

# Southwest Transitway DEIS Comments

Comments Received during the November 14, 2012 Public Hearing

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PUBLIC HEARING OF THE  
HENNEPIN COUNTY REGIONAL RAILROAD AUTHORITY  
ST. LOUIS PARK, MINNESOTA  
NOVEMBER 14, 2012  
5:00 p.m.

1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: I'm going to call  
3 this hearing of the Hennepin County Regional Railroad  
4 Authority to order. I am Peter McLaughlin, the Chair of  
5 the County Rail Authority. I am joined by my colleagues  
6 Gail Dorfman and Jan Callison.

7 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Mic, please. Get on  
8 mic.

9 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: There we go.  
10 Thank you. The cable guy told me I had to -- I knew I'd  
11 need help.

12 Joined by -- I'm Peter McLaughlin. I'm  
13 joined by my colleagues Gail Dorfman and Jan Callison.  
14 And Tom Barrett from the county attorney's office is to  
15 my left, and Katie Walker is to my right. And the -- the  
16 stenographer will be taking -- taking down the words that  
17 are said here tonight so that there will be an accurate  
18 record of all the proceedings.

19 It's a job and pleasure to welcome you here  
20 tonight. This is the second of three public hearings  
21 that we're having to receive comments on the Southwest  
22 Transitway Draft Environmental Impact Statement. We had  
23 one in Minneapolis last evening that some of you  
24 attended. It's great to see all of you here tonight.

25 The Southwest LRT line will be the region's

1 third LRT line, and it will be part of a -- of a regional  
2 system of transit. It's estimated to provide 30,000  
3 trips per day and access to what is predicted to be  
4 270,000 jobs along the corridor. It also provides access  
5 to some of the region's greatest amenities, whether it's  
6 the Minneapolis chain of lakes, the regional park system,  
7 the Waker Art Institute and Sculpture Garden, Hopkins  
8 Center for the Arts, Historic Downtown Hopkins, St. Louis  
9 Park; and the list goes on and on.

10 You will be -- there's a connection, as  
11 well, through this line for a one-stop ride to the five  
12 stops in Downtown Minneapolis that exist currently, and  
13 it will carry on to the University of Minnesota along the  
14 central corridor to St. Paul.

15 In addition, the line will allow residents  
16 in the Southwest Metro to connect easily and quickly to  
17 the VA, the Veterans Administration Hospital, the  
18 airport, and Mall of America along the Hiawatha Line with  
19 one transfer. In addition to that, residents in North  
20 Minneapolis and the rest of the region can get access to  
21 jobs on the reverse commute out along the southwest  
22 corridor.

23 So with that, I would be happy to turn over  
24 the podium to Commissioner Dorfman for a few other  
25 comments before getting started.

1                   COMMISSIONER DORFMAN: Thank you,  
2 Commissioner McLaughlin.

3                   You know, I wanted to say we had the  
4 funeral for former mayor Lyle Hanks. He spent 25 years  
5 in this room; and, you know, he loved a big crowd. He  
6 would love this today.

7                   So let me just -- a couple of introductory  
8 comments, and many of you already know this. The  
9 Hennepin County Regional Rail Authority, together with  
10 our cities, began planning for transit along the  
11 Southwest Corridor a decade ago. The mutual goal was to  
12 improve transportation and transit within this growing  
13 area of our Metropolitan region. And after considerable  
14 due diligence, numerous studies, and in-depth analysis,  
15 the Rail Authority and our partner cities recommended an  
16 LRT route that passes through the Kenilworth area of  
17 Minneapolis, continues through St. Louis Park and  
18 Hopkins, and then proceeds through the Opus area of  
19 Minnetonka and the Golden Triangle area of Eden Prairie.

20                   All six cities approved this alignment, as  
21 did the Rail Authority. It was then sent to the MAC  
22 council, whose members approved the route, called the  
23 "locally preferred alternative" in May of 2010. This was  
24 the first major milestone that began to move this LRT  
25 project from idea to reality. In September 2011, the

1 Federal Transit Administration approved the project to  
2 enter into what's called the Federal New Starts Program  
3 and gave authority to MAC council to begin preliminary  
4 engineering. Southwest LRT is only one of 12 projects  
5 nationwide to achieve this status.

6 And recently the Obama Administration  
7 designated this LRT line as a We Can't Wait Project,  
8 which will help expedite the permit and review process  
9 amongst federal agencies. Southwest was one of only two  
10 projects nationwide designated for We Can't Wait. At the  
11 state level, Southeast LRT received \$2 million in deed  
12 money, Department of Employment and Economic Development  
13 Funds, further demonstrating the state commitment to this  
14 project, on top of an earlier \$5 million in state bonding  
15 and \$33 million from the Metro counties on the counties'  
16 Transit Improvement Board.

17 And in October, with the release of the  
18 DEIS, the document that you're here to talk about  
19 tonight, we achieved another milestone. The DEIS is a  
20 critical piece in the development of this major  
21 infrastructure project. Its purpose is to provide for  
22 the disclosure of potential impacts, as well as the  
23 potential mitigation of those impacts along this LRT  
24 line. Comments submitted on the DEIS will help to shape  
25 what is evaluated during preliminary engineering and

1 what's included in the final environmental impact  
2 statement.

3 Hennepin County has also established the  
4 Southwest LRT Community Works Project to maximize  
5 opportunities for economic development, new housing, and  
6 jobs along this line; and to help coordinate land use  
7 planning with the design and engineering of the LRT line.  
8 Community Works seeks to ensure that this major regional  
9 transit investment will benefit the residents,  
10 businesses, and communities all along the Southwest  
11 corridor for Minneapolis to Eden Prairie.

12 Thank you all so much for being here this  
13 evening to participate in the DEIS process.

14 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: So if I might,  
15 I'll just give you a quick rundown here about the Draft  
16 Environmental Impact Statement and what it is and how it  
17 performs within this process.

18 The Draft Environmental Impact Statement  
19 provides the public, businesses, agencies, and the  
20 general public with a full summary of the potential  
21 impacts of the project and also possible ways to mitigate  
22 those impacts. The Rail Authority chose to extend the  
23 final comment period, the formal comment period from the  
24 mandatory 45 days to 60 days to provide the public with  
25 additional time to review what is a lengthy document and

1 also to acknowledge the fact that this is happening in  
2 and around the Thanksgiving holiday.

3 It's important for the public to comment on  
4 the content of this Draft Environmental Impact Statement.  
5 These comments will help shape the work of the  
6 Metropolitan Council, which will lead the preliminary  
7 engineering process, and that work will be reflected in  
8 the final Environmental Impact Statement.

9 Tonight we are here, the three of us, as  
10 representatives of the County Rail Authority to listen to  
11 your comments. The purpose of the hearing and the other  
12 two, one yesterday and one in Eden Prairie on the 29th of  
13 this month, the purpose is to provide the public with an  
14 opportunity to provide verbal comments on the Draft  
15 Environmental Impact Statement document.

16 In addition to those verbal comments,  
17 comments can also be submitted via e-mail to sw,  
18 Southwest, that is, swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us. That's  
19 swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us, or via the U.S. Mail to  
20 Hennepin County, 701 4th Avenue South, Suite 400,  
21 Minneapolis 55415. That it would be to Hennepin County,  
22 701 4th Avenue South, Suite 400, Minneapolis 55415.  
23 Comments provided in writing will receive the same weight  
24 as comments received orally during these three public  
25 hearings.



1                   For the Draft Environmental Impact  
2 Statement, the County Rail Authority is the state  
3 responsible governmental unit, or RGU. If you hear that  
4 term, that's what -- that's what the County Rail  
5 Authority is. The Federal Transit Administration, which  
6 is a part of U.S. Department of Transportation, is the  
7 lead federal agency on this project. And the  
8 Metropolitan Council is the local project sponsor.

9                   Comments received during this comment  
10 period, which will extend through December 11th -- so  
11 comments are good until December 11th to be officially  
12 collected -- are being collected by Hennepin County and  
13 will be provided to both the Metropolitan Council and the  
14 Federal Transit Administration. All comments received  
15 will inform the preliminary engineering and final  
16 Environmental Impact Statement phases of project  
17 development.

18                   The Rail Authority and County will continue  
19 to be a strong partner as this project moves forward  
20 under the leadership of the FTA and the Metropolitan  
21 Council.

22                   Before I go on, I would acknowledge the  
23 presence -- I saw her -- there she is -- of Sue Sanger  
24 from the City Council in St. Louis Park.

25                   (Applause.)

1                   COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Applause for the  
2 elected officials, but now after that's the done, we're  
3 going to try to -- I'm going to ask you to retrain from  
4 applause or any other noise-making in terms of what  
5 people say, whether you like it or you don't like it,  
6 just in terms of decorum and allowing things to proceed  
7 in an orderly fashion.

8                   Anne Mavity is here, also from the St.  
9 Louis Park City Council. Mayor Jacobs, I saw him out  
10 front on my way in. I don't know if he's in the room,  
11 but he's close by, I'm sure.

12                   So we're going to ask -- in terms of  
13 speaking tonight, we're going to do what we did last  
14 night, which is to provide each speaker with three  
15 minutes for their comments. The speakers are going to be  
16 given a signal -- two signals, actually, or one signal.

17                   We're going to give you a signal with two  
18 minutes to go -- two minutes to go, one minute to go, and  
19 your time is up. And at that point, we suggest that you  
20 try to wrap up, finish your thought, and then just -- I  
21 suspect they're going -- there's going to be a large  
22 number of people that wish to speak; and in order to  
23 facilitate that and to respect the people who are going  
24 to be coming later on in the agenda, we'd ask you to try  
25 to adhere to the three-minute limit.

1           As I indicated earlier, the comments are  
2 being transcribed as a part of a formal record that will  
3 be submitted to the FTA and Metropolitan Council. And  
4 we'd ask you to -- any speaker coming up to clearly state  
5 your name, address, and the organization that you  
6 represent, if any. You don't have to represent an  
7 organization; but if you do, we would like to have that  
8 as a part of the record. And we'd ask you to limit your  
9 comments to the Southwest Draft Environmental Impact  
10 Statement.

11           Written comments, again, will be accepted  
12 and will be added to the formal record. And we had a  
13 blue -- we have a box here for the written comments.  
14 There's a box out front, the blue box --

15           UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: White.

16           COMMISSIONER MCLAUGHLIN: White tonight, a  
17 white box tonight. Okay. Sorry.

18           So those -- that's where you can drop your  
19 comments. And if you actually have a written version of  
20 your statement that you're making tonight, you can feel  
21 free to drop that there, as well; but your statement will  
22 be transcribed.

23           Again, I would again urge everybody to try  
24 to respect one another as we go forward, and I think we  
25 can have a good hearing just as we did last evening. I

1 know there are a lot of strong feelings on both sides of  
2 this issue, and we want to -- we're here tonight to  
3 listen and hear what you've got to say.

4 So with that, I'm going to proceed; and  
5 then I have a list of one, two, three -- four pages so  
6 far of people who've signed up to speak. And I'm going  
7 to ask -- at some point we're going to need to ro -- I  
8 don't know how many people are outside, but there's a  
9 considerable number. And we're going to have to ask  
10 people after they're done speaking, if you could, kind of  
11 rotate out, so we could rotate someone else into the --  
12 into the room. I think that's the only way we're going  
13 to be able to give everybody a chance.

14 So our first speaker is Tom Harmony from  
15 the city of St. Louis Park. Welcome to the Rail  
16 Authority hearing.

17 MR. HARMONY: Good evening. My name's Tom  
18 Harmony, and I'm the city manager of St. Louis Park.  
19 Address is 5005 Minnetonka Boulevard, here in St. Louis  
20 Park.

21 On behalf of the Mayor and City Council, I  
22 want to welcome you to St. Louis Park, and I want to  
23 welcome all of you, as well. We thank you for holding  
24 this public in St. Louis Park and providing an  
25 opportunity for our community to talk to you about this

1 important project.

2 The City of St. Louis Park is going through  
3 the whole DEIS document right now. In fact, we had our  
4 first conversation with the City Council about it last  
5 night, and we will be submitting detailed comments to you  
6 by the deadline of December 11th.

7 The Mayor and Council did ask that I  
8 reiterate for you the position the City has taken on this  
9 whole Southwest LRT project. And we've taken a couple of  
10 actions, one in 2010 and one in 2011, a couple of  
11 resolutions we've adopted that we've provided to you.

12 First, the Mayor and City Council have gone  
13 on record more than once strongly supporting the  
14 Southwest LRT project, and that is still very much the  
15 case. And, second, and as you well know, the City does  
16 have strong reservations about the freight rail reroute  
17 option. In fact, the Council has gone on record opposing  
18 the reroute of freight rail traffic from the Kenilworth  
19 Corridor onto the MN&S, unless it's proven that no other  
20 viable alternative exists, and if only -- then only if  
21 appropriate and necessary litigation measures are  
22 implemented.

23 So the Council asked me to just refresh  
24 your memory on that; and -- and, again, I'm sure that you  
25 were aware of that. Again, thanks for conducting this

1 hearing, and we really look forward to working with you  
2 and the Met Council on seeing this Southwest LRT project  
3 become a reality. Thank you.

4 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Thank you very  
5 much.

6 For the record, there are five cities along  
7 the corridor through which the line actually (inaudible),  
8 so -- for the record here.

9 Next is Thom Miller, and then Jami LaPray  
10 is on deck after that. So I'm just going to give people  
11 some understanding here of what the order is.

12 MR. MILLER: These aren't my comments.

13 I'm Thom Miller, 2900 LaSalle, St. Louis  
14 Park.

15 I would like to understand how this reroute  
16 is going to be a win-win for St. Louis Park. That's the  
17 way that this has been described to us by Commissioner  
18 Dorfman, and I have to say it typifies the HCRRA's  
19 attitude toward this reroute.

20 How is it a win-win for St. Louis Park when  
21 we know now that colocation is not only a viable  
22 alternative, as Tom Harmony just said, but an alternative  
23 that's going to cost \$123 million less. Those aren't my  
24 numbers. Those are numbers straight out of the DEIS. We  
25 know that the colocation alternative is safer. We know

1 the colocation alternative is better for the railroads.  
2 It's just all around a better corridor to run the freight  
3 trains. So why is that a win-win for St. Louis Park when  
4 we have to pay a portion of that \$123 million in our  
5 taxes.

6 How is it a win-win when there's going to  
7 be a mile-long ramp that's going to be built, starting at  
8 Blake Road and moving up toward the high school, a huge  
9 monstrosity of infrastructure, a new bridge built over  
10 Highway 7 for tens of millions of dollars where the  
11 trains will then ramp up and come right in front of our  
12 high school with two blind curves, where the railroads  
13 have admitted already that there is no way they can stop  
14 if they see a child on the tracks?

15 And these aren't the trains that we've had  
16 for tens and tens of years, as many people have said.  
17 These are new trains. These are trains that the  
18 railroads themselves have said and experts have concurred  
19 they will not be able to stop if they see a child on the  
20 tracks near the high school. How is that a win-win?

21 How is it a win-win for the north side of  
22 our city on 27th, 28th, 29th, that area, where the trains  
23 are up on an embankment? They will tumble down if  
24 there's a derailment. It sounds like a crazy idea. It  
25 just happened two months ago in Maryland. Trains tumble

1 down the embankment, crush everything below them,  
2 including two young women who were sitting next to the  
3 train. When they found their bodies, their bodies were  
4 still in a sitting position because they had no train --  
5 no chance to get away from the train. They didn't have a  
6 chance to get up and try to get away. The trains were  
7 that heavy, and those are types of trains we're talking  
8 about. How is that a win-win?

9           How is it a win-win when the instructors at  
10 the school have to stop instructing for the period of  
11 time it takes for the trains to go by? It's already  
12 happening with the small trains we have today. Now they  
13 have to stop, wait for the classroom to stop shaking, and  
14 how about the time that they can speak over the trains as  
15 those locomotives are throttling to get up that grade  
16 that I described to you earlier. That's not a win-win.

17           How is it a win-win for the resolutions  
18 that have been passed, as Tom Harmony said, for our City  
19 leaders? They've passed resolutions, multiple  
20 resolutions, one of which Commission Dorfman actually  
21 signed when she was the mayor of St. Louis Park. So it  
22 puts them in a difficult position. It's not a win-win  
23 for them.

24           It seems to us that it's not a win-win at  
25 all, because not only are we going to be less safe in St.



1 Louis Park, but we have to pay the bill for it. We've  
2 got 1,500 signatures here on petitions, and that's only  
3 because we didn't know if petitions would mean anything.  
4 We could get 15,000 in probably a couple of weeks if we  
5 thought this was a petitionable action. It's not a  
6 win-win. It's a lose-lose.

7 And I have to tell you that I would not be  
8 the least bit surprised if the actions that are in the  
9 DEIS end up in the FEIS. You can expect a lawsuit from  
10 several citizens in St. Louis Park against both the  
11 HCRRA, as well as the Met Council, as well as potentially  
12 our City Council if they renege on our resolutions.  
13 Thank you.

14 (Applause.)

15 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Do not boo and  
16 applaud. We're not going to do it. We're not doing  
17 that.

18 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Too bad.

19 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: It's not the way  
20 the hearings are going to be conducted, and so I would  
21 ask you to respect that rule, which has been -- we have  
22 used for a long time, which the City of St. Louis Park  
23 also uses.

24 Next witness is Jami LaPray, and Joseph  
25 LaPray after her. Welcome.

1 MS. LAPRAY: Jami LaPray, 3256 Blackstone  
2 in St. Louis Park.

3 Last September I was pleased when the FTA  
4 asked the HCRRA to add the freight rail option to the  
5 Southwest Light Rail project. DEIS documents are  
6 supposed to be an unbiased critical analysis of a  
7 situation. I felt hopeful.

8 In December last year, Commissioner Gail  
9 Dorfman said at an HCRRA meeting, which included  
10 discussion of the FTA ruling, and I quote: How do we  
11 explain colocation being added without people thinking  
12 that colocation is on the table in a serious way?  
13 Promises were made going a long way back.

