

Southwest Transitway DEIS Comments

Comments Received during the November 13, 2012 Public Hearing

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SOUTHWEST TRANSITWAY
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (DEIS)
OPEN HOUSE/PUBLIC HEARING

PUBLIC TESTIMONY

NOVEMBER 13, 2012

REPORTED BY: AMY KRISTINA LIZOTTE

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APPEARANCES

PETER McLAUGHLIN, Hennepin County Commissioner and
Chair of Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority
(HCCRA)

GAIL DORFMAN, Hennepin County Commissioner

JAN CALLISON, Hennepin County Commissioner

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1 (Opening statements off the record.)

2 THE COMMISSIONER: I have a list of
3 people who have signed up, and the first person on
4 the list is Barry Schade. Welcome.

5 BARRY SCHADE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
6 My name is Barry Schade. I live at 256 Sheridan
7 Avenue South. And I'm here as a representative for
8 the Bryn Mawr Neighborhood Association. We wanted
9 to show up today and let you know that the Bryn Mawr
10 Neighborhood Association supports the DEIS review of
11 the locally preferred alternative, and we support
12 the finding that it is the environmentally preferred
13 alternative. And that would include, especially in
14 our interest, the Penn station and the relocation of
15 the freight rail out of the Kenilworth corridor.

16 We're not particularly naive in ignoring
17 there are some potentially negative impacts on Bryn
18 Mawr, for example, the possible loss of connectivity
19 in the neighborhood, as we have yet another possibly
20 divisive thing like 394 that split the neighborhood
21 years ago. And also we're aware of the possible
22 loss of our easy unconventional access to the biking
23 and walking trails by walking across the railroad
24 tracks and going directly onto the trails.

25 However, we think that these negative

1 impacts are significantly offset by benefits that
2 come from the project. And there are five things I
3 would like to highlight.

4 First of all, the station itself would give
5 us better access and connectivity to the light rail
6 and to the regional transportation system. That, of
7 course, is paramount. Secondly, the station at Penn
8 would give us access to trails that we could
9 otherwise lose by construction of the light rail and
10 the construction of fences along the light rail.

11 Thirdly, we think the station at Penn would
12 offer developmental potential, as was identified in
13 the Capstone report that was prepared for the
14 neighborhood by the Humphrey School of Public
15 Affairs. And we see that beyond the neighborhood
16 that the station also offers an opportunity for the
17 near north side to connect with the light rail
18 system and also -- would also provide an important
19 gateway to the parks and trails in Minneapolis.

20 Of course, there are couple of minor things
21 we might want to grumble about and probably will
22 submit those in writing, but we mainly wanted to
23 show up today and express our strong support for the
24 DEIS document and its environmental evaluation and
25 to thank you for the opportunity to appear before

1 you today.

2 THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much.
3 Next is Tim Hayes. After that it will be Bob
4 Salmen, just to get yourself ready.

5 TIM HAYES: Thank you, Chairman. My
6 name is Tim Hayes. And I'm with LBP Mechanical, 315
7 Royalston Avenue. The impact study shows a lack of
8 understanding of the current conditions of the
9 business operations on Royalston Avenue. We're
10 going to be negatively impacted by the alignment of
11 the platform and on the routing of the rail line.
12 These businesses require unfettered access from
13 Royalston, and this will be impacted by the current
14 layout.

15 The long-term effects of the businesses on
16 these sites need to be a priority as we go forward
17 with this study. The DEIS anticipates land use
18 changes with no plan for the implementation. The
19 proposed LRT could have the impact of dislocating or
20 relocating the businesses, and this needs to be
21 developed.

22 While the environmental impact study
23 acknowledges land use change is projected in the
24 future, the existing businesses finding new
25 locations, there's no plan as to how this will

1 happen and when. The mitigation must be identified
2 to ensure that the existing businesses will be able
3 to continue to operate.

4 We depend on street parking, and this will
5 be eliminated with the current proposed routing.
6 Further study of the traffic patterns and
7 identification of measures to ensure that these
8 businesses will continue to operate and have access
9 need to be a priority during the preliminary
10 engineering study. The proposed location of the
11 Royalston station should also be reevaluated. The
12 proposed location will severely impact the Royalston
13 area businesses.

14 The businesses on Royalston Avenue are
15 primarily industrial in nature and employ over 200
16 people currently. And there's nothing in the study
17 that acknowledges these businesses or the
18 contribution to the local economy. Thank you.

19 THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much.
20 Next is Bob Salmen, and then Duane Peterson after
21 that.

22 BOB SALMEN: Thank you. Appreciate it.
23 I will first second pretty much everything that Tim
24 had stated. I have the two properties that are just
25 to the west of him, 501 Royalston and 415 Royalston.

1 My name, just to reiterate, is Bob Salmen, and my
2 address is 501 Royalston Avenue. I am a -- we
3 manage, lease, and own the two industrial properties
4 at that location. They are multi-tenant. And we
5 feel that we would be negatively impacted for the
6 following reasons.

7 First of all, it will be a logistical
8 nightmare. Because, as Tim stated, heavy truck
9 traffic is in and out of our property on a daily
10 basis. That will be severely restricted both during
11 the construction period and post construction with
12 the rail and inactivity. So that's devastating to
13 some of our tenants who need the access,
14 accessibility, and the circulation that currently is
15 in the location, which will be blocked from
16 Royalston Avenue.

17 There's also some discussion that Royalston
18 Avenue may be converted to a route that goes along
19 Border Avenue. And I just want to comment that if
20 that does happen, that affects us probably even more
21 negatively for pretty much the same reasons. But
22 that would totally eliminate all of our truck access
23 and traffic access, which is all through the west
24 side of our property -- or properties.

