Southwest Transitway DEIS Comments

Comments Received from the General Public

Part 3 of 5

Comment #384

Aron Khoury

12/22/2012 01:48 PM

Please respond to
Aron Khoury
>

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us
cc
bcc
Subject Support for SW route 3A

Dear madam/sir,

I write in support of the proposed light rail line 3A. Aside from it being a superior route due to existing infrastructure and right of ways, it also represents the best opportunity to create new development and jobs.

Entering the transit hub through the Bassett creek valley bolsters existing development efforts while bring public infrastructure to an area where such investment has long been absent. Additionally, this transit will connect Minneapolis residents to jobs.

Aron

Comment #385

JACQUES BRUNSWICK

12/22/2012 02:39 PM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us
cc
bcc
Subject Question regarding Southwest Transitway DEIS

Attached please find a letter regarding my questions and concerns about the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed Southwest Transitway.

Thank you, Jacques Brunswick

Comment #385
Attachment #1

December 22, 2012

Southwest Corridor
701 4th Avenue South
Suite 400
Minneapolis, MN 55415

Dear Sirs/Madams:

As a concerned neighbor, I have read the Southwest Transitway Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

Has there been any consideration of running the LRT underground between West Lake Street and 21st Street and keeping the existing freight line running above ground? Above-ground freight and below-ground transit co-location would solve several environmental and quality of life problems and could free up funds that could be applied toward the increased costs of a tunnel.

My own quick analysis of the numbers shows that by not relocating the freight line through St. Louis Park the project would save almost $48 million (see below). I assume some of those funds could go toward the increased costs of constructing a tunnel for the LRT through the CIDNA section instead of the proposed flyover bridge across Cedar Lake Parkway.

Based on Revision of 11/29/2012

	LRT 3A (LPA)	LRT 3A-1 (Co-location Alternative)	Savings	
Guideway and Track Elements	218,044	185,353	32,691	
Stations, Stops, Terminals, Intermodal	122,810	122,810	-	
Support Facilities: Yards, Shops, Buildings	38,960	38,960	-	
Sitework & Special Conditions	111,544	111,544	-	
Systems	167,073	167,073	-	
Right-of-Way, Land, Existing Improvements	117,629	142,601	-	No land to acquire
Vehicles	96,788	96,788	-	
Professional Services	203,458	199,357	4,101	
Unallocated Contigency	118,364	107,318	11,046	

Total Cost (2012 Dollars)	1,194,670	1,171,804	47,838

Running the light rail underground would eliminate the need for the proposed monster bridge across Cedar Lake Parkway, part of a National Scenic Byway. The existing freight line does not encroach on Cedar Lake Beach Park. Keeping the freight line where it is would eliminate the need to relocate the freight line through St. Louis Park.

Burying the LRT and not relocating the freight line would save 247 households from the projected "severe noise impact" (162 in the CIDNA area along with 85 in St. Louis Park per the DEIS) and from the vibration impact as well.

We are used to the inconvenience, noise, and vibration caused by the freight trains that run several times a day through our community. While a nuisance, the freight line has been grandfathered into the neighborhood. The recent upgrade to welded railroad track in our area has dramatically reduced the noise and vibration. This welded track eliminates the noisy joints and rails that were originally installed in the 1920s. **A new noise study should be undertaken for this area.**

A bridge of the scale that is being proposed over Cedar Lake Parkway will forever change our quiet neighborhood.

Thank you,

Jacques Brunswick

Comment #386

Scott Friedman

12/23/2012 01:50 PM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us

cc

bcc

Subject Southwest LRT feedback from a new Kenwood family

To whom it may concern:

My wife and I purchased a house in Kenwood this past summer, having lived in Chicago immediately beforehand, and we look forward to raising our two daughters in this neighborhood. Our new (old) house is at about 1-1.5 blocks from the proposed 21st street station. We often take our two-year-old on hikes up and down the East side of Cedar Lake, and I -- still -- try to bike to work downtown via the bike trail.

Having just moved here from Chicago -- and having extensive experience with the "L" system, Metra trains, and CTA buses there -- we deeply value public transportation, and we would like to offer our support for the sustainable development of a non-invasive light rail system. We saw how the rail system invigorated certain areas of Chicago and reduced traffic, but we also saw the opposite when the choices the city of Chicago made weren't consistent with the existing land usage. These experiences informed our disposition on the following DEIS points:

- We support the relocation of the freight rail.
- We do not support a bridge over cedar lake parkway, since it would be inconsistent with existing land usage.
- We hope the DEIS will preserve park areas and wildlife as much as possible, and use this opportunity to improve the area, since the nature and the serenity (i.e., lack of noise) of the neighborhood are what attracted us here.
- We stress public safety considerations, e.g., safe pedestrian access and strategies to prevent illegal behavior.
- We are very concerned about noise and vibration impacts. We understand that audible signals are necessary for commuter safety, but we urge you to consider noise reduction strategies to preserve the nature of the neighborhood.
- We strongly oppose a park-and-ride.

Many of these factors are related by cause-and-effect. For instance, studies have shown that illegal activity can be mitigated by well-designed landscape and hardscape elements, beautification, and rapid repair/restoration of vandalized property. So if the transit system uses the space in a fashion that respects the park and the homes in the area, that respect will extend to the passengers and passersby who enjoy the public transportation.

Thanks, and let us know how we can be of assistance.

Regards,

Scott & Sara Friedman

Comment #387

"Tim O'Brien"

12/23/2012 05:06 PM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us
cc
bcc
Subject Comment on DEIS for the Southwest Transitway Project

Dear Sirs:

I realize that at some point projects like this take on a weird logic of their own, and the momentum to push them through becomes unstoppable. When that time comes, the opportunity for public commentary is little more than a sop to the local citizens; an empty gesture to make them feel that their voices were heard before the axe fell. So it is with considerable skepticism that I submit this comment. I suspect that it will simply become another statistic cited to support the project, along the lines of "XX citizens submitted commentary, and the HCRRA took all comments into consideration." Nonetheless, here goes.

I moved to the Kenwood neighborhood recently, drawn by the beauty of the area and its access to miles of hiking and biking trails. It is Minneapolis's crown jewel, and that rarest of American phenomena, the desirable urban neighborhood. These areas are always fragile: the well-to-do citizens who live in them have the choice of moving away and leaving the housing stock, property values and amenities to deteriorate. The wealthy can afford to move, and move they will if they see their neighborhood being ruined. Certainly you know this. Why, then, would you degrade this beautiful area to cater to suburban commuters? Your light rail line will move property values, tax revenues and population outward from the city. This is exactly backwards: instead, you should look for ways to enhance the urban areas, and to pull the population into the city centers.

If you must build the light rail line, then for God's sake do everything you can to minimize the impact on this neighborhood. I am sure you are trying to build the light rail line on a tight budget, and you will have strong short-term financial incentives to look for cheap solutions. But you must weigh the increased costs of better abatement against the value of the neighborhood. I have heard my neighbors advocate for a tunnel or deep trench through the area. That seems worth exploring. I agree with them that the proposed bridge over the Cedar Lake Road intersection would be massively ugly and disruptive. Even if you can't bury the LRT through Segment A, can you cover it? How much would it cost to put a lightweight shell over the train, rather than leaving it open?

I can see that you have limited LRT options for crossing the waterway that runs between Lake of the Isles and Cedar Lake. That corridor, though, is a major thoroughfare for canoes, kayakers, kids heading toward the beach, cross-country skiers, herons, hikers, paddle-boarders and bicyclists. Replacing the old rail bridge across the "lagoon" with a larger, more intrusive bridge for LRT would be a shame. Aesthetics matter here – at the other end of the lagoon by Lake of the Isles there is an elegant bridge for foot and automobile traffic. If you must put in a

new LRT bridge, think about getting a good architect who can create a bridge that mirrors the lovely bridge at the other end.

The DEIS states (Chapter 3, page 3-58) that "the operation of LRT service along Segment A is not anticipated to adversely affect community cohesion because Segment A is currently bisected by a freight rail line and adding LRT services does not alter the existing barrier." This is false: the existing rail corridor does little to interrupt intercourse between Lake of the Isles and Cedar Lake, and in fact it enhances foot, bicycle and water traffic between the two. Come and view the corridor on a summer day – you'll see kids and families walking back and forth to the beaches at Cedar Lake, and legions of people using the rail right of way for exercise, walks and recreation. All of this would be damaged with a light rail line running trains through every few minutes. Community cohesion would crumble. You simply must find a way to keep this corridor safe for the nearby residents and the many visitors who enjoy the Kenilworth corridor as it exists. Again, covering the LRT through this sensitive area would enhance safety and reduce noise.

I don't get the 21st Street station at all. That area is currently a virtual dead end (in the best way possible) with very little traffic. Putting a station there will radically change the nearby streets and homes, because of greatly increased traffic, parking problems, trash and noise. Think about eliminating that station altogether.

Above all, I entreat you to take your public responsibilities to the Lake of the Isles and Cedar Lake communities seriously. This project will be massively disruptive, both during construction and once in service. Do not claim that it will improve our lives – it will not. Instead, look for every way to mitigate the impact on us, and to protect this lovely community from the ravages of "progress."

Tim O'Brien

Comment #388

Ken Cram

12/24/2012 02:19 PM

Please respond to
Ken Cram

To "swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us" <swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>
cc
bcc
Subject Southwest Light Rail

Dear Sir or Madam:

Thank you for giving the citizens of the area an opportunity to comment on the Southwest Light Rail project. I am a 30+ year resident of the Lake of the Isles area and have some concerns about the proposed Southwest Light Rail which is planned along the Kennilworth Trail. These include:

1. Noise mitigation: With multiple light rail trains/per hour, we need to minimize the impact by perhaps berming the corridor as it passes through the neighborhood.
2. Cedar Lake crossing: I favor a plan to place the light rail below the Cedar Lake Parkway crossing, rather than an overpass over the parkway.
3. Relocation of existing freight trains, rather than co-locate light rail and freight in the same corridor.
4. Nature and wildlife: This area need to be protected to preserve the adjacent parkland.

Thank you, again,
Kenneth Cram,

Comment #389

Kent Marshall

12/25/2012 12:09 PM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us
cc kentmmarshall@yahoo.com
bcc
Subject COMMENT on the Southwest Transit DEIS.

I am a 13+ year resident of the Calhoun Isles Condominium in Minneapolis. This complex is located just north o Street station of the SouthWest Light Rail project. Our condo abuts the south-east side of the present Kenilwor current freight rail right-of-way. I live in the sixth floor of the highrise directly about the Midtown Greenway. M Light Rail are elaborated below.

NOISE. The proximity of the proposed light rail through such dense residential housing will lower my quality of whistle blasts, bell ringing and squeaking wheels as the train curves toward the Northeast right against my buil south-facing side of the building have demonstrated to me that the building itself serves as a gigantic sound bo as far away as Lake Street and beyond. The addition of frequent light rail service will make it even worse.
I urge you to consider sound mitigation measures to minimize the impact of residents' ability to get restful slee morning hours. A tunnel or trench in which to run the light-rail tracks would be a useful mitigation technique. Milwaukee was buried in a trench for this very reason. That abandoned track bed has now been turned into th I also urge you to investigate the sound-dampening construction techniques that have been required on the Ce settlement of the lawsuit brought my MPR. Finally, please enclose the West Lake Station so that the bells, whis maintenance from that facility does not carry over to the Calhoun Isles Condos on the South-facing side.

TRAFFIC. I have concerns about the increased in passenger vehicle traffic caused by the new station at West La Street and Excelsior is constantly bottlenecked, and the addition of any commuters at this node will only make park and ride option should be available for city-bound commuters at this station because there is no additiona My second concern about traffic is at the grade crossing northwest of my condo building at Cedar Lake Parkwa flash flooding, which sometimes closes Dean Parkway temporarily, Cedar-lake Parkway and the back alleys pro our building. I encourage planners to consider the benefit of a tunnel at the juncture as well to prevent chroni

Thank you,
Kent Marshall

Comment #391

Robin Bischoff

12/26/2012 11:53 AM

To <swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>
cc
bcc
Subject Response to Southwest Transitway DEIS

Attached are my comments on the Southwest Transitway DEIS.
Sincerely,
Robin Bischoff

Comment #391
Attachment #1

December 26, 2012

Below are my comments on the Southwest Transitway Draft Environmental Impact Statement. If any additional information is needed, my email address is rb773@hotmail.com.

1. Bridge Over Cedar Lake Parkway

1.1. No reasons for the bridge were given in the DEIS. What justifies building a bridge? The traffic study by WSB & Associates, Inc. dated March 2, 2012 in the DEIS does not support a bridge. The level of service by approach and intersection remain at A or B through 2030 based on Attachment B. The visual impact is clearly negative based on statements in the DEIS on pages 3-108, 3-115, 3-116, 3-117, and 3-125. The noise along segment A would negatively affect 1,143 residences based on the DEIS page 4-79.

1.2. No sound studies where provided in the DEIS for a bridge. A study is needed to determine sound levels for an elevated structure. As the structure will be above many houses the sound will carry further. The study should account for the lack of screening at South Beach on Cedar Lake as the sound will carry a great distance over open water.

1.3. No safety study was provided for the bridge. The bridge will limit visibility at a busy intersection that includes cars, pedestrians, and trail users. If a traffic signal is needed, a traffic study is needed to determine the impact.

1.4. A bridge would not comply with the Minneapolis Zoning Code, Article VI – Shoreland Overlay District. The bridge would require 14' clearance for vehicles plus approximately 28' for the bridge structure based on diagrams in the DEIS report. The 42' total height would exceed the 35' height limit in the zoning code. In addition it would negatively impact the factors listed in the zoning code under 551.480. - Height of structures.

1.4.1. Access to light and air of surrounding properties.
1.4.2. Shadowing of residential properties or significant public spaces.
1.4.3. The scale and character of surrounding uses.
1.4.4. Preservation of views of landmark buildings, significant open spaces or water bodies.

1.5. No study for a trench or tunnel was given in the DEIS as an option for a bridge. A study is needed for comparison with the other options. This needs to be studied as it provides several advantages –

1.5.1. Separates rail traffic from cars and pedestrians.
1.5.2. Greatly reduces or eliminates sound and vibration issues from a dense residential area.
1.5.3. Eliminates a visual barrier that is out of context with the neighborhood.
1.5.4. Complies with the Minneapolis Zoning Code.

2. Noise

2.1. The sound levels will greatly exceed current levels with an above grade option. Not only will the sound levels be higher, they will occur far more often. Currently there are 5 freight trains a day. Page 4-84 states there will be 198 trips from 7:00am to 10:00pm. This means there will be 193 more noise events each day in a dense residential area. A detailed noise mitigation study needs to be provided for all above grade and below grade rail locations.

3. Parking Facility at the Lake Street Station

3.1. Page 6-55 of the DEIS states parking facilities are expected to generate additional traffic. A traffic study is needed to determine the effect on the neighborhood. Lake Street is already a very busy street. Slowing traffic to the point where people do not want to drive to the station defeats the purpose of the station and negatively affects the quality of the neighborhood.

3.2. If the parking facility is undersized, it will likely create severe parking issues in this area due the limited parking available. Monitoring who is using a parking lot will be difficult and expensive for local businesses. A study is needed to determine the amount of parking needed for the station and what impact it will have on traffic and local businesses.

3.3. A study is needed to determine the effect on the nearby fire station response time. The additional traffic generated by a parking facility will increase response times and negatively impact neighborhood safety.

Comment #392

Cheryl Taddei

12/26/2012 12:44 PM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us
cc
bcc
Subject Southwest Light Rail

I am writing to express my concern about the proposed Southwest Light Rail line which will run beside the Calhoun Isles Condo development.

I am not against the Light Rail project, however, I do not want my quality of life to be damaged by the noise and vibration of the trains.

I have lived in my Calhoun Isles condo for more than 20 years. I love the beautiful area and do not want it to be overwhelmed by noise and vibration.

According to DEIS page 4-84 Table 4.7-2, 17 times per hour (when the full train schedule is implemented) our development will experience (SEL) noise levels of 114 dB. Quoting the neighborhood committee researching the affects of the Rail on our neighborhood, "On the log scale this does not appear excessive, but on a normal linear scale this is an increase over the ambient of one million times in intensity! From universal data, this sound level is similar to live rock music or an auto horn at one meter distance."

I am also concerned about the long-term effects that the vibration that a 90-ton LRT passing every 3.5 minutes will have on our concrete condo buildings and the nearby town houses.

I recommend that noise and vibration levels be reduced by placing the LRT below grade level with a tunnel, or by a ditch and fully-enclosed-sound barrier.

Please consider alternative recommendations that will reduce sound and vibration levels.

Thank you.

Cheryl Taddei

Comment #394

Meg McCormick

12/26/2012 03:56 PM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us
cc
bcc
Subject Commnets Re: SW Light Rail

I have lived in St. Louis Park for more than 25 years and believe that light rail is a necessity for this community, as well as the greater community. In fact, I just saw in the StarTribune that the Sierra Club rated the SWLRT project one of the best transportation projects in the U.S. Community is more than the block, neighborhood, or city in which we live. Decisions need to be made that are in the best interest of the broader community.

St. Louis Park has co-existed with the railroads since its inception and has dealt with more rail traffic in the past without issue; I believe people need to be reminded of that fact as it relates to our city's history. I would have loved to have seen a graphic comparing SLP population to rail traffic from 1950 to current day to help put this discussion in perspective!

I don't have an opinion one way or the other in regard to freight rail re-location and only ask that regardless of the decision, **appropriate and reasonable** mitigation be put in place for the residents affected. If it stays where it is, one area of St. Louis Park is affected; if it moves, another area is affected. Include residents in mitigation planning and listen to what is **appropriate and reasonable**. However, I do not support taxpayer dollars being spent on the purchase of property not essential for the project, regardless of the community in which that property is located. My personal opinion is that people who bought homes on or near a railroad track gambled and if this project affects that property, they lost the bet. Taxpayers shouldn't be on the hook for their gambling debts. Thank you.

Meg McCormick

Comment #395

Lisa Walker

12/26/2012 04:47 PM

To "swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us" <swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>
cc
bcc
Subject LDT Station in Hopkins

Feedback - traffic concerns about the station being on the north side of the tracks. I feel for flow and the amount of traffic the station should be located on the south side of the tracks. The number of residents walking on Blake Road and the school traffic with buses would dictate that the station should be located on the south side.
43 hoops is a HUGE asset to the community and deserves our full support. They open their doors and partner with everyone. They were a summer feed site so we could feed youth and families in the community.

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Comment #396

arthur higinbotham

12/26/2012 05:16 PM

To swcorridor <swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>
cc
bcc
Subject SWLRT DEIS

The SWLRT project is being kept alive with smoke and mirrors and political propaganda:

1. The choice of an LPA was a foregone conclusion, based on wishes of Hennepin County Commissioner Gail Dorfman.

2. The project submitted to the FTA was based on "advanced conceptual engineering", which was less that 1% of the engineering work, per Project Director Mark Fuhrmann. It is at least 40% too low. PE has been authorized for 15 months, but consultants have only now been chosen.

3. The ridership detail for the project was never released to the public for discussion; it is clearly overstated.

4. The project fails the economic justice criteria of serving minority populations of Uptown Minneapolis.

5. The project does not specify any quantitative mitigation along the Kenilworth corridor or for re-located freight rail in St. Louis Park. It fails the Minneapolis city criteria for approval.

6. It invites lawsuits from the residents of both St. Louis Park (along the MN&S line) and Minneapolis (along the Kenilworth corridor).

7. The proposed station locations in Minneapolis and St. Louis Park are too costly, inaccessible, ignore existing traffic congestion, and are oblivious to environmental concerns.

8. The LRT route adversely affects designated park areas eligible for the National Historic Register.

9. The DEIS, although issued over a year behind schedule, makes nebulous, unsubstantiated statements on various issues affecting community welfare, making public commentary difficult.

10. The project ignores safety concerns of several of the affected municipalities, including running the LRT or freight trains within 25 feet of residences and splitting school properties.

Arthur E. Higinbotham

Comment #397

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us

cc

bcc

Subject Comments on the Environmental Impact Statement on Southwest Transitway Project

The residents of Minnetonka, living in the Beachside community, on Pompano Drive are responding to the Environmental Impact Statement on the Southwest LRT and are expressing our concerns on the impact to our neighborhood, our homes and our investment in our homes from the proposed crossing of the LRT line at the intersection of the Smetana and Feltl Roads. Our homes are extremely close to the proposed crossing and we have concerns about the noise that will emanate from that crossing as well as the ecological impact on the surrounding area.

The LRT at the above intersection of Smetana and Feltl Roads at grade level will cause interruptions in an already busy traffic flow and will create noise from train alarms, sounding every 7.5 minutes during the day and also frequently at night. We will hear the train alarms from our homes when the windows are open and when we are on our decks. Constant noise from the trains will also frighten the wildlife in the wetland area that is adjacent to the proposed crossing and that separates our homes from the proposed crossing. We purchased our homes for many reasons, including the the quiet, the woods, and the wildlife that surrounds us.

We are also concerned about the rerouting of Feltl Road and the most likely need to cut down the trees near the crossing, which currently provides us with a sound buffer to the traffic on Smetana, Feltl and Opus in general. If the LRT must go through our neighborhood we would like to see the trees and wetland preserved to maintain our ambiance, our silence and our enjoyment of the wildlife, which are some of the reasons we purchased our homes.

As homeowners we would appreciate you allowing us input on all aspects of the LRT project as it pertains to our neighborhood and investment. We are especially concerned with the rerouting of Feltl Road and the preservation of our wooded wetland and wildlife. Please keep us informed and we welcome your inquiries about our opinions on the development of the project at the intersection of Smetana and Feltl Roads.

Signed by the following residents:
Margaret Edstrom,
(contact person)
Barbara Faegre,
Sally Shaw,
Victoria Dunn, o
Chris Torberg,
Andrew Peacock,
Lois Peacock,
Linda Hagmeier,
Joanne Strate,
Janet Rasmussen,

Comment #397
Attachment #1

Southwest Transitway Project

Comments on the Environmental Impact Statement

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Signed by the following residents:

Margaret Edstrom,
(contact person)

Barbara Faegre,

Chris Torberg,

Sally Shaw,

Andrew and Lois Peacock,

Janet Rasmussen,

Linda Hagmeier,

Victoria Dunn,

Joanne Strate,

Comment #404

RECEIVED
DEC 26 2012
BY:

To Whom It May Concern

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.

Regards,
Jennifer Huebscher

Jennifer Huebscher

To Whom It May Concern:

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 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.

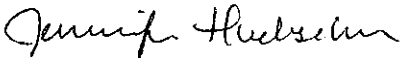
Besides my general concerns about the SWLRT-DEIS, the portion of the report dealing with freight rail noise and safety at the High School (Chapters 3, 4, and 9) causes me the greatest concern. The unique noise and safety issues associated with locating main line freight within 35 feet of the High School parking lot and 75 feet from the building are not adequately discussed. When the High School is mentioned the information is dismissive. At no point in the SWLRT

DEIS are the negative impacts the extra freight trains will have on the learning environment and safety of the students at St. Louis Park High School. Before the proposed re-route should even be considered, the cost of sufficiently mitigating the impact to St. Louis Park High School need to be evaluated. Examples of concerns include but are not limited to the following:

- A plan for emergency evacuation of the school should evacuation be necessary when a trainis passing
- How will the many classrooms affected by train noise be sound proofed
- How will the students who want to use the new rail bridge to cross Hwy. 7 on their way to school be kept off the bridge
- How will the added vibration of longer, heavier and more frequent trains be mitigated to the investment the school makes in technology is not lost
- How will the safety hazards of blind crossings, curves and hundreds of teenagers in close proximity be eliminated
- How will a derailment be prevented so our children's lives are not at risk

None of the mitigation requested by the City of St. Louis Park or the St. Louis Park School Board 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.

Regards,
Jennifer Huebscher



T Hawkins

MINNEAPOLIS MN 554

24 DEC 2012 PM 4 L

RECEIVED
DEC 26 2012
BY:

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

5541518430

Comment #405

RECEIVED
DEC 26 2012
BY:

Southwest Transitway Project

Comments on the Environmental Impact Statement

The residents of Minnetonka, living in the Beachside community, on Pompano Drive are responding to the Environmental Impact Statement on the Southwest LRT and are expressing our concerns on the impact to our neighborhood, our homes and our investment in our homes from the proposed crossing of the LRT line at the intersection of the Smetana and Feltl Roads. Our homes are extremely close to the proposed crossing and we have concerns about the noise that will emanate from that crossing as well as the ecological impact on the surrounding area.

The LRT at the above intersection of Smetana and Feltl Roads at grade level will cause interruptions in an already busy traffic flow and will create noise from train alarms, sounding every 7.5 minutes during the day and also frequently at night. We will hear the train alarms from our homes when the windows are open and when we are on our decks. Constant noise from the trains will also frighten the wildlife in the wetland area that is adjacent to the proposed crossing and that separates our homes from the proposed crossing. We purchased our homes for many reasons, including the quiet, the woods, and the wildlife that surrounds us.

We are also concerned about the rerouting of Feltl Road and the most likely need to cut down the trees near the crossing, which currently provides us with a sound buffer to the traffic on Smetana, Feltl and Opus in general. If the LRT must go through our neighborhood we would like to see the trees and wetland preserved to maintain our ambiance, our silence and our enjoyment of the wildlife, which are some of the reasons we purchased our homes.

As homeowners we would appreciate you allowing us input on all aspects of the LRT project as it pertains to our neighborhood and investment. We are especially concerned with the rerouting of Fetl Road and the preservation of our wooded wetland and wildlife. Please keep us informed and we welcome your inquiries about our opinions on the development of the project at the intersection of Smetana and Feltl Roads.

Signed by the following residents:

Margaret Edstrom,
(contact person)

Barbara Faegre,

Chris Torberg,

Sally Shaw,

Andrew and Lois Peacock,

Janet Rasmussen,

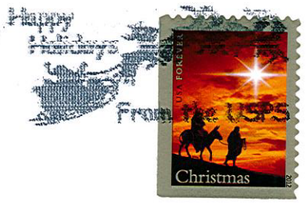
Linda Hagmeier,

Victoria Dunn,

Eckstrom

MINNEAPOLIS MN 554

24 DEC 2012 PM 4 L



RECEIVED
DEC 26 2012
BY:

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

55415$1843

Comment #409

Kelly Nelson

12/27/2012 06:45 PM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us
cc
bcc
Subject SWLRT DEIS Comments

Hello-
I am submitting the following comments on the SWLRT DEIS:

Impacts to the Farmer's Market . It is unclear how much the planning process has engaged the Minneapolis Farmer's Market. I can find no reference to it in the DEIS save in lists of businesses in Appendix H.
The Farmer's Market currently draws high traffic into the immediate proximity of the proposed Royalston station; any positive impacts to the Market from increased access, and negative impacts from upset traffic patterns should be studied prior to positioning the routing and the Royalston station location.

7th St. N Crossing . The DEIS discusses a tunnel of the route under 7th St N adjacent to the Interchange site. Subsequently it has been proposed that the crossing will be via a bridge. The potential for a grade crossing does not appear to be under consideration. A grade crossing should be studied as an alternative. It is important to balance any short-term impacts to automotive traffic with the long-term adverse impacts to development and community connectedness from a railroad overpass.

Border Avenue Alternative . Border Avenue should be investigated as a route alternative to Royalston. The elevation of a Border Avenue station would provide easier access to adjacent businesses than would a Royalston Station significantly above the businesses below. In addition, a Border Avenue station would afford better access to the Minneapolis Farmers Market. It would appear a routing would be possible leveraging the significant width of the Olson Highway road corridor between 7th St & Border at the north end of Border. At the south end, the ample room under the I-94 overpass on either side of Glenwood could foreseeably be utilized to route the rail diagonally toward the existing rail corridor, perhaps using Aldrich Avenue for the final block.