14 I have read the entire DEIS, and I know how  
15 they've done it now. Let me give you some of the ways in  
16 which information has been left out, minimized, and  
17 twisted so that no one in their right mind will think  
18 that your promises to Kenwood are not being kept. First  
19 of all, in Chapter 1, we are told that the TCW will be  
20 happy to go north to the Humbolt yards in New Hope.  
21 Never mind that Golden Valley, Chrystal, and New Hope  
22 have no idea that they are facing increases in rail  
23 traffic. Never mind that the fact that the increase in  
24 rail traffic will cross Cedar Lake Road. And no analysis  
25 in the DEIS was given as to the traffic issues that will

1 be caused on Cedar Lake Road as the trains pass.

2 We are told in the DEIS document that the  
3 railroad companies will own the track -- the new track  
4 that will be built and will be expected to maintain it in  
5 safe standard. I understand that's correct and is a safe  
6 operating procedure, but it leads the reader to believe  
7 that all the maintenance is covered. However, there is  
8 no mention in the DEIS that I can find that explains who  
9 will be responsible for maintaining the interconnect ramp  
10 with its huge retaining walls and curved bridge.

11 According to the railroad companies when  
12 they commented on the EAW, they will not be responsible  
13 for the maintenance of the internet -- interconnect  
14 structure. Furthermore, there's no reference in chapters  
15 5 or 8, the ones that deal with finance. Finally, since  
16 I only have a minute, on page 58, chapter 3, Discussion  
17 of Impacts of Colocation; and I quote, it says: With the  
18 additional tracks using a wider portion of the HCRRA  
19 corridor, the potential to alter historic properties and  
20 characteristics of the neighborhood -- and they're  
21 talking about Kenilworth.

22 How ludicrous. Kenilworth was a rail yard  
23 for -- since the mid-1800s with as many as 14 sets of  
24 tracks. What does leaving freight trains in a rail  
25 corridor have to do with changing the historic qualities?

1                   And I could go on about how the -- St.  
2                   Louis Park has completely left out and how it will  
3                   negatively impact our city. Thank you.

4                   COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Thank you very  
5                   much.

6                   Joseph LaPray, and then Brenda Litman after  
7                   that. Welcome.

8                   MR. LAPRAY: Hello. Hello. Thank you for  
9                   this opportunity to speak. My name is Joseph LaPray. I  
10                  live at 3256 Blackstone Avenue in St. Louis Park.

11                  I was concerned when I read the DEIS that  
12                  there's a lot of things missing in it. There's -- an  
13                  example, there is no mention of a very key element to  
14                  make this freight rerail -- freight rail reroute work, is  
15                  gaining traffic lights from the Burlington Northern Santa  
16                  Fe east of the MNS line; and if that's been done, it  
17                  should have been in DEIS, I think; and if it's not been  
18                  done, that's a critical element that's in place, and I  
19                  think the public deserves to know how much that's going  
20                  to cost; because the Burlington Northern Santa Fe could  
21                  pull a lot of strings to make a lot of money off of this  
22                  thing.

23                  The other -- one other thing was if you  
24                  look -- there's so many things missing from the DEIS.  
25                  For example, one of the things they say make the strange

1 assertion that the only concern for the freight rail  
2 reroute is -- would be -- come from trespassers. As I  
3 look before, none of you look like trespassers, but all  
4 of you might be motorists, motorists who someday see  
5 yourselves driving southbound on Library Lane. The  
6 library is behind you.

7           You're coming up to Lake Street. You come  
8 to the intersection, there's traffic going east and west  
9 on Lake Street. In order to make a smooth transition  
10 into the traffic, you pull up to as far as you can. It  
11 gives you a better view of the traffic, and it allows you  
12 to move more expeditiously into the flow of traffic, but  
13 now you're on the crossing. A couple of cars pull up  
14 behind you. You can't turn forward because of the  
15 traffic on Lake Street. There's cars behind you. You  
16 can't back up. And the crossing alarm goes off. There's  
17 a train coming. What are you going to do? There's  
18 nothing you can do. You're standing there. So -- but  
19 you have done nothing wrong. You are not trespassing.  
20 You haven't done anything wrong, but your car is in  
21 danger and perhaps your life.

22           Now, the train comes. The locomotive  
23 engineer has done nothing wrong. He might be the best  
24 locomotive engineer in the world, or she, she could be --  
25 he could be absolutely alert on the brake, could handle

1 the train perfectly well; but because of the sight lines  
2 and the sharpness of the curves, there's no way he can  
3 stop that train in time to stop -- keep from hitting you.  
4 It's too late for him. It's too late for you, the  
5 motorist; but it's not too late for you, the County  
6 Commissioners, to stop this as of November 14th.

7 Thank you very much.

8 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Thank you.

9 Next, Brenda Litman, and Louise --

10 MS. KURZEKA: Kurzeka.

11 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: -- Kurzeka.

12 MS. KURZEKA: Thank you.

13 MS. LITMAN: I'm Brenda Litman, 3301  
14 Gettysburg Avenue South in St. Louis Park, and a 50-year  
15 resident of the suburb.

16 People have really been detailing some of  
17 the omissions and things that the DEIS minimizes, so I'm  
18 just going to speak to some of the dangers. I strongly  
19 am in support of the Southwest Light Rail Transit. I  
20 think that's wonderful. I strongly oppose the reroute of  
21 the freight trains to St. Louis Park. It's an  
22 unnecessary, expensive, governmental move that would  
23 create serious safety hazards that have already been  
24 detailed for our citizens and our schools.

25 The route is proposed by Hennepin County

1 and the Met Council, not by the railroad. It is not  
2 proposed by the railroad. It is truly irrational, really  
3 unconscionable in this day and age for any governmental  
4 agency to spend an extra \$123 million to move a freight  
5 line from a wide, flat area that has historically been a  
6 railroad line -- a railroad yard, built to handle freight  
7 trains, multiple tracks, and an area that's cert -- where  
8 certainly freight line and the light rail could exist in  
9 concert. Moving this, relocating freight to a narrow,  
10 multicurved bed in St. Louis Park, running through a much  
11 more congested area, and next to a major high school, St.  
12 Louis Park High School, with multitudes of students often  
13 with ear pods, crossing the tracks to McDonald's, to the  
14 football field, and just walking along the tracks on  
15 their way to school, unconscionable spending of  
16 taxpayers' money.

17           While a short -- it was just pointed out a  
18 minute ago, while a short, eight-car train can stop in a  
19 hundred feet, a 132 car, heavy freight train running at  
20 25 miles an hour requires a mile or more to stop; so it  
21 really can't stop in time for any hazard. It is a major  
22 hazard.

23           In addition, a long freight train, unlike  
24 the short trains currently running on the tracks, would  
25 be on several tight curves at once exponentially

1 increasing the likelihood of derailment. Since a  
2 significant part of the track is elevated as the  
3 former -- last speaker said, Mr. LaPray, and close to  
4 houses, this is a distinct hazard. Therefore, to say  
5 that a narrow, curved track suitable for short eight-car  
6 trains running at 10 miles an hour is suitable for long,  
7 heavy freight trains running at 25 miles an hour, 253  
8 times a day is ludicrous and strains credibility.

9 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Thank you.

10 MS. LITMAN: Okay. DEIS ignored all of  
11 this. Thank you very much.

12 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Thank you very  
13 much.

14 Louise Kurzeka and Clark Johnson next.

15 MS. Kurzeka: Good evening. My name is  
16 Louise Kurzeka. I live at 3301 Library Lane.

17 I have the unique position of being a  
18 lifelong resident of St. Louis Park in that property. My  
19 parents had the home built in 1949. So I have lived two  
20 blocks away from those railroad tracks my entire life.

21 I want to talk about what I think are  
22 flawed perceptions in the DEIS, regarding real world  
23 impacts of people. I found it interesting that goal  
24 number 4 on your story board states: Preserve and  
25 protect quality of life in the study area.



1           So I would ask you how is the quality of my  
2 life preserved and protected when the property values of  
3 my home and my neighbors' homes and everyone who is  
4 within a certain number of feet of that property -- of  
5 that rail line are going to decrease, because we know  
6 that there are studies that have been done that show this  
7 time and again in other parts of the country? How is  
8 this going to preserve and protect the quality of life  
9 for us if the safety of our children in those five  
10 schools that those tracks with that rerouted traffic  
11 passing are going to be affected, especially if those  
12 trains with upgraded rail can now go at 25 miles per  
13 hour, not 10 miles per hour as they currently do.

14           Of course, I'll remind you that my taxes  
15 are what paid for the increase of that freight traffic  
16 and for that increased quality of rail. How is my  
17 quality of the life preserved and protected when I find  
18 that more frequented trains not only cause delays, but  
19 have much greater noise levels that affect again teaching  
20 in schools, people commuting, and those that live close,  
21 and closer than I do?

22           I'm certain that the people in  
23 Kenilworth -- in the Kenilworth Corridor will be happy  
24 when their property values increase because we do know  
25 that, again, from studies, light rail into an area

1 increases the property values. So not only do we lose  
2 our property values, we don't get any of the value  
3 increase. Somebody else gets that, as well.

4 So I ask you to please think about this  
5 reroute as an issue where we look at colocation as a way  
6 to preserve the quality of life for all of us who live in  
7 this area. Thank you very much.

8 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Thank you very  
9 much.

10 Clark Johnson is next, and then I'm going  
11 to give this one a try Janet Weivoda.

12 Mr. Johnson, welcome.

13 MR. JOHNSON: My name's Clark Johnson. I  
14 live at 2749 Blackstone. I've lived there since August  
15 of 1972, in the same house.

16 I am in total agreement with everybody that  
17 has spoken so far. And my biggest concern is it seems  
18 like there is a strong faction going that wants to keep  
19 us that live in the neighborhoods in the dark. I'm  
20 talking to you guys as a council.

21 Tonight is the first time I've seen a map  
22 that actually shows what's going on. The Star Tribune  
23 don't work. Something's rotten in Denmark. And, I mean,  
24 we're the people that are going to be affected by it, you  
25 know; and nobody's ever come out and said what's -- what

1 is going to happen with the houses if you do that  
2 reroute. Okay.

3 I counted them a year ago. I can't  
4 remember the number, but it's 80 something that are  
5 affected, and your figure was about 30. Where's all that  
6 money going to come from? And then think of the citizens  
7 and voters that you're losing, because there aren't going  
8 to be any places to move to in St. Louis Park.

9 So that's about all I got to say.

10 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Thank you.

11 Janet Weivoda and Brian Zachek next.

12 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: How'd I do?

13 MS. WEIVODA: Not bad. You were close.

14 It's Janet Weivoda, with a W; W-E-I-V-O-D-A  
15 I live at 2750 Yosemite Avenue South. I don't speak  
16 officially for my neighborhood. I'm in Birchwood  
17 neighborhood, but I am on the steering committee for  
18 Birchwood Neighborhood Association.

19 Like everyone else who has spoken so far,  
20 maybe not everyone, I strongly support light rail coming  
21 through St. Louis Park. I -- you know, I think that it's  
22 good, and I'm looking forward to it. I think that it's a  
23 great improvement. But the reroute of the freight  
24 traffic is -- I don't understand. I'm a CPA. I own  
25 three businesses. If I was a business person and I said,

1 one -- and we'll take a step back.

2 The DEIS statement does not include any  
3 costs for mitigation, which really not only -- I really  
4 don't even want to jump to the place where that was going  
5 happen, but should we get to the place where you were  
6 saying there's going to be location, freight relocation,  
7 and there's going to be mitigation, we haven't taken that  
8 cost into account. So to say \$123 million additional  
9 cost for freight relocation, plus mitigation, if I was a  
10 for-profit business, I would not be thinking about that.  
11 We're talking in the range of \$200 million, probably.  
12 Those are taxpayer dollars for something that's totally  
13 unnecessary.

14 I bike for -- since June I have been biking  
15 daily the Kenilworth corridor, the length of the  
16 Kenilworth Corridor every day. Every day I say to myself  
17 how is it possible that no one thinks that freight rail  
18 and light rail can co-exist? There's so much space. And  
19 for the pieces, the very small pieces, is not \$200  
20 million or \$123 million worth of expense. The tradeoff  
21 between that cost and the safety savings for high  
22 schools, 500 residences are impacted by freight  
23 relocation.

24 I want you to think about it. I came in  
25 the room earlier. If we imagine that the screen here is

1 someone's backdoor, any of these people who -- say that  
2 they live at Blackstone Avenue. This wall represents the  
3 freight train. That wall is roughly the distance of a  
4 backyard that that train is going to run through their  
5 yard at 25 miles per hour with possible derailment.  
6 Trains derail all the time. I think that it's really  
7 critical that the City look at how that impacts those  
8 people's lives, the lives of students, the lives of all  
9 the 500 residents it's impacted.

10 I am not directly impacted. My house  
11 doesn't sit on the rail line. But as a neighbor and in  
12 those neighborhoods, I can't imagine how that's possible  
13 that this council and Met council, City council, anyone  
14 thinks that that is a possible thing to do to any of  
15 these people where the Kenilworth corridor is a  
16 freight -- is a freight line. It was designed for that.  
17 It's always had freight traffic. Thank you very much.

18 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Thank you very  
19 much.

20 (Applause.)

21 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Brian Zachek and  
22 Sharon Lehrman is after.

23 Mr. Zachek, welcome.

24 My name is Brian Zachek.

25 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Zachek. I'm

1 sorry. I misread it. I thought it was an R.

2 MR. ZACHEK: I live at 6108 Minnetonka  
3 Boulevard.

4 And I know all about the problems and the  
5 dangers of the elevated train because my house is the  
6 closest house to the tracks. It's about 34 feet from the  
7 tracks, and I know exactly how it goes the rest of the  
8 neighborhood, the Birchwood neighborhood. I see all the  
9 people walking down the tracks. And I know all about  
10 the -- the derailment dangers, but I'll keep this short  
11 and Sweet.

12 A few points of my concerns with the DEIS.  
13 The MNS Spur rail line is clearly unsafe as a main rail  
14 line. Number two, the Great Crossing at 29th Street must  
15 stay open. Three, colocation with SW LRT and the TCP and  
16 W's current freight rail route through the Kenilworth  
17 corridor is viable, superior, and cheaper option for  
18 freight reroute along MNS. Excuse me. Four, the freight  
19 reroute will result in a loss of property values along  
20 the affected areas, particularly in my neighborhood.

21 I just got a letter from Hennepin County  
22 today saying my property value dropped \$21,600. I got  
23 that in the mail this morning. I have to think this  
24 reroute must be at least partly to do for that. The  
25 reroute will block street crossings and impede the

1 response of emergency vehicles, which is a big concern to  
2 me. My wife has a disability, and I know lots of  
3 disabled people because of her medical treatments. It's  
4 not acceptable that emergency vehicles be blocked on the  
5 way to Park Nicollet or Methodist Hospital from our side  
6 of the -- from our side of St. Louis Park.

7 The reroute will cause dramatic noise and  
8 safety issues by the high school. The proposed quiet  
9 zones are not adequate mitigation to address this. You  
10 said there was five communities along this route.  
11 Only -- only one of them has to worry about sending their  
12 kids to -- and grandkids to high school, and they would  
13 put them in danger of being killed or maimed by a train.  
14 That is -- that is the truth.

15 Hennepin County did not encourage and  
16 facilitate public involvement and discussion -- decisions  
17 would affect the quality of the human environment  
18 concerning the reroute, and the DEIS that describes noise  
19 and vibration study has flawed methods and conclusions.  
20 SW LRT is a great idea. The freight reroute is not,  
21 especially as it's dealt with in the SW L -- in the DEIS.  
22 We can do much better for St. Louis Park. And, yes, I am  
23 grateful that my house is one slated to be purchased. I  
24 needed to say that. But I wish you would afford the same  
25 generosity or good thinking to the rest of the citizens

1 along that are affected so deeply by this by creating a  
2 greenway or a bikeway that would actually improve the  
3 area. Thank you.

4 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Next, Sharon  
5 Lehrman, and Nancy Brown after Sharon.

6 MS. LEHRMAN: Nancy had to leave.

7 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Nancy had to  
8 leave. Okay. Then after -- okay. So then after --  
9 you're Sharon Lehrman, yes?

10 MS. LEHRMAN: Correct.

11 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: So after you  
12 would be Tom Johnson.

13 MS. LEHRMAN: Okay. So hello. Thank you  
14 for this opportunity to speak. I'm Sharon Lehrman. I  
15 grew up in the Birchwood neighborhood, in a home on 27th  
16 and Zenwood that my parents owned for almost 50 years.  
17 My husband and I are homeowners for 18 years in the same  
18 neighborhood, on 26th and Vernon. And it's our wedding  
19 anniversary tonight. Happy anniversary, Honey. I would  
20 have much rather have been -- go out to dinner, but we  
21 decided this is a very important issue. We don't have --  
22 our kids are grown up. We don't have to worry about kids  
23 at the high schools or Peter Hobart, but this is a really  
24 important issue for our community.

25 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: President Obama



1 had that same dilemma.

2 MS. LEHRMAN: Right. Right.

3 So my husband and I are really worried that  
4 the rerouting of freight trains is considered a done  
5 deal. In a November 4th Star Tribune article, our mayor,  
6 Jeff Jacobs is quoted as saying: Opposing the freight  
7 reroute is like being opposed to winter. You can oppose  
8 it, but it's coming. And in a November 13th Star Tribune  
9 article Commissioner Gail Dorfman is quote as saying: I  
10 think this is a win-win for St. Louis Park in all  
11 respects, as long as we're adequately -- as we  
12 adequately mitigate for the freight rail.

13 I just don't see how this is a win-win for  
14 St. Louis Park, and that's why I'm here tonight. This  
15 will cost taxpayers at least \$123 million more than  
16 colocation in the Kenilworth Corridor without any  
17 additional cost of mitigation. But the most important  
18 issue for me and my husband is the reroute is a disaster  
19 waiting to happen, and this really comes down to the  
20 safety of our residents.