25 Secondly, the construction disruption will

1 have a negative impact on our businesses. And our
2 businesses are three- to five-year tenancies. And
3 instead of a company coming into a construction zone
4 for that period, they will probably either eliminate
5 it or our revenues and revenues of those businesses
6 would be anticipated to be very restricted. Whether
7 or not that's the case, time will tell.

8 Taking the central corridor into account, it
9 would probably align more with our fears that
10 there's going to be a disruption that will
11 negatively impact the businesses that are in there,
12 or in our case, the businesses that we cannot bring
13 into the property because of that.

14 The light rail itself for the type of
15 businesses that we operate in that neighborhood is
16 probably going to have little impact, even though
17 there are 200, probably 250 soon, employees. Most
18 of them drive cars, and for the near future most of
19 those users probably will continue to. So even
20 though there are many benefits to the light rail,
21 the impact in the ridership to this particular area
22 on Royalston is probably very limited.

23 THE COMMISSIONER: Your three minutes
24 is up, if you could wrap up.

25 BOB SALMEN: One last thing, another

1 big concern that we have is the station being put in
2 in front of Stark Electronics on this street will
3 then require either an underground project or an
4 over-the-bridge project to get the train from that
5 station to the interchange itself. And we have seen
6 nothing to show us what that's going to be like. So
7 we're very nervous that we're going to get cut off
8 from downtown by a large either concrete structure
9 or bridge-type structure. So thank you very much
10 for your time.

11 THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much.
12 Duane Peterson is next, and then Art Higinbotham.
13 Welcome, Mr. Peterson.

14 DUANE PETERSON: Yes. My name is Duane
15 Peterson. The address is 401 Royalston Avenue
16 North, Minneapolis, Minnesota. The organization
17 would be Stark Electronics, which is our business.
18 I'm going to talk about the access of -- the impact
19 is going to have on the Royalston Avenue with our
20 business. The LPA has a negative impact on access
21 to the businesses along Royalston Avenue.

22 The businesses along Royalston Avenue are
23 industrial in nature and require unfettered access
24 to the conduct of their businesses. Further study
25 of the traffic patterns and identification of

1 measures to ensure these businesses continue to have
2 access should be prioritized during the primary
3 engineering, the engineering being done now.

4 The businesses on Royalston Avenue are
5 industrial and require direct and frequent access
6 with cars, trucks, and semis. We have employees
7 going in and out. The site contains only one access
8 on Royalston Avenue. And the priority of the early
9 P and E should be identifying alternate access to
10 these businesses.

11 Further study of Border Avenue route as an
12 alternative to Royalston is necessary to see if
13 there is an alternative that has less impact on the
14 Royalston businesses. If Holden Street is closed,
15 the train alignment as it exists, the rail trench on
16 its way to the Royalston station, the loss of this
17 connection must be migrated by the project opening
18 Border Avenue through one block through a private
19 property through Glenwood Avenue. It is critical to
20 maintain or improve vehicle circulation in this area
21 for existing businesses, future development, traffic
22 circulation, and pedestrian access.

23 If the Holden Avenue becomes a dead end,
24 turnaround capability will be required provided that
25 the public right of way and not on private property.

1 Alignment along Royalston Avenue right of way
2 centered west side and east side should be evaluated
3 looking at affects of adjacent businesses way to
4 keeping two-way traffic circulation.

5 The proposal located at Royalston station
6 should be reevaluated. The proposal location will
7 certainly negatively impact the Royalston Avenue
8 businesses.

9 The LPA will have a negative impact of
10 businesses along Royalston Avenue. Again, I think I
11 already said this, they're mostly industrial, but
12 it's going to be over 200 and some jobs going to be
13 impacted. If we have to move, these jobs could be
14 done, gone. It should be a priority to study the
15 impact of the LPA on these businesses with the
16 planned development to ensure that jobs are
17 preserved within the city of Minneapolis. That's
18 all I have to say.

19 THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much.

20 DUANE PETERSON: Thank you.

21 THE COMMISSIONER: Art Higinbotham, and
22 then Scott Barriball. Mr. Higinbotham, welcome.

23 ART HIGINBOTHAM: Good afternoon. Art
24 Higinbotham, 3431 St. Louis Avenue, Minneapolis.

25 I'm going to wear the cap of the representative for

1 the West Lake Street station on the Southwest LRT,
2 and my comments will be directed to section 8.0 of
3 the DEIS, the financial analysis.

4 In that section there's a table which shows
5 the expenditure for trackage and guide of
6 \$218,000,000. That number was based on advanced
7 conceptual engineering. When I addressed the
8 question of what advanced conceptual engineering
9 means, Mark Fuhrman, who is the project director,
10 replied, 1 percent of the engineering costs. In
11 other words, it's a guess.

12 The problem is that if any of you have seen
13 the video, a virtual ride from Eden Prairie to
14 Target Field, and Target Field is not really the
15 destination most of these riders are going to be
16 going to, it includes an overpass at 494, an
17 overpass at Highway 212, an overpass at the
18 crosstown, a 3,000 foot bridge over the Minnehaha
19 Creek water shed in Minnetonka, a grade separation
20 at Highway 169, grade separation at Cedar Lake
21 Parkway, grade separation at the Burlington Northern
22 tracks downtown, and over North 7th Street.