Respectfully,
Kelly Nelson
Minneapolis North Loop Resident
SWLRT CAC Member

Comment #410

Joanne STRATE

12/27/2012 07:15 PM

To swcorridor <swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>
cc
bcc
Subject Southwest LRT

A couple of my neighbors want me to send you a response as it relates to the progression of the 3A line and the PROPOSED Smetana Crossing on the border of Hopkins & east Minnetonka....we are 3 of the 114 units which will be effected with severe nosie & vibration as cited by the DEIS study. I have already responded various times regarding this & other issues...see below. I feel it's all in vain and it's politics as usual. I plan to investigate the legal Minnetonka noise levels as well. With that information, I'll probably contact WCCO-TV's reality check so the Met Council & company can't hide the true facts of the matter. Just so happens I work at a TV station and have contacts in the industry. If this waste of tax payer dollars continue and the line remains as the recommended 3A, then we need a QUIET ZONE. Per page 4-88 of the study, Pompano Drive residents are Segment 3, category 2 and it's noted there are 114 severe impacted units. **The Quiet Zone for the Smetana Crossing should be no train whistles and no post-mounted horns on the gates. To protect the citizens, we need only 4 quadrant gates with a median barrier.** A train passing every 7:30 will be impossible to live with and no one can sit outside or open their windows, or sleep during 5a-1a. Would you want to live here????? OUR PROPERTY VALUE WILL SUBSEQUENTLY DECREASE, NOT INCREASE AS SOME HAVE BLATANTLY LIED TO US. Don't know if we could even get a buyer for our units!!!

Joanne Strate,
Marion & David Wolf,
Austin Miller & Kylie Otte,

FYI...LRT is not the answer to transportation problems!

Starving the rest of our transportation system in favor of a more expensive, less efficient and totally inflexible light-rail system is the epitome of politics trumping common sense! **Using the Met Council's 2010 report,** the cost of a single ride on the Hiawatha line is $2.46. Riders pay only $.99 of this cost, leaving almost 60% subsidized by the public. But this isn't the true cost. Add in the 30 year amortized costs of bonding and a single ride actually cost $6.42 which is an 85% subsidy! This equates to the public spending $15M PER YEAR. The Northstar line costs $13M, Central estimated @ $17M and SW is $12M. Improve bus service and rebuild critical highway infrastructure. The LRT mode of transportation has a negligible effect on traffic congestion! When you look at the costs, building more light rail lines like the SW LRT is nothing short of a money pit that will bankrupt our state. It's time to cut our losses and stop this madness!

Further issues...

TO: Southwest Light Rail Project Staff
ATTN: Deb Sisneros
DATE: 11/16/11

I understand the SW LRT is in the early design and engineering stages now. I'm a resident of Beachside Two-II town home development in Minnetonka which has 5 Associations. It's established & very large. I have been battling the Metropolitan Council, to no avail, to change the route from 3A to 1A as detailed in the following four very good reasons. It doesn't have to be politics /lobbyists as usual to jam this decision down our throats to satisfy the "Opus World" of wishful thinking occupancy 25 years from now. They can have an adjacent station 4 blocks off Smetana. **Perhaps my concerns & LOGIC will reach a receptive ear and common sense will rule the day!**

ISSUE #1 - Route 1A would run on existing rail lines and would be far cheaper to the general public than 3A. Exact savings I'm sure have been calculated but not shared via the Met Council. Isn't the Federal government trying to cut costs these days due to our ridiculous economy? Does the added cost really justify the 3A route?
ISSUE #2 - The 3A route goes through Opus and crosses Smetana Rd on the way to downtown Hopkins. **I live ONE block from this crossing**! This is adjacent to residential zones, not empty lots or commercial property. People sleep here! Note: The average town home price is $200K+ and we're not an eye-sore community! Trains running every 10:00 from 5a-1a with their vibration and warning bells is a definite "pollution" problem. Per the Met Council, it would be similar decibels to a blender …I'm sure if you're deaf! And it's supposed to increase home value. Where's the logic in that? I don't live next to a station and would only hear, see, and feel the effects of the continuous trains which would lower my value for such an intrusion ONE block away! I'm 100% sure you wouldn't want to live here. Bad choice with zero disregard to surrounding upscale town homes and the rental apartments on the north side of Smetana!
ISSUE #3 - Safety and congestion concerns are an issue. Smetana is a road with a long, steep grade. During the winter months if it's snowing or icy, it's difficult to navigate. Stopping abruptly at a crossing could be very dangerous. And lots of cars & semi's use this road. I'm assuming some one did a traffic flow assessment to merit my observations. Therefore, I predict car accidents waiting to happen and possibly horrible fatalities which could be prevented. Who wants a death on their shoulders/conscience? Logic doesn't prevail here. Note: There have been accident/deaths on the existing Hiawatha Line already without any of these concerns in play. The congestion would be another headache. Not so with route 1A!

ISSUE #4 - As it relates to human life, St. Therese is an upscale senior high-rise east of the crossing. In the last two days alone, 4 ambulances have sped down Smetana in route to address medical issues. Now imagine waiting for the crossing arm & traffic to clear/subside when every minute counts! This could be your parent's life in jeopardy! Get St. Therese's input. **AGAIN…BAD CHOICE OF CROSSING/ROUTE!**

Put some thought into doing the right thing for all concerned. Share with other decision-makers too. Thank you for your time, understanding & anticipated cooperation. I look forward to a change in the route! (*Obviously Gail Dorfman, Mark Fuhrman & company haven't seen the light! Save gas & help traffic is their response!)*

Also, by 2030 when this line is supposed to be at it's peak for Opus, which currently has alot of vacancy, people will be working out of their homes. Not even commuting to work. Dah? The undesirables will be using the line for crime instead and the public will pay dearly for their opportunity to ride the rails. Even the Northstar line ridership is having problems already! What about the trees & wildlife effected? What about the St. Louis Park freight lines issues? I guess I could go on & on. Is anyone listening and thinking rationally? Or...politics as usual?

Feel free to give me some real comments and not a canned response.

IF NOTHING ELSE...A QUIET ZONE @ THE SMETANA CROSSING. I DON'T WANT TO MOVE!

Thank you for your anticipated understanding, compassion, and action,
Joanne

Joanne Strate

RECEIVED
DEC 27 2012
BY:

Comment #412

We live on 21st Street, in Kenwood, about a block from where the proposed light Rail station will be built. We are very excited about the prospect of such incredible access to light Rail and all of its environmental benefits. However, we are VERY concerned about a few issues. First and foremost, we read that you were suggesting a parking lot for the station. We were devastated to even imagine paving over any of the prairie restoration, natural woods, trails, or parklands that make our area so special for space for one hundred (!) cars. Our area is cherished for its wildlife and natural beauty - please do not destroy it with a parking lot. People can walk, bike, take a bus - be dropped off. These are the alternatives to consider in order to kick the car habit and keep the area special. ALSO - we are extremely concerned about noise & station aesthetics and will do whatever we can do to help ensure that all is done to make certain the station blends in with the natural surroundings & the noise isn't disruptive to our daily life. Thank you so much for all the thought & consideration you've put into making the station a success. We look forward to many ahead.

Name: David Boxer & Emily Benz

DAVID BOXER & EMILY BENZ

29 DEC 2012 PM2 L

Hennepin County

Housing, Community Works & Transit
ATTN: Southwest Transitway

701 Fourth Avenue South, Suite 400

Minneapolis, MN 55415

Fold here

Comment #415

Robert Corrick

12/28/2012 08:59 AM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us
cc
bcc
Subject Robert Corrick's Comments on SW DEIS

Robert Corrick

December 28, 2012

To: Metropolitan Council, Metro Transit, and Hennepin County

I have the following comments about the Southwest Transitway Draft Environmental Impact Statement (the "DEIS"):

1) **Fly-over Bridge at Cedar Lake Parkway:** I strongly oppose any railroad bridge at this intersection. The fly-over bridge proposed in the DEIS, would have extremely adverse effects on the surrounding neighborhood, users of the Kenilworth Trail, and the Grand Rounds. Adverse affects would include:

- Noise on the elevated bridge.
- Potential shadowing on residences to the north,
- Effects of a massive unaesthetic structure on nearby residences, the neighborhood and users of the Kenilworth Trail and Grand Rounds.

The LRT should pass under Cedar Lake Parkway, preferably through a shallow tunnel, with Cedar Lake Parkway slightly elevated and slightly re-routed to the west. The analysis of an underpass by Steve Durrant of Alta planning (dated November 26, 2012) represents a very intelligent presentation of underpass solutions.

I also oppose an at-grade rail crossing (also proposed in the DEIS), which would make the intersection even more dangerous for cyclists and pedestrians, and cause significant traffic jams. An underpass would reduce noise for the very close residences and provide a more attractive ambience for users of the trails and parks.

2) **West Lake Street/Minnetonka Blvd. Bridge:** This bridge was designed for freight rail. The bridge is too narrow and high to encourage drop off or pick up at the LRT station. It seems that a new bridge and further analysis of pedestrian/bicycle connectivity and auto traffic is required. This location is part of one of the busiest traffic intersections in the State. More planning is needed to address this complicated problem.

3) **Kenilworth Trail:** Significant mitigation of the Kenilworth Trail is recommended including landscaping,, sound barriers, possible relocation of the LRT rails to the center of the corridor, and lowering of the tracks with berms to further reduces noise.

4) **No Co-Location:** I strongly oppose co-location. The freight rail should be relocated through St. Louis Park as proposed. The Kenilworth Corridor is too narrow to accommodate LRT, freight rail, bike-ped trails and the Grand Rounds. Freight rail in the corridor will discourage transit-oriented development, one of the primary objectives of the Southwest Transitway. Other neighborhoods should share the burden of LRT, not just the CIDNA.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Corrick

Comment #417

Linda J Mack

12/28/2012 01:12 PM

Please respond to
Linda J Mack

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us

cc

bcc

Subject Response to Southwest Corridor DEIS

We would like to add our voices to those calling for mitigation of the significant impacts of a light rail transit line on the Kenilworth Corridor. We support the comments made by the Kenwood Isles Area Association and would like to emphasize a couple of concerns:

NOISE: Many of us who live in this area cherish the chance to live in an urban neighborhood that is quiet and close to nature. We fear that those qualities will be greatly impaired--if not destroyed--by the presence of the light rail line. So we would humbly request whatever mitigation is possible to reduce the noise impact. (Chapter 4, pages 4-84.) Because of the close proximity to both homes and park areas along the corridor, please explore the option of trenching and/or berming the tracks, landscaping with tr ees and shrubbery where possible, and operating procedures that reduce noise.

SAFETY and VISUAL IMPACT at CEDAR LAKE PARKWAY: We are deeply concerned about the colliding vehicular uses at this point on the Kenilworth Corridor. Currently, with bikes and pedestrians using the trail, trains occasionally stopping traffic, and cars with reduced sight-lines coming west up the hill, it is extremely unsafe. It is hard to imagine how unsafe this intersection will be with more than 200 t rains stopping traffic periodically. A huge concrete flyover bridge, however, is not the way to solve this problem.(Chapter 3, Pages 3-115.) Given the proximity to Cedar Lake and the historic Minneapolis Grand Rounds, such a bridge is totally unacceptable. Please explore the possibility of tunneling or trenching the train through this area, if this route indeed has to be chosen.

RELOCATION OF FREIGHT LINES: We support the City of Minneapolis in its position to relocate freight rail if light rail is to go through the Kenilworth Corridor. The idea of tearing down 60 houses to make way for both forms of rail seems absurd, given high property values and the stated desire to have more residences near the light rail line.

BRIDGE OVER THE KENILWORTH LAGOON: It looks likely that the current railroad and trail bridge over Kenilworth Lagoon would need to be widened. It is important to keep in mind that the Minneapolis Chain of Lakes is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places and that new infrastructure such as the bridge must be sensitive to this historic context. Also, directly beneath this bridge are springs that bring fresh water to the city's lakes. This delicate ecology should be protected both during and after construction. (Chapter 4, pages 4-19.)

LIGHT POLLUTION: This issue has not been adequately addressed in the DEIS.

Linda and Warren Mack

Comment #419

Nate Paul

12/28/2012 01:45 PM

To <swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>
cc
bcc
Subject Comments on the SWLRT-DEIS

To Whom It May Concern:

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 cars 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 loss of property value in the re-route area should be in Chapter 9: Indirect Impacts, but it is not, and this causes me great concern. The SWLRT-DEIS does not mention the impact of re-routed freight trains from a main line fright corridor to a bridge line on property values of the re-route area. Freight rail re-routes are not exclusive to Minnesota and the cost of the re-routes to residents has been documented. For example, according to an article in a 2001 issue of The Appraisal Journal bringing additional freight rail traffic to an area will negatively affect properties 250' feet from the rail tracks by 5-7%. All of the properties along the MN&S are well with in 250'. Based on this article one can conclude that property values along the MN&S will drop more than 7%. Two major questions arise that are not addressed in the SWLRT-DEIS. First, what happens to the tax base of St. Louis Park when the drop in value is realized? Second, how are property owners who lose value because of this government action going to be compensated for their loss? It is unreasonable for the Hennepin County to ask any resident to pay a higher price for the benefits of light rail than others.

The County will need to determine mitigation for the many homeowners who will see a drastic property value decrease especially those that will have such extreme impacts and might make their homes uninhabitable and potentially worthless for resale. Please finalize a plan for financial mitigation that is not limited to anything less then taking properties for fair market value that are along the line. This would be at first glance dozens and dozens of properties. We are already feeling the effects on our property values because of the material fact of the reroute that we would have to disclose if ever considering putting our home on the market. Please do what is best for these homeowners and don;t overlook the financial problems you will be causing them.

Name:_____Nathan Paul_____

Comment #420

12/28/2012 02:02 PM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us
cc
bcc
Subject KEEP 'EM IN KENILWORTH

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN: PLEASE DON'T MAKE A VERY STUPID MISTAKE BY SENDING TRAINS THRU ST. LOUIS PARK IT IS COST SENSISBLE TO SEND THEM DOWN THE KENILWORTH RAIL LINE AND AVOID THE VERY POTENTIAL AND DANGEROUS RE-ROUTE THUR THE PARK. I HAVE LIVED IN THE IMMEDIATE AREA BOTH ON THE KENILWORTH LINE AT 21ST AND SHERIDAN AVE. SO. AND NOW ON THE BSNF ON CEDAR LK. RD. FOR WELL OVER 40 YEARS. THEIR IS NO WAY THAT RUNNING IT DOWN THE KENILWORTH ROUTE WOULD UPSET THE PEOPLE OF KENWOOD. FIRST OF ALL THEY WILL BE A LOT QUIETER THAN NORMAL RAIL. SECOND OF ALL IT INVOLOVES A LOT LESS COST AND AGGRAVATION FOR OTHERS. ITS ALREADY THERE!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! DUH!!!!!!!!!!!!!! FOR ALL THE WRANGLING AND WASTE OF TIME THIS HAS CAUSED EVERYBODY, THEIR COULD HAVE BEEN A SW LIGHT RAIL ALREADY IN PLACE!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! CUT TO THE CHASE AND DO THE RIGHT THING ALREADY!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! NO RE-ROUTE!!!!!!!!!!!!!! CORDIALLY, JERRY STAMM AT

Comment #421

"Karen Lee Rosar"

12/28/2012 02:27 PM

To <swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>
cc
bcc
Subject SWLRT DEIS Comments

Greetings

I am a neighbor living in the North Loop neighborhood of Minneapolis. I would like to personally endorse the North Loop Neighborhood Association's (NLNA) submission for DEIS comments. Attached are the NLNA DEIS comments as submitted by the NLNA.

Thank you,

Karen Lee Rosar

Motion of Support – **SWLRT DEIS Comments**

RE: Southwest Transitway Draft Environmental Impact Statement

The following comments were approved by the North Loop Neighborhood Association board on November 28, 2012.

2.1.3

Issue: As it relates to the Locally Preferred Alternative for the Royalston station concerning safety, access, accessibility, visual sightlines, and cross-access. There should be an at-grade platform and access at the Royalston Station path across 7th Street and Hwy 55.

Outcome: To have improved access to the railway transit line, providing clear and direct pedestrian connections. Connections shall include Minneapolis Farmers' Market, the Upper North Loop, the Sports District (Target Center and Twins ballpark Target Field), and the Minneapolis downtown Central Business District.

Outcome: To provide safe access between these areas to the railway transit line.

Outcome: Grade separated facilities have created pedestrian, automobile, and bicycle barriers in the neighborhood for years. Safety plans shall include keeping LRT vehicles at grade with other modes of transportation in an effort to maintain safe and functional viewing corridors, sightlines, visual cues, and connections.

Outcome: Balance short-term impacts to automobile traffic with long-term adverse impacts to development, community, street grid, and visual connections from railway overpasses/bridges/tunnels.

Proposal: Provide street grade LRT at the Royalston alignment as it crosses 7th Street, not within a tunnel or elevated on a bridge. This is in support of the City of Minneapolis' North Loop Small Area Plan, as adopted in the City's Zoning policy. (Refer to attached renderings for an at-grade crossing specifically drafted for this location.)

Advantages: Development opportunities increase for the station area due to the limited need for elevation changes, allowing for access to the existing Minneapolis Public Works facility site. Additional development is improved by allowing close-by access and near ROW locations for buildings, pathways, and circulation space. Cost savings would be

realized and recaptured by eliminating the tunneling cost for underground, or semi-underground trenching and elimination of bridge and trestles. Visibility also improves ridership by increasing sightlines to the station itself by non-area residents accessing the site. The Royalston Station is indicated as an overflow station for the Twins ballpark Target Field. Interrupting the visual cues and sightlines from one to the other adversely will affect ridership levels with these blocking obstructions.

2.1.3

Issue: The locally preferred alternative routes the Royalston Station along Royalston Avenue. The route should be aligned on Border Avenue.

Outcome: The street grid should be made continuous as outline in the North Loop Small Area Plan. Healing the street grid will improve access to the Transitway and the station. The border Alignment aids this positive street grid access. (Refer to attachment for illustration.) Holden Avenue is proposed to be closed on 6-20 (6.2.2.2) affecting the street grid.

Outcome: Alignment on Border Avenue will provide clear enhanced connections for pedestrians directly to the Minneapolis Farmers' Market, the Upper North Loop, the Twins ballpark Target Field, and to the existing bus routes along Hwy 55 and 7th Street.

Outcome: Grade separation from the Minneapolis Farmers' Market to the planned Royalston Station would require a vertical transportation to get pedestrians and bicyclists up and down the 30 feet of elevation change. Minimize cut and fill, embankments, and elevation change for the railway.

Outcome: Provide safe and functional pedestrian, automobile, and bicyclist access which serve stakeholders and users in its fullest capacity.

Outcome: Provide direct access to the Minneapolis Farmers' Market and area residents. Current design would require a multiple block walk by pedestrians accessing a Royalston Station.

Outcome: Provide for enhanced TOD and redevelopment of the area around the Border Avenue Station.

Outcome: Provide enhanced visibility to the line, surrounding areas, and positive view corridors.

Proposal: Provide route along Border Avenue alignment as shown in the attachment.

Advantages: No vertical transportation access would be required for the block long path, as required by a Royalston Station alignment, via Border Avenue, recapturing these costs would be positive to the Transitway. Holden Avenue could be preserved with a Border Avenue alignment, greatly increasing street grid connectivity. Bicyclists benefit from a Border Avenue alignment and Station due to a more direct connection, visibility, and safe ROW connections to the Cedar Lake Trail system. Private land ownership exists in the area that would be required to make a pathway for the Royalston Station to the Farmers' Market. Again, a Border Avenue alignment would eliminate the need for

these private land acquisitions. Costly elevation changes are avoided by utilizing a Border Avenue alignment. The Border Avenue Station would be located very near the Farmers' Market, a major destination and source for ridership. There are more development opportunities along both sides of the Border Avenue Station option. Pedestrian access is more direct to existing bus routes on 7th street and 5th Avenue with a Border Avenue Station. The Royalston Station may require an overpass, bridge, tunnel, or trenching, these costs would be eliminated by a Border Avenue Station; thus, recapturing these costs, providing enhanced views to the railway line for pedestrian safety, and benefits from visibility also allows for greater ridership. Additional residential access is gained by the Border alignment as it allows for direct access to the neighboring transitional shelter housing populations and access to shelter meals. Crossover bridge savings would also be recaptured as the Border Avenue Station would eliminate this bridge at Glenwood Avenue.

2.3.3.9

Issue: The Operations & Maintenance Facility (OMF) identified four options, one of which is to be located in the North Loop Neighborhood and does not fulfill criteria used in the site selection process as described in Appendix H.

Outcome: Preferred location near one end of the line: The North Loop is home to the Interchange, a regional transportation hub that currently connects Hiawatha LRT with the Northstar Commuter Rail. In 2014 it will connect Central Corridor LRT to St. Paul. Southwest LRT will interline with Central Corridor LRT so consequently the identified OMF is mid-line.

Outcome: Compatibility with adjacent current and planned land uses as found in the North Loop Small Area Plan projects large-scale 10-story developments that are transit-oriented. This location for the OMF would have a negative impact on residential density in order to support the regional transportation system.

Outcome: Land zoned in this area is incorrectly identified in the DEIS as being industrial/light industrial. In fact the area is zoned B4S Downtown Services district and not industrial in nature. An OMF would be a barrier to TOD opportunities.

Proposal: To locate the OMF outside the North Loop.

Advantage: The majority of the land needed for the proposed OMF at this site is private. Costly acquisitions can be avoided by siting the facility at one of the other proposed locations. TOD opportunities would be increased by siting a mix of residential, office, and commercial uses rather than an OMF.

Chapter 3

Issue: The DEIS does not include any mention of the Minneapolis Zoning related to the North Loop Small Area Plan.

Outcome: This zoning regulation and policy has impacts along the area of the Royalston Station, the mid-line connection to the Central Corridor, the Interchange facility, and the pathway for the railway transit to Van White Station.

Proposal: List this document as supporting evidence within the DEIS. Apply its

goals, zoning regulations, land use, transit recommendations, and development issues to the Southwest Transitway.

Advantage: This document supports many desirable outcomes for development, transit-oriented development, safety, and access.

3.2
Issue: The Minneapolis Farmers' Market as a regional destination and potential use for the railway transit line.

Outcome: Recognize this vital regional resource within the Environmental Impact Statement.

Proposal: Include the impact to the land use and economics of the railway taking into account the business of the Farmers' Market.

Advantage: Ridership should have increases shown on market days, thus an increase in fares. This is a vital area amenity and Citywide resource.

Chapter 4, 4-83, 4-97
Issue: No noise sensitive areas were indicated near the Royalston Station.

Outcome: To reduce impact to neighboring residential areas.

Outcome: Be sensitive to area residents by limiting LRT vehicle noise which will also impact future residential developments. The North Loop area is the fastest growing neighborhood by population in the City of Minneapolis as 2010 census data shows. This area will continue to be an area for residential population growth moving forward, especially as Minneapolis is calling for a doubling of population by 2025.

Proposal: Limit LRT vehicles to 20mph design speed and reduce idling LRT vehicles. Remove bridges and tunnels as pathways for LRT vehicles.

Advantage: This will keep noise to a minimum and reduce the noise impact to the area. The removal of bridges and tunnels will limit the reverberation and sound impact wave formations that are increased due to closed-in hardscape areas that occur in both tunnels and bridge embankments/structures.

6.2.2.2
Issue: The closing of the Royalston Avenue and 5th Ave N intersection is mentioned. This would have gravely negative consequences to the area's street grid, access to local businesses, and development opportunities. The existing Royalston businesses are industrial that require frequent, direct, and unfettered access from semi-trucks.

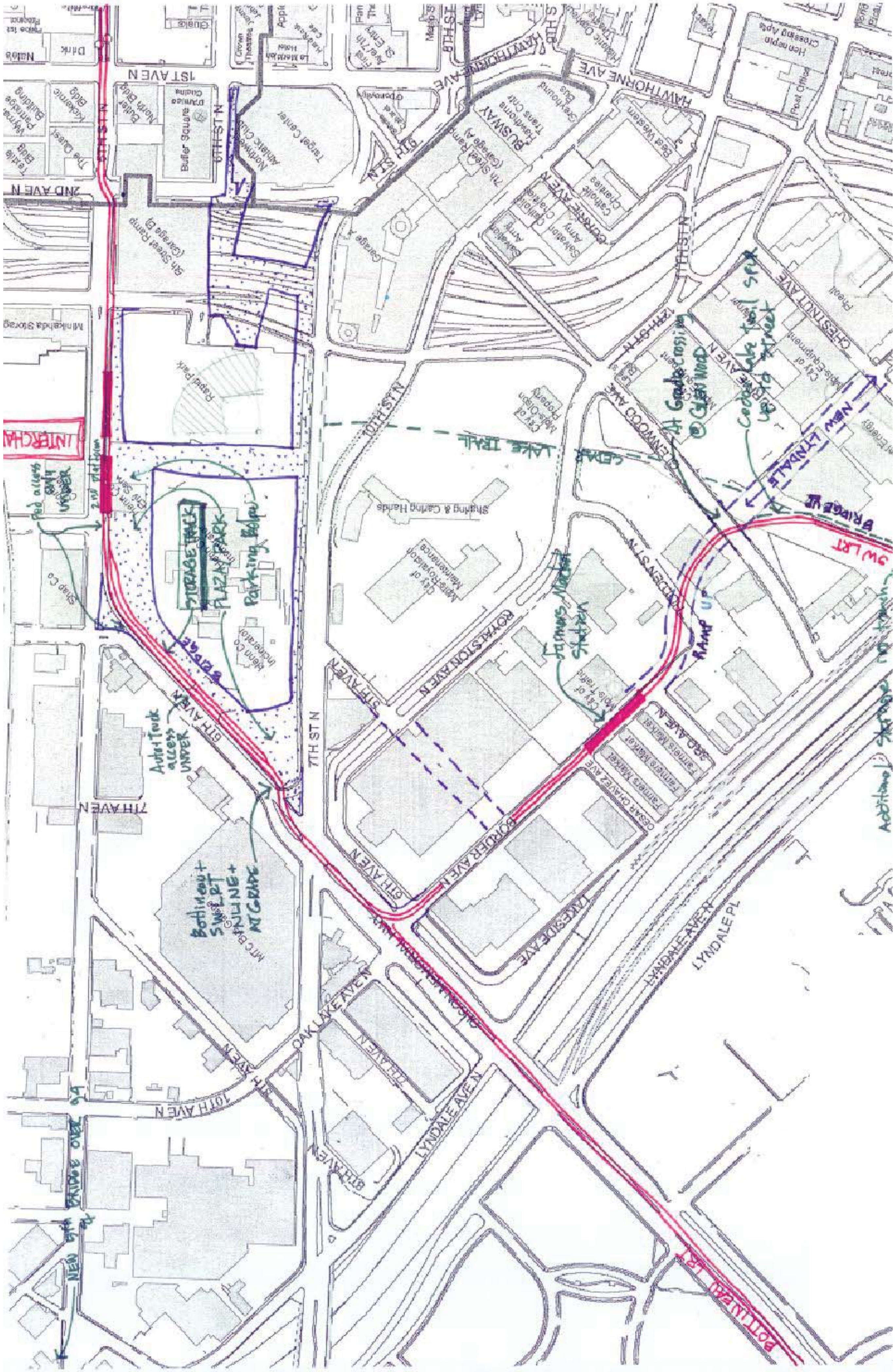
Proposal: Continue to allow for access from Royalston Avenue to 5th Ave N, by way of an at-grade crossing if needed.

Appendix F, part 1, page 61
Issue: Royalston Station and railway path is planned as a tunnel. Due to the location of the Interchange facility, it no longer is possible to create the tunnel.

6th Ave Streetscape: At-Grade LRT with Integrated Pedestrian Route

VJAA

2020 Partners
Groundwork City Building
04.28.2010



1ST AVE N
2ND AVE N
HAWTHORNE AVE
BUSWAY
Target Center
7TH ST N
10TH ST N
ROYALSTON AVE N
BORDER AVE N
6TH AVE N
7TH AVE N
10TH AVE N
OAK LAKE AVE
LYNDALE AVE N
LYNDALE PL
GLENWOOD AVE
CHESTNUT AVE
LAKESIDE AVE
CESAR CHAVEZ AVE
Farmers Market
Sharing & Caring Hands
STORAGE TRACK
PLAZA/PARK
Parking Below
CEDAR LAKE TRAIL
LRT
Bridge UP
RAMP UP
Farmers Market Station
Bottineau + SW LRT INLINE + AT GRADE
Auto/Truck access UNDER
NEW 6TH ST BRIDGE OVER 94
INTERCHANGE

Comment #423

Joel Abrahamson

>

12/28/2012 02:48 PM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us

cc

bcc

Subject DEIS comments for Southwest Light Rail Transit

Dear LRT planners,

My wife, Dorea Ruggles, and I would like to submit our comments for the SW LRT DEIS (attached). We work with the ISAIAH coalition of faith communities for economic and environmental justice and support its recommendations for the project. We look forward to the expansion of light rail in the Twin Cities metro area and appreciate the opportunity to give feedback on its development.