21 So I'm asking those of you who have the  
22 power to make this decision, how will you feel when the  
23 first student is killed, the first car is hit on Library  
24 Lane, and those cars after the first derailment spill  
25 into the backyards of the homes of those people living

1 along the tracks? Will you be there to console those  
2 parents, those families, and those residents? Will you  
3 be able to sleep at night knowing you made this decision?  
4 Because the decision is made and tracks are built,  
5 there's no going back.

6 I implore you to reconsider the colocation  
7 option. It's viable with fewer safety concerns and will  
8 cost significantly less money. I'm counting on you to do  
9 the right thing and uphold our Minnesota Nice standards.  
10 Thank you.

11 COMMISSIONER MCLAUGHLIN: Next is Tom  
12 Johnson, and Betty Shaw after Mr. Johnson.

13 Welcome.

14 MR. JOHNSON: Hi. My name is Tom Johnson,  
15 and I'm president of Railroad and Metallurgic Engineering  
16 here in St. Louis Park, 4601 Excelsior Boulevard. I'm an  
17 engineering consultant with 31 years of railroad  
18 experience. I spent most of my career designing  
19 locomotive at the GE locomotive factory in Erie,  
20 Pennsylvania. I'm a license professional engineer for 28  
21 years. My education is in metallurgic engineering with a  
22 bachelor of science degree from the University of  
23 Minnesota.

24 I'm certified in accident reconstruction  
25 and OSHA regulations. Most of my engineering consulting

1 practice involves investigating, writing reports, and  
2 testifying on crossing accidents and derailments. And  
3 believe me, I don't want any extra business here in St.  
4 Louis Park. I'm here in opposition to the freight rail  
5 reroute for a number of reasons. I will address them all  
6 in my written report in response to the DEIS. Cost and  
7 construction, railroad crossing accidents, derailment  
8 analysis, noise and vibration issues, and mitigation.  
9 Tonight I want to talk about crossing accidents.

10           And I want to address Mayor Jacob's  
11 comments about the lack of railroad accidents near the  
12 high school. There's a reason for that. The trains go  
13 slow. A rule of thumb is that you take miles per hour  
14 that the train goes, square it, and you get in feet the  
15 stopping distance. That's just for a lot of people here  
16 a nice, easy calculation. So the eight-car, two  
17 locomotive, 750-foot trains, running now at 10 miles an  
18 hour stop at 10 times 10, a hundred feet. The new MN&S  
19 upgrades will have a 25 mile an hour speed limit.  
20 They'll be much longer, heavier trains, like the 132 car,  
21 three locomotive, 20,000 ton, 8,000 foot coal trains.  
22 Basic stopping distance for -- is going to be 25 times  
23 25, or 625 feet. This is for the short trains or general  
24 freight, not the coal trains. It must be remembered this  
25 is for the small coal trains.

1           Let's look -- I'm going to take one  
2 crossing example. For example, coming east and turning  
3 north from Highway 7, a train will pass the Walker Street  
4 crossing after three curves and an uphill grade. This is  
5 the Library Lane crossing. The visibility from the east,  
6 I've measured. It's about 200 feet as you come around  
7 that corner. The locomotive engineer can't get a good  
8 view of what's in the crossing until he passes over  
9 Walker Street. At 10 miles an hour, 14.5 feet per  
10 second, his train is 13.8 seconds from entering Library  
11 Lane. He can stop in front of what he sees.

12           The new 25 mile an hour limit, he could --  
13 he's going 10 miles an hour, he'll take 625 feet to stop.  
14 He will not be able to stop. I haven't got to the coal  
15 trains yet. The engineer in the 10 mile an hour train is  
16 in control, and he can make the stop. This analysis is  
17 all for the small general freight trains. The large coal  
18 trains will obliterate anything in Library Lane and not  
19 come to a stop until the head of the train is well past  
20 Dakota Avenue. Also, the rear of the 8,000 foot coal  
21 train will be back 2,000 to 3,000 feet west of Louisiana.

22           The real issue is safety versus  
23 convenience. With the braking distance that I've talked  
24 about, the locomotive engineers that will be working  
25 don't want -- okay, I'll say one more thing.

1 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Yep.

2 MR. JOHNSON: I have a lot to say.

3 But my -- in my profession --

4 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: You're going to  
5 submit this in writing, though, are you not? You're  
6 going to have a full written report, aren't you?

7 MR. JOHNSON: Full written report.

8 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: All right.

9 MR. JOHNSON: My professional opinion about  
10 freight rail is keep it in Kenilworth, keep it slow, keep  
11 it safe.

12 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: I would just say,  
13 sir, my -- all of my mother's family worked at the GE  
14 plant somewhere else up in Erie, Pennsylvania. I grew up  
15 in Coreview.

16 MR. JOHNSON: We'll talk later.

17 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Okay. Thank you.

18 MR. JOHNSON: Hope I can change your  
19 mind.

20 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Next is Betty  
21 Shaw, and then Tom Pearson.

22 MS. SHAW: My name is Betty Shaw. I live  
23 at 2649 Huntington Avenue in St. Louis Park. My home is  
24 not anywhere reasonably close to the reroute proposed, so  
25 I'm not talking about this for my -- for my sake or for

1 my home's sake. My passion is education; and my  
2 terrible, terrible fear about this reroute has to do with  
3 our schools.

4 My daughter Laura taught at Oltman Junior  
5 High in St. Paul Park several years. Oltman Junior High  
6 in St. Paul Park is a field away from the freight rail  
7 tracks that run through St. Louis Park. And every day,  
8 two to three times a day, teaching comes to a complete  
9 stop. When the trains slow down, their whistles go  
10 longer, and it's not a sweet little toot-toot. It's a  
11 whoo. And I think you get the idea.

12 It just -- I mean, teaching is not  
13 possible. You have to interrupt it. In St. -- at Oltman  
14 Junior High, there has been damage to the windows. The  
15 windows shake. And after years and years and years of  
16 shaking and shaking and shaking, not only are they no  
17 longer energy efficient, which we just spent referendum  
18 dollars to make our high school, they don't -- they --  
19 the doorjamb no longer fit. The doors do not shut  
20 tightly enough that you can lock them, giving access to  
21 the school; and vandalism has occurred in the school  
22 because the doors don't lock well. There's structural  
23 cracks and damages to the school from the constant  
24 vibration of trains along this route, and it isn't even  
25 remotely as close to those freight rail lines as St.

1 Louis Park is to the proposed reroute -- routed trains.

2 Please think very carefully about what you  
3 are doing to that marvelous asset of this community and  
4 this state when you propose to put the kind of rail  
5 traffic by that high school as close as it is, as  
6 frequently as it will go; and think very very much about  
7 what that means for the quality of life in the city as a  
8 whole. My property values aren't going to go down  
9 because my train is close to me, but they sure as heck  
10 will if St. Louis Park becomes an undesirable place to  
11 send your kids to high school.

12 (Applause.)

13 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Next we have Tom  
14 Pearson, and then Chad Hayenga.

15 MR. PEARSON: Hello. I'm Tom Pearson. I  
16 live at 2706 Yosemite. I've lived there for about 24  
17 years. We're at Birchwood Park neighborhood. I'm about  
18 three blocks from the tracks. I'm going to disagree with  
19 one of the former speakers, one of my neighbors. She  
20 said our property values would not be impacted. I would  
21 disagree with that. I think they definitely will be  
22 impacted for a number of reasons. Most of the people who  
23 spoke before me had a lot of nice facts and so forth.  
24 I'm going to give a kind of overall recap, if you will.

25 The "S" in DEIS stands for study, and I

1 think a clear -- clearly unbiased study would reveal five  
2 reasons why it's a bad idea to move the freight through  
3 St. Louis Park. And a lot of it's been touched on  
4 already, so I'll just recap. Quality of life, especially  
5 at the high school, is definitely going to be negatively  
6 impacted. There's the noise, the violation. There's the  
7 disruption to the flow of traffic, not only at the high  
8 school, at the other schools, businesses, and our  
9 community around the tracks.

10 Safety, obviously, the proximity to the  
11 high school; it's not close to the high school; it's  
12 through the campus. It splits the high school building  
13 from the -- from the soccer field and football field.  
14 What's going to happen when -- when it's time for a game  
15 or it's time for -- to go out to gym class out there or  
16 to practice, and there's freight train, and you've got to  
17 wait for 20 minutes. Safety is obviously an issue, as a  
18 lot of people already went through.

19 Property values would definitely take a  
20 hit. It's not just for the people who are right along  
21 the tracks. It's for those of us who are about three  
22 blocks away are also going to take a hit from the noise  
23 and the disruption, et cetera. It's a lot less efficient  
24 to have the trains moving through these curves and up the  
25 grade to get to them than it is to leave them on the path



1 they're on now. And cost, of course, cost. I keep  
2 hearing \$123 million. That does not include the  
3 mitigation cost that would be required, and I think they  
4 are huge.

5 Finally, the one thing that disturbs me --  
6 I didn't know this until tonight -- there's several  
7 different cards out there, boards that show different  
8 ideas for rerouting. Most of them show the freight  
9 rerouted through St. Louis Park. There's two boards on  
10 the end here that show the light rail not going through  
11 Kenwood, but the Light Rail going through Uptown and then  
12 further east and then down into the City. Why aren't we  
13 talking about that? Leave the freight where it is and  
14 reroute the Light Rail to go through Uptown. By the way,  
15 if I were a business in Uptown, I would want the Light  
16 Rail to be there.

17 Thank you very much.

18 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Next we have Chad  
19 Hayenga, followed by Carma Hayenga. Welcome.

20 MR. HAYENGA: My name's Chad Hayenga, and I  
21 am from 2700 Brunswick Avenue here in St. Louis Park. I  
22 received my property tax notice in the mail today, and  
23 unlike some of you lucky folks, my property taxes went  
24 up. So it says that the value of my home has increased  
25 in the last year by 3.2 percent; and because the value of

1 my home has increased, so will my property taxes. I live  
2 across the street from the folks who back to the railroad  
3 track, so that was a little comical.

4 I pay my taxes and appreciate the number of  
5 the services Hennepin County provides. Most  
6 commissioners would probably agree that spending  
7 taxpayers' money wisely is of paramount importance.  
8 Would you agree? Yeah. I'm hoping so. It is my  
9 understanding that you could save the taxpayers in  
10 Hennepin County about 120 million by colocating LRT and  
11 the freight trains right where they are; but by  
12 relocating them, it will cost about 120 million. From a  
13 dollars and cents perspective, this just doesn't add up.

14 That being said, I have not complained to  
15 my elected officials, well, not much anyway, when dollars  
16 have been spent in ways that I deem foolish. So for me  
17 the financial issue is secondary to some degree.  
18 However, the thought of running a one to one and a half  
19 mile freight train through our community on the MN&S line  
20 is like jamming miles of rail cars into what is  
21 essentially a back road or side street, while carrying  
22 whatever hazardous materials the railroad company desires  
23 to place in the train cars, while blocking multiple  
24 crossings simultaneously, with engines running at full  
25 throttle to get up the hill, with tracks well above

1 grade -- many of the neighbors that I have look up at the  
2 tracks -- it's crazy.

3 With 1,300 students and many more staff at  
4 the high school, it is at best thoughtless. And at  
5 worst, I'm not sure. I have two daughters at the high  
6 school and another in elementary school. If the powers  
7 that be decide that rerouting the freight rail on the  
8 MN&S is the best option, which would be mind boggling to  
9 me, I expect, as I'm sure you would if you were in my  
10 shoes, that hundreds of millions of dollars would be  
11 spent to assure the safety of St. Louis Park High School  
12 students and staff, as well as the residents that live  
13 along the MN&S. The tracks should not be above grade for  
14 such a massive train, especially a train that is within  
15 50 feet of the high school and less than -- and less than  
16 that for dozens of houses.

17 If you're going to move the freight on the  
18 MN&S, then create a railway corridor that is at least the  
19 width of the Kenilworth Corridor and is at grade or below  
20 grade to improve the safety of the citizens that live  
21 along that line. I'm hopeful that you will hear my plea  
22 and the pleas of my neighbors and take the safety issues  
23 seriously while also putting \$120 million to good use  
24 where it may be needed most.

25 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Thank you. Next

1 Carma Hayenga -- I didn't get -- oh, there you are, and  
2 Fran Schmit is after Carma.

3 MS. HAYENGA: My name is Carma Hayenga. My  
4 house is on 2700 Brunswick Avenue South.

5 I have a number of concerns regarding the  
6 proposed freight rail reroute in St. Louis Park. The  
7 fact that Gail Dorfman thinks that light rail with  
8 rerouting can be a win-win for all concerned is  
9 preposterous. She among other elected officials are  
10 obviously not concerned about the livability, property  
11 values, and most importantly the safety of all St. Louis  
12 Park residents. She is completely out of touch with the  
13 very serious and very real concerns of the very people  
14 who voted her into office.

15 Another concern is that none of the  
16 mitigation requested by St. Louis Park on behalf of its  
17 residents is being considered. However, make no mistake  
18 about mitigation, even. With mitigation, if it were to  
19 come to that, rerouting would forever change the face of  
20 St. Louis Park with no possibility of it ever going back  
21 to being one of the top 100 communities in which to live.

22 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Thank you.

23 Next is Fran Schmit, and Candy Arries.

24 MR. SCHMIT: Hi. I'm Fran Schmit. I live  
25 at 3370 Library Lane, block off the MN&S.

1 I just want to iterate and even reiterate  
2 what's been said tonight, that colocation is the only  
3 thing that makes sense. Relocation does not make sense.  
4 So colocate, not relocate. Thank you.

5 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Thank you, sir.  
6 Next Kandi Arries, and Will Schroer is  
7 after that.

8 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Welcome.

9 MS. ARRIES: My name is Kandi. I live on  
10 3051 Brunswick Avenue.

11 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Could you say  
12 your last name for the tape?

13 MS. ARRIES: Arries.

14 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Okay. Thank  
15 you.

16 MS. ARRIES: I've spent a lot of time  
17 reading the Southwest DEIS, and though it was set to  
18 study the impact of this, especially through St. Louis  
19 Park, it seems to be missing out on some real world  
20 issues and the things that happen in this neighborhood.  
21 I have many concern, and I think there's many flaws in  
22 the DEIS, but I'm going to focus on two.

23 The first being noise and the noise study  
24 that was used in the analysis. The noise impacts are  
25 flawed and improper. The methodology that was used in

1 the studies comes from MNS PMT process. And in those  
2 studies the field studies were completed with only  
3 looking at the noise for the current freight that goes  
4 through the MN&S.

5 It is not acceptable because the design for  
6 the interconnect and the traffic that will be traveling  
7 through our neighborhoods will fundamentally change. The  
8 number of locomotives will double. The number of rail  
9 cars will increase, and the speed will increase. This  
10 makes the study not applicable to this situation.

11 In addition, we're talking about building a  
12 ramp that's going to be a mile long. It's going to end  
13 with a sharp curve. None of these, like, have been part  
14 of the noise study. There is no consideration for how  
15 much or how hard the locomotives will have to work to  
16 climb the ramp as they try to get onto the tracks at the  
17 MN&S. The reality of this is that the locomotive will be  
18 at increased throttle, and that they will continue to  
19 climb and continue. The long -- longer trains will  
20 require this increased throttle as it comes past our high  
21 school causing more noise for students. The curve itself  
22 will also have its own noise impacts and will have  
23 increased friction that will cause more wheel squeals.

24 The second thing I wanted to mention is the  
25 DEIS talks about community cohesion. And in that it says

1 that the community cohesion in St. Louis Park will have  
2 no impacts. I find this ludicrous. The tracks are  
3 within a half mile of five schools, adjacent to more than  
4 300 homes. We have three neighborhood parks. We have  
5 many athletic fields. Somehow all that has been lost in  
6 the study and not included as an impact.

7 So I'd just like to say that I disagree  
8 that the -- the 3A route with a freight reroute coming  
9 through the -- St. Louis Park is the best for this, and I  
10 want to say that I support the colocation option.  
11 Colocation, not reroute.

12 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Thank you.

13 Next Will Schroeer, and after will be Paul  
14 Danicic.

15 Welcome.

16 MR. SCHROEER: Thank you, Commissioners.  
17 My name is Will Schroeer. I represent the Minneapolis  
18 Regional Chamber of Commerce and the St. Paul Area  
19 Chamber of Commerce. My work address is 81 South 9th  
20 Street, Minneapolis. My home address, for what it's  
21 worth, is 3805 Upton Avenue South. Eager to walk to the  
22 West Lake Southwest Light Rail stop.

23 The two Chambers and our sister Chambers,  
24 Twin West, Edina, and Eden Prairie Chambers of Commerce  
25 have been strong supporters of the Southwest Light Rail

1 project because we believe that the region these cities  
2 in particular absolutely need the additional  
3 transportation capacity and connectivity represented by  
4 this project.

5 The purpose of this testimony is to -- is  
6 to speak to the Rail Authority and to the FTA, of course,  
7 along with an opportunity to engage with all the other  
8 opinions here, and it seems rude to not acknowledge  
9 those. We do acknowledge those. We want to emphasize  
10 the following to the FTA and to the Rail Authority. The  
11 region absolutely needs this line. We have been engaged  
12 with the planners on this line for several years to help  
13 move it forward and emphasize two points to the FTA and  
14 the Rail Authority.

15 The first is that we endorse the DEIS's  
16 findings that the benefits to the Southwest LRT  
17 substantially outweigh the impacts, that of the  
18 transportation options studied, the Light Rail has the  
19 greatest ability to address the needs of region. Third,  
20 that the LPA is the most cost-effective option for a  
21 rider, including those shown on the maps, elsewhere  
22 discussed here this evening. And, fourth, that the LPA  
23 fits with, in general, understanding the concerns  
24 expressed here tonight, the land use and economic  
25 development plans of all of the communities along the



1 line.