23 It seems incredible that all this can be
24 done for \$218,000,000. Secondly, around the West
25 Lake Street station there's no provision for

1 improved access to the proposed West Lake Street
2 station. The arteries West Lake Street and
3 Excelsior Boulevard already carry 39,000 vehicles
4 per day. And a recent study has shown that they are
5 at saturation today. If we bring in more commuters
6 to that station, either coming in from Uptown or
7 from Linden Hills or Edina, we're going to have
8 virtual traffic jams on the railroads.

9 Furthermore, there is very little parking
10 access. There is a deficiency of spaces today for
11 the two major business centers, Calhoun Commons and
12 Calhoun Village. And there is no funds in the
13 proposal to rectify those shortages. Thank you very
14 much for you time.

15 THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much.
16 Scott Barriball, and Craig Westgate on deck.
17 Mr. Barriball, welcome.

18 SCOTT BARRIBALL: Yes, thank you.
19 Hello, my name is Scott Barriball. I am at 200 East
20 Lyndale Avenue, which is commonly known as the
21 Farmers Market Annex. I've been at that site for 28
22 years. I've made over a half-million dollars of
23 improvements. I just recently completed a \$250,000
24 renovation in the back, which I now call the urban
25 garden. I was rezoned from an I zone to a C2 about

1 a year ago. We've been working closely with the
2 Minnesota Twins. And we're developing our facility
3 now for weddings, tailgating, charitable operations,
4 and corporate events.

5 The Farmers Market Annex is a mix of small
6 farmers, food vendors, and individual entrepreneurs.
7 We have almost 150 small businesses. I employ 15
8 full- and part-time people. The building that I own
9 and occupy has two tenants; the Sunrise Early
10 Learning Center, which is a minority owned and
11 operated day care; and the Wrecker Services, which
12 rents 10,000 square feet and has been a tenant of
13 mine for the past 28 years.

14 Currently the plan calls for their storage
15 area to be taken. So I am poised I guess to lose my
16 long-time tenant which generates over \$60,000 of
17 rent a year. I understand from some of the things
18 that I've heard and looking at the plan that my new
19 urban garden area may need to be cut into. Wouldn't
20 be a great deal for me. My business and the
21 Minneapolis farmers market across the street is
22 totally dependent on access and parking, without
23 that we're pretty much out of business.

24 I'm really concerned about the construction,
25 the staging of the equipment, the parking, and the

1 congestion I feel will hurt my business. The good
2 side of it is we're only open Saturday and Sunday
3 from May 1 until the end of October. So if there
4 can be some thought put into maybe, you know,
5 lightening that up on the weekends so we could
6 operate as free from the construction process as
7 possible.

8 I also have heard rumblings that the
9 Royalston may turn into the border argument. I
10 don't know where that's coming from. But that would
11 be a catastrophic effect on both the farmers market
12 and my business. There is just simply no way we can
13 lose that parking. And the construction, the two
14 year, two and a half year process, it would just
15 absolutely ruin a lot of people's businesses.
16 That's all I have to say. Thank you very much.

17 THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you for you
18 time, sir. Craig Westgate, and on deck Ryan
19 Edstrom. Mr. Westgate, welcome.

20 CRAIG WESTGATE: Thank you. Craig
21 Westgate. My address is 3523 St. Paul Avenue in
22 Minneapolis. But tonight I'm speaking as the
23 chairman of CIDNA. I'm here on behalf of CIDNA.
24 Our transportation committee has done a wonderful
25 job of preparing a written response for the December

1 11 deadline. With that said, we have many concerns.
2 I'm just going to point out a couple.

3 The first one we believe is the noise.
4 The -- we believe that the impact of the noise level
5 and noise incident frequency has not been properly
6 assessed and will have a major impact on the peace
7 and tranquility for the residents and the users of
8 the Kenilworth corridor and users of the Grand
9 Rounds National Scenic Highway. The flyover bridge
10 at Cedar Lake Parkway is just unacceptable. To
11 quote an area resident, it's something that
12 Mussolini would be proud of.

13 We believe that this is -- we believe that
14 this is the reason that we have in place the
15 Shoreland Overlay District restrictions, so that
16 developers, both private and public, cannot just
17 build what they want. Not only is the bridge too
18 tall, it does not fit in with the neighborhood. It
19 is a monstrosity.

20 We believe that we need a grade separation
21 at Cedar Lake Parkway. With trains every three
22 minutes, that intersection is simply and cannot
23 handle the cars and trains at the street level. We
24 believe that some sort of a better solution of grade
25 separation of LRT underpass, whether it be a tunnel,

1 cut and cover, we believe that the noise and the
2 visibility issue should not be overlooked going
3 forward. Thank you very much.

4 THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much.
5 Ryan Edstrom, and Peter Rickmeyer is next.

6 RYAN EDSTROM: Good evening. My name
7 is Ryan Edstrom. Thanks for the opportunity to
8 speak tonight. My address is 2824 Yosemite Avenue,
9 St. Louis Park, Minnesota. I'm representing myself.
10 I think I could probably speak for others in my
11 neighborhood. Just to kind of give you an idea
12 where we live, we are at Highway 100 and Minnetonka
13 Boulevard. Just west of that area near what would
14 be called the LRT 3A LPA option, the freight rail
15 reroute, within two blocks of that freight rail
16 reroute.

17 I came tonight to speak specifically to goal
18 number four of the DEIS, which is preserve and
19 protect the quality of life in the study area and
20 region. And specifically I wanted to speak to
21 noise, safety, air quality, and property value.