Sincerely,
Joel Abrahamson, PhD

Name: Joel Alabanson

Southwest LRT DEIS Comments

I respectfully submit these comments on the Southwest LRT DEIS.

I support the 3A alignment for the Southwest LRT because of its great potential to connect environmental justice communities to opportunities in the form of jobs, education, cultural resources and other regional amenities. The 3A alignment will also be a catalyst for important redevelopment efforts in the Bassett Creek Valley, bringing jobs and affordable housing to an area of need.

Following are comments specific to sections in the DEIS.

Section 1.4 Project Goals and Objectives
I support SW LRT goals 1, 2 and 5, economic development and cost-effective, efficient travel options.

The 3A alignment for SW LRT is an essential piece of the Bassett Creek Valley (BCV) Master Plan. The Van White and Penn Ave. stations are key connection points between economically depressed North Minneapolis and employment opportunities in the southwest Minneapolis suburbs. In addition, many students from North Minneapolis travel to schools along the route and the LRT service would greatly reduce travel time for them.

The Van White station is the center of the BCV Master Plan. The BCV Master Plan and the SW LRT will work in concert, bringing economic opportunity while boosting ridership.

Section 3.1.2.4 Segment A [LRT 1A, LRT 3A (LPA), and LRT 3A-1 (co-location alternative)] Land Use
The rezoning of Bassett Creek Valley was approved February 2008 by the city of Minneapolis. This rezoning should be mentioned in this section.

Section 6. 3.1.3 Land Use Plans
I share the Harrison Neighborhood Association's concerns with the Van White station planning.

- The planning document clearly advocates for the siting of diesel commuter rail layover at Van White Station. The final document misrepresents the formal Minneapolis city council position on the sale of Linden Yards East. The city directed city staff to explore joint development strategies at Linden Yards East and report back to city council.

- The Van White Station Area Plans illustrations are misleading for policy maker by representing a platform (plinth) that could accommodate development above and rail below. This is misleading because the feasibility work has not been completed and there has been no environmental assessment of siting a rail layover/maintenance facility at the Van White Station.

- The Van White Station Area plan does not adequately assess Harrison neighborhood property owners, renters and business owners. The Bassett Creek Valley is home to over 170 businesses and over 150 homes all of which are in the ½ mile radius of the Van White Station. Increasing the accessibility to the Van White Station is critically important to provide these environmental justice communities access to jobs along the Southwest LRT.

3.1.5.1 Effects to Land Use and Socioeconomics; Segment A
The description is inadequate and should include mention of the Bassett Creek Valley project area. The Van White station is central to the Bassett Creek Valley project. Because of its significant size and city of Minneapolis site control, this project area deserves mention in this section.

Section 5.1 Economic Conditions
The Metropolitan Council highlighted job linkage to North Minneapolis through the SW LRT corridor in a SW LRT funding application to the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development. This point should be included in the description of the effects on the local economy.

Section 6.1.1 Methodology
Ridership at the Van White station is underreported. It does not account for the Bassett Creek Valley Master Plan. The ridership model should use the City of Minneapolis comprehensive plan adopted 10/2/09 which includes Bassett Creek Valley Master Plan.

Section 9.4 Reasonably Foreseeable Future Actions
A rail layover/maintenance facility in Linden Yards East will have an impact on economic development at the Van White Station. Repeated requests for an environmental assessment of such a facility have gone unanswered by local agencies.

Community members have repeatedly been told that the rail layover/maintenance facility cannot be considered as part of the SW LRT EIS analysis, yet this facility could seriously compromise ridership and the effectiveness of economic development and improved land use around the SW LRT project.

Additional Comments
As a resident of the Seward neighborhood, I greatly appreciate the benefits of the Franklin Ave LRT station. It increases accessibility of homes and businesses here, which improves the equitable, environmentally sound development of our neighborhood. I would like the Van White neighborhood community to see the same benefits.

Name: Dorea Ruggles

Address:

:

Southwest LRT DEIS Comments

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Additional Comments

Comment #424

"Katherine Low"

12/28/2012 03:23 PM

To <swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>
cc
bcc
Subject DEIS comments

The LPA for the SWLRT would pass through heavily used, treasured parkland as well as an historic neighborhood of single family homes. The route designated as 3C would have been a much more desirable route for the long term. If the SWLRT is built on the LPA, it will inevitably degrade trail and park users' and neighborhood residents' experience, so all efforts must be made to preserve the environment to the maximum possible extent. Further, have we learned nothing from the unfortunate experience of years past when highways were laid down through vibrant urban neighborhoods, permanently destroying their character and cohesiveness? If a stop is installed at 21st street, all efforts must be made to reduce noise, vibrations, visual blight and traffic in the surrounding neighborhood. I endorse the response of the neighborhood association (Kenwood Isles Area Association) on all of these issues and wish to further comment on the traffic issues related to the 21st Street station.

6.2.2.4 Transit Station Access, page 6-41-42

There must not be a surface parking lot at the 21st street station. The noise, traffic and visual blight would further degrade the environment, and such lots are contrary to the City's policy. I don't have the expertise to predict whether there would be sufficient use of the 21st street station to justify its existence, but the analysis should NOT rely on an assumption that there will be a parking lot there. Regarding people getting dropped off and picked up at the station, a more complete analysis of the traffic impacts of this station on the Kenwood neighborhood MUST be conducted. Neighborhood cohesiveness and pedestrian safety would be imperiled by an increase in traffic from people from all over being driven to and from the 21st St. Station. The convenience of those using the LRT must not come at the expense of the livability of this Minneapolis neighborhood through which the trains will pass. Neighborhood input must be sought and complied with to ensure that traffic calming measures are implemented to maintain the walkability and quality of life in the neighborhoods.

6.2.2.3 Operational Impacts at Intersections
Segment A (LRT 3A-1 Co-location Alternative), page 6-39

An at-grade crossing or tunneling/trenching would be preferable to an unsightly, hulking bridge over Cedar Lake Parkway. While an at-grade crossing would inconvenience local residents, it is my belief that other drivers would avoid the area because of the backup of traffic waiting for trains to cross, so that the impact would be naturally mitigated. Co-location of freight and rail should not be considered and is infeasible for residents and trail/park users.

5.2.5.1 Mitigation for Land Use Plan Consistency, page 5-21

The unfortunate choice of the LPA would have the trains going through the quiet residential neighborhood of Kenwood and the park area. Land use changes typically appropriate for LRT do not apply here. Although I support urban density as a desirable goal, this is not an area where this goal is achievable, and as such, the LPA was not an optimal route. Therefore NO land use changes should be made in the area of the 21st St. Station.

Sincerely,

Katherine Low

Comment #426

12/28/2012 05:52 PM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us
cc
bcc
Subject Attn: SW Transitway

Greetings Southwest Transitway Planners,

Please consider the attached comments submitted in response to the Southwest Transitway Draft LRT.

Thank you for this opportunity,

Comment #426

Comments in Response to the SouthWest LRT Draft EIS

Submitted: 12.28.12

1. Preference for LRT

I generally favor the preferred options outlined in the DEIS - particularly use of rail rather than bus. Buses are uncomfortable, unreliable, wear out rapidly, and spew diesel particulates in the worst places such as South Minneapolis neighborhoods and shopping malls. I also favor a routing that connects with the existing LRT lines at Target Field. Nicollet Mall is best reserved for use as a pedestrian mall that includes no more than a Portland style streetcar line.

2. Freight Line Routing Issue

Regarding the relative merits of the TCW relocation, both routes are satisfactory. It is unfortunate this has become such a NIMBY hot button issue. My thoughts are based on several decades of living near the Kenilworth line (even back when Cedar Lake was an active rail yard) and walking, biking and running the LRT, Kenilworth and Cedar Lake trails almost daily. The TCW freight traffic is not particularly obtrusive, and TCW could be considered a good neighbor except that their train crews could be a bit more friendly, like the BN and UP crews.

Comparing the Kenilworth and MNS options, the Kenilworth routing is direct and provides few operational challenges. With the recent installation of CWR, it is all the better. The relatively short squeeze for the freight track, LRT tracks and path could be accommodated if the right of way requirements for each were reduced to fit the slow freight train speed conditions between Cedar Lake Parkway and Lake Street. The DEIS considers only “ideal” spacing but the reality is that BNSF will not be operating at 60 MPH through there, and we bikers can squeeze through for a block or two if necessary. And there are plenty of examples of tight shared corridors and boarding platforms in Minneapolis and many other cities around the country. Recall that the MSL had three or more tracks through this area in the past.

The MNS routing, however, would be more of a challenge for the longer and/or heavier tonnage movements. The package of proposed track enhancements (ie: Bass Lake / MNS connection, CWR, and a new BNSF passing track) hopefully will eliminate the risk of derailment as well as serve other needs of the respective railroads.

2. Station Design

The DEIS is sketchy as to station design. However, based on the Hiawatha and Central Corridor designs, I would strongly urge consideration of full length awnings over all boarding platforms. This is a common feature in the Chicago area and in the Northeast for rail stations (and many bus stations) and would be greatly appreciated here as well given the climate.

3. Bicycle Facilities

Again, based on the two other LRT lines, the bicycle accommodations should be ramped up on the Southwest line. Include more sheltered bike racks, especially at the near-in stations such as Beltline, Lake Street, 21st, and Penn. Also, this line. unlike the others, has a significant potential for luring weekend recreational bikers by offering the possibility for people to bike and/or ride out to Eden Prairie and beyond and ride the LRT back into the cities. With this in mind, easy bike access to all stations should be a high priority. "Build it and they will come (by bike)."

4. Burnham Road Bridge.

The Burnham Bridge soars gracefully over the Kenilworth corridor ably serving the light auto traffic. It would be more useful if it had a bike friendly connection to the trail below. It would then be an alternative for bikers and walkers coming from Cedar Lake to crossing the tracks at Cedar Lake Parkway or 21st streets.

Comments submitted by:

Greg Taylor

Comment #427

john sinks

12/28/2012 08:49 PM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us
cc
bcc
Subject Comments for Southwest LRT DEIS

The following comments are submitted in response to the SW LRT DEIS:

INTRODUCTION
We are residents in the Calhoun Isles condominium apartments, located at the junction of the Midtown Greenway and Kenilworth Trail. Our apartment on the 7th floor of the building (one of three interlinked high rise buildings up to 12 floors) is one of 109 high rise units and 34 town homes in the complex, set in the Chain of Lakes area (Cedar, Isles and Calhoun). We have lived in Calhoun Isles for the past six years and the neighborhood since 1968, a result of our deep appreciation of the natural beauty of the area.

CONCERNS
Our reading of the DEIS reveal particular concern for the following issues:

NOISE
The DEIS ambient noise levels recorded - at ground level - reveals a satisfactory 44dB [DEIS Appendix H Part 1, pp 215 & 217] comparable to quiet conversation one would encounter in a quiet setting, such as a library. As a starting point, this is instructive since, also per the DEIS, the sound level of a 90-ton LRT traveling at 30-40 mph immediately adjacent (less than 30 feet) to our condominium complex would reach 114dB [DEIS ch 4.7.3.4 Table 4.7-2]. To say that this is "severe impact" [DEIS Appendix H Part 1, p. 207] is an understatement of epic proportions given the setting and the intrusion of LRT's traversing the Kenilworth corridor every 3-4 minutes. From the proposed Lake Street station through the Kenilworth corridor, past Calhoun Isles condominiums, and over the proposed 45 foot Cedar Lake Parkway bridge. This will "severely impact" Calhoun Isles from the ground up in increasing amplification to our full height of twelve floors.

VIBRATION
Calhoun Isles condominiums are a unique architectural achievement, constructed from recycled concrete grain elevators in the early 1980's. Formed from foot-thick concrete walls and floors, the 109 units could be threatened by the high frequency vibrations generated by the LRT schedule of trains every 3-4 minutes in a manner not unlike that of the stress fractures experienced in the Sabo bridge over the Hiawatha LRT line. We already have to contend with slow, low rumble of freight trains in the Kenilworth corridor, a minor threat compared to higher speed and more frequent LRT's. [DEIS 4.8.2.1 Vibration-Sensitive Land Uses pp 4-188] This inherent danger was given very little attention in the DEIS. [DEIS 4-115 Segment A. pp 4-118 and 4-119]

SOCIAL EFFECTS
The authors of the DEIS present a picture of the social environment which is inconsistent with the realities on the ground. The community impinged upon by the LRT project is far more diverse than presented, to wit: "Residential land uses surrounding the Segment A alignment are mainly low to medium-density single family detached housing near Cedar and Lake of the Isles..." [DEIS ch 3, pp 3-34]. The Kenilworth corridor has over 400 units of high density housing. Further: "the operation of LRT service along Segment A is not anticipated to adversely affect community cohesion." [DEIS, ch 3, p. 3-58] These statements totally misstate reality. The CIDNA (Cedar Isles Dean

neighborhood) would be split down the middle by this project (much as Bryn Mawr neighborhood by I-394 in the 1970's), most obviously by the insertion of an industrial-sized bridge over Cedar Lake Parkway. [DEIS ch 3, p 3-115 and 3-116] Yet, the DEIS contradicts itself elsewhere [DEIS, ch 3-79]. Segment A has "...potential long-term effects (which) may occur at the following properties: Cedar Lake Parkway, Grand Rounds...the intersection of the LRT corridor with the historic parkway, including the LRT overpass bridge...Kenilworth lagoon/channel..."

VISUAL EFFECTS

The LRT project will visually overwhelm the neighbors and users of the Kenilworth corridor. One cannot say, as stated in the DEIS, visual impacts "generally (would) not be substantial because of mature vegetation buffers." [DEIS ch 3-115]. The intrusion of the LRT in the corridor will necessitate removal of vegetation.

HUMAN SAFETY AND LIVE EXPOSED WIRES

The Chain of Lakes area is the seasonal home of many birds, including hawks and bald eagles. The exposed LRT high voltage wires are lethal to any bird and of undetermined effect on humans residing in close proximity. In addition, no crossing provision is made for the extraordinary amount of foot and bike traffic in the corridor. [DEIS ch 4-49]

SUGGESTED MITIGATION STEPS

Many of the negative impacts from this project would be mitigated by constructing the LRT below grade throughout the Kenilworth corridor, either by tunnel or by ditch and fully enclosed sound barrier to achieve main goals: mitigating sound, visual and vibration effects on high rise buildings, Cedar Lake Parkway crossing and protecting the integrity of a united neighborhood.

John Sinks

Comment #430

RECEIVED
DEC 28 2012
BY:

December 26, 2012

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

Re: Draft Environmental Impact Statement ("DEIS")

I submit the following set of comments regarding the DEIS for the proposed Southwest Light Rail Transit system:

1. My wife and I have been residents of the Kenwood neighborhood for forty years. Our home is within a couple of blocks of the Kenilworth Corridor and the proposed W. 21st Street station. We are extremely familiar with the environs, the history of the area, the natural beauty of the surrounding parkland and trails, the recreational amenities for all metro residents who come to use these parks and trails, the traffic patterns of commuter and local traffic, the location of the school, churches and playgrounds and the quiet residential character of this neighborhood.

2. We realize that metro roads are overcrowded during rush hours and that improved public transportation must be developed to accommodate the needs of those who live outside the city. We also realize that there is always a balancing of local and non-local interests that must accomplished when public transportation plans are being

devised. That said, however, we also realize how easily adverse comments can be dismissed or minimalized by regulators and government officials if the people commenting are from the neighborhood where vital interests are about to be sacrificed for someone's competing notion of the "greater good." We hope that decision-makers reading these comments and others from the residents and their associations who are both most knowledgeable and most invested in this neighborhood will be given substantial weight, as we know far more about this neighborhood than people who merely visit to "study" it.

3. Since we bought our home in 1972, there have been significant efforts made to attenuate the impact of commuter traffic by making Lake of the Isles Parkway and the Burnham bridge one-way. Morning rush hour traffic was also diverted away from Burnham Boulevard to reduce the volume of vehicular traffic, especially on Sheridan Avenue S., which is entirely residential with families and children occupying both sides of the street where excessive traffic would otherwise flow. Many on this street have children who walk to Kenwood Elementary School and back home during the rush hour periods. The residents applauded these steps to route traffic to main roadways and away from residential streets. As a consequence, the neighborhood is quieter and much safer than it was when we first moved here.

4. The most egregiously ill-advised portion of the plan as it relates our neighborhood is the proposed W. 21st Street station and parking lot for 100 cars. This location is among

the quietest and most purely residential in the city. The noise, pollution and dangers posed by increasing traffic flow to this area to school children, bikers, park users and everyday pedestrians cannot be overstated. In addition, as a 40 year resident, I cannot believe that the estimates of ridership for a station situated at that location are close to accurate and should be re-examined with clear eyes and objectivity. The local residents using LRT would not come close to satisfying the projections that are set forth to justify establishing this station. Hence, the numbers must come from suburban commuters drawn into the neighborhood, thus increasing risks, noise and air pollution and loss of property values. No station or parking lot should be built on this site.

5. If there is substantial justification for siting a station close to downtown, then it should be sited much further down the Corridor, perhaps near the City's work yard where there would be essentially no impact on a residential neighborhood.

6. There is no question that this neighborhood will be adversely impacted by the proposed Southwest Light Rail Transit ("LRT") system to the point of transformation unless major changes are made to the plan and major investments are made to protect the environment from noise, increased traffic, and blight – and even with such measures, the neighborhood will decline from what it is today. While the neighborhood has experienced a relatively small amount of freight train traffic, that is not at all comparable to possibly

running two hundred or more LRT trains a day on this rail bed.

7. It is difficult for a lay person to envision exactly what infrastructure will be required and built to power the LRT trains. Whatever that might look like, there should be added to the cost major landscaping and earth shaping projects (e.g., abundant mound and berm construction) to isolate the surrounding areas from the noise and visual pollution that that infrastructure will necessarily create.

8. Having lived near the tracks when freight rail traffic was much heavier, there is no question that trains cause vibration issues to the neighboring properties. I could not find any mention of that in the DEIS and wonder how carefully, if at all, it has been addressed. If vibration and pollution problems cause a substantial and permanent loss of value to residential properties adjacent to the tracks, is that a "taking' by the government which will require compensation and is there a plan and process to address claims fairly?

9. There is a proposal to construct a massive cement bridge over Cedar Lake Parkway where the Kenilworth Trail crosses it. Such a bridge could not be more out of place and injurious to the environment. A trench or tunnel should be evaluated for this spot to protect one of the most attractive areas of Minneapolis.

10. Finally, as a taxpayer in this county, I have to wonder about the financial justification for building this system and

whether there has been a rigorous process of cross-examination of all the assumptions and cost and ridership projections. While I don't have the numbers available to me about how well or poorly the actual experience has been for the Hiawatha Line, my sense from newspaper accounts is that this will have to remain another substantial drain on taxpayers supporting limited ridership to Mall of America, the airport and Twins games for many years to come – and perhaps forever. Maybe Minnesotans are not going to buy into a "build it and they will come" dream of an LRT system no matter how much supporters would like to believe that that will happen.

Respectfully submitted,

John J. Ursu

Ursa

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

Comment #431

DEC 28 2012
BY:

To Hennepin County, regarding the SWLRT DEIS:

The SWLRT DEIS, as it stands, is a colossal work of dishonesty and disingenuity. Indeed, the falsehoods and half-truths which it carries are worthy of a relabeling of the document from Draft Environmental Impact Statement to Fantasy Environmental Impact Statement.

These are strong words, I know. This letter will endeavor, in a few short pages, to list off not a complete list of the misdirections and deceits, but a fairly representative sample. At this point, a thorough handling of the lies and false assurances granted by both elected and appointed officials could fill a book. Only the freight-reroute portion of the SWLRT plan will be addressed by this letter, as this is the only portion with which I have personal experience.

Firstly, and most importantly, the SWLRT is represented as being widely supported by local citizens, with no opposition. Looking at the documents submitted so far, one would think that the freight reroute is a minor change about which no one is concerned. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Citizens of St Louis Park have been extremely vocal about their opposition to this portion of the plan. Letters and phone calls have been made to elected and appointed officials at every level, repeatedly. When Hennepin County met with citizens, they promised mitigation and remediation, but refused to implement any provisions requested by citizens (for example, a pedestrian bridge over the tracks, next to the high school). Meetings were held in many neighborhoods, in addition to the official (PMT) meetings held by the County and St Louis Park. From these meetings, neighborhood representatives (I was one of the two representatives from my neighborhood) brought back pages upon pages of requests and suggestions.

Not only were those suggestions disregarded, they were apparently discarded – for no evidence of them shows up in any of the documentation sent to the FTA. Hennepin County Commissioner Gail Dorfman has repeatedly ignored the feelings of her SLP constituents on this issue, and continues to dishonestly present this plan as "a win-win for St Louis Park."

For reasons which will become clear in the rest of this letter, the freight reroute would be anything but a win-win for St Louis Park. Indeed, it is a plan to shift freight traffic from a wealthier area to an inferior route through a less prosperous neighborhood. A plan to shift the freight from a relatively straight and flat route with wide right-of-way, to a route with drastic elevation changes, sharp turns, and virtually no right-of-way. The engineering of the reroute is suspect (suspect enough that even the affected railroad company has expressed concern about its feasibility, and the initial plan was cited by the FTA as being questionable), and the process by which the reroute selected was opaque at best.

To be honest, the County has been highly effective at defusing opposition to the plan. Residents of the Kenilworth Corridor (the current freight route) oppose SWLRT because they do not wish to have LRT going through their back yards. In an attempt to mitigate their opposition, Gail Dorfman and the Hennepin County Rail Road Administration (HCRRA) has promised that freight will be moved out of their neighborhood. In every discussion of SWLRT, Commissioner Dorfman has said "freight is a separate subject, and we do not need to discuss it here." Yet, any opposition to the reroute is met with "well, we'd hate for SWLRT not to get passed." The subtext is clear: Take the freight, or you don't get LRT. This is a false dichotomy at best, and a blatant deception at worst.

At the final meeting on the freight reroute in St Louis Park, the County refused to take any comments from the community. This is a peculiar move for a meeting whose stated purpose was to solicit community input. Unfortunately, the obscuration and obfuscation of community opposition to portions of the SWLRT is just the beginning.

The DEIS itself contains many bad measurements and improper metrics. The two routes for rail are presented as essentially equivalent. Nothing could be farther from the truth.

The remainder of these comments will fall into five broad categories. Those categories are history, grade, corners, crossing, and affected areas. Throughout these discussions, the increased costs of freight reroute will also be discussed, despite the fact that the County has been very reticent to actually discuss any costs of the reroute. No doubt part of the hesitancy is due to the fact that they aren't sure of exactly what the costs are, but it is apparent that the primary portion of their reluctance is due to the fact that rerouting the freight will costs tens (if not hundreds) of millions of dollars more than would a colocation.

History is an interesting topic, because the SWLRT DEIS is happy to point out how negatively a co-location will affect the historical character of the Kenilworth neighborhood. It is worth nothing that less than a hundred years ago, the major portions of the Kenilworth neighborhood were a railyard – a massive, flat expanse of parallel tracks and association infrastructure. The extremely wide right-of-way which is still in evidence along the Kenilworth route is one of the lingering remnants of those facilities.

The MN&S line, in St Louis Park, however, was never wide, flat, nor straight. It was initially intended as an electric LRT line. It snakes through what has traditionally been the heart of the city, wending its way past grade schools, the high school, residential and commercial districts. Buildings are in close proximity to the tracks. For much of the MN&S line, a rail car turned sideways would touch houses on either side of the track simultaneously. For most of the Kenilworth line, several cars could stretch across the right-of-way without touching any dwellings or businesses.

For decades, the MN&S line was virtually unused. In the past decade, traffic has grown to 40

cars per day – two separate trains of 20 cars each. Moving mile-long coal trains (an integral part of the freight reroute) to the MN&S line would be a drastic alteration in this historical pattern. Keeping those same trains in the Kenilworth corridor (where they currently travel) would be more fitting to the terrain and historical patterns of use in Kenilworth.

In short, any honest arguments as to the history or flavor of the affected neighborhoods clearly favor the Kenilworth route for freight, and co-location of freight and light rail.

The grade of the routes is a major consideration. The Kenilworth route parallels MN state highway 7 (hereafter referred to as MN-7) as it passes through Hopkins and St Louis Park, crosses above MN Highway 100 (MN-100), and continues East as MN-7 turns into Hennepin County Road 25. County Road 25 ascends a bridge, and the Kenilworth route passes under the road, turning North. Note here, that it is the highway which handles the elevation change.

By contrast, the MN&S Route will cross MN-7 before it reaches MN Highway 100. It is worth noting that MN Highway 7 is a major thoroughfare at this point, shunting traffic between MN Highway 100 and US Route 69. Much downtown traffic heads West on Highway 7 at the end of the day, and enters the city via MN-7 in the morning. Indeed, MN-7 was originally constructed during the Great Depression to alleviate traffic problems for traffic entering the Twin Cities. It has remained prominent in that role for the last seventy-five years.

The MN&S Route will cross over MN-7 just before MN-7 reaches MN-100. To cross over the highway, the tracks will have to climb some thirty to thirty-five feet, make a ninety-degree turn, then make another series of sharp turns on the other side of the highway. This grade is remarkably steep: almost 1% – even though the affected rail company has stated that nothing over 0.6% will be economically sustainable. East bound trains will have to pull long coal trains up this grade, as well as negotiating both curves simultaneously, due to the length of the coal trains. This should prove to be a very interesting trip after ice storms, in rain, or in heavy snow.

Even in ideal circumstances, the coal trains will be laboring heavily to climb the grade. Once the engines have conquered the grade, they must tow the remaining cars up, while negotiating the blind curves of the route – the curves will be discussed shortly.

Then, no sooner has the entire train managed to get up to the level of St Louis Park, but it must begin the descent down to the BNSF rails which run East-West through St Louis Park. Again, this is a sharp descent (or ascent, if the train is West bound), which will put the trains laboring heavily in proximity to an elementary school, Peter Hobart. I am not a transportation engineer by trade, but it would seem a simple rule-of-thumb that mile-long, multi-kiloton trains would get better fuel efficiency and control on a flatter, straighter route.

It isn't just homes which are in close proximity to the MN&S line – there are no fewer than four schools within a thousand feet (two of which are within one hundred feet of the lines: the St Louis Park High School, and the Metropolitan Open School). At no point does the Kenilworth route get within even a thousand feet of a school.

This pair of excessive grades will be expensive to build, will add additional maintenance challenges, and will result in increased train noise, decreased fuel efficiency, and a great potential for out-of-control incidents. How exactly does one slow a mile-long coal train on a 1% grade, when there has been an ice storm? How does that affect the tail end of the train, as it accelerates around the corners and through at-grade crossings? The safety implications of this feature of the plan cannot be overestimated. It is bad engineering, and should not be implemented.

The number of curves and at-grade crossings along the MN&S route is, simply, absurd. This was designed as a commuter rail-line with frequent stops at businesses. It was not intended to pass big, heavy, non-stop trains. A coal train negotiating the MN&S route will often be on three curves simultaneously – and not gentle, ten-degree curves, but forty degree, sixty degree and sharper curves.

As a train passes the high school, after the lead engine has negotiated both blind curves in that segment of the route, it will find the front and rear of the train on curves in opposite directions. Longer trains will find themselves negotiating the curve and hill south of MN-7 at the same time that the tail end is negotiating a curve by the local McDonald's restaurant, and Dakota Ave. Dakota Avenue sees some 3000 cars per day – it is a major feeder from Minnetonka Boulevard to MN-7 and MN-100.

Past just the issue of curves (I count four in less than two miles in St Louis Park), we have at-grade crossings. I count seven in less than two miles. It is true that the County has proposed closing one of those at-grade crossings – at 29th street, which is a crossing that the affected neighborhood wishes to keep. At no time in the history of the rail discussion has any SLP citizen requested the closing of that crossing. Indeed, in the meetings, it was frequently requested that the crossing remain. The County, however, insists that it must go.

The city of St Louis Park, in fact, opposes the closing of this crossing. SLP has a carefully-designed grid of streets, designed to allow alternative routing of traffic. Closing the 29th street crossing has markedly negative effects on that grid. It is dishonest and disingenuous of Hennepin County to claim that anyone besides themselves wants that crossing closed.

In addition to the quantity of at-grade crossings, it is important to consider their locations. One is within seventy-five feet of the high school, and another is within 500 feet of the high school. Both are major thoroughfares for foot traffic, since the High School's football field is located on the opposite side of the tracks from the high school itself. Furthermore, the closest at-grade crossing is also the

figures in the DEIS, it is a mere (mere?) $23 million more to reroute freight.