2 Second, though, responding to the concerns  
3 that we've heard here tonight, we understand and have  
4 heard the concerns of the residents here tonight. Our  
5 understanding of the DEIS is that the reroute is the only  
6 workable way to advance this line.

7 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Bullshit. Not true.  
8 I believe --

9 MR. SCHROEER: My experience includes  
10 working on DEISes and FEISes in the past. I -- I endorse  
11 for the FTA and Rail Authority's benefit the efforts to  
12 treat this as a study and explore all possible options  
13 and urge them to continue to do that. Bottom line is  
14 region absolutely needs this line, and we hope a way  
15 found to mitigate and move forward with this line. Thank  
16 you.

17 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Thank you very  
18 much.

19 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKERS: Boo. Boo.

20 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: All right.  
21 Folks, enough.

22 Let's move on now to Paul Danicic and Greg  
23 Harmon next.

24 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: As Paul is coming  
25 up, I would -- I would acknowledge the presence of

1 Jennifer Mundt, who is a member of the Metropolitan  
2 Council. Sorry. You bending down tying your show.

3 Thank you. Go ahead.

4 MR. DANICIC: My name is Paul Danicic, 2721  
5 Idaho Avenue South, Bronx Park Neighborhood; and I  
6 strongly disagree with the previous comment.

7 To -- the fact is DEIS, the way this is  
8 supposed to work is that this is a draft, right? So  
9 you're supposed to be collecting comments, and you're  
10 supposed to be collecting all the facts. And when I  
11 found out that the facts were not collected regarding  
12 derailments in this reroute, especially when the  
13 derailments come within several feet of the high school  
14 that I plan to send my two kids to, I became activated  
15 and am here tonight.

16 So any final EIS will need to have a study  
17 of derailments through all the upgrade crossings, which  
18 are more in this reroute than are in the colocation  
19 option. So this LRT line is a good idea with a bad plan  
20 if it doesn't include collocating. Thank you.

21 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Thank you.

22 Greg Harmon and then Barb Thoman.

23 Good evening, sir.

24 MR. HANNON: My name is actually Greg  
25 Hannon, and I live at 3600 Wooddale Avenue South, and I'm

1 going to give you another point of view that we haven't  
2 heard yet. And with all due respect for people that have  
3 their orange shirts on tonight, there's another part of  
4 the neighborhood that's affected by the decision-making  
5 process here.

6 I guess my question would be how many  
7 people purchased their respective homes before the tracks  
8 were put in place? Well, the answer to that is obviously  
9 none of you were. You bought your house at a discount  
10 because you live next to a track. But when you bought  
11 that house was it written into your mortgage that you  
12 were never going to have a train come through there? Of  
13 course not. Of course not.

14 I'm a little disappointed that the safety  
15 issue is being, in my view, politicized to make this  
16 thing happen. I had two kids that went to St. Louis  
17 Park, went to the high school. And, obviously, all due  
18 respect, I know that there's a safety issue, but that's  
19 not the only thing. To me this is a simple economic  
20 issue. The people that live near these -- where this  
21 route is going to take place, the 500 homes, they're  
22 simply trying to protect their investment; because they  
23 know that their homes are going to be devalued.

24 So what you're saying is let's put the LRT  
25 and the freight trains right next to our building where

1 there's 60 residents right now, and that to me makes no  
2 sense for our neighborhood; because if you put the LRT  
3 and the freight trains right there, imagine trying to  
4 cross at Wooddale on a daily basis. And so everybody  
5 says don't put it in my neighborhood. I don't want it to  
6 be my problem. And that's really simply what it is.

7 But in all fairness, I'll try to make you a  
8 deal. We'll keep the freight trains. Why don't you take  
9 the LRT through the neighborhood. Thank you.

10 (Applause.)

11 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Barb Thoman and  
12 David -- looks like H-O -- Hond? Okay. Thank you.

13 MS. THOMAN: Commissioners, my name is Barb  
14 Thoman. I'm the executive director of Transit for  
15 Livable Communities. Our office is located in St. Paul,  
16 and we have about 10,000 members located across the Metro  
17 region and in Greater Minnesota. Our organization has  
18 been around since 1996. Our members want expanded public  
19 transit; bus, rail, streetcars, and safer connections for  
20 biking and walking. They see the Southwest Light Rail  
21 project as a critical line and system, and the locally  
22 preferred alternative as being the most cost effective  
23 proposal.

24 People want more options, the residents and  
25 employers of our region. Students want a way to get to

1 college without having to spend money on gasoline and an  
2 unreliable car. Employers want to put money into  
3 research and development, not money into expensive  
4 parking ramps for their employees and their customers.  
5 And commuters want alternative to sitting in the kind of  
6 congestion that we saw on Monday when we had about a half  
7 an inch of snow that seemed to snarl up our entire  
8 transportation system.

9           We are falling behind those places like  
10 Denver, Dallas, Seattle, Charlotte, and St. Louis, who  
11 are building out their public transit systems. They have  
12 a growing -- a growing array of options that are  
13 attracting young people, that are enabling those regions  
14 to retain their senior citizens, and that are maximizing  
15 new development at these Light Rail station areas.

16           New development that results in jobs,  
17 walkable community centers, huge saving on public  
18 infrastructure costs, and often billions of dollars in  
19 new development. So we are confident that the County,  
20 the Met Council, and cities along the line can work out  
21 an acceptable plan.

22           I live within walking distance of the  
23 Central Corridor Light Rail line, which is under  
24 construction right now. For the record, I also live  
25 within walking distance of a freight rail line that

1 serves a major paper recycling plant and two -- and a  
2 number of grain elevators. So the Central Corridor  
3 project runs right down the middle of a four-lane,  
4 arterial street.

5 And the Met Council and the project office  
6 have worked diligently with my neighbors, with the  
7 businesses in our community to work out thousands of  
8 little details, things like location of stations, zoning  
9 changes, vibration, train horns, park congestion  
10 mitigation, pedestrian safety. Pedestrian safety is  
11 important to people in my neighborhood because along the  
12 Central Corridor Light Rail line where a train will pass  
13 every five minutes, there are a number of elementary  
14 schools, high schools, librArries, sheltered workshops,  
15 services for the blind; so the County has been working  
16 with us to make sure that that line and those trains,  
17 three-car trains passing every five minutes are going to  
18 be a safe and wonderful addition to our neighborhood, and  
19 we -- I can say that the excitement is building. So I  
20 trust you to come to a resolution that works well for  
21 everyone. Thank you.

22 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Thank you very  
23 much. David Hound and then Matt Muyres.

24 Welcome to the hearing, sir.

25 MR. HOUND: Thank you. My name is David

1 Hound, and I live in 1246 Shryer Avenue West in  
2 Roseville, Minnesota; and I represent the Sierra Club and  
3 myself. And obviously, due to my address -- can you hear  
4 me way up here?

5 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKERS: Yeah.

6 MR. HOUND: Obviously, due to my address, I  
7 can't speak to the initial main topic here regarding the  
8 rerouting, so I'm going to speak to the -- on behalf of  
9 all the people who live in the Twin Cities who will be  
10 able to use this route to get from one side of the Cities  
11 to the other.

12 My wife works at Methodist Hospital in St.  
13 Louis Park, and she drives back and forth every day from  
14 Roseville; and I have a need to go every couple of weeks  
15 to Park Nicollet Medical Center. So having a light  
16 rail -- excuse me -- having a rail line that would  
17 transverse the entire Twin Cities would be a great value  
18 for ourselves specifically and for everybody. I think  
19 this will tie things -- the City together very well.

20 In regards to the representation of the  
21 Sierra Club, I just wanted to represent that the need for  
22 decreasing air pollution, the need to reduce the amount  
23 of fossil fuel burden in automobiles, and just general  
24 congestion is extremely important for the Twin Cities as  
25 it grows and continues to grow. So for these reasons,

1 I'm very, very supportive of the Southwest Corridor,  
2 which is the green line, and a continuation of the  
3 central corridor, which starts at the Downtown St. Paul  
4 train depot.

5 And one thing in regards to the primary  
6 topic tonight. I used to live in Rochester, Minnesota;  
7 and they went through a very similar deal here, even  
8 including a reroute with potential of high speed coal  
9 trains going right through the middle of Downtown; and  
10 there the Mayo Clinic and most of the governmental  
11 officials were locked hand-in-hand against the idea of  
12 running it through the town. There was a reroute, too,  
13 but it ran out into the countryside, and the farmers were  
14 against that one. So it is a very difficult issue, and I  
15 hope you will be able to solve it fairly. Thank you.

16 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Thank you very  
17 much.

18 Matt Muires is next, and then Rolf  
19 Peterson.

20 Welcome to the hearing.

21 Is Matt Muires here? No.

22 All right. Then we'll go to Rolf Peterson  
23 and then followed by Denise Sergent.

24 Welcome to the hearing.

25 MR. PETERSON: Hold on a second. I brought



1 a prop. You've probably seen that before.

2 It certainly is. I'm Rolf Peterson. I  
3 live at 3536 Zinran Avenue South in St. Louis Park, and I  
4 represent the St. Louis Park School Board on the  
5 Southwest LRT CAC. I'm a former school board member, and  
6 having worked on a freight rail issue for several years  
7 on the board, I've continued that work since I left the  
8 school board in January. The School District has asked  
9 me to comment in person this evening, but to also let you  
10 know that we are working on a much more detailed, formal  
11 written response.

12 The rock I just handed you is a small piece  
13 of limestone. It's a sedimentary rock. It's hard. It's  
14 heavy. It's tough. It's -- it'll basically last  
15 forever. It's what -- the pyramids were built out of  
16 limestone. They will be here -- that rock will be here  
17 long after we're gone, a lot like a railroad; and that's  
18 my message for this evening.

19 Many times we are concerned about what's  
20 going to happen tomorrow or next year. Please remember  
21 the decisions we are making with regard to the railroad  
22 will be with us for a very long time. Long after we are  
23 gone from this building, even the LRT, freight rail  
24 traffic will still be operating on the very tracks we are  
25 pondering now in the Southwest LRT DEIS. The School

1 District has been on record going back to 2008 during the  
2 scoping process with concerns about safety, noise,  
3 vibration, and operations impacts, and that has not  
4 changed. We participated faithfully in the HCRRA PMT  
5 process, both with a list of mitigation -- requested  
6 mitigations and EAW comments.

7           The Southwest LRT doesn't seem to offer  
8 anything different from the EAW. But, again, the first  
9 of future discussions of mitigations, which is puzzling  
10 because there seems to be different budget amounts for  
11 the reroute and the colocated options. How would you  
12 determine the budget without knowing the scope of these  
13 alternatives? Again, we will be responding in writing  
14 with more specific comments and do look forward to future  
15 discussions regarding the impacts that the freight rail  
16 reroute would have on our schools and our students.

17           Now let me tell you a story of my friend  
18 Rocky there. I collected him on the afternoon of April  
19 28, 2011 along the very popular Cedar Lake LRT Regional  
20 Trail, about halfway between Lake Street bridge and the  
21 Belt Line Boulevard crossing. Rocky was spilled there  
22 during a derailment of a train carrying 26 -- 260,000  
23 pounds of white limestone on October 2, 2010.

24           As you hold that rock in your hand, just  
25 imagine if you were holding anhydrous ammonia or ethanol.

1 These are the kind of things commonly transported in this  
2 corner of the world, and as a common carrier railroads  
3 cannot deny shipments. As we move forward in this  
4 process, please keep in mind the longevity of the  
5 decisions being made and how we can best serve future  
6 generations of Minnesota. Thank you for your time.

7 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Thank you.

8 MR. HOUND: I need that rock back. I  
9 should probably actually give it to Bob, I think.

10 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Denise Sargent  
11 and then Peter Rickmyer.

12 MS. SERGENT: My name is Denise Sargent. I  
13 live at 4841 West 40th Lane, St. Louis Park. I also do  
14 not live anywhere near the proposed rail rerouting.

15 My top concerns are that the D -- the DEIS  
16 did not address the safety concerns of four blind curves  
17 that they are including in the reroute. There would be a  
18 steep grade rising 30 feet before the high school. Then  
19 there's a blind curve going left. There's a blind curve  
20 going right, right in the front of high school. And then  
21 there's another blind curve near Peter Hobart school up  
22 at Dakota Park.

23 I find that the fact of this reroute versus  
24 nothing like that having to happen in the Kenilworth  
25 Corridor. I just don't understand how that came out as a

1 better idea. It's costing much more money. There's  
2 going to be a lot more danger to the -- to the kids and  
3 to the people.

4 And the one thing I want to mention is St.  
5 Louis Park has been nominated or awarded as one of the  
6 top hundred communities in this country. St. Louis Park  
7 High School is rated very highly. They recently won an  
8 award, and I can't remember what it is.

9 But this -- this will seriously impact the  
10 quality of life in St. Louis Park, both with the traffic  
11 backups, noise levels, problems with people wanting to  
12 send their children to St. Louis Park schools; and for  
13 that reason, I support, at the very least, a new study  
14 that takes into consideration the safety -- the safety  
15 recommendations that we have talked about tonight. Thank  
16 you.

17 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: All right.

18 Peter Rickmyer and Mathias Mortensen.

19 MR. RICKMYER: Good evening. Peter  
20 Rickmyer, 211 (inaudible).

21 First, St. Louis Park has been known to be  
22 the most respectful people in the Twin Cities area, and  
23 you can keep that in mind.

24 Couple of things. One is that I don't  
25 understand why a tunnel can't be built for the trains to

1 go into a tunnel versus building a mile-high -- a  
2 mile-long ramp. Just build a tunnel, and then you can  
3 have a road over the -- railroad bridge over the railroad  
4 tracks, so you can actually utilize the air space above  
5 the train.

6 The second thing is that there's a  
7 precedent out east that allows the county and the state  
8 and the city to triple the amount of money that's  
9 designated for a project. The Lowry Bridge came in at  
10 about three times the amount that it was supposed to come  
11 in at, so...

12 The last part is that I went to last  
13 night's hearing, and I want to talk a little bit about  
14 the noise mitigating. Coming over here from the other  
15 side, the freeway noise was a lot; and then when I hit  
16 the bushes, it really cut down a lot. I would encourage  
17 the mitigating noise to put several layers of bushes,  
18 medium trees, and large trees; so when I say layers, I  
19 don't mean one row. I meant, you know, a couple feet of  
20 bushes, several rows of medium trees, several high trees.  
21 That would definitely lower the noise during the spring,  
22 summer, and fall; and it will still eliminate some noise  
23 during the wintertime.

24 Thank you for your time.

25 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Mathias Mortensen

1 and then Edna Bernstein.

2 Mr. Mortensen? Mathias Mortensen? One  
3 more time. Mathias Mortensen? Not here.

4 Then Edna Bernstein and then Cheryl  
5 Martin.

6 Edna Bernstein?

7 All right. Then Cheryl Martin. And after  
8 Cheryl, we'll go to Kathryn, looks like Kottke, perhaps?

9 MS. KOTTKE: Yep, it is.

10 MS. MARTIN: Hi there. Thanks for giving  
11 us this opportunity tonight. My name is Cheryl Martin.  
12 I live at 5728 West 26th Street in St. Louis Park.  
13 That's in the Birchwood Neighborhood.

14 And I feel like all the comments I had  
15 prepared here have been said over and over, so I feel  
16 like I'm rather redundant. But I guess some of the  
17 points that I had, too, was the cost. You know, the  
18 money itself is a lot that could be saved; 123 million  
19 that's already on the table for the Southwest Rail; but  
20 the mitigation has not even been considered yet for St.  
21 Louis Park.

22 And in that DEIS study, I believe there  
23 were two mitigations that were addressed. One was to  
24 close 29th Avenue, and I don't think the neighborhood is  
25 in favor of that one. The second one had to do with the

1 quiet zone around the high school. And one of our  
2 speakers tonight earlier, Tom Johnson, who's already told  
3 his credentials, had indicated in a Safety in the Park  
4 meeting that as much as that would be a quiet zone,  
5 because of the visibility issues there, the engineers  
6 don't want a death on their conscious; and so therefore  
7 they're going to blow their whistles anyway. And so what  
8 would have been a quiet zone is not going to be a quiet  
9 zone. So we'll not only have the noise the trains are  
10 making, but we'll have all the whistles besides.

11 I believe in the fact that the railroad  
12 people have talked to various city council members,  
13 whatever, to say that where the trains are now a flat  
14 area without the grades, et cetera, and not the curves is  
15 where they would prefer to be; and, yet, we have skirted  
16 that and not even talked about colocation.

17 So I too really want to see the Southwest  
18 Rail Line come in, but not at the expense of us having a  
19 reroute. I would like to see it in the colocation part.  
20 So thank you very much for your time.

21 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Thank you very  
22 much.

23 Kathryn Kottke, and then I think it's Mike  
24 Daly.

25 Welcome to the hearing.

1 MS. KOTTKE: Thank you. My name is Kathryn  
2 Kottke. I live at 2712 Brunswick Avenue in St. Louis  
3 Park. I'm a Bronx Park Neighborhood block captain.  
4 That's my group.

5 Dear County Commissioners, I want to  
6 express my deep disappointment in a document that was  
7 supposed to be an objective and fair study of a freight  
8 rail problem in the DEIS. I'm a little sad to say this,  
9 but I also want to take this opportunity to say shame on  
10 Hennepin County for once again wasting taxpayer money on  
11 a bogus report that divulges nothing but selfish  
12 political motives. Shame on Hennepin County.

13 (Applause.)

14 MS. KOTTKE: Sorry. My comments are  
15 limited to Chapter 3 of the DEIS. On page 19 the DEIS  
16 claims that six separate studies concluded the best  
17 option for freight rail operations was to relocate the  
18 TC&W freight rail operations on the MN&S line. And I  
19 took -- that's a direct quote.