22 Let's start with noise. With the freight
23 rail reroute there's a planned ramp that would be
24 running along Highway 7 that would get the trains
25 across Highway 7 and through our neighborhood. And

1 for those trains to get up that new proposed ramp,
2 they would have to be running full throttle. I
3 don't know if that has been studied in this
4 environmental impact study. So that would
5 definitely affect the residents in that area.

6 Further with noise, the trains are going to
7 be bigger. So currently there's two trains running
8 there every day, about ten cars each empty. With a
9 full train, a full coal train or an ethanol train,
10 the noise would be significantly more. The trains
11 are just heavier and longer.

12 Moving on to safety. With the increase in
13 trains, I think there's just an inherent risk of
14 something bad happening in that area, not just
15 because there's added trains, but because of the
16 configuration of the track in that area. There's up
17 to three blind corners in that neighborhood. So the
18 engineers would not be able to see through those
19 corners, making that particular route a lot more
20 dangerous than the LRT 3A coal location route.

21 And then air quality, this kind of goes
22 along with the noise. If those trains are rumbling
23 up that grade at full throttle, there's definitely
24 going to be a lot more diesel smoke, and I think
25 that goes against preserving the quality and

1 protecting the quality of life that's in this study
2 area.

3 And the last thing here I think is property
4 value. I've heard that freight rail reroutes cause
5 property value impacts from 3 to 12 percent. And
6 there's about 200 houses in our neighborhood that
7 that would directly impact. I think I can probably
8 close with that. Thank you for your time tonight.

9 THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Is there
10 a second list? That would be good. Next speaker is
11 Peter Rickmeyer, and then Joshua Houdek is next.
12 Thank you. Welcome to the committee.

13 PETER RICKMEYER: Thank you. Peter
14 Rickmeyer, 2118 - 25th Avenue North, Minneapolis.
15 First, the Bryn Mawr neighborhood is a
16 well-respected neighborhood organization within the
17 city of Minneapolis. And I'm aware that the
18 Royalston businesses, I would encourage both groups
19 to get together to work out alternative roads to get
20 in and out. There are two more public hearings, so
21 that would give you enough time to discuss possibly
22 corrections to this plan and give more thought to it
23 to see if something could be worked out. And Bryn
24 Mawr, please work with the farmers market people,
25 too, even though they're way out of your district.

1 I'm here specifically to talk about what the
2 last gentleman was talking about, specifically about
3 noise, environmental impact, and above all, the
4 purpose of it. I believe the purpose of light rail
5 is to reduce the carbon monoxide, dioxide in -- to
6 and from the suburbs, from Eden Prairie into
7 downtown Minneapolis.

8 I believe, first of all, to attack the noise
9 problems with the rails and the bells at the
10 intersections, I believe three layers. The first
11 layer would be bushes, which would decrease the
12 amount of rail noise. The second layer would be
13 medium trees. And the third layer would be tall
14 trees.

15 What that would do is that would, first of
16 all, reduce the amount of noise three blocks away
17 from where the light rail is. The second thing that
18 it would do is that it would provide oxygen, so the
19 area from Minneapolis to Eden Prairie would actually
20 improve its air quality, which I think is what we
21 all want.

22 The third impact would be specifically
23 around intersections with the trains. I've taken my
24 time and I've gone up to 38th and Hiawatha, gone
25 about three, four blocks away, and I could hear the

1 bells, and I talked to some people over there. And
2 you can hear it. And I believe by putting some
3 bushes, that would just naturally absorb the sounds
4 of the bells, that would relieve a lot of the
5 complaints or concerns about the excess noise.

6 I can only stress to you that we have been
7 dealing with global warming. And I believe that
8 with the bushes, mid-sized trees, and large trees
9 that would give off a lot of shade in the 20-mile
10 light rail. And that would go a long ways into
11 reducing the global warming, at least in the
12 downtown Minneapolis to the Eden Prairie area.
13 Thank you.

14 THE COMMISSIONER: Your time is up.
15 Thank you very much for your comments. Joshua
16 Houdek, and then Todd Klingel is next. Welcome,
17 sir.

18 JOSH HOUDEK: Thank you, Chair. My
19 name is Joshua Houdek. I'm with the Sierra Club,
20 Northstar Chapter, in Minnesota. Our address is
21 2327 East Franklin Avenue. I wanted to start off
22 with saying that the 30,000 members of the Sierra
23 Club in Minnesota do support a greener, cleaner
24 transportation choice in the southwest metro. And I
25 believe that it's a critical link for a 21st century

1 transit system. We believe that this is a smart
2 investment in the region, like Chairman McLaughlin
3 said earlier.

4 This project will serve over 200,000 jobs.
5 There are problems with the route, the preferred
6 route that is, but -- and it's not perfect, but the
7 region needs to move beyond oil if we are going to
8 remain competitive in the future.

9 The station area planning, I wanted to bring
10 that up, because it's very, very important that good
11 sustainable TOD transit-oriented development happens
12 around these stations that we are planning, not just
13 large park and rides, but good, multiuse,
14 sustainable, compact development. So we want to
15 stress that be continued to keep an eye on that and
16 maximize the amount of density that we can provide
17 around the station areas.

18 And I just wanted to conclude with a
19 quote -- or to quote President Obama's initiative,
20 "We Can't Wait" to be riding this train by 2018,
21 because the region does need to remain sustainable,
22 and this is a great step towards that. Thank you.

23 THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much.
24 Todd Klingel, and then Randy Peterson is after
25 Mr. Klingel. Welcome.

1 TODD KLINGEL: I'm Todd Klingel. I'm
2 president/CEO of the Minneapolis Regional Chamber of
3 Commerce. We also oversee the Bloomington Chamber
4 Commerce and the Northeast Minneapolis Chamber.
5 Thanks for the opportunity to speak on the DEIS
6 today.