Why would anyone choose the MORE expensive, MORE dangerous route? In what world is this a good idea? It is absurd to squander this amount of money on a project that will negatively and permanently impact not only the residents and schools of St Louis Park, but the very fabric of the city itself.

Indeed, opposition from the city of St Louis Park would likely be stronger if one of the city council members were not an employee of Gail Dorfman -- the leading proponent of SWLRT. This is a conflict of interest on a surprising scale, and is enough to cast the character, motivations and actions of both Ms. Dorfman and Councilwoman Anne Mavity into severe doubt.

I urge the city of St Louis Park, Hennepin County and the Federal Government to require colocation of freight and light rail. Such co-location is being done on the proposed Bottineau line through the northern half of the Twin Cities, and it has been done safely in many, many other locales. The very idea of relocating heavy freight to an unsafe route within touching distance of our sole high school, should give anyone pause as to the logic and validity of this plan. I find it difficult to describe the degree of incompetence which the County has evidenced, throughout this process, in mere words.

If the SWLRT plan refuses to adopt co-location, I charge the federal government to defend the city of St Louis Park by denying funding to this project. Hennepin County has made it eminently clear that they have no interest in co-location, and will tell any lie required to ram this reroute through. Check their engineering, check their measurements, check every last one of their assumptions. I believe you will find an alarming degree of deception. I also believe that there are other, more honest projects which have been submitted for funding. Perhaps I am a hopeless liberal, but I believe that honesty and forthrightness should be rewarded, while dishonesty and deception should not. Do not reward the deception of Hennepin County and the Metropolitan Council with the funding they so desperately want.

Sincerely,

Jeremy Anderson

From: Jeremy Anderson

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

1005

55415

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To: Housing, Community Works & Transit

Attn: Southwest Transit Way

701 Fourth Ave South, Suite 400

Minneapolis, MN 55415

Comment #432

Curt Rahman- PDA-

5-15-2011

Mr. Frank Pafko

Director, Office of Environmental Stewardship

MN Department of Transportation

395 John Ireland Boulevard, MS 620

St. Paul, MN 55155-1899

Mr. Pafko,

All of us that work and live and own buildings along the proposed MN&S rail line experience pretty severe vibration today; vibration that already exceeds federal guidelines. Business owners have told me that when the train comes by it feels like an earthquake. I have had to stop phone conversations when the train comes by because of the rumbling vibrations.

Interestingly, Kimley-Horn did a vibration study at 2 places along the tracks and tells us the vibration level at my building at 6418 west Lake Street should be about 75VdBs today. Since there are only 2 trains a day now, the federal guidelines say that we should be able to handle up to 83 at that location. I hired an engineering firm, ESI, to do vibration analysis at my building and the actual level is 84 today! Higher than the federal guidelines allow today!

Now, consider that the proposed reroute will increase both the frequency and severity of the vibration along the line, according to Kimley-Horn. We will see increases of 5-8 VdBs and because of the additional train frequency we need to use the "occasional events" Federal Guideline which tells us that we need to tolerate only 78 VdBs, yet the predicted actual vibration level will go up to 90 or more!

All levels Measured and in the table are in VdBs	Federal Guidelines infrequent trains- today's guidelines	Actual Measurements at 6418 West Lake St - 50 feet from track center line	Federal Guidelines Occasional Trains	Expected increase due to reroute 5-8 vdb
Sensitive Businesses	65	??	65	??
Homes	80	??	75	??
Businesses	83	84	78	89-92

This needs further evaluation at multiple business locations, residence locations and in classrooms adjacent to the tracks. You can't increase vibrations along a line when they already exceed federal guidelines. You need to make sure that your costs include reducing vibration to federal levels or you will be buying businesses, buildings and relocation costs as well as homes along the line that exceed the federal guidelines both today and after the construction.

Curt Rahman, PMT West Lake Street Business Representative 612-207-5411

April 25, 2011

Mr. Curt Rahman
6418 West Lake Street
St Louis Park, Minnesota

ESI ENGINEERING, INC.
7831 Glenroy Road/Suite 430
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55439
Tel: (952) 831-4646
Fax: (952) 831-6897
Internet: esi-engineering.com

Summary Report for Train Vibration at 6418 West Lake Street St Louis Park, Minnesota

ESI-ENGINEERING, INC.

Dear Mr. Rahman:

This letter summarizes the results of train vibration measurements made at 6418 West Lake Street in St Louis Park, Minnesota on April 13, 2011. I understand that the Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority, the Minnesota Department of Transportation, the city of St. Louis Park and several private rail companies are considering relocating freight rail service from the Kenilworth Corridor to the MN&S line in St. Louis Park. Further, the MN&S line is approximately 45 ft from your building. There are currently 2 to 3 trains per day that pass your building at speeds typically below 15 mph. You are concerned about the future plans that would both increase the number of trains, the train lengths and the speeds. Figure 1 shows the location of the tracks relative to your building.

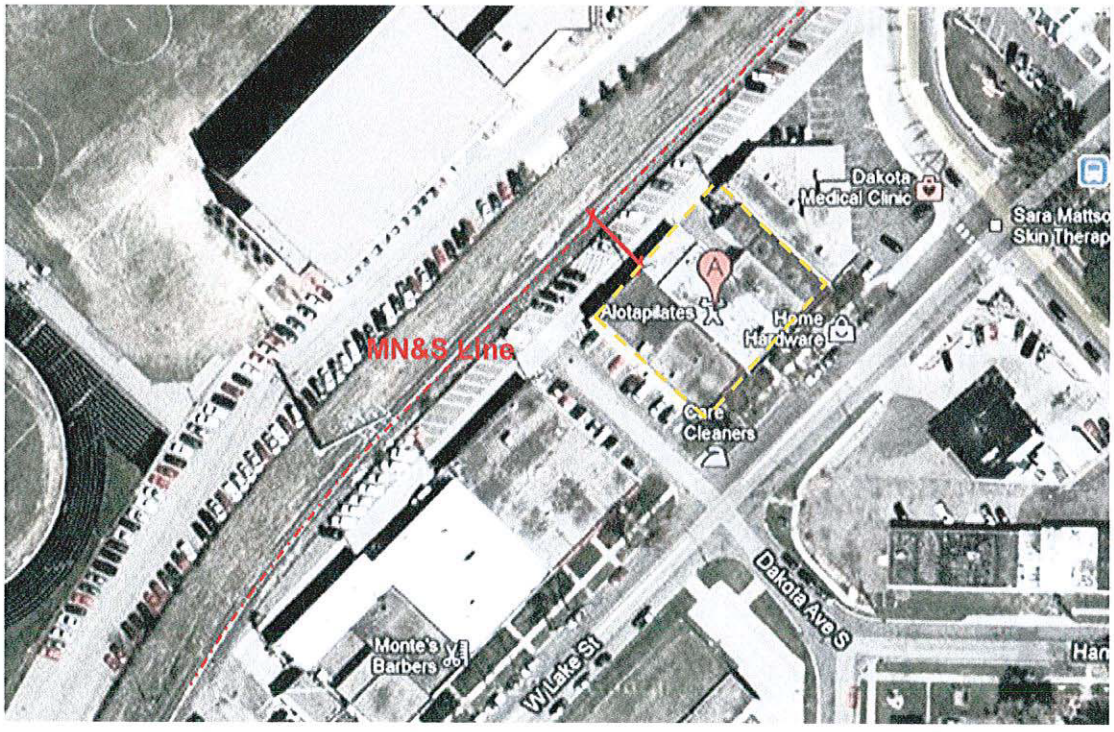


Figure 1 – Aerial photo of the buildings at 6418 West Lake Street and the MN&S line.

Vibration measurements were made a location nearest the tracks, on the northwest side of the building approximately 50 ft from the track. The monitoring system ran from approximately 7:00 AM through 4:00 PM on April 13, 2011. Vibration measurements were made slab on grade in three orthogonal directions. PCB model 393A03 accelerometers were used and the data was sampled at 640 samples per second. The recorded acceleration waveforms were integrated and moving 1 second rms levels were calculated, as recommended in the Federal Transportation Administration guidance manual (Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment, May 2006). The vibration levels are presented in this letter as velocity in decibel units, VdB, relative to 1 micro inch per second.

Two trains passed the building on April 13th. Figure 2, 3 and 4 present the results for the first train which passed between 11:14 AM and 11:16 AM. The maximum rms level was 84 VdB in the vertical direction. The second train had a similar vibration level.

Please let me know if you have any questions or need additional information.

Sincerely,

ESI Engineering, Inc.

Anthony J. Baxter, P.E.
Principal

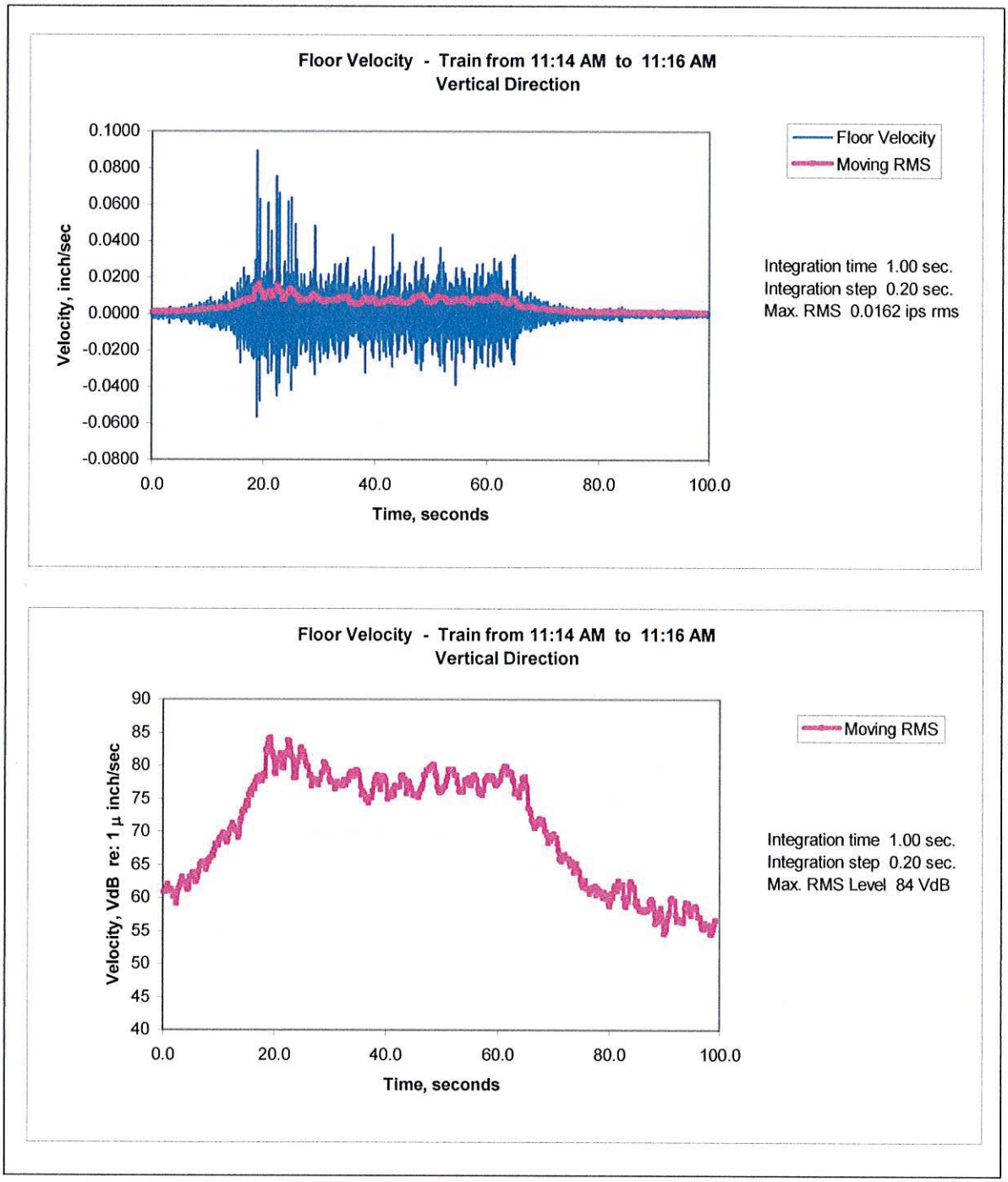


Figure 2 – Measurement of vertical direction vibration with a maximum level of 84 VdB.

----- Original Message -----
From: Tony Baxter
To: Curt Rahman
Sent: Tuesday, April 26, 2011 3:22 PM
Subject: RE: One Week From Today....

Curt,
Since you asked about the second train... Attached is the plot of the vertical vibration for 24 seconds of the train passing. The max level was 84 VdB, the same as the first train.

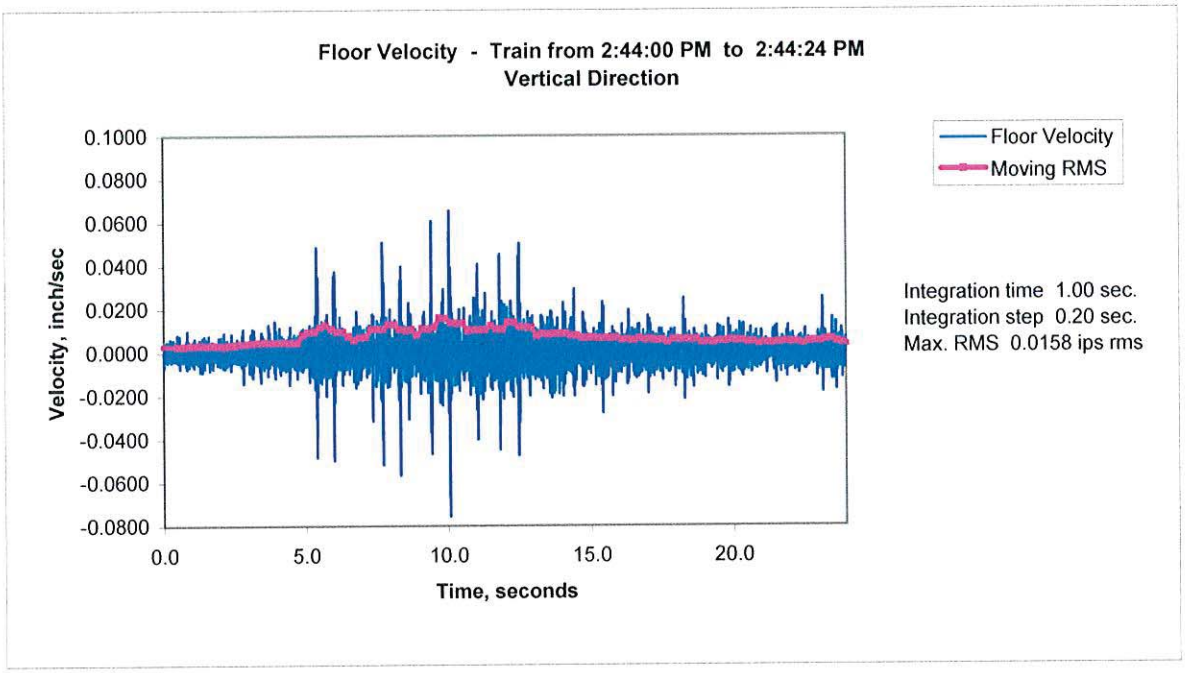
Tony

Anthony J. Baxter, P.E.
ESI Engineering, Inc.
7831 Glenroy Rd. / Suite 430
Minneapolis, MN 55439
tele: 952-831-4646
tbaxter@esi-engineering.com

ESI Engineering Inc.

Project / Location: Curt Rahman - Train Vibration
Date: 13-Apr-2011

Ch3 - vertical



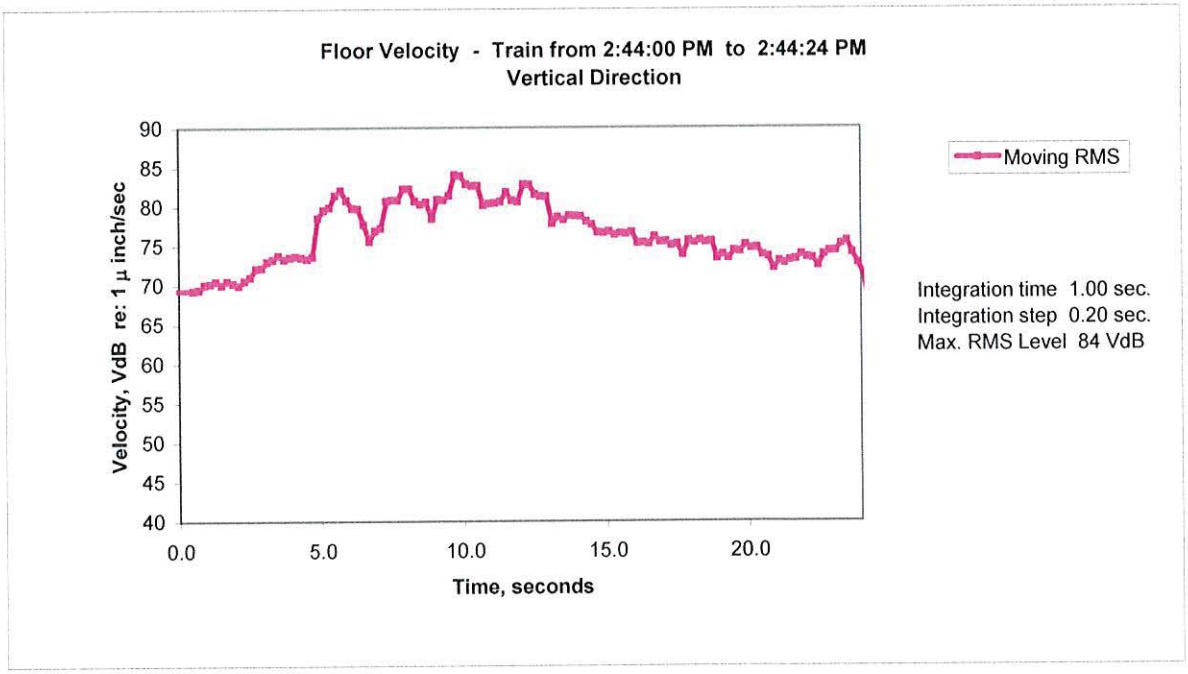
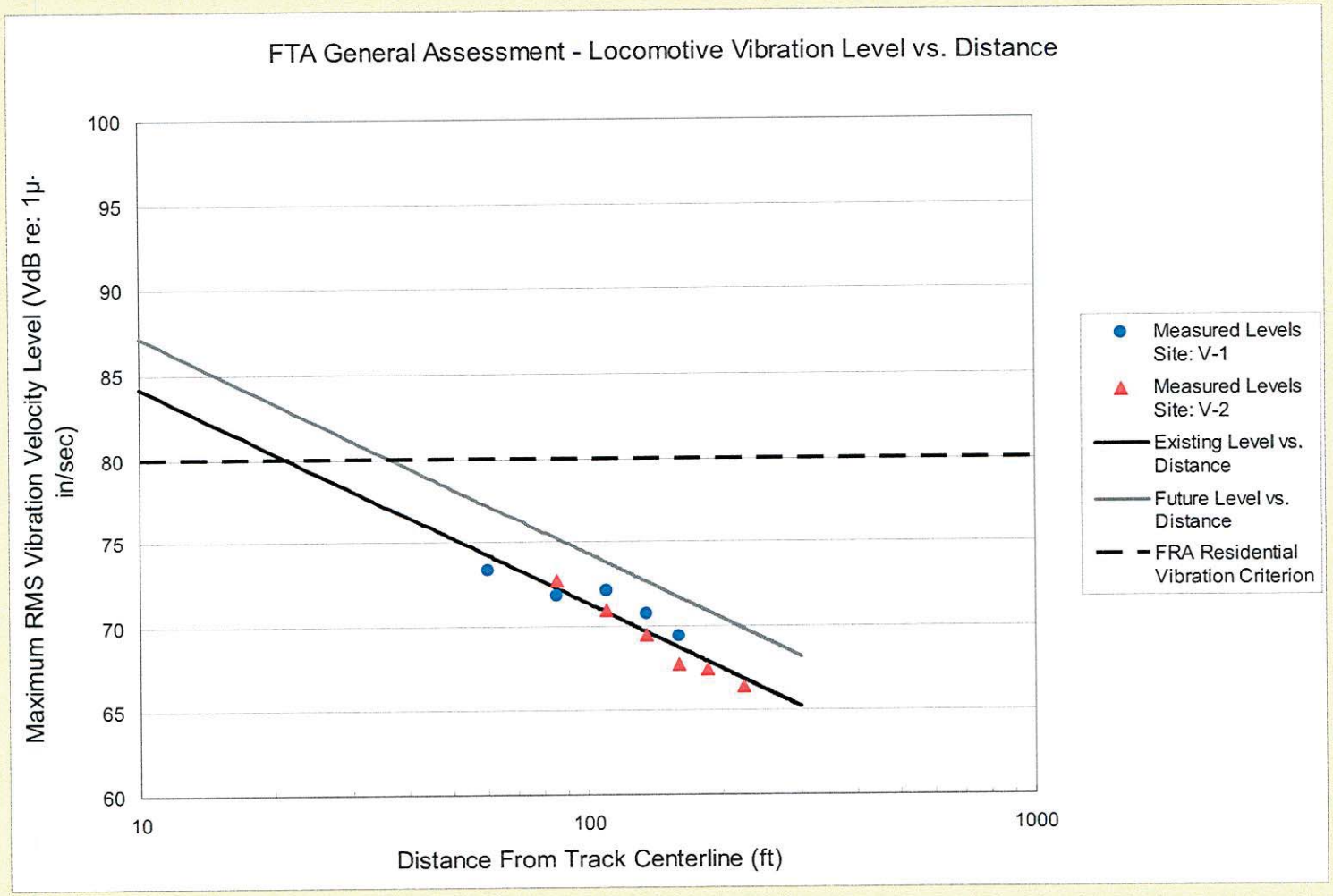


Figure 1

COMMUNITY VIBRATION



VIBRATION CRITERIA

Land Use	Vibration Velocity Level (VdB)		
	Frequent Events (70+/day)	Occasional Events (30-70/day)	Infrequent Events (<30/day)
Special Buildings (concert halls, auditoriums, etc.)	65	65	65
Residential (houses, hotels, motels)	72	75	80
Institutional (schools, libraries, museums, etc.)	75	78	83

Main Identity

From: "Curt Rahman"
To:

Cc:

Sent: Tuesday, April 26, 2011 4:05 PM
Attach: Vibration Criteria.pdf; Curt Rahman - Summary on Train Vibration April 25, 2011.pdf; National Transportation Vibration Guidelines.pdf; SLP Vibration Predictions.pdf
Subject: New Vibration Study attached

I had independent vibration measurements done at my building on West Lake Street by an Engineering firm ESI. Their report is attached labeled "Curt Rahman- Summary on Train Vibration April 25, 2011". Measurements were taken April 13th, 2011. Measurements in the building showed 84 VdB. **By the charts provided by Kimley-Horn, vibration measurements today already exceed acceptable guidelines** and probably do at most businesses and many homes along the tracks.

In addition, **Kimley-Horn predicts increased vibration frequency and a severity increase of 5-8 VdB** which puts many of the buildings past the 90 VdB level and far in excess of the 78 VdB the Federal guidelines mandate.

Considering this new information, additional vibration studies need to be done and further mitigation for vibration needs to be added to the project.

Curt Rahman, PMT West Lake Street Business Representative
612-207-5411 cell

----- Original Message -----
From: Curt Rahman
To: [redacted]
Cc: [redacted]
Sent: Friday, April 08, 2011 10:57 AM
Subject: MN&S Freight Rail Study - PMT #6 Meeting Summary

On page 14 of the attached Final PMT document, Kimley- Horn states that the "occasional events" column should now be used to evaluate the vibration impact of this project. That means that residences should tolerate up to 75 VdB and routine businesses should tolerate up to 78 VdB of vibration. (on table 1 attached)

Using the Kimley-Horn measurements and predictions from the "SLP Vibration Predictions" chart attached to this email, residences closer than 90 feet of the rail line will exceed the federal vibration guidelines and businesses within 50-60 feet of the tracks will exceed the guidelines. This is a huge change because the preliminary analysis concluded that only residences within 40 feet of the tracks had issues and there were no business issues.

How many houses are within 90 feet of the tracks?

How many businesses are within 50-60 feet of the tracks? I know there are some because I own one 45 feet from the tracks.

Curt Rahman
Business Representative West Lake St.

Main Identity

From: "Witzig, Jeanne"
To: "Rahman, Curt"
Cc:

Sent: Wednesday, April 20, 2011 11:58 AM
Subject: FW: FW: MN&S Freight Rail Study - PMT #6 Meeting Summary

Curt, thank you for your comment regarding the vibration analysis for the MN&S Freight Rail Study.

A noise and vibration report is being prepared to address this complex question and will be part of the Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW). It will provide more clarity on the methodology, impacts and mitigation.

At this time, we anticipate that the EAW will be published in May, with a 30-day review and comment period. If upon your review of the EAW you have further comments on the noise and vibration analysis conducted for this study, or on other areas of the evaluation/EAW, you are welcome to submit those comments for inclusion in the EAW record.

Regards, Jeanne Witzig

From: Curt Rahman
Sent: Friday, April 08, 2011 10:57 AM
To:

Subject: MN&S Freight Rail Study - PMT #6 Meeting Summary

On page 14 of the attached Final PMT document, Kimley- Horn states that the "occasional events" column should now be used to evaluate the vibration impact of this project. That means that residences should tolerate up to 75 VdB and routine businesses should tolerate up to 78 VdB of vibration. (on table 1 attached)

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the tracks will exceed the guidelines. This is a huge change because the preliminary analysis concluded that only residences within 40 feet of the tracks had issues and there were no business issues.

How many houses are within 90 feet of the tracks?

How many businesses are within 50-60 feet of the tracks? I know there are some because I own one 45 feet from the tracks.

Curt Rahman
Business Representative West Lake St.

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rail systems, such as the MN&S Spur, ground borne noise criteria are applied only to buildings that have sensitive interior spaces that are well insulated from exterior noise.

The FTA also has vibration criteria for locations with existing vibration, such as the MN&S Spur. For locations where trains will be added where existing trains currently operate, vibration impact must be assessed to determine if there will be additional impacts. For infrequently used rail corridors (less than 5 trains per day), such as the MN&S Spur, vibration impacts are assessed using the criteria in **Table 17**. For this assessment, the locomotive events are considered to be infrequent, and the rail cars are considered to be occasional.