20 Not one of these studies is named or  
21 presented in the DEIS. The chart provided on planned  
22 land views -- and I found this on pages 36 through 39 in  
23 DEIS -- names three documents that demonstrate colocation  
24 as incompatible with existing land use. One of the links  
25 leads to a Web page not found, and two others to



1 brochure-type documents, expressing vision statements  
2 about transit possibilities, rather than comments about  
3 freight operations.

4           Interestingly, the chart lists relocation  
5 of freight as compatible with St. Louis Park land use  
6 plans. Why doesn't the document cite the four separate  
7 resolutions signed by two different mayors, one of which  
8 was Gail Dorfman, over the past two decades as evidence  
9 of incompatibility? Why aren't the city's resolutions  
10 included in the DEIS at all? Why doesn't the DEIS  
11 mention the SCH study funded by the City of St. Louis  
12 Park that found the freight and LR -- that freight and  
13 LRT can loco -- excuse me -- collocate; and it's far less  
14 expense and much safer.

15           The only thing that I can conclude is that  
16 Hennepin County had no intention of ever considering  
17 collocation. And I think that Hennepin County again, as  
18 they did on the EAW, they wish to misrepresent the facts  
19 or lie to the FTA about the freight problem in the  
20 Kenilworth Corridor.

21           On page 60 the DEIS claims that relocating  
22 freight would add only a small increase in freight rail  
23 traffic. Significant impacts to community cohesion along  
24 the MN&S would not be anticipated. And this was a shock.  
25 As others have attested, this is a bald-faced lie. The

1 types of trains, lengths, weight, and material carried  
2 will change St. Louis Park profoundly. St. Louis Park  
3 community cohesion will dramatically change, and it will  
4 only bring negative consequences in the form of increased  
5 vibrations, noise, safety concerns, blocked  
6 intersections, and so on.

7 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Okay. Finish up  
8 your thought.

9 MS. KOTTKE: The Italian architecture along  
10 the Kenilworth Corridor the DEIS is so interested in may  
11 not be found along the humble route of the MN&S, but our  
12 community will be seriously damaged, nonetheless. I am  
13 sorry, but I am ashamed. This is an embarrassing  
14 document. It's not a study. Thank you.

15 (Applause.)

16 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Mike Daly, and  
17 then Jay Lyons is next.

18 Mr. Daly, welcome.

19 MR. DALY: Welcome -- me, oh, yeah.

20 My name is Mike Daly. I live at 2749  
21 Brunswick. I've got a couple of questions I have never  
22 seen the results for, and we had a meeting down at Nelson  
23 Park here a couple weeks ago with one of your  
24 underconstituants, or however you want to say it, about  
25 the Light Rail deal. I asked her, I says, how much is it

1 going to cost to run this thing for a day or per hour?  
2 How much is it going to make in an hour? No answer. No  
3 nobody seems to know how much. How much does the  
4 Hiawatha Line cost to run per hour versus how much you're  
5 taking in? There's nothing ever let out about that.

6 And one other comment, Gail, I want to make  
7 to you, that you said up at the high school last year,  
8 this is a done deal. It's not a done deal.

9 (Applause.)

10 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Okay, folks.

11 We're getting a little out of control here.

12 Jay Lyons, and then Mary Gosselin.

13 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I think ostensibly  
14 you still work for us, right?

15 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: We're going to  
16 keep order here.

17 MR. LYONS: My name's Jay Lyons. I live at  
18 640 6th Avenue South in Hopkins. This is a really good  
19 time for me to come up here because of what just  
20 happened.

21 I came here because I wanted to express my  
22 support for the Light Rail in general. I think this is  
23 going to be a great boon to St. Louis Park, Hopkins, Eden  
24 Prairie, Minneapolis, and the Twin Cities as a whole.

25 I have learned a lot tonight about -- that

1 I didn't know about what this freight -- the freight  
2 piece of it could mean for St. Louis Park, and I have a  
3 lot of sympathy for people whose homes, whose property  
4 values, whose perceived safety might be affected by it.

5 But just two points that I -- that I found  
6 that I would like to make during this are, one, that when  
7 we have a large project like this, some -- there are  
8 always going to be some impacts. There are going to be  
9 some negative impacts, and it's not going to be fair.  
10 Some areas are going to be impacted more than others, and  
11 I think that, you know, the job of our commissioners, the  
12 job of all the people involved in this project is to try  
13 to find the least -- the least impactful way of doing it  
14 in terms of negative that will be feasible.

15 I don't know, other than reading -- I  
16 haven't read through the whole DEIS. I've read the  
17 executive summary. It's not evident to me exactly what  
18 the, you know, strong considerations were in -- in going  
19 about it the way that the -- the preferred route, why  
20 that was chosen that way; but -- and so I -- I don't  
21 have -- I don't really have an opinion on that at this  
22 point, but what I do have an opinion on is that I moved  
23 to Hopkins about five years ago. I lived over on the --  
24 on the other side of the river, and -- and so I didn't  
25 know very much about St. Louis Park, and I've grown to --

1 I've gotten involved in some things that have brought me  
2 into contact with lots of St. Louis Park folks, and I  
3 really like this community, and I really like the people  
4 in it.

5 But I hope that people can be civil in this  
6 kind of discussion. I've heard cursing. I've heard just  
7 kind of some abusive statements made, and I just hope  
8 that -- I know there's a lot of passion and there's a lot  
9 of emotion for the people that are affected by this, but  
10 I hope we can relate to each other in a respectful way.

11 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Thank you.  
12 Mary Gosselin, and Shelbi Hayenga.

13 MS. GOSSELIN: You get an A on  
14 pronunciation, by the way.

15 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Thank you.

16 MS. GOSSELIN: Thank you for this chance to  
17 comment on the freight rail reroute. Anyone who's driven  
18 a car knows that a 30-foot ascent into a blind curve  
19 followed by a 30-foot descent into a blind curve is  
20 dangerous. Add two more blind curves and consider a  
21 mile-long train traveling this route 42 times a week at  
22 25 miles an hour, requiring one mile to stop into an area  
23 that's congested with school buses, pedestrians, and cars  
24 filled with teachers, parents, students, commuters,  
25 football fans, and athletes.

1           Our current average eight-car trains travel  
2   10 miles an hour 10 times per week on level ground, and  
3   somehow the DEIS missed the difference, stating  
4   trespassers as a sole safety hazard. In health care --  
5   in health care we exercise a Stop the Line and a Pause  
6   for Cause to prevent errors before they happen.

7           Please pause and look at this again. Lives  
8   are depending on you.

9           COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Thank you.

10          Shelbi Hayenga, and then Sharon Duncan.

11          Welcome to the hearing.

12          MS. HAYENGA: Thank you. My name is Shelbi  
13   Hayenga. My address is 2700 Brunswick Avenue South, and  
14   I am a senior at St. Louis Park High School.

15           I have lived here nearly all of my life,  
16   and I'm proud to call St. Louis Park my home, and I'm  
17   also very proud to be a student at St. Louis Park High  
18   School. I've been hearing the conversations for the last  
19   couple of years about the possibility of more freight  
20   trains passing by the high school, and so I thank you for  
21   giving me an opportunity to share some of my thoughts  
22   with you tonight.

23           Although I can't speak for everyone at the  
24   high school, I know my experience is not isolated.  
25   Currently, when a train passes by the high school and I

1 am in a class on the railroad track side of the building,  
2 the teacher will oftentimes stop talking, stop teaching,  
3 because students are distracted, and they don't want to  
4 try to teach above the noise.

5 The trains that come by the high school  
6 usually have 10 or 15 cars or so and are going relatively  
7 slowly. Even so, there are students that run out in  
8 front of them and take unnecessary risks to get across  
9 before they get blocked so they don't have to wait the  
10 time it takes for the train to cross. Also, traffic  
11 around the high school is very busy before school and  
12 after school. This is our current situation; not ideal,  
13 but manageable. However, I'm very concerned with the  
14 possibility of having trains that are 10 or 15 times  
15 longer and much, much louder.

16 Also, it seems the frequency of trains will  
17 likely increase significantly. If this is the case, our  
18 classes will be disrupted more often and for longer  
19 periods of time. Longer trains will not be able to stop  
20 in time if there is someone or something on the tracks.  
21 Also, our wait time to get from one side of the tracks  
22 will increase. Maybe that's not such a big deal if we  
23 have to cross from McDonald's to get back to class in  
24 time, but it will be a big deal for emergency vehicles  
25 trying to get through.

1           Please consider the impact your decisions  
2 will have on students like me. We are counting on you to  
3 think of us and represent us well. Thank you.

4           COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Thank you very  
5 much.

6           Sharon Duncan, and then Jean or Harry  
7 Baxter.

8           Ms. Duncan, welcome.

9           MS. DUNCAN: Hi, my name is Sharon Duncan;  
10 thank you for this opportunity to talk tonight. And my  
11 address the 3249 Florida.

12           And I want to speak on behalf of our  
13 children. And one of the things that makes St. Louis  
14 Park such a great community to live in is that it's  
15 children first. And I feel that having this reroute will  
16 significantly change that. And I just -- I'm concerned  
17 about a lot of different things, but the main thing I'm  
18 concerned about is our children's safety.

19           And -- and also as she just spoke about  
20 crossing the street to get to McDonald's. We live near  
21 the high school, and I can't tell you how many times I'm  
22 seeing kids cross that road in front of cars, in front of  
23 anything, trains, just to get to McDonald's.

24           And so one -- and also one thing I wanted  
25 to quote in this book -- this is by David Walsh, a



1 psychologist, and best-selling author, and he's talking  
2 about the prefrontal cortex of the brain being the --  
3 kind of the CEO of the brain and the part where we think  
4 ahead, consider consequences, manage emotional impulses  
5 and urges. It's one of the last circuits of the brain to  
6 mature. It enters a major developmental period as boys  
7 and girls enter adolescence and does not end until late  
8 teens or early 20s.

9           It talks about adolescence is a heck of a  
10 time for the impulse control center to be under  
11 construction. Just when adolescents need it most, the  
12 PFC's ability to act rationally and think through  
13 problems and challenges is off-line. Even though the  
14 teen PFC is much closer to be mature, it's no match for  
15 their roller coaster emotions.

16           And I'm just concerned about, you know, I  
17 want to beat that train, I'm trying to get to McDonald's,  
18 and now I know these trains are going to be a lot longer,  
19 and I'm going to have to wait this much more time, so I'm  
20 going to bolt across the street when all these trains are  
21 coming that much faster, and there's blind corners.

22           I'm concerned about all the cars that are  
23 crossing the road and a lot of new drivers, as well, and  
24 all the traffic that -- with the buses and all the cars  
25 and cars getting trapped right there. So that's my main

1 point, I guess, is just our children's safety.

2 And I also want -- was going to say the  
3 same thing as the other Sharon that spoke earlier is  
4 about how are you going to feel as decision makers when  
5 there's the first fatality or significant injury? It's  
6 just an accident waiting to happen. So thank you.

7 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Next is Jean or  
8 Harry Baxter is how it's listed here, one or the other.  
9 Maybe they're not here.

10 Then -- Jean or Harry Baxter? No.

11 All right. Then Christine Roth, followed  
12 by Shelly Silverman -- Silvermale. I'm sorry.

13 Hi, how are you?

14 MS. ROTH: Good evening. My name is  
15 Christine Roth. I live at 3057 Edgewood Avenue South.  
16 I've been a resident of St. Louis Park over half my life  
17 in a combination of the Triangle Neighborhood, and now --  
18 and now in the Lennox Neighborhood.

19 I have great disappointment in this  
20 process. I have great disappointment in the document,  
21 the DEIS document. It doesn't seem that any of the  
22 comparisons that were made in this have ever been on an  
23 apple-to-apple basis between the Kenilworth Corridor and  
24 the MN&S route.

25 The Kenilworth Corridor, anyone with an

1 ounce of common sense in their head, comparing those two  
2 routes would determine that colocation is the obvious  
3 choice. The Kenilworth Corridor offers a consistent  
4 grade, at the same grade the housing on that line is.  
5 The amount of housing on the Kenilworth Line is half  
6 that, that it is on the MN&S. Our houses may not be  
7 worth as much money, perhaps, as some of the homes along  
8 the Kenilworth Corridor, but there's twice the amount of  
9 them.

10 As for the argument that I've heard Ms.  
11 Dorfman comment on in the past that light rail and  
12 freight rail are not designed to be colocated, they are  
13 already colocated west of Louisiana Avenue. As it's been  
14 stated tonight by a number of people, the Kenilworth Line  
15 is the much cheaper route by over \$123 million. We've  
16 talked a lot about the blind curves and the setbacks and  
17 all the things that go into this.

18 It's very obvious -- have any of you walked  
19 the line, the MN&S line and physically looked at this  
20 area?

21 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: I've ridden it.

22 MS. ROTH: Pardon?

23 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: I've ridden it.

24 I've ridden a bike on parts of it.

25 COMMISSIONER DORFMAN: Many times.

1 MS. ROTH: Parts of it, not all of it?

2 Well, I would encourage you if you haven't  
3 to give it another look, particularly between 27th Street  
4 and Minnetonka Boulevard in front of the high school.  
5 It's common to see kids walking on the high school (sic).  
6 It's common when you drive past there this time of year,  
7 in the dark, to have kids darting out in the street in  
8 front of you; and there's not going to be any change in  
9 that behavior, as we just had pointed out to us.

10 My great disappointment is that this has  
11 never been an apple-to-apple comparison, and it really  
12 feels like it's -- it's -- the route is determined at any  
13 cost. So I hope that's not the case, and I hope you  
14 won't let us down in that regard.

15 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Shelly  
16 Silvernail.

17 And then are there other sign-in sheets?

18 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: No.

19 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: If there are  
20 others who wish to speak, we'll just take it -- hold on.  
21 I've got a couple more. There's a couple more here. I'm  
22 sorry. One last sheet.

23 I'm sorry to interrupt. Go ahead.

24 MS. SILVERNAIL: I live at 2944 Blackstone.

25 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Why don't you

1 read your name into the record.

2 MS. SILVERNAIL: Shelly Silvernail.

3 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Nail, with an N.  
4 Okay. Sorry. Got it.

5 MS. SILVERNAIL: So while everybody that  
6 has come up has pretty much said what I would like to  
7 have said, and I guess I don't really see the reason that  
8 we're even having the discussion because Kenilworth seems  
9 to be the least expensive and has -- makes more -- just  
10 common sense.

11 And I don't know if -- well, you aren't --  
12 no one is from St. Louis Park. I know, but you are a  
13 Commissioner now.

14 COMMISSIONER DORFMAN: I'm still a  
15 resident.

16 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Do you live on the  
17 tracks?

18 MS. SILVERNAIL: I thought that there was a  
19 part of St. Louis Park that the -- that the rail would  
20 have to buy from us, and I don't know if that's true or  
21 if that section has been sold.

22 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: We're not --  
23 we're not answering questions tonight.

24 MS. SILVERNAIL: Okay. Well --

25 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Put the questions

1 on the record, and they'll be --

2 MS. SILVERNAIL: If we do still own any  
3 property, maybe we all need to get together and discuss  
4 that.

5 Thank you for your time.

6 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Thank you.

7 Next is Robert Aderhold.

8 Robert Aderhold?

9 Lyn Wik, followed by Lynne Carper.

10 MS. WIK: Hello. My name is Lyn Wik. I  
11 live at 3965 Quentin Avenue South, and I have owned my  
12 home since '77.

13 I -- I can only hope that -- that all of  
14 these people here that are talking to you guys, that  
15 you're actually listening to what is being said. I -- I  
16 don't know if you are or if this is just lip service that  
17 is paid to the process, but I really hope you're  
18 listening to these folks.

19 I do not understand for one second how this  
20 can be -- how the freight rail reroute through St. Louis  
21 Park could be considered without putting a dollar sign on  
22 the mitigation. And who -- whose responsibility will it  
23 be to pay for that mitigation? Are we not only going to  
24 lose our quality of life, but we're going to have to pay  
25 for it, too? I don't know how you can even consider it

1 without asking those questions.

2           And I didn't plan on speaking at all. I  
3 just wanted to come to show my support, but it came to me  
4 as I was driving here that a perfect -- the -- the lack  
5 of logic that's been shown by even considering running  
6 this freight rail reroute through St. Louis Park when the  
7 colocation is clearly the less costly and the most  
8 reasonable way to go, I just -- I'm baffled by it. It  
9 makes as much sense to me as saying that you're going to  
10 reroute barge traffic onto Minnehaha Creek. You could do  
11 it. You could do it. It'll -- it -- who knows how much  
12 it's going to cost. Does it make any sense at all when  
13 there's that big river over there that's been handling it  
14 fine for a long time?

15           That's -- that's all I can say about it,  
16 and thank you for letting me talk.

17           COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Lynne Carper and  
18 Veronica Min Wotipka.

19           MS. MIN WOTIPKA: I want to listen at this  
20 time.

21           COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Okay. All right.  
22 Thank you very much.

23           Lynne Carper.

24           MS. MIN WOTIPKA: (Inaudible).

25           COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Okay. Thank you

1 for being here.

2 MR. CARPER: Perhaps last and least, Lynne  
3 Carper, I live at 4010 Highwood Road in St. Louis Park.  
4 I've been a resident since 1991. I consider myself an --  
5 very involved in St. Louis Park. I'm on the Planning  
6 Commission. I'm Chair of the Charter Commission. I was  
7 on the Block Captain's Advisory Council. I was on the  
8 very first railroad task force when it initiated in 1995.  
9 So I've got a strong background. And I also was on the  
10 most recent BMT.

11 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Thank you for  
12 your service.

13 MR. CARPER: You are welcome.

14 One of the things that I want to stress is  
15 that I am definitely in favor of the LRT. I think that  
16 we need various forms of transportation in the  
17 Metropolitan area, and definitely mass transportation is  
18 something that is necessary. As far as relocation goes,  
19 I say not now, not ever. And I'm going to give you three  
20 examples on why this should not be done.