7 As many of you already know, we're very
8 strong supporters of transit, light rail transit,
9 particularly in this line. We share in that support
10 with St. Paul Area Chamber of Commerce, the TwinWest
11 Chamber of Commerce, the Edina Chamber of Commerce,
12 the Eden Prairie Chamber of Commerce. And we were
13 pleased to see the DEIS that they understand like we
14 do that, quote, "there's limited additional traffic
15 capacity on existing streets and highways resulting
16 in increased travel time delays and air pollution."

17 I thought it was interesting on Monday when
18 so many of us were caught up in that traffic on the
19 first snow of the season taking three times as long
20 as normal to get to commute, but the trains were
21 going right on time. And that kind of certainty is
22 really helpful.

23 Additionally, the DEIS said that the
24 benefits of Southwest LRT substantially outweigh the
25 impacts. For us in the business community you

1 always need to weigh the capital investment plans
2 against the impacts of those plans. They also said
3 the transportation option studied that LRT has the
4 greatest ability to address the needs of the region.
5 We also know that it's the only alternative that the
6 federal government will give us \$650 million for,
7 which we will be happy to use, and that the locally
8 preferred alternative when the LRT 3A is the most
9 cost effective per rider. That LPA fits with the
10 land use and economic development plans of the
11 communities along the line.

12 Certainly we understand from the ones we've
13 heard earlier and the ones I'm sure you'll hear that
14 there are issues along the line with St. Louis Park
15 and moving the freight and some of the other issues,
16 but we're confident that the county can work out the
17 details with those and move ahead with the next
18 finer level of planning.

19 We thank the FTA for the support of this
20 line, the administration for green lighting the
21 line, as one of only two in the country, and for the
22 county for taking the lead role that you have in the
23 regional rail authority. Thank you.

24 THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you,
25 Mr. Klingel. Randy Peterson is next, and then

1 Jeanette Colby. Mr. Peterson, welcome.

2 RANDY PETERSON: Yeah, I am frustrated
3 that Washington Avenue is closed to transportation.
4 I just don't think you did a good plan. I should
5 not use profanity, I understand that, but at the
6 same token, I just -- without using profanity, I'm
7 extremely frustrated that Washington Avenue is
8 closed. Because -- and I think we -- I don't think
9 we should go ahead with this now, because I think we
10 should wait until we get -- until Washington Avenue
11 around the university is open, and then have
12 hearings again maybe after they were running say a
13 year.

14 That's my opinion. You may not -- you may
15 go ahead anyway, but I don't think you should -- I
16 don't think you should do it now. There's also
17 other concerns that should be addressed, and 60 days
18 is not long enough. Thank you.

19 THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much.
20 I think you expressed your opinion very well without
21 profanity. Thank you for that. Jeanette Colby, and
22 then Russ Adams.

23 JEANETTE COLBY: Thank you,
24 Commissioner, for your time this afternoon. I'm
25 Jeanette Colby. I live at 2218 Sheridan Avenue

1 South. And I'm here on behalf of the Kenwood Isles
2 Area Association. This -- the locally preferred
3 alternative line will run a little more than a mile
4 through our neighborhood. And we were pleased to
5 see that the DEIS recognized some of the very grave
6 impacts that it will have on our area, especially
7 noise and visual impacts as well as safety.

8 This line I think has really stressed the
9 transit-oriented development opportunities and other
10 business development opportunities, which is
11 fabulous. In our area we would like to stress the
12 issue of preserving what we have. We have a
13 beautiful, beautiful space in the Kenilworth trail
14 area. We have three freight trains approximately
15 that run through there a day, and will move to 260
16 trains going from 5 a.m. to 1 a.m.

17 So we are really looking forward to a very
18 strong and creative approach to mitigation. We were
19 a little disappointed to see there wasn't much
20 mitigation talked about in the document. It was a
21 huge document, very thorough in a lot of ways, but
22 not a lot of mitigation proposals.

23 So what we would be focusing on is
24 preserving our unique cultural and natural heritage,
25 safeguarding the safety and enjoyment of park and

1 trail users, maintaining the quality of life of
2 residents, and ensuring the tranquility and
3 functionality of the station area proposed for 21st
4 Street. We also join CIDNA in thinking that a
5 bridge over Cedar Lake Parkway would be awful, and
6 we'd like to see some other form of grade separation
7 there. Thank you.

8 THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much.
9 Russ Adams is next, and then Mark Stensrud.
10 Mr. Adams, welcome.

11 RUSS ADAMS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I
12 have one handout for the commissioners, if that's
13 possible. My name is Russ Adams. I'm the executive
14 director of the Alliance for Metropolitan Stability.
15 We're at 2525 East Franklin Avenue in Minneapolis.
16 We first want to say that we support Southwest LRT
17 and the 3A alignment and believe that that will
18 provide significant social and economic
19 opportunities for environmental justice communities
20 along the corridor.

21 We believe it will do that by the extension
22 of the regional transit system by increasing the
23 access to job centers along Southwest LRT, by
24 generating economic development opportunities, and
25 by sustaining economic development opportunities for

1 communities like the Harrison neighborhood at the
2 Van White station, with the full build out of the
3 Bassett's Creek Valley Master Plan.