Table 17. Ground-Borne Vibration and Noise Impact Criteria by Land Use Category

Land Use Category	Ground-Borne Vibration Impact Levels (VdB re 1 micro-inch/sec)			Ground-Borne Noise Impact Levels (dB re 20 micro Pascals)		
	Frequent Events[1]	Occasional Events[2]	Infrequent Events[3]	Frequent Events[1]	Occasional Events[2]	Infrequent Events[3]
Category 1: Buildings where low ambient vibration is essential for interior operations.	65 VdB[4]	65 VdB[4]	65 VdB[4]	N/A[5]	N/A[5]	N/A[5]
Category 2: Residences and buildings where people normally sleep.	72 VdB	75 VdB	80 VdB	35 dBA	38 dBA	43 dBA
Category 3: Institutional land uses with primarily daytime use.	75 VdB	78 VdB	83 VdB	40 dBA	43 dBA	48 dBA

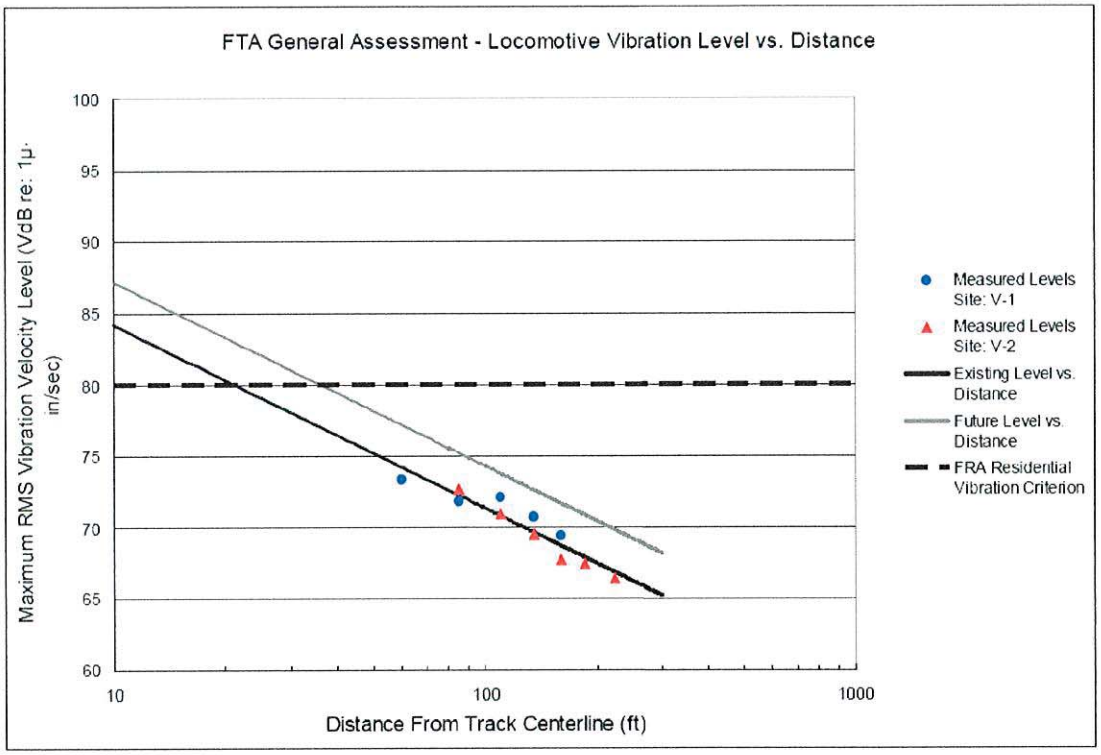
Notes:
1. "Frequent Events" is defined as more than 70 vibration events of the same source per day. Most rapid transit projects fall into this category.
2. "Occasional Events" is defined as between 30 and 70 vibration events of the same source per day. Most commuter trunk lines have this many operations.
3. "Infrequent Events" is defined as fewer than 30 vibration events of the same kind per day. This category includes most commuter rail branch lines.
4. This criterion limit is based on levels that are acceptable for most moderately sensitive equipment such as optical microscopes. Vibration sensitive manufacturing or research will require detailed evaluation to define the acceptable vibration levels. Ensuring lower vibration levels in a building often requires special design of the HVAC systems and stiffened floors.
5. Vibration-sensitive equipment is generally not sensitive to ground-borne noise.

Source: FTA, May 2006.

The vibration impact assessment was carried out in accordance with FTA methodology for a "General Noise Analysis" using project data defined in the Noise Section. The potential vibration impacts of the project are related primarily to the increased in maximum operating design speed in the corridor (10 to 25 mph). The following are project assumptions used in the impact analysis for the vibration assessment:

Based on measurements conducted in Alaska during the summer and winter, there is some variation in vibration levels for efficient soil types, such as peat or clay. This variation results in lower vibration levels in the winter, as compared with the summer. However, for typical soil conditions, which the measurements indicate existing in the MN&S corridor, the vibration levels are the same during the summer and winter.

Exhibit 3. Vibration Measurement Results and Projections



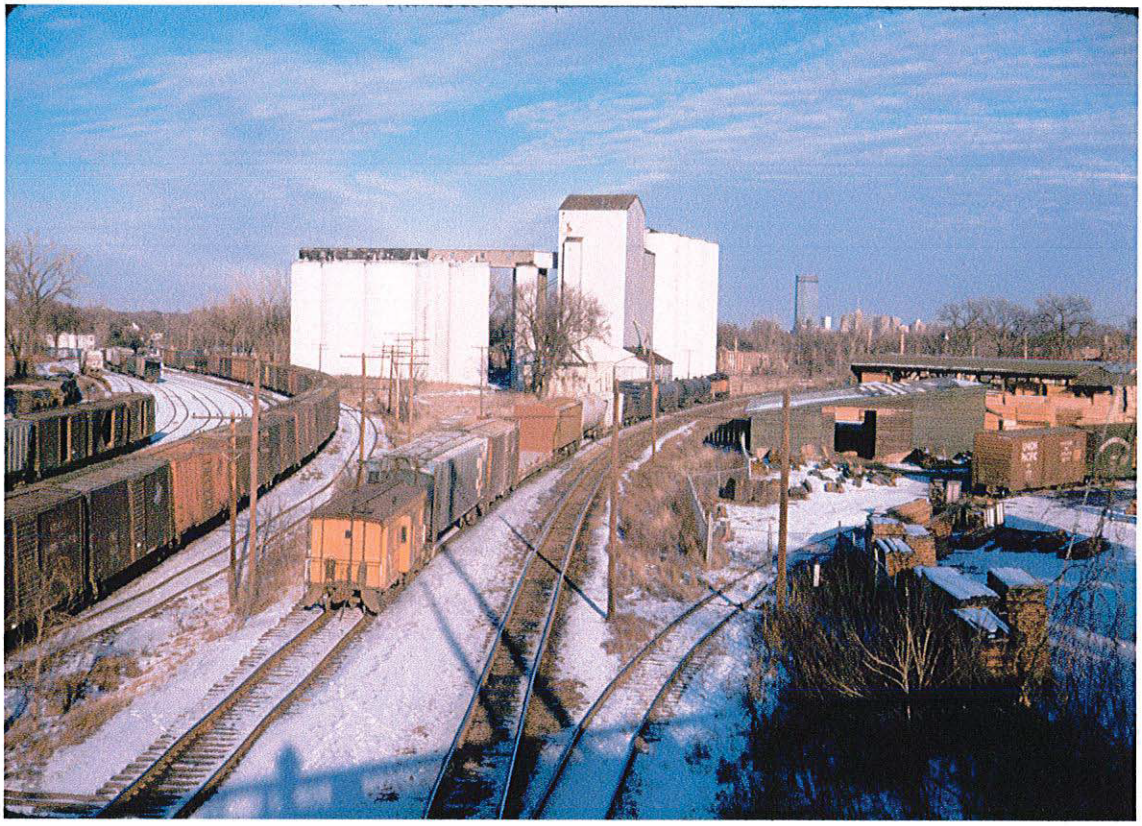
Impacts

The vibration assessment assumed an increase in speed from 10 to 25 mph along with an improvement from jointed rail to continuously welded rail, which will lower vibration levels by 5 VdB. The results of the vibration analysis indicate that locomotive vibration levels of 80 VdB (the impact criterion for infrequent events) would be experienced up to 40 feet from the tracks and that rail car vibration levels of 75 VdB (the impact criterion for occasional events) would also be experienced up to 40 feet from the tracks. There is only one building, an apartment above a business at the southern end of the corridor, which is located within 40 feet of the tracks (**Figure 11**).

Mitigation: Area "B"

There is one location identified with vibration impact on the MN&S Spur. The building identified with impact appears to be a mixed use building with an apartment above a welding shop. A more detailed analysis of this building would need to be conducted to determine if there would be a vibration impact. If impact is identified, potential mitigation measured would be assessed

Comment #433



Picture taken from the Lake Street Bridge looking east in the late 1970's.

SOUTHWEST LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT – DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

RESPONSE FROM:

Jami Ann and Joseph LaPray

VED
DEC 28 2012
BY:

December 28, 2012

December 28, 2012

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

To Whom It May Concern:

Almost fifteen years ago we became involved in the effort to stop the proposed freight rail re-route. We started small, writing letters to our elected officials and commenting during the scoping of the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) project. Each time we commented we were ignored or told the relocation of freight will make someone else's life easier. We were dismayed at the lack of concern our elected officials had for the residents of St. Louis Park and we vowed to continue to work toward a resolution that would preserve our safety, our home and our community.

We have been told, "There are always people who are unhappy about big projects." Our opposition to the placement of the freight rail traffic is not about being unhappy; it is about the safety and well being of the residents of St. Louis Park. The Minneapolis, Northfield and Southern (MN&S) rail line designated for the freight rail re-route was not designed to accommodate the volume of traffic that would come with the re-route and there is no practical way to rebuild the line to make it as safe as the current freight rail route through the Kenilworth Corridor.

The photograph on the cover page of this comment is of the Kenilworth Corridor when it was known as the Kenwood Yard. What Hennepin County alleges to be a "pinch point", where freight rail tracks and SWLRT tracks and a bicycle path can't be squeezed in, is to the left of the grain elevator in the 1978 photograph where seven sets of railroad tracks can be counted. The multiple railroad tracks and the number of trains in the photograph demonstrate that the site was built for high volumes of heavy freight. Although the community has encroached on the former railroad yard in the last 30 years, it is still a straighter, shorter, flatter and safer rail corridor than the MN&S and can accommodate both SWLRT and freight traffic with relatively little effort or expense.

Finally, the current SWLRT, Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) is just another in a long line of incomplete studies done by Hennepin County to justify their plan to move freight rail traffic from the Kenilworth Corridor to the MN&S. For the last 15 years it has been obvious that increasing freight rail traffic on the MN&S is dangerous and an objective analysis that evaluates the MN&S properly will determine that the co-location of freight traffic and the SWLRT is the only safe way for LRT to move forward.

Attached to this letter is a CD of the SWLRT-DEIS comment prepared by the community group, Safety in the Park. The conclusions drawn by the Safety in the Park Steering Committee accurately reflect our concerns. Please review the contents of the CD and comment accordingly.

Thank you,

Jami Ann and Joseph LaPray

Comment #435

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

The proposed action of re-routing freight is described in Chapter 1, Section 1.3.2.3. The MN&S Spur tracks are a lightly used spur line within a high density urban, residential setting and directly adjacent to the St Louis Park Senior High. The current freight occurs five days a week, Monday- Friday, during normal business hours. The proposed action of re-routing freight would introduce mainline traffic and the community, residents, and students will be exposed to longer, heavier trains during weekends, evenings, and nighttime. In detail, the re-route will allow a 788% increase of rail cars traffic. The increase of freight exposure will directly and negatively impact the community health and cohesion of the neighbors adjacent to the tracks. In addition, there will be negative impacts to the school system and educational quality within St Louis Park, including the decreased safety of students at the High School.

Besides my general concerns about the freight rail re-route, the section of the SWLRT DEIS that describes the noise and vibration has flawed methods and conclusions. The vibration and the noise measurements were done with current MN&S traffic. It is important to note that the re-routed freight will be longer, more frequent, and include more locomotives per train.

Vibration, Chapter 4.8.4: The conclusion that vibration will have no significant impacts is incorrect Vibration impacts will be longer in time and the total amount will increase with the heavier freight and additional locomotives.

Noise, Chapter 4.7.5:

Quiet zones: The DEIS fails to describe the real world issues with the quiet zone. The SLP Senior High is both bookended by two blind curves and has athletic facilities on both sides of the tracks. The operating rail company, TC&W, has stated in a public document that it has safety concerns with a quiet zone due to the proximity of the tracks to schools, residents, and businesses. It will be impossible to design a quiet zone that will be both safe for the area while maintaining access for the adjacent Senior High school and local businesses. The quiet zone is listed as mitigation for noise impacts but it is a mitigation that is not supported by the neighborhoods, school board, or the operating rail companies.

A quiet zone will not eliminate all noise impacts and the assessment fails to measure other sources:

a. the rail to wheel curve squeal from the tight interconnect curve
b. the additional noise of the locomotives as it throttles up both the southern interconnect ramp and grade change at the northern connection,
c. trains traveling west will need to use their brakes to maintain a slow speed going down grade and through curves
d. diminished livability from the introduction of night freight traffic
e. the amount of time exposed to the noise impacts of the stationary crossing bells will increase significantly due to increase in train numbers.

The re-routing of freight will negatively impact the safety, livability, and community cohesion of residents, students, and communities. The SWLRT DEIS does not adequately describe the impacts and as such, the freight reroute should not be given any further consideration as an option.

Name: Chris Maurer

To Whom It May Concern:

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 the closing of the 29th street crossings (Chapter 3/p. 135) causes me the greatest concern. Residents from the Birchwood neighborhood requested on behalf of the Birchwood neighborhood that the grade crossing at 29th Street stay open. According to page 135 of the DEIS the 29th street crossing is being closed as a mitigation measure. However, the closing of the crossing will not benefit the neighborhood; it will, in fact, jeopardize residents because it will make emergency vehicle access difficult—if not impossible—during winter months due to narrowed streets.

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: Chris Maurer

To Whom It May Concern:

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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.

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.

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Besides my general concerns about the SWLRT-DEIS, the portion of the report dealing with freight rail noise and safety at the High School (Chapters 3, 4, and 9) causes me the greatest concern. The unique noise and safety issues associated with locating main line freight within 35 feet of the High School parking lot and 75 feet from the building are not adequately discussed. When the High School is mentioned the information is dismissive. At no point in the SWLRT –DEIS are the negative impacts the extra freight trains will have on the learning environment and safety of the students at St. Louis Park High School. Before the proposed re-route should even be considered the cost of sufficiently mitigating the impact to St. Louis Park High School need to be evaluated.
Examples of concerns include but are not limited to the following:

- A plan for emergency evacuation of the school should evacuation be necessary when a train is passing
- How will the many classrooms affected by train noise be sound proofed
- How will the students who want to use the new rail bridge to cross Hwy. 7 on their way to school be kept off the bridge.
- How will the added vibration of longer, heavier and more frequent trains be mitigated to the investment the school makes in technology is not lost.
- How will the safety hazards of blind crossings, curves and hundreds of teenagers in close proximity be eliminated
- How will a derailment be prevented so our children's lives are not at risk

None of the mitigation requested by the City of St. Louis Park or the St. Louis Park School Board 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: Chris Maurer

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Besides my general concerns about the SWLRT-DEIS, the portion of the report dealing with freight rail trains blocking street crossings (6-38 and 39) causes me the greatest concern. In the SWLRT-DEIS we are told the blocked crossings will not cause significant travel or safety issues. To the consultant sitting miles away the increase may seem insignificant, but to residents who must travel the area and rely on quick responses from emergency vehicles the 580% increase in blocked crossing time is unacceptable.

A supposed benefit of the proposed re-route is explained in chapter 1, pages 11 and 12 of the SWLRT-DEIS. According to the document Twin City and Western (TCW) freight trains will regularly travel north of St. Louis Park into Golden Valley, Crystal and New Hope. When the trains travel north they will have to cross Cedar Lake Road; however, no data is given for the impact of this blocked crossing.

Issues about blocked crossings not dealt with in the SWLRT-DEIS include, but are not limited to the following:

- Effects of multiple blocked crossings on residents' ability to move freely about their neighborhood
- Amount of time it takes congestion to clear once a train has passed.
    - Making turns from one street to another with backed up traffic
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- Possibility that trains will be going slower than the "worst case scenario" in the EAW – Trains often stop at McDonald's for train crews to have a break. When they resume travel they will NOT be going 10 mph.
- Medical response times can be affected
    - Narrow side streets will be blocked with waiting automobiles
    - Only one fire station has medical response
- When train volumes increase what will be done to alleviate auto traffic congestion

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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.

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To whom it may concern:

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,

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Besides my general concerns about the SWLRT-DEIS, the portion of the report dealing with loss of property value in the re-route area should be in Chapter 9: Indirect Impacts, but it is not, and this causes me great concern. The SWLRT-DEIS does not mention the impact of re-routed freight trains from a main line fright corridor to a bridge line on property values of the re-route area. Freight rail re-routes are not exclusive to Minnesota and the cost of the re-routes to residents has been documented. For example, according to an article in a 2001 issue of The Appraisal Journal bringing additional freight rail traffic to an area will negatively affect properties 250' feet from the rail tracks by 5-7%. All of the properties along the MN&S are well with in 250'. Based on this article one can conclude that property values along the MN&S will drop more than 7%. Two major questions arise that are not addressed in the SWLRT-DEIS. First, what happens to the tax base of St. Louis Park when the drop in value is realized? Second, how are property owners who lose value because of this government action going to be compensated for their loss? It is unreasonable for the Hennepin County to ask any resident to pay a higher price for the benefits of light rail than others.

Name: Chris Maurer

Chris Mauerer

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

Comment #436

To whom it may concern:

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.

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Minneapolis, MN 55415

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Name: [signature]

Anthony Shaw

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

Comment #438

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Name: Gary Wadtke

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Name: Gary Wadtke

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

Comment #439

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Name: Terri Arquero

Terri Arguijo

RECEIVED
DEC 28 2012
BY:

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

Comment #440

To Whom It May Concern:

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 cars traffic. What the SWLRT-DEIS does not address, but should, are the real world impacts of this action on the affected area.

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Name: Michael Kottke

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

The proposed action of re-routing freight is described in Chapter 1, Section 1.3.2.3. The MN&S Spur tracks are a lightly used spur line within a high density urban, residential setting and directly adjacent to the St Louis Park Senior High. The current freight occurs five days a week, Monday- Friday, during normal business hours. The proposed action of re-routing freight would introduce mainline traffic and the community, residents, and students will be exposed to longer, heavier trains during weekends, evenings, and nighttime. In detail, the re-route will allow a 788% increase of rail cars traffic. The increase of freight exposure will directly and negatively impact the community health and cohesion of the neighbors adjacent to the tracks. In addition, there will be negative impacts to the school system and educational quality within St Louis Park, including the decreased safety of students at the High School.

Besides my general concerns about the freight rail re-route, the section of the SWLRT DEIS that describes the noise and vibration has flawed methods and conclusions. The vibration and the noise measurements were done with current MN&S traffic. It is important to note that the re-routed freight will be longer, more frequent, and include more locomotives per train.

Vibration, Chapter 4.8.4: The conclusion that vibration will have no significant impacts is incorrect Vibration impacts will be longer in time and the total amount will increase with the heavier freight and additional locomotives.

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Quiet zones: The DEIS fails to describe the real world issues with the quiet zone. The SLP Senior High is both bookended by two blind curves and has athletic facilities on both sides of the tracks. The operating rail company, TC&W, has stated in a public document that it has safety concerns with a quiet zone due to the proximity of the tracks to schools, residents, and businesses. It will be impossible to design a quiet zone that will be both safe for the area while maintaining access for the adjacent Senior High school and local businesses. The quiet zone is listed as mitigation for noise impacts but it is a mitigation that is not supported by the neighborhoods, school board, or the operating rail companies.

A quiet zone will not eliminate all noise impacts and the assessment fails to measure other sources:

a. the rail to wheel curve squeal from the tight interconnect curve
b. the additional noise of the locomotives as it throttles up both the southern interconnect ramp and grade change at the northern connection,
c. trains traveling west will need to use their brakes to maintain a slow speed going down grade and through curves
d. diminished livability from the introduction of night freight traffic
e. the amount of time exposed to the noise impacts of the stationary crossing bells will increase significantly due to increase in train numbers.

The re-routing of freight will negatively impact the safety, livability, and community cohesion of residents, students, and communities. The SWLRT DEIS does not adequately describe the impacts and as such, the freight reroute should not be given any further consideration as an option.

Name: Michael Kotke

Michael Kotke

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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: Michael Kottke

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Examples of concerns include but are not limited to the following:

- A plan for emergency evacuation of the school should evacuation be necessary when a train is passing
- How will the many classrooms affected by train noise be sound proofed
- How will the students who want to use the new rail bridge to cross Hwy. 7 on their way to school be kept off the bridge.
- How will the added vibration of longer, heavier and more frequent trains be mitigated to the investment the school makes in technology is not lost.
- How will the safety hazards of blind crossings, curves and hundreds of teenagers in close proximity be eliminated
- How will a derailment be prevented so our children's lives are not at risk

None of the mitigation requested by the City of St. Louis Park or the St. Louis Park School Board 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.

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A supposed benefit of the proposed re-route is explained in chapter 1, pages 11 and 12 of the SWLRT-DEIS. According to the document Twin City and Western (TCW) freight trains will regularly travel north of St. Louis Park into Golden Valley, Crystal and New Hope. When the trains travel north they will have to cross Cedar Lake Road; however, no data is given for the impact of this blocked crossing.

Issues about blocked crossings not dealt with in the SWLRT-DEIS include, but are not limited to the following:

- Effects of multiple blocked crossings on residents' ability to move freely about their neighborhood
- Amount of time it takes congestion to clear once a train has passed.
    - Making turns from one street to another with backed up traffic
    - Pedestrian safety as traffic clears
- Possibility that trains will be going slower than the "worst case scenario" in the EAW – Trains often stop at McDonald's for train crews to have a break. When they resume travel they will NOT be going 10 mph.
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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.

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: Michael Kottke

Michael Kottke

RECEIVED
DEC 28 2012
BY:

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

Comment #441

To Whom It May Concern:

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.

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Besides my general concerns about the SWLRT-DEIS, the portion of the report dealing with loss of property value in the re-route area should be in Chapter 9: Indirect Impacts, but it is not, and this causes me great concern. The SWLRT-DEIS does not mention the impact of re-routed freight trains from a main line fright corridor to a bridge line on property values of the re-route area. Freight rail re-routes are not exclusive to Minnesota and the cost of the re-routes to residents has been documented. For example, according to an article in a 2001 issue of The Appraisal Journal bringing additional freight rail traffic to an area will negatively affect properties 250' feet from the rail tracks by 5-7%. All of the properties along the MN&S are well with in 250'. Based on this article one can conclude that property values along the MN&S will drop more than 7%. Two major questions arise that are not addressed in the SWLRT-DEIS. First, what happens to the tax base of St. Louis Park when the drop in value is realized? Second, how are property owners who lose value because of this government action going to be compensated for their loss? It is unreasonable for the Hennepin County to ask any resident to pay a higher price for the benefits of light rail than others.

Name: Lois Gibbs

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

The proposed action of re-routing freight is described in Chapter 1, Section 1.3.2.3. The MN&S Spur tracks are a lightly used spur line within a high density urban, residential setting and directly adjacent to the St Louis Park Senior High. The current freight occurs five days a week, Monday- Friday, during normal business hours. The proposed action of re-routing freight would introduce mainline traffic and the community, residents, and students will be exposed to longer, heavier trains during weekends, evenings, and nighttime. In detail, the re-route will allow a 788% increase of rail cars traffic. The increase of freight exposure will directly and negatively impact the community health and cohesion of the neighbors adjacent to the tracks. In addition, there will be negative impacts to the school system and educational quality within St Louis Park, including the decreased safety of students at the High School.

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Besides my general concerns about the SWLRT-DEIS, the portion of the report dealing with the closing of the 29th street crossings (Chapter 3/p. 135) causes me the greatest concern. Residents from the Birchwood neighborhood requested on behalf of the Birchwood neighborhood that the grade crossing at 29th Street stay open. According to page 135 of the DEIS the 29th street crossing is being closed as a mitigation measure. However, the closing of the crossing will not benefit the neighborhood; it will, in fact, jeopardize residents because it will make emergency vehicle access difficult—if not impossible—during winter months due to narrowed streets.

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.

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Name: Lois Gibbs

Lois Gibbs

RECEIVED
DEC 28 2012
BY:

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

Comment #442

To Whom It May Concern:

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 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 freight rail noise and safety at the High School (Chapters 3, 4, and 9) causes me the greatest concern. The unique noise and safety issues associated with locating main line freight within 35 feet of the High School parking lot and 75 feet from the building are not adequately discussed. When the High School is mentioned the information is dismissive. At no point in the SWLRT –DEIS are the negative impacts the extra freight trains will have on the learning environment and safety of the students at St. Louis Park High School. Before the proposed re-route should even be considered the cost of sufficiently mitigating the impact to St. Louis Park High School need to be evaluated.
Examples of concerns include but are not limited to the following:

- A plan for emergency evacuation of the school should evacuation be necessary when a train is passing
- How will the many classrooms affected by train noise be sound proofed
- How will the students who want to use the new rail bridge to cross Hwy. 7 on their way to school be kept off the bridge.
- How will the added vibration of longer, heavier and more frequent trains be mitigated to the investment the school makes in technology is not lost.
- How will the safety hazards of blind crossings, curves and hundreds of teenagers in close proximity be eliminated
- How will a derailment be prevented so our children's lives are not at risk

None of the mitigation requested by the City of St. Louis Park or the St. Louis Park School Board 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: Steve Shan

Address: [redacted]

City/State/z

Telephone: [redacted]

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Besides my general concerns about the freight rail re-route, the section of the SWLRT DEIS that describes the noise and vibration has flawed methods and conclusions. The vibration and the noise measurements were done with current MN&S traffic. It is important to note that the re-routed freight will be longer, more frequent, and include more locomotives per train.

Vibration, Chapter 4.8.4: The conclusion that vibration will have no significant impacts is incorrect Vibration impacts will be longer in time and the total amount will increase with the heavier freight and additional locomotives.

Noise, Chapter 4.7.5:

Quiet zones: The DEIS fails to describe the real world issues with the quiet zone. The SLP Senior High is both bookended by two blind curves and has athletic facilities on both sides of the tracks. The operating rail company, TC&W, has stated in a public document that it has safety concerns with a quiet zone due to the proximity of the tracks to schools, residents, and businesses. It will be impossible to design a quiet zone that will be both safe for the area while maintaining access for the adjacent Senior High school and local businesses. The quiet zone is listed as mitigation for noise impacts but it is a mitigation that is not supported by the neighborhoods, school board, or the operating rail companies.

A quiet zone will not eliminate all noise impacts and the assessment fails to measure other sources:

a. the rail to wheel curve squeal from the tight interconnect curve
b. the additional noise of the locomotives as it throttles up both the southern interconnect ramp and grade change at the northern connection,
c. trains traveling west will need to use their brakes to maintain a slow speed going down grade and through curves
d. diminished livability from the introduction of night freight traffic
e. the amount of time exposed to the noise impacts of the stationary crossing bells will increase significantly due to increase in train numbers.

The re-routing of freight will negatively impact the safety, livability, and community cohesion of residents, students, and communities. The SWLRT DEIS does not adequately describe the impacts and as such, the freight reroute should not be given any further consideration as an option.

Name: Steve Shaw

Address: [illegible]

City/Stat

Telephor

Steve Shaw

RECEIVED
DEC 28 2012
BY:

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

Comment #443

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Besides my general concerns about the SWLRT-DEIS, the portion of the report dealing with freight rail trains blocking street crossings (6-38 and 39) causes me the greatest concern. In the SWLRT-DEIS we are told the blocked crossings will not cause significant travel or safety issues. To the consultant sitting miles away the increase may seem insignificant, but to residents who must travel the area and rely on quick responses from emergency vehicles the 580% increase in blocked crossing time is unacceptable.

A supposed benefit of the proposed re-route is explained in chapter 1, pages 11 and 12 of the SWLRT-DEIS. According to the document Twin City and Western (TCW) freight trains will regularly travel north of St. Louis Park into Golden Valley, Crystal and New Hope. When the trains travel north they will have to cross Cedar Lake Road; however, no data is given for the impact of this blocked crossing.

Issues about blocked crossings not dealt with in the SWLRT-DEIS include, but are not limited to the following:

- Effects of multiple blocked crossings on residents' ability to move freely about their neighborhood
- Amount of time it takes congestion to clear once a train has passed.
    - Making turns from one street to another with backed up traffic
    - Pedestrian safety as traffic clears
- Possibility that trains will be going slower than the "worst case scenario" in the EAW – Trains often stop at McDonald's for train crews to have a break. When they resume travel they will NOT be going 10 mph.
- Medical response times can be affected
    - Narrow side streets will be blocked with waiting automobiles
    - Only one fire station has medical response
- When train volumes increase what will be done to alleviate auto traffic congestion

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: Scott Wyberg

To Whom It May Concern:

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.

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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.

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Besides my general concerns about the SWLRT-DEIS, the portion of the report dealing with loss of property value in the re-route area should be in Chapter 9: Indirect Impacts, but it is not, and this causes me great concern. The SWLRT-DEIS does not mention the impact of re-routed freight trains from a main line fright corridor to a bridge line on property values of the re-route area. Freight rail re-routes are not exclusive to Minnesota and the cost of the re-routes to residents has been documented. For example, according to an article in a 2001 issue of The Appraisal Journal bringing additional freight rail traffic to an area will negatively affect properties 250' feet from the rail tracks by 5-7%. All of the properties along the MN&S are well with in 250'. Based on this article one can conclude that property values along the MN&S will drop more than 7%. Two major questions arise that are not addressed in the SWLRT-DEIS. First, what happens to the tax base of St. Louis Park when the drop in value is realized? Second, how are property owners who lose value because of this government action going to be compensated for their loss? It is unreasonable for the Hennepin County to ask any resident to pay a higher price for the benefits of light rail than others.

Name: Scott Wyberg

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The re-routing of freight will negatively impact the safety, livability, and community cohesion of residents, students, and communities. The SWLRT DEIS does not adequately describe the impacts and as such, the freight reroute should not be given any further consideration as an option.