21 The first example that we had, and it was  
22 mentioned earlier, is the fact that recently in Ellicot  
23 City, Maryland, on August 21st, there was a derailment of  
24 21 cars on a coal train. Some young teenagers were  
25 adjacent to where that train is, and they were buried



1 alive, and they were not able to get them out before they  
2 asphyxiated. It also buried an entire parking lot full  
3 of cars that the City was uncertain whether or not there  
4 were occupants in that vehicle.

5 We face the same risk with this elevated  
6 MN&S line as it comes through St. Louis Park because the  
7 tracks are elevated, and they are adjacent to a great  
8 many homes. We lose -- we lose a coal car down in the  
9 yard, we won't have any idea what's under it until we  
10 find it later, perhaps much to our regret.

11 Another example is that -- and I have  
12 information about this -- is that KCRG, a news station  
13 out of Chicago, was discussing this issue as common type  
14 of rail car has dangerous design flaw. And this is  
15 referring to tanker cars. I'm going to read a couple  
16 parts from this article, and I will send the additional  
17 links to the members of the HCRAA and also St. Louis Park  
18 City Council, and for anybody else who'd like to contact  
19 your representative to get further information.

20 For two tech eights, one of the most  
21 commonly used type of rail tanker has been allowed to  
22 haul hazardous liquids from coast to coast, even though  
23 the transportation officials were aware of a dangerous  
24 design flaw that almost guarantees the car will tear open  
25 in an accident, potentially spilling cargo that could

1 catch fire.

2           These are the ethanol train cars that are  
3 going to be routed through our community. There are no  
4 ethanol train cars on that track right now. Prior to  
5 this meeting, several weeks ago, I did see 67 cars in a  
6 train that was traveling through the Kenilworth Corridor.  
7 These are the kinds of trains that are going to be moved  
8 to our tracks, and with sharper curves and with bridges.

9           Another discussion --

10           COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Sir, your time is  
11 up. Can you wrap it up?

12           MR. CARPER: Already?

13           COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Yep.

14           MR. CARPER: Okay. Let's see...

15           COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Why don't you  
16 finish your thought.

17           MR. CARPER: Okay. Regarding the  
18 colocation, it was designed to be LRT exclusive. One of  
19 the things that was not considered is the relocation of  
20 the bike trail. There's been no mention of that as a  
21 possibility nor any attempt to do that.

22           Finally, I challenge our elected officials  
23 that this is your opportunity to make a decision that  
24 could wind up killing children should it be a decision  
25 that puts all of these hazardous chemicals by the school.

1                   Again, I restate: Relocation, not now; not  
2                   ever.

3                   COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Thank you.

4                   Is there anyone else who wishes to speak?

5                   I see a hand back here. Come on up.

6                   If you'd introduce yourself for the tape,  
7                   that'd ge great.

8                   MR. FREEDMAN: I'm Frank Freedman. I live  
9                   at 2530 Pennsylvania Avenue South in St. Louis Park,  
10                  which is approximately almost two miles west of where the  
11                  freight line would be.

12                  But I can tell you I'm also a block from  
13                  the other rail, and the picture frames in my house all  
14                  have the back sticky; because every time the trains go  
15                  by, the vibration from a block away moves my pictures; so  
16                  I don't know if that should be in the Draft Environmental  
17                  Impact Statement.

18                  But what may be -- what maybe could be in  
19                  the draft is really the livability of our city. There  
20                  will be inconvenience. There will be an occasional  
21                  ambulance stuck on Cedar Lake Road that can't get  
22                  through. There will be the complaints. There will be  
23                  the stories. There will be the noise, and there will be  
24                  the frustration. And you will take a wonderful city and  
25                  destroy a lot of its character.

1 (Applause.)

2 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Anyone else?

3 In the green shirt, and then the brown one,  
4 and then over here, and then over here.

5 MR. KUTSCHKE: My name is Tom Kutschke, and  
6 I live --

7 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Could you spell  
8 your name, because we don't have it written down?

9 MR. KUTSCHKE: K-U-T-S-C-H-K-E.

10 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Okay. Thank you.

11 MR. KUTSCHKE: And I live at 1288 St.  
12 Albans Street in St. Paul, Minnesota.

13 I just wanted to give you another  
14 perspective here. Where I live we live near Como High  
15 School. Como High School is right next to the Burlington  
16 Northern and Santa Fe train tracks. They have two and a  
17 half trains per hour going through that area. That's,  
18 you know, in excess of 40 trains a day.

19 There are some ethanol trains that go  
20 through there, and there's never been a problem there.  
21 The high school is within 25 to 50 feet of the train  
22 tracks, and there's a level crossing at Como and Front.

23 Also, if the Kenilworth route is chosen,  
24 there will be six stations that are next to the freight  
25 rail line. If the other route is chosen, there's only

1 one station that's next to a freight line.

2 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Oh, sure.

3 MR. KUTSCHKE: Also, in the aspect of  
4 housing, there's 52 multifamily units within 26 to 50  
5 feet of the train tracks in Kenilworth. There's zero in  
6 St. Louis Park. There's 135 multifamily units within 51  
7 to 100 feet of the tracks in Kenilworth. There's zero at  
8 St. Louis Park. As to housing, there are three units --  
9 three houses that are within 25 feet of the track in  
10 Kenilworth. There are zero in St. Louis Park.

11 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: What?

12 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: That's not true.

13 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Folks. Folks.  
14 We listened to a lot of people.

15 MR. KUTSCHKE: This is from a report that  
16 you guys paid for, for a company to do.

17 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKERS: (Inaudible).

18 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Folks. We listen  
19 respectfully here, and we're going to listen respectfully  
20 to this gentleman.

21 MR. KUTSCHKE: There's also 52 units in  
22 Kenilworth area between 26 and 50 feet of the tracks.  
23 There are only two in St. Louis Park.

24 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Thank you very  
25 much for your comments.

1                   You are next. Welcome to the hearing.

2                   MS. BELTRAND: My name is Renee Beltrand,  
3 B-E-L-T-R-A-N-D. I live at 2805 Zarthan Avenue South.

4                   If we're going to consider the previous  
5 comments, then I think that what the DEIS's is lacking is  
6 a complete apples-to-apples comparison, and I would very  
7 much hope that Hennepin County would make sure that that  
8 apples-to-apples comparison comes up, including  
9 mitigation cost for the City of St. Louis Park.

10                  As far as Hennepin County is con --  
11 factored in in terms of cost, I haven't heard anyone say  
12 anything about the impact on Minnetonka Boulevard traffic  
13 and what the environmental impact will be once Highway  
14 100, which is also on the State project list, how that's  
15 going to factor in. And having ridden a school bus in  
16 rural Minnesota for many years as a child, I can tell you  
17 that, yes, winter does come, it's coming, and there's  
18 nothing we can do to stop it, and diesel engines stall;  
19 and I would really, really hate to see it stall on the  
20 tracks. You're got PSI, Park Spanish Immersion, school  
21 buses crossing those tracks, trying to get into the  
22 parking lot at PSI.

23                  I haven't heard anybody address what do you  
24 do with a packed school bus full of children when it has  
25 to stop before the railroad crossing and then start again

1 to get across the tracks. They're mandated by law to  
2 stop at the railroad tracks. What happens if it stalls  
3 out when it starts up again? I've been on that bus as a  
4 child. It's cold in the winter, the bus is full, the  
5 train is coming. How do you get those kids off that  
6 train fast enough?

7 I really, really sincerely hope that  
8 Hennepin County considers all these safety factors, and I  
9 would hope that they would give the same weights to the  
10 children attending schools in St. Louis Park and the  
11 other communities that they give to the commuters who  
12 would be riding a colocated train, commuters who, for the  
13 most part, are adults, not children. Thank you.

14 SPEAKER: Thank you.

15 You're next, sir. Welcome to the hearing.

16 MR. ADERHOLD: My name's Bob Aderhold,  
17 A-D-E-R-H-O-L-D. I live at 3529 West 54th Street in  
18 Edina.

19 First of all, I just wanted to say that I  
20 greatly support the Southwest Light Rail Corridor  
21 project. I think it represents a fabulous opportunity  
22 for economic development in our region. I think,  
23 unfortunately -- well, I'm fortunate enough not to be --  
24 to live on either route, so -- but my interest is really  
25 just to see this project advance and also to see the

1 negative impacts minimized, as everybody wants here.

2 It seems to me that no matter which route  
3 is chosen, there's -- it's going to generate opposition  
4 and inconveniences for someone, and a lot of intelligent  
5 arguments, I'm sure, would be made if the -- if the  
6 primary -- if the first choice was along the Kenilworth  
7 line. You, of course, are charged with choosing the best  
8 or I should say perhaps the least bad of the options and  
9 then mitigating the negative impacts.

10 I really appreciate the work that you three  
11 commissioners do. I think you've given a lot of thought  
12 to this, and I think there's -- a lot of work has gone  
13 into this thing, and I trust you to do the right thing.  
14 Thank you.

15 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Thank you.

16 I want to acknowledge Jake Spano, City  
17 Council member from the City of St. Louis Park.

18 Sue Sanger was next, I think, over here.

19 MS. SANGER: Hi, I'm Sue Sanger, 4717 West  
20 28th Street, St. Louis Park, and I want to say that I'm  
21 speaking only for myself. I'm not speaking for the City  
22 or for the City Council.

23 I'm not going to repeat any of the comments  
24 that were made here today. I just want to address a  
25 point that I think was left out of the DEIS, and that is



1 the decision that is reflected in there to say that  
2 colocation is not feasible.

3 St. Louis Park gave you a study a year or  
4 two ago that showed that it was indeed feasible if the  
5 bike trail is moved out of the Kenilworth Corridor. We  
6 have seen no analysis of that study. No one has  
7 addressed with us -- with me -- I have not seen any  
8 indication or analysis of why that would not work.

9 But I think you should think about the fact  
10 that it's so much cheaper to move a bike trail for half a  
11 mile than it would be to move freight rail, build a new  
12 bridge, provide the cost of all the mitigation that you  
13 haven't provided for in the DEIS that we know needs to be  
14 done. So I urge you to consider that and relook at the  
15 question of whether colocation is possible.

16 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Anyone else who  
17 wishes to speak?

18 MS. MIN WOTIPKA: Can I just comment?

19 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Please introduce  
20 yourself.

21 MS. MIN WOTIPKA: My name is Veronica Min  
22 Wotipka. I was born in Korea and love -- I'm a  
23 spokesperson for Minnesota. I've been to 55 countries.  
24 They cannot -- they can attack me, but never Minnesota or  
25 the U.S.A.

1           And I just want to mention, you know,  
2   trains are run in Korea and Japan, and they have the best  
3   train. And America has so many cars, but they don't have  
4   enough of percent of trains. Train is much cleaner air  
5   and much safer than automobile to me.

6           And I think -- I love children, and I think  
7   what they should do is allow the high school children,  
8   they want to go to McDonald's, they should have some safe  
9   way so they can, you know, not interfere with the train.  
10  They should have a safe way they can cross to McDonald's.

11           Because I love this country so much, and I  
12  think anything -- I'm sure that I didn't know when they  
13  opened the highway, I'm sure not everybody agreed with  
14  me. So for big project, you cannot make everybody happy  
15  all the time, the persons. Some -- no matter what, even  
16  same sister, brothers, same family, they don't agree.  
17  Even husband and wife don't agree.

18           Like I love the community, and I love the  
19  people. My husband is very private person. So not  
20  everybody will happy, but we have to start somewhere.  
21  Train, so I think beginning they will not all happy and  
22  all agree, but I think this is a good way to start for  
23  train, for long one.

24           COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Thank you very  
25  much.

1 We didn't get your address. I'm sorry.

2 MS. MIN WOTIPKA: 7710 Gleason Road,

3 Edina.

4 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Okay. Thank you

5 very much.

6 Karin Miller.

7 MR. MILLER: My name is Karin Miller. I

8 live at 2900 Yosemite Avenue South.

9 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: How do you spell  
10 your first name?

11 MS. MILLER: Karin, K-A-R-I-N.

12 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: K -- I-N. Okay.

13 MS. MILLER: And I just wanted to address  
14 the comments the gentleman from St. Paul said.

15 He was reading off a report, and I think he  
16 needs to reread that. Actually, what he was referring to  
17 as property lines, he was confusing the property lines  
18 with the number of households.

19 That's all I wanted to say. Thank you.

20 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Thank you.

21 Anyone else?

22 All right. Then in the back.

23 MS. STOBBE: Hi. I'm Lynn Stobbe. I live  
24 at 3056 Dakota Avenue South.

25 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: How do you spell

1 your last name?

2 MS. STOBBE: S-T-O-B-B-E, boy, boy,  
3 Edward.

4 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Thank you.

5 MS. STOBBE: I left a copy of my letter.  
6 Some of you are e-mailed. But I -- I had referenced in a  
7 letter to you the train accidents that we all know  
8 happened 2003 up in Anoka, that four young people were  
9 killed on a train crossing. It was a vehicle/train  
10 accident. And I went and looked up on the Department of  
11 Transportation site, and it's talk -- it's according to  
12 their site, it said 94 percent of all railroad crossing  
13 accidents are caused by risky behavior.

14 Do you know of any high school students  
15 that participate in risky behavior? I see it daily. I  
16 live a couple blocks from a high school. Teenagers equal  
17 risky behavior. They do dumb things. Those of us who  
18 live there, I have stopped and watched kids dart in front  
19 of cars. I've watched them dart under the lowered arms  
20 of the railroad tracks because they know they're moving  
21 slow, and people think, oh, this isn't going to make a  
22 difference.

23 I -- you guys really are potentially  
24 putting lots of kids' lives in danger. The kids cross  
25 the route to go to the athletic fields. They cross the

1 route to go to McDonald's. What are these kids going to  
2 do if, oh, I'm late to school or I'm late to football  
3 practice? Do you think they're going to dart in front of  
4 a train and take a chance with their lives? Yeah, they  
5 are going to do that. I mean, that's what teenagers do.

6 And then it also said under the Department  
7 of Transportation that nearly half of all railroad  
8 crashes occur where the train is traveling under 30 miles  
9 an hours. Approximately, every two hours in the U.S. a  
10 collision occurs between a train and either a vehicle or  
11 a pedestrian. That's 12 incidents a day, and basically  
12 all of you think it's okay to increase this risk by  
13 putting this next to a major high school, a large high  
14 school. I mean, to me that is a major safety issue.

15 Nothing is more important -- walking past  
16 bike paths, even future light rail -- is more important  
17 than the safety of kids. Most people that run for  
18 government in this state, whether it's commissioner level  
19 or any level, you guys all propose to be for the kids.  
20 You, you know, say you're for the people, the citizens,  
21 the parks. We don't see that.

22 Then there's St. Louis Park's total  
23 distrust of the process that you guys have done. It's  
24 been mentioned on record that this was a done deal. It  
25 has made a lot of people unhappy. And I look at this

1 whole process, and it reminds me of Detroit style and  
2 Chicago style politics. I have siblings in both those  
3 cities, and the stories they tell us of the backdoor  
4 deals that are done is very sad. I don't want Minnesota  
5 to be like that. I want Minnesota to be open. I want  
6 Minnesota to do what's fair. And what's fair is not to  
7 have this freight reroute through St. Louis Park where  
8 there's no room for it to start with.

9 And just because you made promises to the  
10 elitist people in Kenwood doesn't mean that it should be  
11 forced down our throats.

12 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Anybody else?

13 Now, this gentleman back here. I'm sorry,  
14 I passed you up. I'm sorry. Welcome to the hearing.

15 MR. MUYRES: Thank you very much.

16 My name is Matt Muyres. I live in  
17 Richfield. I work in Eden Prairie.

18 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: How do you spell  
19 your last name?

20 MR. MUYRES: Muyres, M-U-Y-R-E-S.

21 And I heard some things about the biking --  
22 the path that runs through Hopkins there in Uptown. So I  
23 just want to -- and I haven't read the report or  
24 anything, so I don't know what's involved in terms of  
25 rerouting the bike path. If there are reroutes or any

1 information, please keep the cycling community posted.  
2 If anything is left out, it always looks suspicious.

3 The cycling community is a big community,  
4 and if we find out something the wrong way, generally  
5 we're respectful, but you'll hear from us please, and so  
6 please keep the report up to date. I know Three Rivers  
7 Park, I think, controls some of the path through Hopkins  
8 and the stops, and then the Greenway Coalition takes  
9 over; but please keep the cycling community posted with  
10 any updates or reroutes. Thank you.

11 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: All right. Thank  
12 you.

13 Anybody else?

14 Yes, go ahead. Then there was somebody  
15 coming up over here, too. Go ahead.

16 MS. BURNSON: Hi. Angela Burnson, 9021  
17 West 34th Street, St. Louis Park.

18 I wasn't really planning on speaking  
19 tonight, but there's one other thing I want to throw out  
20 there, as a parent of a 4th grader. I talk to a lot of  
21 parents about the schools all the time. It's a --  
22 obviously a huge, you know, concern of all of ours, where  
23 our kids are going to go. We're talking high schools  
24 already all the time.

25 And I think like -- you know, I've lived in

1 St. Louis Park for 11 years. I think we all love St.  
2 Louis Park, and nobody really will say this, but I have  
3 to tell you that people will leave. If they think that  
4 their kids are in danger or that their learning is  
5 somehow compromised, they're by going to a school that  
6 shakes or, you know, that you can't get a good education,  
7 people are going to leave. People with kids my age, you  
8 know, with a 4th grader, 5th grader, high school; and  
9 then what's going to happen to St. Louis Park when you've  
10 got -- I mean, already people are leaving for other  
11 various reasons related to schools, but safety is huge.

12 If it comes down to it -- I mean, if it  
13 comes down to me staying in St. Louis Park that I love or  
14 like putting my child in danger, I'm sorry, but I'm out  
15 of here. You know, that's more important, so please  
16 consider that people will leave.