4 Now, I know you'll hear from Harrison
5 neighborhood in a moment, but I do want to touch on
6 them a little bit. In our read of the DEIS we think
7 it needs to recognize that Harrison neighborhood is
8 an environmental justice community with significant
9 interest and opportunity at that Van White station.
10 The reason why it's significant is it's uniquely
11 positioned between two major public transit
12 investments. The map shows this with Southwest LRT
13 to the south and the proposed Bottineau LRT line to
14 the north. You will not find another neighborhood
15 probably anywhere in the region that gets the kind
16 of saturated coverage from transit stations within a
17 quarter mile and half mile walking distance than
18 Harrison. And it also has several stations nearby
19 in the neighborhood as well as close by.

20 We think the DEIS and the Southwest Corridor
21 planners should adopt the definition of equitable
22 development that was endorsed by Corridors of
23 Opportunity Policy Board on November 30, 2011. We
24 will be submitting written comments. We'll include
25 that definition in our comments. I'm not going to

1 read it now. But we think a common definition to
2 work from would be useful for both engineers, as
3 well as planners, community representatives, and
4 public officials.

5 We also noticed that the Hennepin County
6 Community Works uses a term catalytic
7 transit-oriented development. And we want to point
8 out that prioritized public -- there were two
9 aspects to this, prioritized public investments that
10 catalyze private investment and prioritized public
11 investments that catalyze equitable development. We
12 believe both are possible and necessary for the best
13 outcomes on Southwest LRT.

14 I won't go into too much detail on the
15 Harrison neighborhood catalytic TOD opportunity
16 except to say that you do have land that is publicly
17 owned, you have a committed developer, and you have
18 a city that's committed to generating hundreds of
19 new housing units on that site and thousands of new
20 jobs. You also have a number of business owners,
21 property owners that are interested in revitalizing
22 Glenwood Avenue corridor, the old industrial area,
23 and carrying that up in into North Minneapolis. I
24 see that my time is up, Mr. Chair, so I'll leave it
25 at that. Thank you so much.

1 THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much.
2 We look forward to getting your written comments as
3 well. Mark Stensrud, and then Malik Holt.

4 MARK STENSRUD: Mark Stensrud. I live
5 at 3145 Dean Court, which is the grain silos. And
6 our representative from the CIDNA neighborhood,
7 which I belong to, was here. But I'd just like to
8 reiterate that, you know, I realize everybody -- you
9 know, nobody wants anything in their back yard, but
10 my back yard is Cedar Lake. And there's a, I don't
11 know, a tranquility that during the day it can be a
12 little noisy, but at night I can hear the frogs, I
13 can hear the geese from the lake.

14 Plus our building is on what will be like a
15 90-degree turn that the light rail is going to take.
16 Our building is so close to the tracks now, I mean,
17 I think people could reach out and touch the light
18 rail as it goes by. And now we're talking about 260
19 trains a day running right past my residence.

20 And I'd just like to say that I hope that
21 all alternatives are being looked at to quiet this
22 down. Because I know Dow Chemical makes a track
23 system that they say will reduce the noise by 5 to 7
24 decibels. So I just hope we're not stuck in the
25 same rut, we did this on Hiawatha, so now we're

1 going to do it here, without looking at the best
2 alternatives.

3 I'm all for the light rail. I realize that
4 our community needs that. But that doesn't mean we
5 keep going along with blinders on, we did it this
6 way here, now that's the way we're going to do it
7 everywhere. Make sure we're looking at all the
8 newest alternatives to keep my neighborhood -- it
9 will never be the same after this, but I'd like to
10 see the damage minimized. And that's all I was here
11 to say. Thank you.

12 THE COMMISSIONER: Great. Thank you.
13 Are there other lists that have been compiled? No.
14 All right. Mr. Holt, Malik Holt, welcome.

15 MALIK HOLT: Thank you, Mr. Chair,
16 commissioners. I'm here with Harrison Neighborhood
17 Association, which is located on 503 Irving Avenue
18 in Minneapolis. Harrison neighborhood supports the
19 3A alignment of the Southwest light rail because it
20 brings economic opportunities at the Van White
21 Station and Bassett Creek. My comments will focus
22 mainly on section A of the 3A locally preferred
23 alternative.

24 Harrison Neighborhood Association, an
25 environmental justice community, with people of

1 color 78 percent and a median income of \$21,000.
2 Since 2000, Harrison Neighborhood Association and in
3 partnership with Bryn Mawr Neighborhood Association
4 have been involved in the Bassett Creek Master Plan.
5 The development will revitalize this environmental
6 justice community, that is Harrison, and repair the
7 decades of land use neglect and divestment at the
8 Van White station.

9 For more than a decade Harrison residents
10 have recognized the opportunity for change,
11 investment, and innovation in land use with Bassett
12 Creek Valley. In its existing condition, Harrison
13 right now is dominated by post industrial land use.

14 The following are concerns and comments that
15 we're going to make now for the DEIS, and then we're
16 going to make further in written comment and e-mail
17 from our residents, possibly some of our business
18 leaders. Including the master plan, putting those
19 actual numbers and have those reflected in the DEIS,
20 including the expected redevelopment outcomes of
21 3,000 housing units from Bassett Creek redevelopment
22 plan, 2.5 million square feet of commercial and
23 office retail, 40 acres of new and open green space,
24 and 5,000 to 6,000 jobs.

25 The fulfillment of the Bassett Creek Master

1 Plan will increase ridership and boost the success
2 of the Southwest light rail. Currently there is an
3 incomplete land use analysis that is in section
4 3.124, segment A. The actual 2008 February city of
5 Minneapolis rezoning needs to be reflected within
6 section 3.124, segment A, in the land use.

