trail and what protection do I have as a homeowner? What protection do I have, I don't have a basement, my foundation sits right on the dirt and if my house cracks what protection do I have? That's what I want to know and I want to speak up because I would like to continue to live here, I really love St. Louis Park and I love our community, thank you.

Commenter: [inaudible]: Your property is being taken with this plan.

Commenter: No, no honey, not my property.

Commenter: [inaudible]: For the road.

Commenter: This is the first I'm hearing of this.

[inaudible]

Commenter: This is the first I'm hearing of it. I don't know.

Jim Terry: I think I know where the townhouse.

Commenter: The townhouse southwest, twenty-seventh and Alabama.

Jim Terry: And we don't affect those townhouses.

Ann Wiesner: I'm sorry ma'am, I'm really, I'm trying to get to folks that haven't had an opportunity to speak yet.

Commenter: I know you're running low on time, nothing has been talked about as far as vibration and the impact on homes in our community, then I please urge you to look at this.

Verbal Comment 40

Commenter: I'm Dick Parsons and I'm on the board of STEP as the chair and I want to raise an issue with STEP, which is the St. Louis Park Emergency Program, and as Jackie Olafson the Executive Director pointed out. We serve four thousand people each year in our community and that includes twenty-five percent of the school age kids in St. Louis Park. So it took the board eight years to find a suitable building and the reason it took so long is not just the money. The problem in St. Louis Park is there aren't a lot of buildings that we could utilize on one floor, handicap accessible, that are about nine thousand square feet. There just aren't a lot. So the challenges we had was to find suitably sized building. One that was on the market. People don't like to give you buildings. You've got to go buy them and they have to be on the market. It had to be affordable, we bought the STEP building in March of 2010, pretty much at one of the depths of the recession and there weren't any deals in St. Louis Park for the building. The reason why is, most of those owners are not heavily capitalized, there not that expensive of a building. And they're going to wait it out, they know STEP has to buy a building in St. Louis Park, we can't go buy one in Hopkins or in Golden Valley or in Minneapolis, it has to be in St. Louis Park. The other issue is that the building has to be centrally located, a lot of STEP's clients walk to the food shelf and the services there. So being centrally located and close to a number of apartments was part of our decision. The fifth thing is that we had to have adequate parking, another issue in St. Louis Park and STEP is like a retail establishment with a lot of people coming through, so by code we needed about nineteen parking spaces. And the last thing is it needed to be convenient to the bus line, again a lot of our clients come via bus and leave via bus. So 6812 West Lake Street is right in the territory they're going to take out and my concern in St. Louis Park would be there aren't that many buildings for us to go look for and purchase. So as I look to you, if you go through with this plan is that there is enough mitigation for an organization like STEP, that has such a high value in the community, to continue to be able to operate. Any questions?

Verbal Comment 41

Commenter: There's five cities that need to give consent, St. Louis Park is not going to consent to this, ok. We're done, you've won and I think that's great. Really the issue is dead. St. Louis Park has to consent to this alternative and you're not going to do it are you? So what we're talking about now is a light rail system, are we going to do it or not? Minneapolis has got big issues with Kenilworth but let's look at a broader question, do we need light rail or are there alternatives? I've put together what I think is a very good alternative. It uses the same route that we are talking about but we use Metro Mobility sized buses instead of light rail. I've run the numbers, I have an MBA from Carlson, top ten percent. It takes about two hundred trains coming through on the current southwest plan. I'm talking about twenty-four hundred runs a day. It's a jobs program, seven hundred people, part-time drivers, seventeen dollars an hour. So your question has got to be Bob you're out of your mind because of

economies of scale right, ten times as many drivers. Well I've run the numbers, it turns out if you use Metro Mobility sized vehicles costs about thirty-five million for the whole system. Costs about thirty-three million according to the plan for the light rail, it's about a wash. But if you've got these sized vehicles there's a couple advantages. First of all you can get much more service, you get two minutes three minutes instead of ten minutes, you can have multiple routes, you can have an express route running from Eden Prairie to downtown, you can have a shuttle route running from Shady Oak Road to Eden Prairie dropping people off. There's a lot of options we can look at. So here's my point, we need to look at what our transit options are in this state and light rail isn't the only one. Now let's take a look at what the Met Council's role is, the Met Council is not elected, it's not mentioned in the state constitution. It was originally formed to coordinate between different communities. You have tax and revenue sharing, it's been a lot of benefit in a lot of ways, but you know you hear we haven't made the decision, the Met Council hasn't made the decision. Well I got news for you Met Council you're not an elected body the legislature is. We need to revisit this whole question at a much more fundamental level and take a look at what are real transit options are going forward. Now let me mention on other thing, how many of you have heard automated driving mentioned. It's coming, we don't know when it's coming, might be ten years might be twenty years. But at some point we're going to look at driving the same way we look at elevator operators. How many people have ridden in an elevator with an elevator operator?

Ann Wiesner: Sir, I'm going to have to ask you to wrap up.