17 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Thank you.

18 Anybody else?

19 Yes, ma'am.

20 MS. GROSS: My name is Kathy Gross. I live  
21 at 2606 Alabama Avenue South in St. Louis Park, and come  
22 January my husband and I will be here eight years.

23 And there was a gentleman from St. Paul  
24 that said there was no multihousing along the tracks. I  
25 thought that's what he said. And I live in Sound Gate



1 West. We are multi townhouses back there. And I know  
2 that some of the residents have moved. They have  
3 relocated to other states for various reasons. And their  
4 townhouses have taken a while to sell. And one of the  
5 concerns -- and I've talked to some potential buyers, and  
6 then they found out about the railroad. They didn't buy.

7 So I agree with the lady before me that  
8 there is a concern that people are not going to be  
9 interested in moving here, and people are going to have a  
10 hard time selling their houses along this railroad. And  
11 we -- my husband and I lived in Bloomington. We moved  
12 here because we love it here. It is a wonderful place to  
13 live and do business and live here.

14 And I don't -- and I just -- I want to -- I  
15 can't sit back there and not say anything. I'm not a  
16 speaker. I don't like to stand in front, but I just -- I  
17 have to root for this community. It's been voted a  
18 desirable place to live. It's a first ring suburb  
19 outside Minneapolis, so we do feel very connected to  
20 Minneapolis. It's a -- it's a win-win as far as  
21 location. I realize there's a lot of apartments that are  
22 being built now along 36th Avenue up by Byerly's and L.A.  
23 Fitness because these people were told that the Light  
24 Rail is coming.

25 And I'm in favor of the Light Rail. I

1 think it's wonderful. I think it's neat that it's coming  
2 here, but I hate to -- I hate to get a win on one area  
3 and lose the community as a whole. The other thing I'm  
4 concerned about, too, when we moved here, we did not know  
5 that this was coming in, and we live very close to the  
6 railroad tracks, and with it coming in 25 miles an hour,  
7 or whatever, how is that going to impact the quality of  
8 our homes as we live along this railroad track, and the  
9 speed is going to increase? What is that going to do to  
10 the structural of the buildings and the homes that live  
11 along this track?

12 And I -- I live here. I do not work, so  
13 I'm in St. Louis Park the majority of my day, week. I  
14 live here, exercise here, do business here. Am I going  
15 to have safety, you know, if there's a -- if there is a  
16 hundred cars passing the city -- the school? And my  
17 husband looked up tonight the wait; 70 car pile up,  
18 backup for just by school. And I really want to ask you  
19 to consider to look at all of everything that people are  
20 saying tonight. We live here, and we want to continue to  
21 live here. Thank you.

22 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Thank you very  
23 much.

24 Okay, sir.

25 MR. STENSETH: Dale Stenseth, St. Louis

1 Park, 3153 Edgewood.

2 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: How do you spell  
3 your last name?

4 MR. STENSETH: S-T-E-N-S-E-T-H.

5 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Okay. Thank you.

6 MR. STENSETH: I believe tonight you have  
7 all experienced some of the hostility and some of the  
8 distrust and even disrespect that many of us feel, and I  
9 feel Hennepin County has brought on a lot of that. We  
10 have been told from the start that it was a done deal.  
11 Our suggestions and our input has been largely filtered  
12 or ignored. Thank you.

13 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Thank you.

14 Anybody else?

15 Anybody else? Yes, sir.

16 MR. PTASZEK: My name's Steve Ptaszek, 2610  
17 Vernon.

18 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Could you give us  
19 a spelling on your last name?

20 MR. PTASZEK: Try to guess. No,  
21 P-T-A-S-Z-E-K, good Polish name.

22 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: I missed.

23 MR. PTASZEK: I want to finish what my wife  
24 did not put on, Sharon Lehrman.

25 She said -- I'll read it for you. Hello.

1 My name's Sharon Lehrman. Okay. I grew up in Birchwood  
2 neighborhood, in the home at 27th and Zenwood that my  
3 parents owned for almost 50 years. You already heard  
4 that. 15 years, blah, blah, blah...

5           There's a special bond and pride for those  
6 who grew up here in St. Louis Park. Some you may have  
7 seen the November 6th article, New York Times, called  
8 Minnesota Mirror, written by Pulitzer Prize winner,  
9 author, and columnist Thomas Friedman. Here it comes.  
10 He came here to look at the election through the window  
11 of his hometown St. Louis Park. Tommy -- this is why she  
12 wanted to say it, she wanted to drop names -- Tommy is  
13 also a family friend, and we graduated together from St.  
14 Louis Park school. He often talks about how growing up  
15 in St. Louis Park is the anchor and moral compass that  
16 keeps him grounded. He loves coming back because nobody  
17 wants anything from him. He loves it.

18           So as a person who grew up here and lived  
19 in California and came back, I can say that there's  
20 really something about Minnesota Nice. That's all I  
21 wanted to say about it. So think about it.

22           COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Thank you.

23           Anybody else?

24           Going once -- anybody else?

25           All right. Go ahead.

1 Hi, how are you?

2 MS. NAUHA: Hi. My name is Sue Nauha,  
3 N-A-U-H-A. I live at 2841 Brunswick in St. Louis Park  
4 here.

5 I live right -- the railroad is a bit  
6 higher than my backyard. I'm originally from a railroad  
7 town, Two Harbors, Minnesota. My husband and I were both  
8 born and raised there. My dad was an engineer for many  
9 years. He's 94 right now, a retired engineer. He  
10 happened to have killed somebody shortly before he  
11 ended -- his retirement, to retire. He didn't want to.  
12 He tried to stop. Somebody was stopped on the track. He  
13 couldn't stop the train. He's had to live with this  
14 himself, coming from an engineer's point of view. My  
15 uncle when I was four years old was killed by a train.  
16 He was working as a brakeman. He fell. Several cars ran  
17 over him.

18 When we moved here, we liked moving with  
19 the railroad in the backyard. There were only about two  
20 trains a day. They were going slow. We kidded everybody  
21 about having our own railroad in the backyard. But the  
22 kids liked it. The engineers waved at them and  
23 everything.

24 But this new type railroad that you are  
25 talking about changes everything. I mean, we're not

1 talking about a slow train that's nice to have in the  
2 backyard that might even be safer than an alley for  
3 children. You're talking about -- I sit there and I look  
4 at the back between my garage and the railroad track, and  
5 even if the train went off the track and didn't roll, my  
6 garage would be gone, my car would be gone now. Now, no  
7 one had said that side of Brunswick was even going to be  
8 considered buying those houses, just Blackstone. And I  
9 think Brunswick houses seem to be closer to the track  
10 than some of the Blackstone houses. This I don't  
11 understand either. Thank you.

12 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Thank you.

13 Thank you.

14 MS. NAUHA: Welcome.

15 MS. DALY: I'm Karen Daly. It's K-A-R-E-N,  
16 D-A-L-Y. I'm at 2749 Brunswick Avenue. I lived here all  
17 my life, grew up, went to school. And I'm very  
18 passionate about what I do for a living. And I hear  
19 about safety. I've heard about car accidents and  
20 everything.

21 Now, the one thing that I have not heard  
22 about is you commissioners for business. Now, this will  
23 impact everybody's insurance, where they come to do  
24 business here, where they drive around here. And you  
25 talk like a (inaudible) lists courts. Now, if you have

1 somebody who dies on the train track and your reports are  
2 wrong, who's going to cover that bill? You know  
3 insurance companies, much like I do, have unlimited  
4 resources of attorneys. They'll take you for years.

5 Now, who is going to be paying that bill  
6 when you have -- like the lady just said, something  
7 happened, you get stalled, it could be a bus; if you have  
8 a bus full of kids, 40 kids on that bus, every single one  
9 of their parents home policies can step up to you and go  
10 after you.

11 So I'm beginning to wonder have you done  
12 the logistics on legit -- I hate to say that word --  
13 courts as to how much insurance companies would take you  
14 for on the first accident? I've been through  
15 derailments, and believe me when I say from 27th to 28th  
16 Avenue, 29th, Minnetonka Boulevard, all the way to the  
17 high school, it took them three days to clean that up.

18 And I guarantee you this, back then people  
19 weren't so happy to sue. Nowadays they will be. And  
20 believe me when I say their car companies will go after  
21 you guys lock, stock, and barrel until you get these  
22 reports right, until houses -- now the big buildings  
23 you've got on Kenwood, right, they've got million dollar  
24 policies on the back end, 5 million to cover the hazards.

25 You get 20 houses and they have a

1 derailment, whether it's chemical, the rock, right, how  
2 much money can St. Louis Park dish out, how much money  
3 are the commissioners going to dish out, or how much is  
4 Hennepin County going to come back at you -- back at you  
5 guys and say you didn't get the reports right, because  
6 that will be on the books. I've seen it happen, and  
7 believe me when I tell you there is one gentleman that  
8 actually his parents are still going after the St. Paul  
9 Railroad for millions of dollars.

10 So please get those reports right, because  
11 this is on the back burner, and I don't think anybody  
12 here wants to play with an insurance company. Think  
13 about yours.

14 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Anybody else?

15 Going once. Twice.

16 You've already been up there once, right?

17 Sorry, we're not going to do repeats.

18 Yes, sir.

19 MR. GJERDE: I'm Jon Gjerde, J-O-N. My  
20 last name I'll spell slowly, G-J-E-R-D-E.

21 I want to talk a little bit about a term  
22 called "environmental justice." We've got a sad history  
23 in the United States of urban areas that happens often  
24 where people with big plans and big dreams come up with  
25 big and scary ideas. They don't want to put them through



1 places with people with money. Where does it end up  
2 going? Poor neighborhoods.

3 Look at the Rondo neighborhood in St. Paul,  
4 one of the most vibrant neighborhoods in St. Paul.  
5 Somebody had the great idea of putting 94 right through  
6 the City. Did they pick along Summit Avenue? Did they  
7 go north? They picked the poorest black neighborhood in  
8 St. Paul, destroyed it. I taught there for years. It's  
9 not back yet. That was in 1950.

10 Okay. My fear -- and I hear it from a lot  
11 of people -- is that there are big people making big  
12 plans, and they found the easiest place to take that  
13 inconvenient train. And they're finding the people that  
14 have the least power, and they're going to put it right  
15 down your throat. It happens in every urban area in the  
16 United States, and this is exactly what's happening here.  
17 It's called "environmental injustice."

18 They don't want it there because it's noisy  
19 and loud and dangerous, but they have plans, so let's  
20 ship it to us. Thank you.

21 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Thank you.

22 (Applause.)

23 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: All right.

24 I'm going to try it again.

25 Anybody else? Anybody else? Third and

1 last time, anybody else?

2 All right. Thank you all. I appreciate  
3 your passion, your insights, your willingness to be here  
4 and participate in this process. And with that, we will  
5 adjourn the meeting tonight. Thank you very much.

6 (Proceedings adjourned 8:30 p.m.)

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## Draft Environmental Impact Statement Comment Form

### Southwest Transitway Project

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

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](http://www.southwesttransitway.org)

In the school year ~~200~~ 2011-2012 there were Chlorine leaks at the High School - two affected the Orchestra room. I am concerned that an increase in vibrations from LONGER, heavier and more freight trains will cause more chlorine leaks at the school.

Name: Michael Kottke  
Address: 2712 Brunswick Ave S.  
City/State/Zip: St. Louis Park MN 55416  
Telephone: 92-920-8363 Email:

Thank you!

transitway

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Place  
Stamp  
Here

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

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I live at 5417 Pompano Drive in segment 3, The proposed Smetana crossing is 1/2 block from my town home. If the 3A line is implemented, I'm submitting & here should be a "QUIET ZONE" consisting of NO post-mounted horns, 4 quadrant gates and a median barrier only. St. Therese Senior Care is a few blocks from this crossing. This crossing is close to the bottom of a long hill. Slippery in the winter! There will be accidents! Ambulances frequent at high speeds to St. Therese to save lives when minutes count. Hope nobody dies during 5a-1a during the 10:00 interval trips! LRT is 85% subsidized. The SW LRT, will cost \$12 million from the public YEARLY!

Name: Joanne Strate

Address: 5417 Pompano Dr.

City/State/Zip: Minnetonka, MN 55343

Telephone: 952-935-3999 Email: strate51@msn.com

Thank you!

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I BELIEVE RE-ROUTING THE FREIGHT LINE  
WILL BE THE MOST EXPENSIVE OPTION, AND  
WILL BE MORE DISRUPTIVE TO SLP BUSINESSES,  
SCHOOLS AND RESIDENTS. THE TWO LINE  
CAN CO-EXIST IN THE SAME CORRIDOR, AS  
SHOWN IN 3A-1. THANKS!

Name: BLAIR MOE  
Address: 2944 BLACKSTONE AVE S  
City/State/Zip: SLP, MN 55416  
Telephone: 128680169 Email: bl-mo@hotmail.com

Thank you!



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Here

Hennepin County  
Housing, Community Works & Transit  
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- From the Shady Oak station to the Mitchell location, this will be an environmental catastrophe.
- No natural long straight sections -
  - Too much wetland destruction  
(whats left in EP etc, should be preserved)
  - Massive earth destroying equipment bulldozing ecology contributing to climate change.
  - less green, more concrete equals death
  - OPUS used to have deer; not any more,
  - Remember the Hwy 212 mega project???
  - get a clue -
  - the Met Council is the most environmentally insensitive group of idiots in Minnesota
  - Kiss Minnetrista good bye.

Name:

Matt Mugges

Address:

Richfield MN.

City/State/Zip:

Telephone:

6128252297

Email:

Thank you!

transitway

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**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](http://www.southwesttransitway.org)

Ch. 3 of DEIS comments "only a small increase in rail traffic" is described when in fact the monthly change will be 28 car, 2-locomotive trains travelling 10 mph will increase to 132 car, 3-locomotive trains travelling 25 mph, which take a mile to stop, with 6 blind curves on the route.

- Land use comparisons of the two routes is MN + S over 40% housing vs 18.8% on Kenilworth corridor

- Ch. 12 of DEIS (years of planning meetings) were held where Hennepin County and the Metropolitan Council did not allow public comment when choosing the location of the freight route.

- This process is driven by an ideology of "light rail at any cost" with complete disregard of students at the St. Louis Park High School & their safety. The DEIS specifically contains no mention of safety there & no plan for mitigation of noise, vibration, etc.

Name: Christine Roth

Address: 3057 Edgewood Ave. S.

City/State/Zip: St. Louis Park MN 55426

Telephone: 952-929-3647 Email: vroth1@comcast.net

- Trains are already co-located on Kenilworth west of Louisiana Ave.

- Leaving, or co-locating <sup>Thank you!</sup> freight & SWRT together saves \$123 million dollars !!

# transitway

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Place  
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Hennepin County

Housing, Community Works & Transit  
ATTN: Southwest Transitway

701 Fourth Avenue South, Suite 400

Minneapolis, MN 55415

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## Draft Environmental Impact Statement Comment Form

### Southwest Transitway Project

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

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I have 11 years living in this adress (S. Lo. P.)  
 I have two childres one is 9 years old  
 and one is 3 years the train pass.  
 I like this city like today  
 I don't like the noise.  
 specially for mis kids.  
 it will be more  
 dangerous for my family  
 re. route.

*Cesar Arias Perez*

Name: Cesar Arias Perez

Address: 2756 Blackstone Ave.

City/State/Zip: St. Louis Park Mn. 55416

Telephone: (952) 406 1197 Email: chi-vis 2008 @Hotmail.com

**Thank you!**

transitway

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Cesar Arias Perez  
2756 Blackstone Ave.  
St. Louis Park Mn. 55416

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

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## Draft Environmental Impact Statement Comment Form

### Southwest Transitway Project

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- The safety of children, this railway is acceptable now, only because the train doesn't exceed more than 10mph  $\pm$  5mph. This will go directly past 2 schools!!

- The tracks are in VERY poor condition. The fact that they're on a hill through most neighborhoods is a GREAT safety concern.

- The cedar lake corridor has more than enough room to accommodate freight & Lt rail.

- Property values will drop & our neighborhoods will turn into a ghetto of section 8 housing

Name: PAUL JACOBS

Address: 2729 Blackstone Ave S.

City/State/Zip: SLP, MN 55416

Telephone: 952 922-1699 Email: sailinrube@yahoo.com

**Thank you!**



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Hennepin County  
Housing, Community Works & Transit  
ATTN: Southwest Transitway  
701 Fourth Avenue South, Suite 400  
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# Draft Environmental Impact Statement Comment Form

## Southwest Transitway Project

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I think someone decided which way this project would go, ~~it~~ because an objective look at the best option would ~~be~~ not be 1) the most costly (which it will be) 2) the least safe - Really? a 100+<sup>car</sup> train going past a high school going up a 1% grade with 4 turns. I think the powers that be listened to the residents of Kenwood and decided to ~~put~~ transfer freight traffic on a line never designed for it so they wouldn't have to deal with it.

Name: Bob Waligora  
Address: 3333 Alabama Ave. S.  
City/State/Zip: St. Louis PK, MN 55416  
Telephone: 952-924-4125 Email: rubies@comcast.net

**Thank you!**

transitway

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

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Lynne Stobbe &lt;lynnestobbe@gmail.com&gt;

**Responding to Southwest Light-rail Transit Re-Route through St. Louis Park**

12 messages

Lynne Stobbe &lt;lynnestobbe@gmail.com&gt;

Sat, Nov 10, 2012 at 9:04 PM

To: swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us, jacobsjeffrey@comcast.net, hallfinsip@gmail.com, Jake Spano <spanoslpouncil@gmail.com>, suesanger@comcast.net, AnneMavitySLP@comcast.net, susansanta@aol.com, juliaross.spl@gmail.com, rep.steve.simon@house.mn, mark.dayton@state.mn.us

To Whom It May Concern:

I am opposed to the freight rail re-route through St. Louis Park. When I first heard of this proposal I thought this was nuts. Why would anyone in their right minds propose high levels of freight traffic through a neighborhood where the homes (Postage Size Lots) are very close to the tracks? If a train de-railed it could potentially take out multiple homes and cause millions of dollars in damage. Why would Hennepin County, and the State want this re-route when they had just spent millions of dollars putting a bridge over Highway 7 at Wooddale, and then this re-route would make that areas traffic impossible?