7 Harrison also has serious concerns about the
8 station area plan. We sent a letter on February 28
9 to Hennepin County, and Harrison is still requesting
10 that station area design without commuter rail
11 layover needs to be met. And we need that question
12 answered.

13 The final document clearly advocates the
14 siting of rail storage at Van White station. The
15 final document misrepresents the formal Minneapolis
16 City Council position on the sale of Linden Yards at
17 Van White station. The city directed city staff to
18 explore joint strategies at Linden Yards East and
19 report back to city council. The Van White plan
20 illustrates the misleading for policymakers
21 representing a platform plan that could accommodate
22 development and rail storage below. And this is
23 misleading because the key feasibility work has not
24 been completed and does not include the
25 environmental assessment of siting passenger rail

1 storage and the maintenance facility.

2 My last comment -- and then I also have a
3 handout for you that shows a 1935 map of racialized
4 [sic] -- racialized planning map the City of
5 Minneapolis did of our area. And then also MCEA,
6 which is the -- that is the current condition of our
7 area the way it looks today in terms of
8 neighborhoods.

9 My last comment, Harrison neighborhood does
10 not support locating the operation maintenance
11 facility, this is located in section 3.152, it does
12 not support it at Linden Yards. Four potential
13 locations for operation and maintenance have been
14 identified. Harrison does support the consultants
15 recommendations on appendix H, page 53, of the
16 operation maintenance facility site evaluation, we
17 support Eden Prairie 1, Eden Prairie 2, Eden Prairie
18 scenario 3, and the Minneapolis scenario 4, not
19 Linden Yards.

20 THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much.

21 MALIK HOLT: Thank you.

22 THE COMMISSIONER: So far we have no
23 one else who signed up ahead of time, but we would
24 be happy to take testimony from anybody who would
25 like to testify. We'll start with this gentleman in

1 the front row. And then we'll go over here. And
2 then I saw a hand in the back. So I saw three so
3 far. We'll go until people are finished. Please
4 introduce yourself for the tape.

5 JOHN HARTWIG: My name is John Hartwig.
6 I live at 3228 Humboldt Avenue South in Minneapolis.
7 I would like to hand out some information to the
8 commissioners.

9 Approximately 200 years ago the federal and
10 the state governments got together and built the
11 Erie Canal. By the time the time the Erie Canal was
12 completed, the Erie Canal was already outmoded, the
13 reason being that the railroads came in and took all
14 the money from the Erie Canal. So in effect, the
15 Erie Canal even to this day is nothing but a
16 boondoggle.

17 What we have here again is another
18 boondoggle, and it's called light rail. We aren't
19 going to need 20 lanes of New Jersey turnpike or 100
20 billion high speed rail lines to save us from
21 gridlock. Is that really where things are headed.
22 The Internet is drastically reducing the importance
23 of distance in human affairs. E-mail has rendered
24 the local post office nearly obsolete. Hundreds of
25 thousands of Americans are already telecommuting,

1 and many have launched web-based businesses from
2 their home. People who used to make three trips a
3 week to the mall do more of their shopping today
4 online.

5 The challenge isn't to move more meat. I'm
6 quoting here from this article I gave you. When
7 they say meat they mean people. The challenge is to
8 move more information. The light rail is already
9 outmoded. If this was 1900, maybe you could do it.
10 But it's nothing more than a reconfigured street
11 car.

12 Here again quoting from here, business
13 parties and social organizations need to take full
14 advantage of the extraordinary efficiencies that the
15 Internet provide. The rush hour rituals of the 20th
16 century really aren't destined to continue until the
17 end of time. Telecommunication, flex time, and
18 mini-commutes to satellite offices will change the
19 way we work.

20 More or less that's what I have to say on
21 this except for one more thing. I used to live in
22 the Kenwood neighborhood, not too far from 21st and
23 Uptown. And I remember when I came in '50, '51 many
24 of the St. Louis freight workers for about five
25 years previously and up until about 1950, the

1 freight workers were obviously working on the
2 tracks. And every so often they forgot to remember
3 where they were. And I remember one instance some
4 railroad worker was sitting on the tracks and a
5 train came by. And he ended up losing both his
6 legs. We went and looked at the stretcher. It was
7 full of blood. And obviously that individual didn't
8 survive.

9 And I think this is what you're going to
10 have, the same thing again. You're talking about
11 200 trains going by during the day or 150 or
12 whatever. First of all, I'm old enough to remember
13 when we had street cars. One street car for
14 whatever reason gets stopped, and you're going to
15 have street cars all the way back one mile, two
16 miles. So in effect, it's an inefficient system.

17 THE COMMISSIONER: If you could wrap
18 up, sir.

19 JOHN HARTWIG: Sure. What we need --
20 we're 87 years away from the 22nd century, and what
21 we need to do is go forward not backward. Thank you
22 for your time.

23 THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much.
24 I saw a hand over here, sir.

25 JACK LEVY: Thank you, Commissioner.

1 My name is Jack Levy. I'm on the board of the
2 Kenwood Isles Association, but I'm here to represent
3 myself. Jeanette has already talked about our
4 issues on behalf of the association and the
5 community.

6 What -- so I live on 21st Street between
7 Kenwood Parkway and the station. And one of the
8 things that alarms me is the noise that the light
9 rail will generate, either through the rails
10 themselves or through the bell or the sounds that
11 they will be sounding as they approach the station.
12 I was disappointed to see a complete lack of
13 mitigation with regard to how that noise was going
14 to be mitigated. And it wasn't left as, we're not
15 going to address that, but rather we're going to
16 address that later while we're doing the
17 engineering. And I got the sense that it would be
18 too late by that time. So I would like to see some
19 kind of a response on what happens to this pristine
20 quiet community when the train comes and the bells
21 go off and noise impacts the community and changes
22 the character of the entire neighborhood. Thank you
23 for your time.