Commenter: Ok, so I'm going to wrap up. I'm going to be over at the legislature proposing this alternative I've laid out and I'm going to be standing here at the end of the meeting tonight if anybody wants to talk to me about this. Thank you.

Verbal Comment 42

Commenter: Hi, my name's Maureen Smith[sp] and I've lived in St. Louis Park for twelve years and my question goes back to the earlier comments related to moving the bike trail. There seems to be a lot of frustration in our community about the transparency to why that option was removed as a viable option and I realize it is not being considered in the scope of what's being re-evaluated right now, but we strongly feel based on all the criteria, that it should be added back. It doesn't involve the disruption that the freight reroute does and there's lots of options about it that make it more viable than the freight reroute. And I was hoping this answers the community questions would give us some more understanding to that and the first several paragraphs address the tunnels and they only mention, even though the question is about moving the bike trail as well, it is very carefully crafted response that does not address the question of why that isn't on the table as an option. So, the only thing mentioned here is the visual impact which obviously is very subjective and our community is having a difficult time understanding. The second thing is difficulty getting on and off the trail especially in an emergencies and I would like to ask if the committee would reconsider exploring a plan for emergency response to bike emergencies, emergency response plan for bike emergencies on an elevated trail and report back on what the cost to implement such a cost would be compared to freight reroute.

Ann Wiesner: So is there a question you want?

Commenter: Can we request, is there?

Chair Haigh: I heard your request and thank you very much and we'll include that in the record as we look at the community input and decide what the next steps are.

Commenter: Also, I should add to that, is there a way to ask for more transparency around the criteria to remove the bike trail relocation as a viable option? I don't feel like our community has received a response as to what criteria was, that decision was based on.

Chair Haigh: We'll see if we can get some more information out to you and we'll go back and look at that record about what we did. I'm sorry I just don't have that all at the top of my fingertips right now.

Commenter: The response here doesn't, it has a community question then doesn't answer the question. Why are the shallow tunnels the proposed option for Kenilworth Corridor and why isn't elevating or moving bike trails still being considered? The only thing mentioned about moving bike trails is visual impacts and access during emergencies on bikes. Is that the only criteria cause I'm looking at the scope that this reroute is being subjected to, the criteria we're being asked to look at, and those are the only two criteria I've been given for bike route. Is there more that was taken into account or was there more factors?

Chair Haigh: I'm going to ask my staff experts down here to see if there, as I recall there were issues with property takings with the bike trail?

[inaudible audience member]

Chair Haigh: We can only answer one question at a time so maybe we can just ask Mark to respond.

Mark Fuhrmann: Well I would first start out to say that staff presented those eight options, six co-location and two relocation in June, cost them in July, then the Corridor Management Committee spent August, September, and October debating what was on the table and what was off the table. To your specific question about criteria, staff shared with CMC and there was good deliberation on that about access, both for the bikers should there be an elevated trail and for emergency in the scenario of an elevated trail. Staff also report to CMC that in a relocated trail option there were nine additional at-grade crossings for that bicycle trail taking it out of Kenilworth and four additional driveway crossings that would be conflicted with a relocated bicycle trail.

[inaudible audience members]

Mark Fuhrmann: Well sir, we met weekly last summer and fall and those are two important discussion items staff presented to the CMC that was part of their deliberation.

[inaudible audience members]

Mark Fuhrmann: I'm reporting to you the summary level that the CMC discussed. We have minutes of those CMC meetings that are posted on the website that are eight ten pages long and there's more detail that I can recall verbatim this evening.

[inaudible audience member]

Ann Wiesner: I'm going to, we're coming up on time, I'm gonna have to say we can take one more comment or question from the gentleman here then we're going to have to wrap up. There are still ways for you to weigh in and ask questions and provide questions we'll get to in just a minute.

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Commenter: Hi. My name is David Yaks[sp], I've spoken a couple times before in the previous meetings and this has been a long night so I'm going to try to be really brief. I've got three kids in PSI, which is the school, the Spanish Immersion School, which is just across the tracks and someday they will be at this high school. I think I just want to say why, you've, there's a little bit of a buzz saw that I think the Met Council's running into here. It started last summer and I think I want to just articulate why that is. This is a community that not only cares about each other but really sees a bright future down the road and how do I know that, because last fall we had a, we passed a, what do you call it, a referendum for increasing technology and so forth in the schools. This community has something like seventy-five to eighty percent of the homes don't have kids. Now you go around the metropolitan area, I guarantee you most communities would give their right arm to have that kind of support. And why would this community do that, why would people that don't have kids in their homes vote for a referendum, three referendums, why? Because there's a vision for the future and the children are a part of that future, education is a very incremental part of that future. Just in a word, it's our brand. So when you talk about rerouting this freight train through St. Louis Park it's messing with our brand and that's important stuff. I want you to realize that's a core element of this discussion so when we get off on why haven't we looked at an elevated bike path and why are certain things weighted this way, at its core its we really care about this community and we just want things to be on an equitable visible level because we care about where the future is headed. Thank you.