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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.

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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.

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Name: Scott Wyberg

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

Comment #444

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Name: BRAD ARMSTRONG

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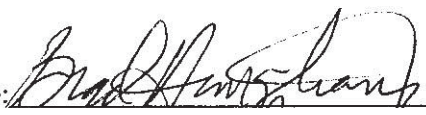
Thank You,

Name: 

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The proposed action of re-routing freight is described in Chapter 1, Section 1.3.2.3. The MN&S Spur tracks are a lightly used spur line within a high density urban, residential setting and directly adjacent to the St Louis Park Senior High. The current freight occurs five days a week, Monday- Friday, during normal business hours. The proposed action of re-routing freight would introduce mainline traffic and the community, residents, and students will be exposed to longer, heavier trains during weekends, evenings, and nighttime. In detail, the re-route will allow a 788% increase of rail cars traffic. The increase of freight exposure will directly and negatively impact the community health and cohesion of the neighbors adjacent to the tracks. In addition, there will be negative impacts to the school system and educational quality within St Louis Park, including the decreased safety of students at the High School.

Besides my general concerns about the freight rail re-route, the section of the SWLRT DEIS that describes the noise and vibration has flawed methods and conclusions. The vibration and the noise measurements were done with current MN&S traffic. It is important to note that the re-routed freight will be longer, more frequent, and include more locomotives per train.

Vibration, Chapter 4.8.4: The conclusion that vibration will have no significant impacts is incorrect Vibration impacts will be longer in time and the total amount will increase with the heavier freight and additional locomotives.

Noise, Chapter 4.7.5:

Quiet zones: The DEIS fails to describe the real world issues with the quiet zone. The SLP Senior High is both bookended by two blind curves and has athletic facilities on both sides of the tracks. The operating rail company, TC&W, has stated in a public document that it has safety concerns with a quiet zone due to the proximity of the tracks to schools, residents, and businesses. It will be impossible to design a quiet zone that will be both safe for the area while maintaining access for the adjacent Senior High school and local businesses. The quiet zone is listed as mitigation for noise impacts but it is a mitigation that is not supported by the neighborhoods, school board, or the operating rail companies.

A quiet zone will not eliminate all noise impacts and the assessment fails to measure other sources:

a. the rail to wheel curve squeal from the tight interconnect curve
b. the additional noise of the locomotives as it throttles up both the southern interconnect ramp and grade change at the northern connection,
c. trains traveling west will need to use their brakes to maintain a slow speed going down grade and through curves
d. diminished livability from the introduction of night freight traffic
e. the amount of time exposed to the noise impacts of the stationary crossing bells will increase significantly due to increase in train numbers.

The re-routing of freight will negatively impact the safety, livability, and community cohesion of residents, students, and communities. The SWLRT DEIS does not adequately describe the impacts and as such, the freight reroute should not be given any further consideration as an option.

Name: BRAD ARMSTRONG

To Whom It May Concern:

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.

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A supposed benefit of the proposed re-route is explained in chapter 1, pages 11 and 12 of the SWLRT-DEIS. According to the document Twin City and Western (TCW) freight trains will regularly travel north of St. Louis Park into Golden Valley, Crystal and New Hope. When the trains travel north they will have to cross Cedar Lake Road; however, no data is given for the impact of this blocked crossing.

Issues about blocked crossings not dealt with in the SWLRT-DEIS include, but are not limited to the following:

- Effects of multiple blocked crossings on residents' ability to move freely about their neighborhood
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Name: BRAD ARMSTRONG

Brad Armstrong

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

Comment #445

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The re-routing of freight will negatively impact the safety, livability, and community cohesion of residents, students, and communities. The SWLRT DEIS does not adequately describe the impacts and as such, the freight reroute should not be given any further consideration as an option.

Name: Michele Maurer

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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: Michele Maurer

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Besides my general concerns about the SWLRT-DEIS, the portion of the report dealing with loss of property value in the re-route area should be in Chapter 9: Indirect Impacts, but it is not, and this causes me great concern. The SWLRT-DEIS does not mention the impact of re-routed freight trains from a main line fright corridor to a bridge line on property values of the re-route area. Freight rail re-routes are not exclusive to Minnesota and the cost of the re-routes to residents has been documented. For example, according to an article in a 2001 issue of The Appraisal Journal bringing additional freight rail traffic to an area will negatively affect properties 250' feet from the rail tracks by 5-7%. All of the properties along the MN&S are well with in 250'. Based on this article one can conclude that property values along the MN&S will drop more than 7%. Two major questions arise that are not addressed in the SWLRT-DEIS. First, what happens to the tax base of St. Louis Park when the drop in value is realized? Second, how are property owners who lose value because of this government action going to be compensated for their loss? It is unreasonable for the Hennepin County to ask any resident to pay a higher price for the benefits of light rail than others.

Name: Michele Maurer

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Name: M Maurer

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Name: Michele Maurer

To Whom It May Concern:

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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.

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: Michael Maurer

To Whom It May Concern:

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Besides my general concerns about the SWLRT-DEIS, the portion of the report dealing with freight rail noise and safety at the High School (Chapters 3, 4, and 9) causes me the greatest concern. The unique noise and safety issues associated with locating main line freight within 35 feet of the High School parking lot and 75 feet from the building are not adequately discussed. When the High School is mentioned the information is dismissive. At no point in the SWLRT –DEIS are the negative impacts the extra freight trains will have on the learning environment and safety of the students at St. Louis Park High School. Before the proposed re-route should even be considered the cost of sufficiently mitigating the impact to St. Louis Park High School need to be evaluated.
Examples of concerns include but are not limited to the following:

- A plan for emergency evacuation of the school should evacuation be necessary when a train is passing
- How will the many classrooms affected by train noise be sound proofed
- How will the students who want to use the new rail bridge to cross Hwy. 7 on their way to school be kept off the bridge.
- How will the added vibration of longer, heavier and more frequent trains be mitigated to the investment the school makes in technology is not lost.
- How will the safety hazards of blind crossings, curves and hundreds of teenagers in close proximity be eliminated
- How will a derailment be prevented so our children's lives are not at risk

None of the mitigation requested by the City of St. Louis Park or the St. Louis Park School Board 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: Michele Maurer

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

Concerns:
- noise, noise, noise
- vibrations affecting structures
- cross-walks + public safety
- traffic delays
- change in traffic flow
- pollution if derailment occurs
- exit strategies for neighborhoods if derailment occurs
- loss of property value w/in +/- 4 block perimeter of rail
- distraction in classroom (noise)

Name: M. Michele Maurer

Thank you!

To Whom It May Concern:

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.

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Besides my general concerns about the SWLRT-DEIS, the portion of the report dealing with the closing of the 29th street crossings (Chapter 3/p. 135) causes me the greatest concern. Residents from the Birchwood neighborhood requested on behalf of the Birchwood neighborhood that the grade crossing at 29th Street stay open. According to page 135 of the DEIS the 29th street crossing is being closed as a mitigation measure. However, the closing of the crossing will not benefit the neighborhood; it will, in fact, jeopardize residents because it will make emergency vehicle access difficult—if not impossible—during winter months due to narrowed streets.

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Name: Michele Maurer

Michele Maurer

RECEIVED
DEC 28 2012
BY:

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

Comment #446

To whom it may concern:

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Thank You,

Name: Elizabeth A. Wukra

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Name: Elizabeth A. Wubera

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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.

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: Elizabeth A. Wyberg

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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 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 freight rail noise and safety at the High School (Chapters 3, 4, and 9) causes me the greatest concern. The unique noise and safety issues associated with locating main line freight within 35 feet of the High School parking lot and 75 feet from the building are not adequately discussed. When the High School is mentioned the information is dismissive. At no point in the SWLRT –DEIS are the negative impacts the extra freight trains will have on the learning environment and safety of the students at St. Louis Park High School. Before the proposed re-route should even be considered the cost of sufficiently mitigating the impact to St. Louis Park High School need to be evaluated.
Examples of concerns include but are not limited to the following:

- A plan for emergency evacuation of the school should evacuation be necessary when a train is passing
- How will the many classrooms affected by train noise be sound proofed
- How will the students who want to use the new rail bridge to cross Hwy. 7 on their way to school be kept off the bridge.
- How will the added vibration of longer, heavier and more frequent trains be mitigated to the investment the school makes in technology is not lost.
- How will the safety hazards of blind crossings, curves and hundreds of teenagers in close proximity be eliminated
- How will a derailment be prevented so our children's lives are not at risk

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A supposed benefit of the proposed re-route is explained in chapter 1, pages 11 and 12 of the SWLRT-DEIS. According to the document Twin City and Western (TCW) freight trains will regularly travel north of St. Louis Park into Golden Valley, Crystal and New Hope. When the trains travel north they will have to cross Cedar Lake Road; however, no data is given for the impact of this blocked crossing.

Issues about blocked crossings not dealt with in the SWLRT-DEIS include, but are not limited to the following:

- Effects of multiple blocked crossings on residents' ability to move freely about their neighborhood
- Amount of time it takes congestion to clear once a train has passed.
    - Making turns from one street to another with backed up traffic
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- Possibility that trains will be going slower than the "worst case scenario" in the EAW – Trains often stop at McDonald's for train crews to have a break. When they resume travel they will NOT be going 10 mph.
- Medical response times can be affected
    - Narrow side streets will be blocked with waiting automobiles
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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.

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Besides my general concerns about the SWLRT-DEIS, the portion of the report dealing with loss of property value in the re-route area should be in Chapter 9: Indirect Impacts, but it is not, and this causes me great concern. The SWLRT-DEIS does not mention the impact of re-routed freight trains from a main line fright corridor to a bridge line on property values of the re-route area. Freight rail re-routes are not exclusive to Minnesota and the cost of the re-routes to residents has been documented. For example, according to an article in a 2001 issue of The Appraisal Journal bringing additional freight rail traffic to an area will negatively affect properties 250' feet from the rail tracks by 5-7%. All of the properties along the MN&S are well with in 250'. Based on this article one can conclude that property values along the MN&S will drop more than 7%. Two major questions arise that are not addressed in the SWLRT-DEIS. First, what happens to the tax base of St. Louis Park when the drop in value is realized? Second, how are property owners who lose value because of this government action going to be compensated for their loss? It is unreasonable for the Hennepin County to ask any resident to pay a higher price for the benefits of light rail than others.

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The proposed action of re-routing freight is described in Chapter 1, Section 1.3.2.3. The MN&S Spur tracks are a lightly used spur line within a high density urban, residential setting and directly adjacent to the St Louis Park Senior High. The current freight occurs five days a week, Monday- Friday, during normal business hours. The proposed action of re-routing freight would introduce mainline traffic and the community, residents, and students will be exposed to longer, heavier trains during weekends, evenings, and nighttime. In detail, the re-route will allow a 788% increase of rail cars traffic. The increase of freight exposure will directly and negatively impact the community health and cohesion of the neighbors adjacent to the tracks. In addition, there will be negative impacts to the school system and educational quality within St Louis Park, including the decreased safety of students at the High School.

Besides my general concerns about the freight rail re-route, the section of the SWLRT DEIS that describes the noise and vibration has flawed methods and conclusions. The vibration and the noise measurements were done with current MN&S traffic. It is important to note that the re-routed freight will be longer, more frequent, and include more locomotives per train.

Vibration, Chapter 4.8.4: The conclusion that vibration will have no significant impacts is incorrect Vibration impacts will be longer in time and the total amount will increase with the heavier freight and additional locomotives.

Noise, Chapter 4.7.5:

Quiet zones: The DEIS fails to describe the real world issues with the quiet zone. The SLP Senior High is both bookended by two blind curves and has athletic facilities on both sides of the tracks. The operating rail company, TC&W, has stated in a public document that it has safety concerns with a quiet zone due to the proximity of the tracks to schools, residents, and businesses. It will be impossible to design a quiet zone that will be both safe for the area while maintaining access for the adjacent Senior High school and local businesses. The quiet zone is listed as mitigation for noise impacts but it is a mitigation that is not supported by the neighborhoods, school board, or the operating rail companies.

A quiet zone will not eliminate all noise impacts and the assessment fails to measure other sources:

a. the rail to wheel curve squeal from the tight interconnect curve
b. the additional noise of the locomotives as it throttles up both the southern interconnect ramp and grade change at the northern connection,
c. trains traveling west will need to use their brakes to maintain a slow speed going down grade and through curves
d. diminished livability from the introduction of night freight traffic
e. the amount of time exposed to the noise impacts of the stationary crossing bells will increase significantly due to increase in train numbers.

The re-routing of freight will negatively impact the safety, livability, and community cohesion of residents, students, and communities. The SWLRT DEIS does not adequately describe the impacts and as such, the freight reroute should not be given any further consideration as an option.

Name: Elizabeth A Wyberg

Elizabeth Wyberg

RECEIVED
DEC 28 2012
BY:

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

Comment #447

December 27, 2012

To Whom It May Concern:

I want to express my deep disappointment in a document that was supposed to be an objective and fair study of the freight-rail "problem" in the SWLRT DEIS.

I also want to take this opportunity to say, "Shame on Hennepin County" for once again wasting taxpayer money on a bogus report that divulges nothing but selfish, political motives. Shame on them.

My comments are limited to chapter three of the DEIS:

On page 3-19, the DEIS claims that six separate studies "concluded the best option for freight rail operations was to relocate the TC&W freight rail operations on the MN&S line." However, not one of these studies is named or presented.

The chart provided on planned land use (p. 3-27) in the DEIS names three documents (the *Hennepin County Transportation Systems Plan*, the *Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board Comprehensive Plan*, and the *Hennepin County Sustainable Development Strategy*) that demonstrate co-location as incompatible with existing land use. The first link leads to a web page not found, and the latter two to brochure-type documents expressing vision statements about transit possibilities rather than comments about freight operations.

Interestingly, the chart lists re-location of freight as compatible with St. Louis Park's land use plans in spite of the fact that the city's councils have passed four separate resolutions signed by two different mayors over the past two decades opposing rerouting freight from the Kenilworth Corridor to the MN&S. In addition, the DEIS fails to mention the SEH study funded by the city of St. Louis Park that found that the current freight line can co-locate with the proposed LRT, and it can do so more safely and much less expensively. Why aren't St. Louis Park's resolutions included in the DEIS at all? Is it because Hennepin County had no intention of every considering co-location? Is Hennepin County once again misrepresenting (lying about) the freight/LRT situation for the SWLRT project?

On page 3-60, the DEIS claims that relocating freight "would add only a small increase in freight traffic, significant impacts to community cohesion along the MN&S would not be anticipated." This is a bald-faced lie. The types of trains, length, weight, and material carried will change profoundly. This reroute is equivalent to sending highway-level car traffic down a residential

side street. The document itself acknowledges that the six at-grade intersections will be blocked for as long as 18 minutes with the longer unit trains currently running through the Kenilworth Corridor. The fact that five schools are within ½ mile of the MN&S—one as close as 75 feet from the track—should give anyone pause. However, this fact is essentially ignored by the comment that there will not be "significant impacts."

St. Louis Park community cohesion will dramatically change, and it will only bring negative consequences in the form of increased noise, vibrations, safety concerns, blocked intersections and so on. I am disgusted that so much ink has been spilled discussing the way co-location of freight and LRT "may affect the district's [in the Kenilworth corridor] overall feeling and setting"(3-79) in spite of the fact that freight currently runs through the district, yet there is no mention of how relocation will affect the feeling and setting of our neighborhoods in St. Louis Park. This DEIS is fundamentally biased and flawed.

Finally, and most importantly, the DEIS notices that the "increased number of trains" along the reroute "could impact the safety of trail users" near parks. What appalls me is that the DEIS does not discuss the safety impacts on the five schools within a half mile of the MN&S—especially considering that hazardous chemicals like ethanol will be regularly carried by the rerouted trains—chemicals that are not currently carried on the MN&S. Furthermore, the DEIS neglects to mention that rerouted trains will run over Highway 7 and Minnetonka Boulevard—two very busy roadways—and will be above grade for nearly a mile as it passes within 30 feet of homeowners' backyards.

This DEIS is an embarrassment. I am ashamed right now to be a resident of Hennepin County. I am furious that so much money has been used so politically, so carelessly.

The federal government asked for a legitimate study of the freight rail problem. Hennepin County instead resorted to creating a work of fiction. Shame on Hennepin County for such a flagrant violation of public trust.

Sincerely,

Kathryn Kottke

Audubon *Kathrun Kottke*

RECEIVED
DEC 28 2012
BY:

Hennepin County
Housing, Community Works & Transit
ATTN: Southwest Transitway
701 Fourth Avenue So.
Ste 400
Minneapolis, MN 55415

RECEIVED
DEC 2
BY:
Comment #448

To Whom It May Concern:

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 the closing of the 29th street crossings (Chapter 3/p. 135) causes me the greatest concern. Residents from the Birchwood neighborhood requested on behalf of the Birchwood neighborhood that the grade crossing at 29th Street stay open. According to page 135 of the DEIS the 29th street crossing is being closed as a mitigation measure. However, the closing of the crossing will not benefit the neighborhood; it will, in fact, jeopardize residents because it will make emergency vehicle access difficult—if not impossible—during winter months due to narrowed streets.

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: Rachel Raz

RECEIVED
DEC 28 2012
BY:

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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.

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.

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Name: Rachel Raz

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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

RECEIVED
DEC 28 2012
BY:

Rachel Raz

Ms. Rachel Raz

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Name:_____

Address:_____

City/State/zip:_____

Telephone:_____ E-Mail:_____

Ms. Rachel Raz

DEC 28 2012
BY:

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

Name: Rachel Raz

Address: Ms. Rachel Raz

City/State/Zip:

Telephone: Email:

Thank you!

RECEIVED
DEC 28 2012
BY:

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The proposed action of re-routing freight is described in Chapter 1, Section 1.3.2.3. The MN&S Spur tracks are a lightly used spur line within a high density urban, residential setting and directly adjacent to the St Louis Park Senior High. The current freight occurs five days a week, Monday- Friday, during normal business hours. The proposed action of re-routing freight would introduce mainline traffic and the community, residents, and students will be exposed to longer, heavier trains during weekends, evenings, and nighttime. In detail, the re-route will allow a 788% increase of rail cars traffic. The increase of freight exposure will directly and negatively impact the community health and cohesion of the neighbors adjacent to the tracks. In addition, there will be negative impacts to the school system and educational quality within St Louis Park, including the decreased safety of students at the High School.

Besides my general concerns about the freight rail re-route, the section of the SWLRT DEIS that describes the noise and vibration has flawed methods and conclusions. The vibration and the noise measurements were done with current MN&S traffic. It is important to note that the re-routed freight will be longer, more frequent, and include more locomotives per train.

Vibration, Chapter 4.8.4: The conclusion that vibration will have no significant impacts is incorrect Vibration impacts will be longer in time and the total amount will increase with the heavier freight and additional locomotives.

Noise, Chapter 4.7.5:

Quiet zones: The DEIS fails to describe the real world issues with the quiet zone. The SLP Senior High is both bookended by two blind curves and has athletic facilities on both sides of the tracks. The operating rail company, TC&W, has stated in a public document that it has safety concerns with a quiet zone due to the proximity of the tracks to schools, residents, and businesses. It will be impossible to design a quiet zone that will be both safe for the area while maintaining access for the adjacent Senior High school and local businesses. The quiet zone is listed as mitigation for noise impacts but it is a mitigation that is not supported by the neighborhoods, school board, or the operating rail companies.

A quiet zone will not eliminate all noise impacts and the assessment fails to measure other sources:

a. the rail to wheel curve squeal from the tight interconnect curve
b. the additional noise of the locomotives as it throttles up both the southern interconnect ramp and grade change at the northern connection,
c. trains traveling west will need to use their brakes to maintain a slow speed going down grade and through curves
d. diminished livability from the introduction of night freight traffic
e. the amount of time exposed to the noise impacts of the stationary crossing bells will increase significantly due to increase in train numbers.

The re-routing of freight will negatively impact the safety, livability, and community cohesion of residents, students, and communities. The SWLRT DEIS does not adequately describe the impacts and as such, the freight reroute should not be given any further consideration as an option.

Name:_____ Rachel Raz

Address:_____ Ms. Rachel Raz

City/State/zip:_____

Telephone:_____ E-Mail:_____

RECEIVED
DEC 28 2012
BY:

St. Louis Park City Council
5005 Minnetonka Blvd. St. Louis Park, MN 55416
November 2012

Dear _____,

I am writing to inform you that I have written a 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. In my response I have pointed out why I believe the SWLRT-DEIS is flawed and why the MN&S re-route is not a viable alternative.

For months we have heard that the SWLRT – DEIS will look objectively at both Co-location and the proposed re-route. Instead of the promised objective document we received a SWLRT-DEIS that has significant flaws. This document makes sweeping generalizations, glaring omissions, assertions without substantiation and phantom assumptions. Nowhere does the SWLRT-DEIS address the real world impacts of this action will have on the affected area of St. Louis Park. Nowhere in the document is substantive mitigation offered to offset the many safety and livability issues raised by residents.

Until a comprehensive unbiased document is published that establishes the need for the proposed re-route, it is imperative that you enforce St. Louis Park City Council resolution Number 11-58.

Thank you,

Resident of St. Louis Park

Rachel Raz

Ms. Rachel Raz

RECEIVED
DEC 28 2012
BY:

To Whom It May Concern:

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: Rachel Raz

Address: Ms. Rachel Raz

City/State/zip:

Telephone: E-Mail:

Comment #449

RECEIVED
DEC 28 2012
BY:

To Whom It May Concern:

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

The proposed action of re-routing freight is described in Chapter 1, Section 1.3.2.3. The MN&S Spur tracks are a lightly used spur line within a high density urban, residential setting and directly adjacent to the St Louis Park Senior High. The current freight occurs five days a week, Monday- Friday, during normal business hours. The proposed action of re-routing freight would introduce mainline traffic and the community, residents, and students will be exposed to longer, heavier trains during weekends, evenings, and nighttime. In fact, the re-route will allow a 788% increase in the number of rail car traffic in this area. The increase of freight exposure will directly and negatively impact community health, cohesion of the neighborhoods adjacent to the tracks and educational quality within St Louis Park Schools. In addition, there will be negative impacts to the community at large. These impacts include but are not limited to, increased noise and vibration, increase in diesel fumes from laboring locomotives, loss of mobility with when multiple crossing are blocked simultaneously, decreased safety for home owners and students at the High School, decreased access to small businesses and a decrease in tax base caused by lower property values in the affected area.

I oppose the freight rail re-route as outlined in the SWLRT DEIS. I believe it will create an unsafe and unlivable situation for our school children, our local businesses, and our residents.

Thank you,

Name: Linda Richardson-Beaird

A _____

C _____

T

E

Safetyinthepark.org

Comment #450

RECEI
DEC 28 2012
BY:

To Whom It May Concern:

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

The proposed action of re-routing freight is described in Chapter 1, Section 1.3.2.3. The MN&S Spur tracks are a lightly used spur line within a high density urban, residential setting and directly adjacent to the St Louis Park Senior High. The current freight occurs five days a week, Monday- Friday, during normal business hours. The proposed action of re-routing freight would introduce mainline traffic and the community, residents, and students will be exposed to longer, heavier trains during weekends, evenings, and nighttime. In fact, the re-route will allow a 788% increase in the number of rail car traffic in this area. The increase of freight exposure will directly and negatively impact community health, cohesion of the neighborhoods adjacent to the tracks and educational quality within St Louis Park Schools. In addition, there will be negative impacts to the community at large. These impacts include but are not limited to, increased noise and vibration, increase in diesel fumes from laboring locomotives, loss of mobility with when multiple crossing are blocked simultaneously, decreased safety for home owners and students at the High School, decreased access to small businesses and a decrease in tax base caused by lower property values in the affected area.

I oppose the freight rail re-route as outlined in the SWLRT DEIS. I believe it will create an unsafe and unlivable situation for our school children, our local businesses, and our residents.

Thank you,

Signature: Kudith Tera Date: 12/11/12

RECEIVED
DEC 28 2012
BY:

3220 Blackstone
Oaks

Comment #451

To Whom It May Concern:

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

The proposed action of re-routing freight is described in Chapter 1, Section 1.3.2.3. The MN&S Spur tracks are a lightly used spur line within a high density urban, residential setting and directly adjacent to the St Louis Park Senior High. The current freight occurs five days a week, Monday- Friday, during normal business hours. The proposed action of re-routing freight would introduce mainline traffic and the community, residents, and students will be exposed to longer, heavier trains during weekends, evenings, and nighttime. In fact, the re-route will allow a 788% increase in the number of rail car traffic in this area. The increase of freight exposure will directly and negatively impact community health, cohesion of the neighborhoods adjacent to the tracks and educational quality within St Louis Park Schools. In addition, there will be negative impacts to the community at large. These impacts include but are not limited to, increased noise and vibration, increase in diesel fumes from laboring locomotives, loss of mobility with when multiple crossing are blocked simultaneously, decreased safety for home owners and students at the High School, decreased access to small businesses and a decrease in tax base caused by lower property values in the affected area.

I oppose the freight rail re-route as outlined in the SWLRT DEIS. I believe it will create an unsafe and unlivable situation for our school children, our local businesses, and our residents.

Thank you,

Signature: Mary C. Krafft Date: 12/19/12

GIVE BACK TO Judy TERP

Comment #452

RE
DEC 28 2012
BY:

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

The proposed action of re-routing freight is described in Chapter 1, Section 1.3.2.3. The MN&S Spur tracks are a lightly used spur line within a high density urban, residential setting and directly adjacent to the St Louis Park Senior High. The current freight occurs five days a week, Monday- Friday, during normal business hours. The proposed action of re-routing freight would introduce mainline traffic and the community, residents, and students will be exposed to longer, heavier trains during weekends, evenings, and nighttime. In detail, the re-route will allow a 788% increase of rail cars traffic. The increase of freight exposure will directly and negatively impact the community health and cohesion of the neighbors adjacent to the tracks. In addition, there will be negative impacts to the school system and educational quality within St Louis Park, including the decreased safety of students at the High School.

I oppose the freight rail re-route as outlined in the SWLRT DEIS. I believe it will create an unsafe and unlivable situation for our school-children, our local businesses, and our residents.

Name: Kathryn Clayton

Comment #453

RECEIVED
DEC 28 2012
BY:

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

The proposed action of re-routing freight is described in Chapter 1, Section 1.3.2.3. The MN&S Spur tracks are a lightly used spur line within a high density urban, residential setting and directly adjacent to the St Louis Park Senior High. The current freight occurs five days a week, Monday- Friday, during normal business hours. The proposed action of re-routing freight would introduce mainline traffic and the community, residents, and students will be exposed to longer, heavier trains during weekends, evenings, and nighttime. In detail, the re-route will allow a 788% increase of rail cars traffic. The increase of freight exposure will directly and negatively impact the community health and cohesion of the neighbors adjacent to the tracks. In addition, there will be negative impacts to the school system and educational quality within St Louis Park, including the decreased safety of students at the High School.

I oppose the freight rail re-route as outlined in the SWLRT DEIS. I believe it will create an unsafe and unlivable situation for our school-children, our local businesses, and our residents.

Name: BILLY STEVE CLAYTON

RECEIVED
DEC 28 2012
BY:

Comment #454

To Whom It May Concern:

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

The proposed action of re-routing freight is described in Chapter 1, Section 1.3.2.3. The MN&S Spur tracks are a lightly used spur line within a high density urban, residential setting and directly adjacent to the St Louis Park Senior High. The current freight occurs five days a week, Monday- Friday, during normal business hours. The proposed action of re-routing freight would introduce mainline traffic and the community, residents, and students will be exposed to longer, heavier trains during weekends, evenings, and nighttime. In fact, the re-route will allow a 788% increase in the number of rail car traffic in this area. The increase of freight exposure will directly and negatively impact community health, cohesion of the neighborhoods adjacent to the tracks and educational quality within St Louis Park Schools. In addition, there will be negative impacts to the community at large. These impacts include but are not limited to, increased noise and vibration, increase in diesel fumes from laboring locomotives, loss of mobility with when multiple crossing are blocked simultaneously, decreased safety for home owners and students at the High School, decreased access to small businesses and a decrease in tax base caused by lower property values in the affected area.

I oppose the freight rail re-route as outlined in the SWLRT DEIS. I believe it will create an unsafe and unlivable situation for our school children, our local businesses, and our residents.