24 THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much.
25 Someone back there? Somebody before you, Vickie, I

1 think, yes. Welcome.

2 KATHLEEN MURPHY: Good afternoon.

3 Kathleen Murphy with Transit for Livable
4 Communities. And I'm at 6601 5th Avenue in
5 Richfield. And I've been a long-time transit rider,
6 because I do not drive. And so I support, along
7 with the Transit for Livable Communities, the
8 opportunity for the Southwest Corridor to have this
9 light rail system.

10 I am hearing from a lot of people that there
11 are things that need to be concerned about. And I
12 totally agree with all of that myself. But my
13 concern, along with TLC, is that the future of our
14 light rail system is now and not to put a halt on
15 this because of reconstruction or whatever is
16 happening here with the freight rail is going to
17 intervene with everything.

18 We have to come to an understanding that in
19 our time of our economic situations that this will
20 help people in the southwest communities to be able
21 to prosper and to grow. And I totally am concerned
22 with making the right choices for people to get back
23 to work and for people to have better options with
24 their transit system. So I hope for the best for
25 all of this. Thank you.

1 THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much.
2 Vickie Moore. Welcome.

3 VICKIE MOORE: Thank you for your time.
4 I live a 2032 Second Avenue North, the Harrison
5 neighborhood. I'm a member of the Harrison
6 Neighborhood Association. I want to really make
7 sure everyone really understands we strongly support
8 the Southwest LRT, the 3A alignment, and in
9 particular we strongly support the Van White
10 station.

11 We do see this as a catalyst for
12 development. We are a neighborhood that not only
13 welcomes development, we welcome city housing.
14 That's something you don't often hear.

15 I also want to point out that our
16 unemployment rate is well over 20 percent. Summit
17 Academy is currently training people who can fill
18 the jobs that are going to be available along the
19 line. That's important to us, not just important to
20 the Harrison neighborhood, but to our neighbors to
21 the north.

22 Hennepin has done a good job with community
23 and citizen involvement. I know there's a lot of
24 really good consultants coming into town to educate
25 people on the council and the county. I would hope

1 that the county would open those sessions up to
2 communities so that we can educate ourselves as this
3 process moves forward.

4 And I think one last thing I want to say is
5 I can't cite the section in the DEIS, but it would
6 be nice to see the 2010 census data included in
7 there, not the old census data. Thank you.

8 THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Anyone
9 else? Yes, sir. Come on up introduce yourself.

10 MARC BALLBACH: Sure. My name is Marc
11 Ballbach. I live at 5503 Wingwood Court,
12 Minnetonka.

13 THE COMMISSIONER: What's your last
14 name?

15 MARC BALLBACH: Ballbach,
16 B-A-L-L-B-A-C-H. I'm a year-round bike commuter.
17 And I want to strongly encourage you all to take
18 into account the communication needs and overall
19 needs during construction of the bike commuter
20 community. I go pretty much along the rail starting
21 at the Shady Oaks station, and then I work downtown
22 here.

23 My experience this summer with some of the
24 Cedar Lake repaving was that there was poor
25 communication. And I would love if you guys could

1 work with us. And I should also say that I'm really
2 excited about this light rail line, especially if I
3 get a flat tire along the way I can jump on a train.
4 So I'm very much watching this carefully and real
5 excited. Certainly after construction I'm excited
6 to see a good bike infrastructure in the wake of
7 construction as well. And I'll be following that
8 closely.

9 During if you could focus on some of the
10 social networking communication methods to alert us
11 when we need to detour, that would be great.

12 THE COMMISSIONER: Anyone else? Yes,
13 sir. Come on up.

14 ROLF ERICKSON: 14520 - 12th Avenue
15 North in Plymouth. And I'm just concerned that
16 we're taking money from a federal government that's
17 wallowing in debt to build 19th Century
18 transportation systems. That's my basic concern. I
19 know I'm a person that does not use mass transit at
20 all. There's very little near me. And if I were to
21 go somewhere like the Mall of America it might take
22 me three or four hours, so I understand I'm biased
23 in that respect. But I do believe it's wrong to
24 keep breaking the government. Thank you.

25 THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much.

Draft Environmental Impact Statement Comment Form
Southwest Transitway Project

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

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

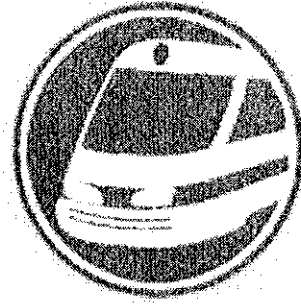
Comments on the DEIS will be accepted through December 11, 2012. All comments must be received by that date. Please include a return mailing address with all comments.

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

I LIVE IN HERITAGE PARK AND THE VAN
WHITE STOP IS IMPORTANT TO ME. MY CONCERN
IS TO INSURE THAT RESIDENTS IN SURROUNDING
NEIGHBORHOODS HAVE MORE THAN ADEQUATE ACCESS
TO VAN WHITE STATION VIA: CLEAR WALKING PATHS
IN ALL SEASONS. BY BUS, STROLLERS OR FEEDER MODELS
BIKE TRAILS AND BIKES CAR LINES AND PARKING
PLUS BUT NOT LIMITED TO ZIP LINES.

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Thank you!



SOUTHWEST
transitway

Fold here



Place
Stamp
Here

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

Fold here