And why would anyone think it is OK to propose this re-route right through the center of the St. Louis Park High School Campus - separating the school from the athletic fields - basically dividing the campus in half. This whole process is politics run amok! There is a reason Gail Dorfman is our ex major.

After what happened in the deadly train accident in Anoka in 2003, you would think that the State, Hennepin County, the Federal Government, and the Railroad companies would take the lessons of that accident, and apply it's concerns to this case.

In that accident four young people were killed in a train crossing (train/vehicle). The jury found the railroad 90% responsible for the accident, and the families were awarded millions.

By putting this proposed freight rail re-route through St. Louis Park, Hennepin County, the State, Federal Government, and the Railroad will be endangering the lives of our high school students, and all of the families that live too close to this route.

According to the Department of Transportation:

"94% of all railroad crossing accidents are caused by risky behavior." HELLO - do you know of any high school students that participate in risky behavior? Teenagers = Risky Behavior.

"It can take a train a full mile or more to brake - even after it hits something." That's nearly 18 football fields to stop. Do you think any teenager that is late to football practice or to school might try to dart in front of one of these trains to get to the athletic field or the school?

We who live near the high school routinely see the High School students duck under the railroad gates to run across the tracks to McDonald's. The students also daily cross these tracks in their cars to get to their student parking. With the proposed re-route, and longer trains this is more risk to our students.

"Nearly half of all rail crashes occur when the train is traveling under 30mph. Approximately every two hours in the US a collision occurs between a train and either a vehicle or a pedestrian." That's 12 incidents a day, and Hennepin County, the State, Federal Government, and the Railroad thinks it's OK to increase this risk percentage by putting this train re-route through the middle of a high school campus. Very Risky - It will most likely cost lives.

We cannot have this re-route through St. Louis Park. NOTHING - not proposed walking paths, biking paths, or even future light rail - can ever replace kids in our lives. This proposed rail re-route will endanger way too many lives.

What I have not addressed here is the impact this will have on the home values in St. Louis Park, and our quality of life. Is the state prepared to spend millions to compensate us for our homes losing value, livability, and the general impact this will have on the quality of our lives? Is the State and the Railroad prepared to buy homes, sound proof, and replace window on many more homes to compensate us on the damage to our homes environmentally, physically, and financially?

Also lets not forget the total distrust the citizens of St. Louis Park have for Hennepin County Commissioner Gail Dorfman. We have all heard of your promises to the rich elite neighborhood of Minneapolis' affluent Kenwood neighborhood - this whole process has reminded me of crooked insider trading. **NO RAIL RE-ROUTE in ST. LOUIS PARK!!!!**

Lynne Stobbe  
3056 Dakota Avenue South  
St. Louis Park, MN. 55416  
(952)922-0893

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To Whom It May Concern: (Noise/vibration)

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

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

Besides my general concerns about the SWLRT-DEIS, the portion of the report dealing with Noise (3-93 and 94) and Vibration (4-117) causes me the greatest concern. The SWLRT-DEIS underestimates the effects of vibration for because it considers only the immediate traffic increase from the re-route and not additional traffic that is likely to occur. Currently trains travel on the MN&S for approximately two hours a month. If the re-route occurs there will be a minimum of 6 hours and 39 minutes or a 232.5% increase in train related vibration will occur each a month. Currently, all vibration and its negative impacts occur five days a week during regular business hours. In the future vibration will occur on weekends and nights as well as during business hours. Not only will the duration of vibration increase, but also the amount of vibration will increase with longer, heavier trains. The assumption stated in the SWLRT-DEIS that the increase in vibration is insignificant is incorrect. Listed below are reasons why the assumptions are incorrect:

We are also led to believe that creating a quiet zone will end all of the noise issues. This assumption is incorrect for the following reasons:

1. A quiet zone is not a sure thing.
  - a. Implementation could be denied by the school board because the building of a quiet zone will limit access to the Senior High School
  - b. Locomotive engineers are compelled to blow the horn if they perceive a dangerous situation. What kind of responsible person would drive a train through a series of blind crossings, past several schools without blowing the horn?
2. Quiet zones do not limit locomotive noise
  - a. Multiple locomotives will be necessary for pulling a fully loaded train up the .86% grade if the new interconnect.
  - b. Multiple locomotives laboring with long trains will make more noise than the locomotives that currently use the MN&S
3. Trains traveling west will need to use their breaks to maintain a slow speed going down grade and through curves
4. Train wheels on curves squeal; the tighter the curve the greater the squeal.
5. Bells on crossing arms in a quiet zone will ring the entire time a train is in the crossing.
6. Because there are currently no trains at night, even one night train means diminished livability.

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

Name: Jennifer Kiss

Address: 2812 Alabama Ave S

City/State/zip: St. Louis Park mn 55416

Telephone: 612-293-9152 E-Mail: fwfw-7@yahoo.com



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

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To Whom It May Concern: (DEIS is not Objective)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Name: Jennifer Kiss

Address: 2812 Alabama Ave S

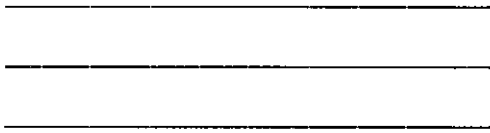
City/State/zip: St. Louis Park mn 55416

Telephone: 612-293-9152 E-Mail: fwfwr-7@yahoo.com





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

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To Whom It May Concern: (safety)

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

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

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

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

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

Name: Jennifer Kiss

Address: 2812 Alabama Ave S

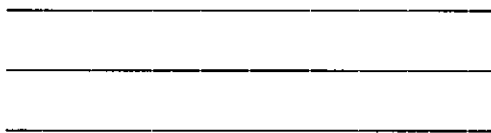
City/State/zip: St. Louis Park MN 55416

Telephone: 612-293-9152 E-Mail: fwfwr-7@yahoo.com

To Whom It May Concern: (crossings)



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

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To whom it may concern: (The process to choose the Locally preferred Alternative was flawed)

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

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

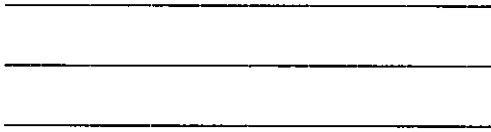
Besides my general concerns about the SWLRT-DEIS, I am particularly concerned with Chapter 12 (Public and Agency Coordination and Comments). NEPA 1500.2(d) states that the leading agency must “encourage and facilitate public involvement in decisions which affect the quality of the human environment.”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

Thank You,

Name: Loren Botner  
Address: 3067 Zorathian Ave So  
City/State/zip: St. Louis PK, MN 55416  
Telephone: 952.926.7975  
EMail: lbotner@comcast.net



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

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

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

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

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Name: Loren Botner

Address: 3067 Zarthan Ave So

City/State/zip: St Louis Pk, MN 55416

Telephone: 952.926.7975 E-Mail: lbotner@comcast.net



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

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Name: Katy Drachle

Address: 3067 ZARTHAN AVE S

City/State/zip: ST LOUIS PARK, MN 55416-2025

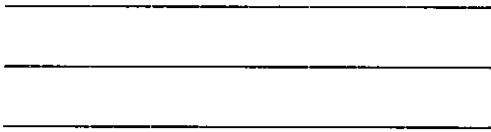
Telephone: 952-926-7975 E-Mail: Kdrachle@comcast.net

*Both the effect of the reroute and the costs have not been considered!*





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- Number of pedestrians who transverse crossing every day
- Permeable soil under MN&S
- Medical emergency response hindered when crossings are blocked – only one fire station has emergency medical response (page 80)
- Tight Curves. Derailments are more likely to occur on curves than on straight track
- Hazardous materials are being carried on the rail line without sufficient right of way.

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

*I feel very strongly that the proposed re-route is an idea that was adopted without a real understanding of the many problems. Add. Despite the admitted issues which must be worked out for effective relocation with freight continuing through Kenilworth, it is the better, safer, and cheaper in the long run alternative.*

*Thank you for your attention to these important concerns.*

Name: Kay Drache KAY DRACHE

Address: 306-1 ZARTHAN AVES

City/State/zip: SLP MN 55414

Telephone: 952-924-7975 E-Mail: Kdrache@comcast.net

To Whom It May Concern: (crossings)



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

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To whom it may concern: (The process to choose the Locally preferred Alternative was flawed)

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

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

Besides my general concerns about the SWLRT-DEIS, I am particularly concerned with Chapter 12 (Public and Agency Coordination and Comments). NEPA 1500.2(d) states that the leading agency must “encourage and facilitate public involvement in decisions which affect the quality of the human environment.” This regulation was clearly ignored in regards to the potential freight rail re-route issue. Hennepin County did not “encourage and facilitate” public involvement concerning this issue. In fact, Hennepin County refused attempts for public comments and concerns regarding the freight rail issue at all of the outreach meetings listed in table 12.1-1 and all of the community events listed in table 12.1-2. Public comments regarding the freight issue were denied at the 2008 Oct 7, 14, and 23 scoping meetings and the comment period that followed as listed in section 12.1.3.1. Public comments regarding the freight issue were refused at the 2010 May 18, 18 and 20 open houses. Most importantly, public comments regarding the freight issue were denied during the entire LPA section process. This included all of public hearings listed in section 12.1.4.1. In summary, all public comments regarding the freight rail issue were denied at all of SWLRT’s major milestones leading up to the DEIS. Worse, the public was not made aware of the significant environmental impacts caused by SWLRT and the potential freight re-route because the freight issue was not discussed at any of the SWLRT meetings leading up to the DEIS. The only opportunity the public was given by Hennepin County to discuss the freight rail re-route was at the PMT meetings discussed in section 12.1.5.

However, any discussion of possible alternatives to the re-route (co-location) or the freight re-route’s connection with SWLRT was strictly forbidden at these PMT meetings. Lastly, the DEIS fails to mention the 2011 April 17 and 28 freight re-route listening sessions that were held by the city of St. Louis Park. Hundreds of St. Louis Park residents voiced their opposition to the freight re-route. Because those opposed to the re-route have been denied comment during the entire SWLRT planning process leading up to the DEIS, the freight rail issue needs to be dropped or significant more work needs to be done on the alternative studies and public outreach.

Thank You, I appreciate your attention and hope that ~~and~~ REAL study of this issue will finally take place

Name: KAY DRACHE

Address: 3067 ZARTHAN AVE S

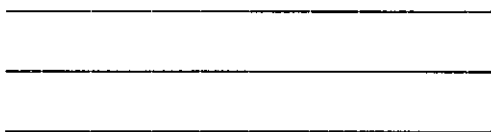
City/State/zip: ST LOUIS PARK MN 55416

Telephone: 9529267975

E Mail: Kdrache@comcast.net



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Hennepin County  
Housing, Community Works & Transit  
ATTN: Southwest Transitway  
701 Fourth Avenue South, Suite 400  
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To whom it may concern:

I am writing in response to the Southwest Light Rail Transit Draft Environmental Impact Statement that also addresses the re-routing of freight rail in St. Louis Park.

In Chapter 1, Section 1.3.2.3, the report identifies the option of rebuilding a spur line into a main freight line in St. Louis Park but does not address the monumental safety implications for St. Louis Park residents if initiated.

The re-route would increase freight rail car traffic approximately 788%. What is particularly fearsome is that the freight traffic increase would overexpose St. Louis Park High School and alternative high school students to danger, as they cross the street to go to McDonald's and other eateries, to their stadium or to walk to and from school to their homes. Unfortunately, some high school students can be impulsive, distracted by cell phones, music, friends or tablets, pre-occupied or otherwise not engaged in looking out for trains (and cars). Some have even been known to 'play chicken' with trains. My railroad engineer friend has told me that it takes a mile to stop a freight train with more than 100 cars. Is this re-route worth taking a risk of losing a St. Louis Park student or adult who is not being vigilant? I don't think so. Yet, the report doesn't address this critical concern or provide any options or responsibility for mitigation.

The rebuild of the spur would also involve constructing a steep rail ramp, with several dangerous tight curves. This design appears to increase the risk of derailments; more so than if the rail track was straight and flat. To explore the possible implications of this scenario further: what if the freight cars are carrying hazardous materials when they derail and subsequently crash and roll into residents' and/or businesses' back yards? If this happens, I hate to think of the consequences, particularly the potential of lost lives and/or serious injuries.

I am a great supporter of light rail. I have used the Hiawatha line to go to the airport, and I find it so easy and efficient. I would like St. Louis Park to have easy access to LRT as well. However, I am very worried about a decision for community-situated light rail that involves the re-routing of hundreds of freight trains through the Park's highly populated business and residential areas. There has to be a safer solution.

If the re-route option is chosen, I am also concerned that the areas in proximity to the trains will not have enough mitigation in place to maintain the safety of its citizens. In addition, I don't understand why freight trains cannot continue to be routed through the Kenilworth corridor, which appears, in most places, to be wide enough to be able to support multiple tracks with safe clearance (unlike some places in St. Louis Park which have less than a length of a car rail as a protective zone).

Please explore the safety and livability needs of St. Louis Park residents when considering freight rail alternatives. Regrettably, none of the mitigation requests by the City of St. Louis Park are addressed or acknowledged in this report. It is as if we residents are invisible or, even worse, 'second class' citizens...

Thank you for considering my concerns. I would be most happy to discuss them with you. (My contact information is below.)

Sincerely,

*Nancy S. Brown*

Nancy S. Brown  
2625 Salem Avenue St. Louis Park, MN 55416  
952.922.5947 [NBrownMpls@aol.com](mailto:NBrownMpls@aol.com)

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## Draft Environmental Impact Statement Comment Form Southwest Transitway Project

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

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](http://www.southwesttransitway.org)

*What studies have you done to determine the adverse impact of train vibration on structures near the tracks?*

*What studies have you done on loss of teaching and learning time from trains passing near the SHP high school?*

*Have you talked to school districts about the cost to their buildings and the disruption of teaching cause by trains passing nearby? Specifically Altman Jr High St Paul Park (So Wash Co School district)?*

Name: *Betty Shaw*

Address: *2649 Huntington Ave*

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

Telephone: *952 926 6093* Email: *bettyshawmn@yahoo.com*

**Thank you!**



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# Draft Environmental Impact Statement Comment Form

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I support the SW LRT & urge the design & construct to move forward!

freight reroute can be mitigated so that the project can proceed in the most cost effective manner.

my family & friends look forward to future access via LRT!

Please move forward

Name: Bill NEUENDORF  
Address: 5625 YORK AVE S  
City/State/Zip: EDINA MN 55410  
Telephone: 952 920 9255 Email: wneuendorf@yahoo.com

**Thank you!**

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~~Sharon Lehrman~~

Sharon Lehrman 952-922-3011  
2610 Vernon Ave S  
SLP 55416

11/14/12

Hello my name is Sharon Lehrman. I grew up in the Birchwood neighborhood in a home on 27th and Xenwood that my parents owned for almost 50 years. My husband and I are homeowners of 18 years in the same neighborhood on 26th and Vernon. There's a special bond and pride for those of us who grew up here in SLP. Some of you may have seen the Nov 6 article in the NY Times called Minnesota Mirror written by Pulitzer prize winner, author, and columnist Thomas Friedman. He came here to look at the election through the window of his hometown of St. Louis Park. Tommy is also an old family friend and we graduated together from SLP high school. He often talks about how growing up in SLP is the anchor and moral compass that keeps him grounded and "normal." AS A PERSON WHO GREW UP HERE, LIVED IN CA, and came back, I can say there really is something about MN nice.

I AM VERY WORRIED THAT THE REROUTING OF FREIGHT TRAINS IS CONSIDERED A DONE DEAL. In a Nov 4 Star Tribune article our mayor Jeff Jacobs is quoted as saying opposing the freight reroute "is like being opposed to winter--you can oppose it but it's coming." And in a Nov 13 Star Tribune article Commissioner Gail Dorfman is quoted as saying I think this is a win-win for St. Louis Park in all respects, as long as we adequately mitigate for the freight rail. I just don't see how THIS IS A WIN WIN FOR SLP And that's why I'm here tonight to speak out for my neighborhood. THIS WILL COST taxpayers at least \$123M more than co-location in the Kenilworth corridor without any additional cost of mitigation. Why has full mitigation been omitted from the DEIS plan for the reroute?

But the most IMPORTANT ISSUE for me IS THAT THE REROUTE ~~is~~ is a disaster waiting to happen. This really comes down to the safety of our residents.

So I am asking those of you who will have the power to make this decision, how will you feel when the first SLP high school student is killed and the first car is hit on Library Lane because those extra long trains don't have time to stop and the first derailment spills railcars into the backyards of those homes along the tracks because there's not an adequate safety buffer? Will you be there to console those parents, those families, and those residents? Will you be able to sleep at night knowing you made this decision? Because once the decision is made and the tracks are built, there's no going back.

I IMPLORE YOU to reconsider the co-location option. It is a viable option with fewer safety concerns which will cost significantly less money to build. I'm counting on you to do the right thing and uphold our MN nice standards.



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*For Commissioner McLaughlin: When you're making decisions that are going to impact (severely) people, the least you can do is visit the neighborhoods that will be impacted. Please drive through the reroute affected area & you'll see just why these people are so "passionate" in their appeals!*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Thank you!**



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I support the SWLT project. I support your efforts to choose among options that cannot please everyone, you must choose the least bad of the options then do your best to mitigate the negative impacts. Keep doing the right thing. Either option will make someone unhappy. I support your choices.

Name: Robert Adervold  
Address: 3529 West 54th Street  
City/State/Zip: Edina, MN 55410  
Telephone: 952-924-1639 Email: bobader@comcast.net

**Thank you!**

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