Thank you,

Name: Lowell and Karen Vickerman Lowell Vickerman Karen Vickerman

Comment #455

RECEIVED
DEC 28 2012
BY:

To Whom It May Concern:

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

The proposed action of re-routing freight is described in Chapter 1, Section 1.3.2.3. The MN&S Spur tracks are a lightly used spur line within a high density urban, residential setting and directly adjacent to the St Louis Park Senior High. The current freight occurs five days a week, Monday- Friday, during normal business hours. The proposed action of re-routing freight would introduce mainline traffic and the community, residents, and students will be exposed to longer, heavier trains during weekends, evenings, and nighttime. In fact, the re-route will allow a 788% increase in the number of rail car traffic in this area. The increase of freight exposure will directly and negatively impact community health, cohesion of the neighborhoods adjacent to the tracks and educational quality within St Louis Park Schools. In addition, there will be negative impacts to the community at large. These impacts include but are not limited to, increased noise and vibration, increase in diesel fumes from laboring locomotives, loss of mobility with when multiple crossing are blocked simultaneously, decreased safety for home owners and students at the High School, decreased access to small businesses and a decrease in tax base caused by lower property values in the affected area.

I oppose the freight rail re-route as outlined in the SWLRT DEIS. I believe it will create an unsafe and unlivable situation for our school children, our local businesses, and our residents.

Thank you,

Name: Greg Lasica Greg LASICA

Comment #456

DEC 28 2012

BY:

To Whom It May Concern:

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

The proposed action of re-routing freight is described in Chapter 1, Section 1.3.2.3. The MN&S Spur tracks are a lightly used spur line within a high density urban, residential setting and directly adjacent to the St Louis Park Senior High. The current freight occurs five days a week, Monday- Friday, during normal business hours. The proposed action of re-routing freight would introduce mainline traffic and the community, residents, and students will be exposed to longer, heavier trains during weekends, evenings, and nighttime. In fact, the re-route will allow a 788% increase in the number of rail car traffic in this area. The increase of freight exposure will directly and negatively impact community health, cohesion of the neighborhoods adjacent to the tracks and educational quality within St Louis Park Schools. In addition, there will be negative impacts to the community at large. These impacts include but are not limited to, increased noise and vibration, increase in diesel fumes from laboring locomotives, loss of mobility with when multiple crossing are blocked simultaneously, decreased safety for home owners and students at the High School, decreased access to small businesses and a decrease in tax base caused by lower property values in the affected area.

I oppose the freight rail re-route as outlined in the SWLRT DEIS. I believe it will create an unsafe and unlivable situation for our school children, our local businesses, and our residents.

Thank you,

Name: Camille Lasica CAMILLE LASICA

Comment #457

RECEIVED
DEC 28 2012
BY:

To Whom It May Concern:

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

The proposed action of re-routing freight is described in Chapter 1, Section 1.3.2.3. The MN&S Spur tracks are a lightly used spur line within a high density urban, residential setting and directly adjacent to the St Louis Park Senior High. The current freight occurs five days a week, Monday- Friday, during normal business hours. The proposed action of re-routing freight would introduce mainline traffic and the community, residents, and students will be exposed to longer, heavier trains during weekends, evenings, and nighttime. In fact, the re-route will allow a 788% increase in the number of rail car traffic in this area. The increase of freight exposure will directly and negatively impact community health, cohesion of the neighborhoods adjacent to the tracks and educational quality within St Louis Park Schools. In addition, there will be negative impacts to the community at large. These impacts include but are not limited to, increased noise and vibration, increase in diesel fumes from laboring locomotives, loss of mobility with when multiple crossing are blocked simultaneously, decreased safety for home owners and students at the High School, decreased access to small businesses and a decrease in tax base caused by lower property values in the affected area.

I oppose the freight rail re-route as outlined in the SWLRT DEIS. I believe it will create an unsafe and unlivable situation for our school children, our local businesses, and our residents.

Thank you,

Signature: _____ Date: 12/1/2012

Name: MARCIE PIETRS & FRED MORGAN

Comment #458

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us
cc
bcc
Subject Comment on SWLRT - DEIS

Thank you for reading the attached letter and including it in the public comment file on the SWLRT - DEIS .

Linda Lott

December 29, 2012

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in response to the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) – Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) which includes the proposed freight rail re-route in St. Louis Park, Minnesota. While I am not in opposition to light rail, I find it hard to believe that this reroute is the most viable option. This reroute - that winds through a community, within 75 feet of a high school, through hundreds of backyards , at a cost that is millions of dollars more expensive (and that is without factoring any mitigation costs which would be necessary just to ensure even the most basic safety and quality of life standards) - is this really the best we can do?

There are existing freight tracks through the Kenilworth Corridor that were designed and built to accommodate freight trains. These tracks are currently used multiple times a day, with minimal safety issues. The existing MN&S tracks through St. Louis Park were not built or designed for the kind of freight traffic being proposed. Multiple grade level crossings, the proximity to several St. Louis Park schools, homes and businesses, the number of pedestrians (mostly school-aged children) who cross the tracks daily, permeable soil under the MN&S line, and many tight curves along the route make this route highly questionable as a viable alternative for redirecting freight traffic.

None of the mitigation requested by the City of St. Louis Park on behalf of the residents are being considered in the DEIS. There is no mention in the DEIS of the negative impact to the quality of life, property values, safety & livability that this reroute would have on the St. Louis Park Community. In fact, there is inaccurate information in the DEIS with regard to noise and vibrations affecting St. Louis Park, as this was done using measurements from the current MN&S traffic which is far less than what the proposed reroute will entail. There is, however, a great deal of emphasis placed on how the current freight traffic affects the residents around the Kenilworth Corridor – which has been home to freight traffic for over one hundred years. Without taking full account of these factors, how can this “draft” even be considered?

We live about five blocks from the MN&S tracks so, while I am not particularly worried about freight trains through my backyard, I do have concerns about property values in the Birchwood neighborhood. However, I can’t imagine living in one of the 500 homes located within a block or two of the tracks and what a 100+ car freight train would sound like coming through my backyard. Or how the teachers at the high school will effectively deal with the horns, vibration and train noise less than 100 feet from their classrooms. I worry about the high school students who cross those tracks - en masse - multiple times a day getting from the school to McDonald’s (just across the tracks). I drop off my son every morning for school and the congestion around

that area is already substantial. What happens when/if a long freight train blocks the crossing for even 5-10 minutes? True, our community was built around those tracks, but tracks that were not built for 100+ car freight traffic.

I had been hearing about the proposed reroute for some time, but until I saw what this looked like on a map, it was incredible to me that this is the best option our Planning Commission can come up with. This DEIS contains so many flaws, omissions and inaccuracies, it is incredible that any informed decisions can be made with this as the template. Until the Commission has all the facts and an accurate assessment of the true costs for this reroute vs. collocation or other viable alternatives, any decisions made will be seen as purely political and a true indication of just how deals are done in Hennepin County.

Thank you for your consideration.

Linda Lott

cc: St. Louis Park City Council

Comment #459

Christopher Cremons

12/29/2012 10:44 AM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us
cc
bcc
Subject Opposed to Southwest Light Rail Transit Proposal

Hello,
I am writing to voice my opposition to the current Southwest Light Rail proposal to route the freight rail traffic through St. Louis Park. Attached is a more detailed explanation of my reasoning.
Sincerely,

Christopher Cremons
--
Christopher Cremons, M.S.

To Whom It May Concern:

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

The proposed action of re-routing freight is described in Chapter 1, Section 1.3.2.3. The MN&S Spur tracks are a lightly used spur line within a high density urban, residential setting and directly adjacent to the St Louis Park Senior High. The current freight occurs five days a week, Monday- Friday, during normal business hours. The proposed action of re-routing freight would introduce mainline traffic and the community, residents, and students will be exposed to longer, heavier trains during weekends, evenings, and nighttime. In fact, the re-route will allow a 788% increase in the number of rail car traffic in this area. The increase of freight exposure will directly and negatively impact community health, cohesion of the neighborhoods adjacent to the tracks and educational quality within St Louis Park Schools. In addition, there will be negative impacts to the community at large. These impacts include but are not limited to, increased noise and vibration, increase in diesel fumes from laboring locomotives, loss of mobility with when multiple crossing are blocked simultaneously, decreased safety for home owners and students at the High School, decreased access to small businesses and a decrease in tax base caused by lower property values in the affected area.

I oppose the freight rail re-route as outlined in the SWLRT DEIS. I believe it will create an unsafe and unlivable situation for our school children, our local businesses, and our residents.

Thank you,

Christopher Cremons

Comment #460

Ken Fairchild

12/29/2012 12:11 PM

To "swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us" <swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>
cc
bcc
Subject Time to Open

Question: Is there any way to speed up when the line will be open? I have to believe that anyone with even limited vision/intelligence will be able to understand the positive impact that the light rail will have. The line will improve livability, access, aesthetics, and property values. A ten minute review of the now extensive transit system in Portland Oregon provide amble evidence of that.

I recommend that the time frame for public review and comment on various phases be shortened or eliminated. I believe that there is evidence to show that it is rare that any value add input comes from this process for transit projects.

My hope is that we can have the line open by 2016, which is already two years longer than I would like to wait.

Best,

Ken Fairchild
Saint Louis Park Resident

Comment #461

12/29/2012 03:21 PM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us
cc
bcc
Subject comment on LRT Draft Environmental Impact Statement

We are writing in response to the LRT draft environmental impact statement. We live across the street from the proposed 21st St. station (2515 W. 21st ST.) The draft environmental impact statement indicates:
Page 3-117

Four at-grade center-track platforms are proposed for each station in the segment. No sensitive receptors, with the exception of the aforementioned trail users, are located adjacent to the station sites; therefore no additional visual impacts are anticipated.

Comment: The study indicates that there will be substantial visual effects on trail users. However it claims that there are no other "sensitive receptors". This is not correct as we would be directly affected both visually and due continuous noise at both the station and the 21st street crossing. Plans for the station and street crossing must take this into account. In addition, this is not correct due to the amount of vibrations our house would receive from the frequent passage of trains. We currently experience the occasional vibratory and minor noise effects of the freight trains, but the light rail passing through this area is scheduled to pass by approximately every 5 minutes, and so this greatly increases the vibratory and noise impacts. We would like to see mitigation for the visual effects of the station, as well as the vibratory and noise effects of the trains. In addition, since the light rail will be stopped right at the street crossing we request that an exception be made to requirements that the train blow its horn and whistle when crossing 21st St, as that will have a clear negative impact on those living directly across from the station. We suggest a traffic light, as we also do not want to hear the constant noise of crossing gates. Finally, the statement also mentioned the possibility of a park and ride at this station stop. This would be against city of Minneapolis policy and clearly inappropriate for this neighborhood. We live in this neighborhood to be surrounded by the beauty of the trees and trails. The proposed station already greatly impacts this naturally beautiful area. A park and ride would further damage this area, and cause an increase in traffic, congestion, and noise.

Sincerely,

Michael Farrar
Marion Collins

Comment #462

Terry Saario

12/29/2012 05:09 PM

To "swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us" <swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>
cc
bcc
Subject FW: Kenilwood Light Rail Project

From: Terry Saario
Date: Saturday, December 29, 2012 4:34 PM
To: "swcorridor@co.hennipen.mn.us" <swcorridor@co.hennipen.mn.us>
Subject: Kenilwood Light Rail Project

To Whom It May Concern: I have lived at for almost 14 years. My husband and I were attracted to this area because of the easy access to walking paths, bicycle paths, the abundance of wild life that share the environment with us, and relative lack of ambient noise and light. While we understand the necessity of dedicating the light rail project to a particular geographical area, we have become increasingly concerned about the level of degradation that the proposed Kenilwood light rail project will create at the intersection of Cedar Lake Parkway and the rails location. The proposed frequency of the trains will result in high volume noise and light disturbance. But I am particularly concerned about the increased noise, vibration, and light disturbance that a bridge over Cedar Lake Parkway would create. I would strongly urge the project planners consider creating a trough or tunnel for the train at that intersection. It would reduce the potential for serious accidents, mitigate noise and light, and do less damage to the environment. This might be the best win-win solution for the project. Thank you for your serious consideration of this suggestion. Terry Saario, 34 Park Lane, Mpls., 55416.

This message contains information which may be confidential and privileged. Unless you are the intended recipient (or authorized to receive this message for the intended recipient), you may not use, copy, disseminate or disclose to anyone the message or any information contained in the message. If you have received the message in error, please advise the sender by reply e-mail, and delete the message. Thank you very much.

Comment #463

Damon Farber

12/29/2012 05:15 PM

Please respond to
Damon Farber

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us

cc

bcc

Subject DEIS comments on SWLRT

From: Damon Farber
Sent: Saturday, December 29, 2012 5:01 PM
Subject: DEIS comments on SWLRT

To whom it may concern:

I previously submitted comments and since that time have found that some corrections and additions are called for. Please disregard previous email and substitute this refinement.

1. ***Chapter 3, Page 3-34, Segment A stipulates that under the co-location Option (LRT 3A-1) three homes on Burnham Road will be taken ("permanently used"). According the DEIS (Chapter 3, page 3-34, Segment A) those homes are" the first three single family homes north of Cedar Lake Parkway along Burnham Road". As many as 57 town homes north of the West Lake Station are also slated for removal. In addition there will be "disturbance" to parkland on the east side of Cedar Lake to accommodate a realigned Burnham Road where it intersects with Cedar Lake Parkway.***

Comment:

I questioned this at the November 13, 2012 open house/public hearing and both the Hennepin County and its engineering representative stated that it was an error that three homes on Burnham Road were to be taken. Rather two homes on Burnham Road (2650 and 2642) and one home on Park Lane (42) were the single family homes being considered for removal under the co-location scenario. There is no text describing any taking of private property on Burnham Road or Park Lane under Option LRT 3A, which assumes that the freight train would be moved to St Louis Park.

2. ***Chapter 11, Page 11-3 of the DEIS indicates 4 properties, including .81 acres of Cedar Lake Park potentially used permanently.***

Comment

Is the .81 acres of park land referenced on page 11-3 the corner north of Cedar Lake Parkway and west of Burnham Road at Cedar Lake Park

In that same table on page 11-3 under the LRT 3A Option it appears that only one property and the historic channel are to be "used" permanently.

Comment:

Is that "one property" a reference to 2650 Burnham Road or is it a reference to Cedar Lake Park? Neither the project engineer nor Hennepin County Community Works and Transit can confirm the addresses in either option. This needs to be clarified. Which properties are being alluded to in the DEIS for Options LRT 3A-1 and LRT 3A?

2. ***Chapter 4, Environmental effects regarding vibration.***

Comment

In October of this year I sent a note to the MPRB and to SW Transit/ Hennepin County Community Works asking for detailed information regarding design options for how the intersection of Cedar Lake Parkway with the Kenilworth Trail might be handled. I also asked for more definitive data on noise and vibration testing specific to that crossing. I was referred to the DEIS which it seems to me does not adequately address these aspects in enough detail to allow for reasonable conclusions. I appreciate that the Final EIS will be less general and have a more detailed scope with greater insight into site specific issues and adverse impacts of the LRT upon affected properties neighborhoods. The Hiawatha LRT corridor can prove a substantive, quantifiable example of what we along the Southwest LRT corridor might expect. As such, any references that addressed real construction and real resultant influences related to social, environmental and transportation impacts along the Hiawatha LRT corridor will be especially helpful for the layman to better understand and anticipate the impacts that will result from both construction and implementation along the SW Kenilworth LRT Corridor.

Vibration both during the construction process and after project completion may have serious ramification on nearby properties. I am obviously concerned about potential structural impacts and cracking to my home at 2650 Burnham Road which is at the corner of Cedar Lake Parkway and Burnham Road, during construction and following project completion. I respectfully request that you provide vibration readings/documentation for all the same locations identified above to ascertain if vibration, along with noise, might be shown from a quantifiable, historical perspective.

3. ***Chapter 4, page 4-84, 4.7.3.4 summari□es the sound e□posure levels used in southwest transitway detailed noise analysis.***

Comment

This does not adequately address existing conditions. Quantitatively what is the current noise/decibel level at the intersection of Burnham Road with Cedar Lake Parkway? I assume that decibel readings were taken before, during, and after construction of the Hiawatha Line. For the purpose of comparison what was the noise level - prior to and following completion -

inside and outside structures 100 ft and 150 ft from the center line of the Hiawatha LRT at East 32nd and East 53 Streets. Along Hiawatha berms, landscaping (noise cannot be mitigated by plantings) walls and a combination of the two were used. However, that is not possible at crossings. So again, it seems reasonable to ask for real, empirical, historical data to be provided that illustrates noise levels along the Hiawatha corridor at key intersections. Also there are two elevated bridges, one at East 28th and a second that crosses Hiawatha at Crosstown Hwy 62. Will you please provide the same before and after data for those two locations in case an LRT overpass is the final design solution at the Cedar Lake Parkway crossing?

The very thought of bells, whistles and sound emanating from the train as it crosses the historic Grand Rounds System at Cedar Lake Parkway, speeds through passive regional parkland, and imposes itself on the sensitive neighborhoods that abut the Kenilworth Corridor in Segment A is difficult to comprehend.

4. ***Page 4-8 of the DEIS notes that there will be 1□8 trips between 7 am and 1□pm, □□LRT trips between 1□pm and 7 am, 48 LRT trips between □am and □am and another 48 trips between 3 pm and □:3□pm with speeds ranging from □□to 5□miles per hour.***

Comment

Are the 104 trips between 6:00 am and 9:00 am and 3:00 pm and 6:30 pm in addition to the 258 trips between 7:00 am and 10:00 pm and 10:00 pm and 7:00 am or are they included in that total.

According to a 4/20/2010 technical memo by HDR Engineers, the LRT train will cross Cedar Lake Parkway every 3.75 minutes under the LRT 3A option. Will you please confirm this? Will you please confirm the gates will be down no longer than 30 seconds for each of the 258 or f the 354 trips? What is the design speed of the LRT if it is at grade where it crosses Cedar Lake Parkway? What is the speed if the LRT is elevated above Cedar Lake Parkway. Will you confirm that the bells at crossings will occur no longer than 5 seconds for each of the 354 crossing and will the train horn blast in addition?

Please provide specific answers to each of these questions if the co-location Option(LRT3A1) is selected and if that option is selected exactly how many total freight trains per day should be expected and and at what times of day or night are they anticipated.

5. ***Chapter □notes that vehicular circulation was modeled based upon traffic counts for Cedar Lake Parkway and Burnham Road taken on □ebruary 1□, □□1□***

Comment

It was determined that pedestrians, were not to be modeled ue to "low

pedestrian counts". This seems shortsighted. Would this same conclusion have been reached had the counts been taken almost at any time during the spring, summer or fall seasons when there is increased vehicular flow and much higher pedestrian traffic and bicycle movement along both Cedar Lake Parkway and the Kenilworth Bike Trail – both of which support a significant volume of pedestrians and bicyclers who use these two avenues for recreation and commuting? Have counts been taken that are not illustrated in the Draft EIS that might support a reassessment of the value and importance of the pedestrian and bicyclist.

The LPA with its flyover bridge proposed in the conceptual engineering plans would not have impacts upon any sensitive receptors.

Comment

The bridge example in photo 3.6-6.where the LRT bridges over Cedar Lake Parkway is completely unacceptable from an aesthetic, historic, sound. Nothing could be worse as a solution except an at grade crossing. From a safety standpoint there can be no question that an at-grade crossing is the least desirable solution. Bikers and pedestrians are regularly being hurt. An at grade crossing is unsafe as my wife can allude to after having been sent to the hospital for stitches after a major fall at the intersection of Cedar Lake Parkway with the railroad tracks.

Not enough study is reflected by the DEIS to adequately address the impact to wildlife, visual and aesthetic character, materials selection, and noise

Any design solution eventually selected the engineers needs to be significantly more sensitive and must incorporate an historic recall and reference to other bridges in the Cedar, Isles, Dean neighborhoods that are integral to the Historic Grand Rounds and Parkway System. Also, a very significant concern beyond those identified above and in the DEIS is the visual mpact of a band of light emanating from the LRT train windows from dusk to dawn as the LRT streaks along the Kenilworth Corridor. Light trespass is a very real environmental impact that has not b een addressed in the DEIS and it should be.

Recently the MPRB, its consultant and a citizen advisory committee (CAC) proposed a middle ground solution where the LRT tracks begin to recede into a trench from a point north of the West Lake Street station to a point south the 21 Street Station. The historic Cedar Lake Parkway would arch over the recessed tracks from east of Cedar Lake Park and the Beach to meet grade on the east side of the proposed LRT trough. There are, to be sure, still pedestrian/ bike/auto and LRT conflicts where the tracks, Cedar Lake Parkway, Kenilworth Bike Trail and walking paths converge, but such a solution which would keep the LRT "low" and the Parkway with its more

pedestrian aspects "higher" seems like a reasonable compromise that could, with some creative engineering and design, allow all properties to remain, address many traffic and safety concerns, and respond to myriad environmental issues within a fiscally responsible approach. This is the creative type of thinking, conceptualization and approach that ought to be considered and endorsed.

Finally, serious consideration must be given to a tunnel Option for the LRT rather than a bridge or at-grade crossing at Cedar Lake Parkway. New, updated and modified economic data has just been added to the DEIS. Please advise why no analysis has been assigned to a tunnel / LRT underpass solution. I recognize that it is more expensive, including the need for to work outside the current ROW, but it is technically possible and the most environmentally friends solution.

Respectfully submitted,

Damon and Becky Farber

Comment #464

arthur higinbotham

12/29/2012 07:13 PM

To swcorridor <swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>

cc

bcc

Subject DEIS Response

The SWLRT DEIS is very nebulous on the mitigation that would be required. Since the aerial bridge over Cedar Lake Parkway and the channel between Cedar Lake/Lake of the Isles are 4f. issues, they are subject to the strictest requirements:

1. Grade separation is needed at Cedar Lake Parkway; traffic surveys conducted during summer months, not in February as the DEIS studies reports, will result in traffic back-ups on the east and west approaches to the crossing. Back-ups will extend on the east side to Dean Parkway and West Lake of the Isles Parkway due to cutting traffic flow to Lake St. at the intersection of Dean Parkway with Cedar Lake Parkway. Separate responses state why an LRT aerial bridge over Cedar Lake Parkway does not address issues of noise, vibration and visibility to the neighborhood. A partially submerged trench under the Parkway does not bring noise and visibility issues within an acceptable range; a fully submerged cut and cover tunnel is needed under Cedar Lake Parkway, extending to the southwest of the Calhoun Isles condos grain elevator tower and to the southwest of the Cedar Lake Shore Townhomes. Trenching will only dampen the sound created by LRT wheels and will still broadcast sound up the sides of the 14 story Calhoun Isles Condos grain elevator tower. As the MPRB CAC response points out, the bike trail should be submerged with the LRT, but with the LRT tunnel extending beyond the connection of the Kenilworth bike trail with the Midtown Greenway bike trail, so the latter can be connected at grade with no LRT crossings.

2. A bored tunnel underneath the Cedar Lake/Lake of the Isles channel is required so as not to disturb fish in and other wildlife around the channel as well as boaters using the channel. Since the LRT will already be submerged as it approaches Cedar Lake/Lake of the Isles channel, it should remain depressed until it enters the bored tunnel, surfacing north of the Burnham Bridge where the corridor widens and is an acceptable distance from residences adjacent to the corridor.

Arthur E. Higinbotham

Comment #465

"Thorpe-Mease, Mary H"

12/29/2012 08:53 PM

To <swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>
cc
bcc
Subject Concersn related to LRT in Kenwood

To whom it may concern:

Please accept the concerns in the attached memo that my husband, Bill Mease and I have regarding LRT at 21st Street. Feel free to call me if you have further questions.

My best,

Mary Thorpe-Mease

The information in this electronic mail message is the sender's confidential business and may be legally privileged. It is intended solely for the addressee(s). Access to this internet electronic mail message by anyone else is unauthorized. If you are not the intended recipient, any disclosure, copying, distribution or any action taken or omitted to be taken in reliance on it is prohibited and may be unlawful.

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--

Re: SW LRT in Kenwood

My apologies for being so late in getting my thoughts to you.

Freight rail

If light rail is going through the Kenilworth Corridor leaving the freight trains in basically the same location would dramatically reduce property values in the area. Much of the parkland and trails would have to be eliminated. These things are part of what the area so desirable.

Bridge over Cedar Lake Parkway

Really!!! Realy ugly and lots of expense. Surely there is a better solution - especially for the kind of money that would have to be spent for such a bridge.

Preservation

See my comments regarding the freight rail. I think it would be a mistake to change the park use beyond w hat might be necessary for the LRT.

Park & Ride

I can not imagine where such a lot could be located. Why not just a stop? Many people will walk to the stop. Having grown up with street cars in the 50's I know that most walked to their stop. Granted there are more cars today but I really think LRT users will appreciate the opportunity to NOT use their cars for a few blocks.

The above issues are my biggest concerns. I do believe, however, that the KIAA has made excellent points related to the potential impact of LRT on our neighborhood.

Mary Thorpe-Mease

12/29/12

Comment #466

Debra Berns

12/29/2012 09:35 PM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us
cc
bcc
Subject Comment Letter on DEIS for LRT Project

December 29, 2012

Hennepin County
Housing, Community Works & Transit
ATTN: Southwest Transitway
701 Fourth Avenue South, Suite 400
Minneapolis, MN 55415
swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us

Dear Project Manager,

Introduction:
This is a comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement ("DEIS") for the Southwest Transitway (LRT) project ("LRT Project"). As residential property owners of ., in the Cedar Isles Dean Neighborhood, we are personally and directly impacted by the LRT Project as our property is located between the proposed 21st Street and West Lake Street Stations immediately adjacent to Kenilworth Trail and the Kenilworth Corridor Bridge.

While there are many issues of importance related to the LRT Project, this comment letter will focus on specific themes related to the proposed 21st Street and West Lake Street stations and the area between these stations, as follows:

1. Re-Location of Freight Trains: We support the re-location of freight trains to accommodate light rail, and do not support the co-location alternative:

2. Environmental Effects: The DEIS is flawed in its analysis of noise and vibration implications and does not address light and electromagnetic concerns with regard to the location of the 21st Street and West Lake Street Stations and the area between these stations:

3. Social Effects: The DEIS is flawed in its conclusion that the operation of LRT along Segment A is not anticipated to adversely affect community cohesion.

Discussion:
1. Re-Location of Freight Trains:
The DEIS concluded (in the final paragraph of Chapter 11, pg. 11-11, 11.2.5) that the co-location of light rail and freight trains do not meet the project's purpose and need and is not a practicable alternative. As a result, co-location is not recommended as the environmentally preferred alternative. As impacted residential property owners, we agree completely with the conclusion that co-location is not a viable option.

A decision, however, to co-locate the freight and light rail would have material and detrimental effects on our property as it is not clear whether our property would need to be acquired to complete the project.

2. Environmental Effects (Noise, Vibration, Visual, and Electromagnetic Interference): As impacted residential property owners, we are significantly concerned about the environmental impacts of the LRT project due to the high number of trains that will travel by our property daily. The increase from a few freight trains per day to hundreds of LRT trains per day will drastically and severely impact our and our neighbors exposure to noise and vibration.

As to noise, our property is located in an area that is considered to have a "severe impact", and as a result, significant mitigation will be required. However, the impact of noise level and noise incident frequency has not been properly assessed in the DEIS. As a result, further study needs to be done.

Moreover, the DEIS incorrectly classifies Segment A property as Category 3 land use. However, in FTS's land use categories for Transit Noise Impact Criteria, Category 3 is most commonly associated with institutional land uses. In contrast, Category 1 is for tracts of land where quiet is an essential element on the intended purpose. The property in our neighborhood is aligned with Category 1 use – it is quiet, serene, and park-like. As a result, noise impacts should be re-evaluated under the standards set for Category 1 land uses.

As to vibration, while the DEIS (page 4-118, 4.8.6. Mitigation) provides that detailed vibration analysis will be conducted during the Final EIS, we urge that the range of frequencies and vibration incident frequency be taken into consideration.

The DEIS does not examine or discuss the impacts of LRT train light, corridor light, or the impact on presently dark areas of neighborhoods like ours. More analysis is necessary to determine the impacts and mitigation required.

In addition, the DEIS does not discuss potential health hazards related to electromagnetic interference for those people that live in close proximity (40 feet or less) to exposed overhead wires. Such information should be provided to the public and such hazards must be mitigated/avoided.

3. Social Effects Related to Segment A: The DEIS is flawed in its conclusion of the social effects related to Segment A. On page 3-58, the DEIS states that the implementation of LRT along the proposed Segment A "is not anticipated to adversely affect community cohesion because Segment A is currently bisected by a freight rail line and adding LRT service does not alter the existing barrier." This is unsubstantiated and incorrect, as currently, freight trains pass through infrequently, between 4-8 times per day, and the tracks are easily crossed. For example, there is an informal pathway immediately adjacent to our property that passes over the freight tracks and connects Washburn Ave. to Kenilworth trail, Kenwood Isles neighborhood and the Kenilworth Channel Bridge. High-speed high-frequency trains would absolutely eliminate the informal pathways, and would therefore create a barrier between CIDNA, the Kenilworth Trail and the Kenwood Isles
neighborhood.

Conclusion:
As property owners that are directly impacted by the LRT Project, we respectfully request that you consider the above concerns related to the DEIS. We also urge you to consider all factors to assist in mitigation of short-term construction effects and long-term impacts related to noise, vibration, and visual effects of the LRT project between 21st Street and Lake Street. One possible solution could be a tunnel for the LRT to pass between the 21st Street and Lake Street Stations.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. If you have any questions, please contact Debra Berns at (612) 208-0378 or debra_j_berns@yahoo.com

Sincerely,

Debra Berns
Amy Lederer

Comment #470

jodie lampcov

12/30/2012 01:12 PM

To "swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us" <swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>
cc
bcc
Subject 3325 Dakota slp

I live directly across from the high school and have the rail right behind my property. I understand when I bought my house I was purchasing on a low active rail line. That is now going to change. I am not happy. What bothers me more is there are other options such as the outer rim of the cities and the Kenwood area. But as usual, our community did not play politics with hennipen county board members as the Kenwood area did, so now it is our problem.
So once again safety and the environment is being overlooked for capital.

Thank you,
Jodie lampcov Fahey

Sent with Peace

Comment #471

Lee Lynch

m

>

12/30/2012 02:00 PM

To "swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us" <swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>

cc

bcc

Subject CedarLake Pkwy Bridge

I do not have the necessary skills to delve deeply into the Light Rail Deis concerning the complicated intersection at Burnam Rd. and Cedar Lake Parkway. It would seem to me that the underground alternative has not been considered. Is tunneling simply too expensive. If so, how much more?? We all agree that the lakes and the surrounding enviorment is priceless and worth preservation. The proposed bridge makes the un needed superbridge over the St. Croix River look like a thing of enviormental beauty. Please consider going down, not up. It would reduce visual, noise and light pollution.

--

PLEASE NOTE – MY EMAIL ADDRESS HAS CHANGED TO:

Lee Lynch

Comment #472

Lynne Stobbe

12/30/2012 02:53 PM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us
cc
bcc
Subject OPPOSED to Southwest Light Rail Transit

To Whom It May Concern:

I am OPPOSED to the freight rail re-route as outlined in the SWLRT DEIS. By putting this proposed freight rail reroute through St. Louis Park - you will be endangering the lives of not only our St. Louis Park High School students, and families that live nearby. We who live near the high school routinely see the students duck under the railroad gates to go to the McDonald's or the athletic fields - with the proposed longer and faster students this is putting them at risk to be killed. According to the Department of Transportation: 94% of all railroad crossing accidents are caused by risky behavior. These longer & faster trains can take over a mile to stop (18 Football Fields). Do you think any student or even local driver will try to rush instead of waiting for these longer trains.

"Nearly half of all rail crashes occur when a train is traveling under 30mph (Dept of Transportation). Approximately every two hours there is a collision in the US between a train and either a vehicle or pedestrian." That is 12 incidents a day and you want to increase this percentage to 788% by putting this train re-route in the middle of the St. Louis Park High School campus. When the first student is killed - the citizens of St. Louis Park will be lining up to testify against Hennepin County and the State of Minnesota.

It is time for Hennepin County and the State of Minnesota to learn to be fiscally responsible. It would be less costly to leave the freight rail traffic where it currently is. In the last couple of years the State of Minnesota and Hennepin County has spent millions upgrading Highway 7, and putting in a new bridge at Wooddale, by forcing this re-route onto St. Louis Park you are wasting not only future money, but past money spent, because the freight traffic will cut many of us off from using this new access to Highway 7. Your plan that you are trying to force on us will create an unsafe and unlivable situation for our school children, our local

businesses, and our residents. This NE□ATI□ELY impacts our community.

Sincerely,
Lynne Stobbe

!

Comment #473

Jocelyn Simon

12/30/2012 02:55 PM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us
cc
bcc
Subject SWLRT

To Whom It May Concern:

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.

2.

3.

4. 5. 6.

A quiet zone is not a sure thing.

1. Implementation could be denied by the school board because the building of a

   quiet zone will limit access to the Senior High School
2. 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?

Quiet zones do not limit locomotive noise

1. Multiple locomotives will be necessary for pulling a fully loaded train up the .86% grade if the new interconnect.

2. Multiple locomotives laboring with long trains will make more noise than the locomotives that currently use the MN&S

Trains traveling west will need to use their breaks to maintain a slow speed going down grade and through curves
Train wheels on curves squeal; the tighter the curve the greater the squeal.
Bells on crossing arms in a quiet zone will ring the entire time a train is in the crossing. Because there are currently no trains at night, even one night train means diminished livability.

None of
considered. This mitigation is not frivolous; it is necessary to maintain the safety, livability and property values for the residents of St. Louis Park.

the mitigation requested by the City of St. Louis Park on behalf of her residents is being

Name: Jocelyn Simon, homeowner

ity/State/zip: St. Louis Park, MN Telephone: 612-670-6765

Comment #474

Mark Christiansen

12/30/2012 03:10 PM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us
cc
bcc
Subject Comment to DEIS

□o □ hom □t May Concern□

□ttached and pasted below is my comment □would like added to the □E□S □or the S□ □□□ and proposed □reight-rail reroute. □oppose the □reight-rail reroute and ask □or □ull and complete consideration o□the truth be□ore making any detrimental decisions. □hank you

To Whom It May Concern:

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

I oppose the freight rail re-route as outlined in the SWLRT DEIS. I believe it will create an unsafe and unlivable situation for our school children, our local businesses, and our residents.

The proposed action of re-routing freight is described in Chapter 1, Section 1.3.2.3. The MN&S Spur tracks are a lightly used spur line within a high density urban, residential setting and directly adjacent to the St Louis Park Senior High. Using this as a proposed freight-rail route is of **deep concern** to many people in our community.

What is most concerning is the questionable approach many elected officials and state employees have taken while working on the SWLRT and the freight-rail reroute. There have been **reported errors and omissions** throughout the last few years, and decisions are being made based on this bad information, without full consideration of all the true details and facts around the issues. Beyond the trust deficit that's been created, **we just want a fair-shot** and fair consideration once everyone has correct information. And having communities work together, and not against each other should be the goal.

I can understand that change and progress will be met by opposition, and not always benefit 100% of people involved. With that understanding and empathy**, why can't we help those affected** to the best of our capabilities and creativity? No single person or group of people should feel like they are taking the brunt of this progress and made to feel like second-class citizens. There **should not have to be clear losers** that are ignored. We need to help our communities by providing safe, meaningful and legitimate mitigation. Make it worthwhile or desirable in some respects, to live next to the tracks. **Find ways to off-set the negative impacts** with positive reparations. For instance, **provide tax incentives** for property adjacent to the reroute. Or **provide sound-proof walls** and barriers, similar to what's used on our highways and interstates in the Twin Cities. Or financial assistance with selling or buying homes along the

route, or interest-free loans to repair homes that receive the increased vibration from the increased train traffic. **Please, if this has to happen, make mitigation a real, impactful thing.**

Thank you,

Name:__Mark Christiansen_____

12/30/2012

To Whom It May Concern:

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

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Thank you,

Name:__Mark Christiansen_____

Comment #475

Judy Meath

12/30/2012 03:35 PM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us
cc
bcc
Subject Comment on Southwest Transitway

To: Southwest Transitway Project Office

From: Judy L. Meath, resident of Kenwood neighborhood, Minneapolis

Home address:

Please consider my comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the proposed Southwest LRT/Transitway.

Concern about the overpass bridge over Cedar Lake Parkway: The bridge will impose a substantial negative visual impact on the scenic beauty of the area. The site of the proposed bridge is immediately adjacent to walking and biking trails, as well as to the Kenilworth Channel that links Lake of the Isles to Cedar Lake, and which thousands of Minnesotans and visitors to the state enjoy every year via canoe. The proposed bridge would detract significantly from the quiet and beauty of this area. I request that an alternative be found for the bridge (such as a tunnel or trench).

Concern about noise due to LRT trains: I think the DEIS is incorrect to categorize the park land to the west of the Kenilworth Corridor as a Federal Transportation Agency land-use noise category 3. Rather, this area should be designated Category 1, because *quiet is an essential element of its use* . This area offers precious opportunities to commune with nature. People walk and bike and canoe nearby, and birdsong is the predominant sound. Light rail noise will negatively impact enjoyment of this civic commonwealth. The DEIS fails to support adequate mitigation of noise caused by light rail trains and horns.

While I support noise mitigation for the enjoyment of the thousands of bikers, walkers, and canoists who use the Kenilworth Trail and Cedar Lake Trails, I also support noise mitigation for residents such as myself who live close to the proposed light rail. Noise caused by light rail trains and horns could drastically reduce quality of life for thousands of us who live nearby. I request that the noise imposed by light rail be mitigated, perhaps by trenching it, or by running it up Highway 100.

Concern about preservation of historic landscape: The DEIS does not properly assess the impact of light rail on Cedar Lake Parkway, correctly identified as an "historic landscape" and eligible for the National Register of Historic Properties. Specifically, Cedar Lake Parkway is a treasured segment of Minneapolis' Grand Rounds, and features natural beauty enjoyed by thousands of Minnesota residents year-round, who use the Parkway for biking, walking, and enjoying the outdoors. The activity and noise of light rail poses a serious threat to the preservation of this historic landscape. I would like to see the landscape preserved.

Concern about biodiversity: On canoe trips along the Kenilworth Channel, I have seen mink, possum, coyote, deer, to name a few species. The DEIS fails to account for impacts on the habitat of these species.

Sincerely,

Judy L. Meath

Comment #476

Mary Schwanke

12/30/2012 04:09 PM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us
cc
bcc
Subject DEIS

I am responding to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement in specific areas that impact our neighborhood of Kenwood.

Relocation of Freight Rail: The freight rail must be relocated as supported in the DEIS. Co-location would mean destruction of 60 homes, the taking of parkland, the elimination of trails as well as other adverse impacts.

Bridge over Cedar Lake Parkway: The proposed large cement bridge would be ugly, noisy and totally inconsistent with the area. It would look like an industrial park. I support a feasibility study of trenching or tunneling the LRT.

Noise: the DEIS points to sever noise impacts on the residences, especially near stations. Noise mitigation needs to be the very best the planners can come up with.

Preservation: Both the park and the trail are valuable assets. Existing park, trail and open green space must be preserved. What other city in the US has such a treasure for everyone to enjoy. Every year it is more and more utilized by an increasingly diverse population of families. I walk daily in the parks. I see the wildlife of fox, coyote, rabbits, deer,eagles in an urban environment. It must be preserved. We can do better than destroying everything for a people mover.

Traffic: A traffic study needs to be done and the problems related to traffic need to be addressed to the neighborhood's satisfaction.

Light Pollution: This was not considered at all. It must be, for it will impact the homes near the LRT as well as the wildlife.

Vibration: A detailed assessment needs to be done in order to adequately mitigate the problems related to vibration.

Public Safety: Kenwood has worked hard to increase the public safety at 21st street as well as Hidden Beach (Cedar Beach East). Safe access to the beach as well as ways to minimize illegal behavior in the secluded area that will be the 21st street station needs to happen. MPRB must be consulted. They have worked hard on this issue.

Environmental Impacts: Groundwater and drinking water must be protected in an area of very high sensitivity to pollution of the water table system. Contaminated soils must be dealt with appropriately.

One last comment: I know this is the preferred alternative, but it seems to me that it was chosen to give the residents of Eden Prairie and the western suburbs a beautiful ride downtown through the park rather than considering the transportation needs of those north and south of Lake Street and east and west of Nicollet. It won't meet the needs of Minneapolis.

Mary Schwanke

Comment #477

D Lott
12/30/2012 04:58 PM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us
cc
bcc
Subject Response to SWLRT DEIS

Please reference my attached letter regarding the Southwest Light Rail Transit Draft Environmental Impact Statement. I strongly oppose this reroute as outlined in my letter.

Thank you for your consideration.

Deborah W. Lott

December 30, 2012

TO: Hennepin County Housing, Community Works and Transit

I am writing in response to the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) – Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) , specifically the proposed freight rail re-route in St. Louis Park, Minnesota. I have several objections to the proposed reroute and question the validity of the DEIS which has so many inconsistencies, half-truths, and is riddled with misinformation and erroneous data. That this document was even submitted in support of a reroute through St. Louis Park only goes to show that, at best the writers did not do their homework or, at worst, are intentionally trying to mislead the community and decision-makers into thinking this reroute is truly the "preferred" alternative. Preferred to whom, I would ask?

While I have several issues with the reroute, my main issues are these:

- The reroute costs millions more than co-location. These costs will be paid for by taxpayers of Hennepin County and it does not include **any** mitigation for the people of St. Louis Park. In light of our current economic situation, spending a few extra million dollars here and there so haphazardly is greatly concerning to me. How can you make a recommendation on reroute vs. co-location without having an accurate cost analysis? It really makes me wonder about the motivation of those making the recommendations.
- There are five schools within a half-mile of the reroute (the St. Louis Park High School building is within 75 feet of the tracks); there are no schools along the current co-location route, where the trains are currently operating.
- Re-routed, mile-long trains will simultaneously block up to six crossings several times a day. It will take trains 10 minutes or more to clear an intersection. I occasionally drop my grandson off at the high school in the mornings and can attest to the already congested area around the school. I see the constant flow of distracted teenagers as they cross the tracks in the morning between the school and McDonalds and can almost visualize a "beat-the-train" scenario as they rush to school….or a football game….or a band concert….or whatever activity is just across the tracks.
- The reroute will increase freight traffic on the MN&S route by over 700%. These trains will be more frequent, louder, longer and heavier than ever before. These tracks were not built for this kind of freight traffic and to not include any of these mitigation costs in the DEIS is irresponsible.

The quality of our neighborhoods is threatened. Our quality of life is threatened. The safety of our residence and visitors is threatened. Is this really the best plan we can come up with? Before you make a recommendation, please have all the facts, costs, and implications to our community.

Sincerely,

Deborah Lott

cc: St. Louis Park City Council

Comment 47

Mary Benbenek

12/30/2012 07:26 PM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us
cc
bcc
Subject SW light rail corridor

SW Light Rail Corridor:
I am a resident in the Kenwood neighborhood and live within 1 block of the proposed SW light rail line. My husband and I were adamantly opposed to running the light rail through here and continue to be so. I was told at a community meeting that I had until December 31 to submit comments, so I am submitting comments regarding the light rail line here. Due to the holiday period and work requirements, it was not feasible for me to write at an earlier time. In any case, now that the SW light rail line has been, unfortunately, approved, I am writing to request NOT running the freight trains through here as well. We chose to move here, because this was a quiet neighborhood with ready access to the lakes and bike trails, a good place to raise children with a nearby school. Contrary to popular belief, many residents in Kenwood are NOT inordinately wealthy, but we were willing to pay the high property taxes that continue to rise annually, because we had a quality of life we valued. The short-sightedness of Minneapolis and Hennepin County speaks volumes as they seem prepared to throw away the beauty of one of the gems of the city in the name of progress, which is so typical of the workings of this city. I attended numerous meetings during the deliberation phase and was struck by the inordinate amount of skewed statistics, flawed ridership numbers, and a blatant lack of foresight for any type of remediation to the neighborhood. I distinctly remember one meeting when questions were asked about remediation of traffic and the answer was, "We don't address that until it is built". I will tell you that in most professions, a lack of planning is really not an option, but it seems that this has been par for the course in this venture. Now a proposal indicates that 7 dwellings in the neighborhood will be torn down, yet there is no information as to where these dwellings are located. Real people live in these dwellings and it is unfortunate the statement is made without any clarification. There is also a proposal to construct a monstrous bridge that will be a huge eye sore and likely a safety concern to bypass Cedar Lake Parkway. It would have been helpful to consider these aspects at an earlier stage. The current proposal will still markedly change the landscape, upset the natural balance, and create safety concerns for neighbors and visitors. I wonder if anyone on this committee has ventured here during the summer when Hidden Beach is awash with teens, families, and young adults. I also wonder if there are any environmentalists among you who have bothered to get up early, hear the pair of loons that visits every spring or the nesting birds in the rushes, or the deer that frequently surprise you on the walking and biking trails. To have light rail noisily make its way through here is bad enough, but to also consider running freight trains through here is unconscionable. I am really tired of Minneapolis deferring the suburbs at the expense of its own people. I wonder who among you has experienced the shaking of your house, the crack in the dining room from trains rumbling past and now we are to put up with the bells and whistles of light rail on an all too frequent basis. This is one of the oldest neighborhoods in Minneapolis and you are prepared to mow down the trees to put in a parking lot and add reams of traffic to a quiet residential neighborhood. We do not even have a regularly scheduled bus line. This route does NOT serve Minneapolis, it

serves the suburbs. I am sure those individuals will be only too happy to drive into our neighborhood and park our streets full to hop on the light rail to downtown. I will expect my taxes to go down to make up for this travesty and lack of foresight a well as to pay for the sound mitigation that we will no doubt require.

Thank you,

Mary Benbenek

Comment □480

Vicki Moore m>

12/30/2012 09:08 PM

To "swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us" <swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>

cc

bcc

Subject SWLRT DEIS Comments

To whom it may concern:

I have lived in Harrison neighborhood for the past □□ years and have been involved in the Harrison Neighborhood □ssociation during this time. I am deeply involved in many aspects of the community planning process for the SWLRT line and I was involved in the development of the Bassett Creek □alley Master Plan.

I support the 3□ Kenilworth alignment for SWLRT and I view it as an economic development opportunity for Harrison, which is an economic □ustice community. The □an White Station in Bassett Creek □alley is a critical anchor for economic development in the valley which represents an area of Minneapolis with a significantly underutili□ed parcel of publicly owned land. Its proximity to downtown Minneapolis should give it great potential for future successful economic development.

In addition, the station will serve as a link between impoverished North Minneapolis and the wealth of Lowry Hill to the south. Minneapolis will be better off as a city both morally and economically if north Minneapolis can be integrated into south Minneapolis.

Now is the time to unravel decades of institutionali□ed racism by integrating our city and the □an White station along the SWLRT line is a concrete step out of the shadows that our city's leaders chose to operate in decades ago.

Sincerely,

□icki Moore

Sent from my iPhone

Comment 481

Mary Armstrong

12/30/2012 09:09 PM

Please respond to
Mary Armstrong

To "swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us" <swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>
cc
bcc
Subject comment on DEIS for Southwest LRT

Re: Comment on DEIS for Southwest LRT
Date: Dec. 30, 2012
From: Mary Armstrong

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a recent transplant to the Birchwood area of St. Louis Park (early 2012), and my in-laws are 30-year residents of 42nd and Wooddale. I'm 43 years old, and this is where my husband and I plan to raise our daughter and spend the rest of our lives. I support regional transit and the Southwest LRT, but I would like to express my vehement opposition to the rerouting of heavy freight rail traffic through St. Louis Park.

I would like to quote from a presentation by the nonprofit grass-roots group Safety in the Park:

"The MN&S corridor [here in St. Louis Park] ... features several blind tight curves, is elevated in multiple locations, crosses 6 tightly bunched roads at grade, and in order to be used for the re-route, a multi-million dollar ramp and bridge must be built to raise trains up 30 feet. Most importantly it runs directly adjacent to St. Louis Park High School."

Thomas Johnson, P.E. of Railroad & Metallurgical Engineering Inc., who professionally studies freight rail accidents, states:

.The main reason that there are few accidents now is that even with only 200 ft. of visibility at the Dakota and Library crossings, an 8 railcar/2 locomotive train at less than 10 mph can stop in 100 ft. or so without hitting anything that they can see. The new 132 railcar/3 locomotives/22,000 ton/ 8000 ft. long coal trains at up to 25 mph can take over a mile to stop..

.The proposed changes in frequency, weight, speed and volume of trains pose a significant increase in risk any way you look at it. .

The strikes against the reroute are not just about safety, accessibility and livability, although those are critical concerns: It simply does not add up in any common-sense way. The heavy freight trains are already in the Kenilworth Corridor, and the Southwest LRT could be accommodated there as well. Why on earth would you move the freight rail line instead of the bike trail? Why is co-location the preferred option for the future Bottineau line but not for the Southwest line? It appears that the standard shifts according to whatever the county has decided it would like to impose.

I will not even address the shifting cost (is it $123 million, or $23 million?), but it does seem suspiciously convenient that the numbers changed in the county's favor as soon as the opposition to the freight reroute started getting attention in the news media.

These are not simply lines on a map: These are people's lives, homes and neighborhoods at stake. I have heard the vague and nonsensical argument that "promises were made to Kenwood" about moving the freight line, and another more plausible theory: that county employees, several years ago and without any real authority to do so, simply "moved" the freight trains around in the early planning stages for the LRT. Now, the machine of bureaucracy is unwilling or unable to admit that it may have made a mistake, gone beyond its authority, or failed to consider the potentially devastating impact on residents and other stakeholders.

It has been truly disconcerting to observe the dismissive manner that St. Louis Park residents have been treated by Hennepin County, the Metropolitan Council and some of our own city officials. Our mayor has compared the inevitability of the reroute to the coming of winter. If the mayor is correct then this entire process is an expensive charade – even a fraud. I have no doubts about winter, but I do have faith in the democratic process – the one in which the majority rules but may not trample on the rights of a minority. It might appear that this issue affects a relatively small number of people – but when there are feasible, cheaper and more common-sense options available, why not take them?

You, our leaders and decision makers, are supposed to be in the business of public service. The people here do not want the reroute, and it ultimately makes no sense. Please, listen to the public opposition in St. Louis Park and abandon the reroute. Co-location is the only way to go.

Comment #482

"George Puzak"

12/30/2012 09:56 PM

To <swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>
cc
bcc
Subject Comments on SW LRT DEIS dated 12-30-2012

Catherine and George Puzak

December 30, 2012

Hennepin County
Housing, Community Works & Transit
ATTN: Southwest Transitway
701 Fourth Avenue South, Suite 400
Minneapolis, MN 55415
via US mail and email to swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us

Re: Comments on the Southwest Transitway Draft Environmental Impact Statement

Dear Project Manager:

Please accept these comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Southwest Transitway (LRT) project. The comments first address freight rail and LRT track siting issues. Subsequent comments discuss specific Minneapolis locations within the corridor.

Consistent with the DEIS recommendation, freight rail should be rerouted from the Kenilworth Corridor to a different freight rail corridor. Operating both freight and light rail in the Kenilworth Corridor would irreparably harm natural green space. It would destroy sixty homes. It would also eliminate highly used non-motorized recreational and commuter trails. By rerouting freight rail, the outcome of preserving this tranquil, park-like corridor and water channel may be achieved.

Outcomes of LRT track siting: LRT tracks should be placed to preserve as much open space as possible for people, wildlife, and nature. LRT tracks should also allow as much space as possible for mitigation on both sides of the LRT line, especially where residential properties are on both sides of the corridor. These outcomes produce two recommendations.

First, north of Franklin Avenue and below the Kenwood water tower, LRT tracks should hug the base of Kenwood bluff. This design places the tracks on the east side of the corridor. It makes trails and paths into a continuous loop around Cedar Lake without rail

obstruction. This "cutting the corner" design would shorten the route and travel time to downtown Minneapolis. The base of Kenwood bluff would absorb noise and vibrations. Most importantly, it would achieve the outcome of preserving open space ("Conservancy") between the SW LRT, the north-east corner of Cedar Lake and the Burlington Northern rail line for people, wildlife, and nature.

Second, between Franklin Avenue west and west Lake Street, LRT tracks should be sited in the center of the corridor. This placement would allow space for mitigation on both sides of the SW LRT line, where it is in closest proximity to peoples' homes.

Comments on Specific Planning Locations

Cedar Lake Regional Trail and LRT Crossing Area

Outcome: The Cedar Lake Regional Trail, Kenilworth Trail and Cedar Lake pathway should provide a continuous uninterrupted loop around Cedar Lake similar to the loop trails around Lake of the Isles, Lake Calhoun, and Lake Harriet. If the Kenilworth Trail remains east of the LRT tracks, trail users will be forced to cross tracks where 250 LRT trains/day will be passing. Trail users circulating Cedar Lake should have the same safe, efficient, and pleasant experience offered by the regional paths around the other three lakes in the regional trail system. If the Cedar Lake or Kenilworth trails cross the SW LRT line, the trails should be grade-separated from the LRT line.

Intersection of West 21st Street and LRT tracks

Outcomes: Uninterrupted access to east Cedar Lake beach and to homes on the 2000 block of Upton Avenue South. Station design should enhance safety for Cedar Lake Park users and local residents. Cedar Lake Park and the surrounding corridor should maintain their "up-north" feel. They are quiet spaces with multiple layers of vegetation: grasses, bushes, and trees. An estimated 250 LRT trains/day will mar the tranquil, green setting of this area. Tunneling or trenching LRT tracks and land bridging over them would best mitigate the visual and noise pollution caused by LRT service in this area.

Kenilworth Channel Bridge

Dredging the Kenilworth Channel helped form the Chain of Lakes as a historic and regional amenity. **Outcome**: People and wildlife that are experiencing this area should enjoy naturally occurring lights and sounds. **This location is unique in its lack of artificial light**: No street-grid lighting is located here, due to the expanse of lake water, park land, and open space. Headlights from LRT trains during dark hours would forever change the character and night sky experience of this unique urban space.

Cedar Lake Parkway and Grand Rounds

Outcome: Preserve the integrity of the Grand Rounds National Scenic Byway by

maintaining the ambiance, views, and park experience at south end of Cedar Lake and Beach. An LRT bridge of Cedar Lake parkway is insufficient. It would spread noise and block views. It would also be visually jarring and inconsistent with the park setting. Tunneling or trenching LRT under Cedar Lake Parkway would minimize the adverse effects at this unique intersection.

Outcome Provide a continuous, safe, and pleasant trail experience for Kenilworth Trail users at Cedar Lake Parkway. The Kenilworth Trail should be grade-separated from traffic on Cedar Lake Parkway-Grand Rounds. If the trail is on the west side of the LRT tracks, it could directly connect to the South Cedar Beach and provide a continuous trail loop onto the Cedar Lake Pathway at South Cedar Beach. Going south after crossing Cedar Lake Parkway, the trail could use a landbridge to ramp over a depressed LRT line. The Kenilworth Trail would switch to the east side of the LRT tracks, providing access to Park Siding Park and then continue south to intersect with the Midtown Greenway.

onclusion

Given the Kenilworth Corridor s value as a critical greenspace and waterway connector and as a non-motorized recreational and commuter pathway, LRT impacts must be substantially mitigated. Minneapolis has a history of mitigating impacts from rail traffic. A nearby example is the 2.8 mile east-west depressed rail trench from Cedar to Hennepin avenues. More recently, Minneapolis built a tunnel for new LRT service at the airport. These examples should apply to any LRT routing through Kenilworth.

One component of the mitigation should include a rail tunnel from Lake Street to Franklin Avenue or to I-3 4. The length would be approximately one mile. The tunnel would go under Cedar Lake Parkway, the Kenilworth Channel, and West 21st Street. The tunnel would resurface in the open space below Kenwood Hill and the historic water tower.

A tunnel in Kenilworth is essential to mitigate the impacts of 250 daily LRT trains in this sensitive corridor. A tunnel would follow Minneapolis precedent of rail trenching. It would minimize traffic congestion at Cedar Lake Parkway, a **ationa cenic a** and at West 21st Street. Most importantly, the tunnel would help preserve natural assets of regional and state significance the Kenilworth greenspace, the Minneapolis Chain of Lakes Regional Park, and Cedar Lake Park Wildlife and Nature Preserve.

An LRT route connecting Minneapolis to southwest Hennepin County is a 100-year decision. The environmental impacts of LRT service must be carefully considered. Substantial and meaningful mitigation must be designed, funded, and implemented for the SW LRT line to achieve its full potential.

Thank you for your consideration.

Catherine and George Puzak

Catherine and George Puzak

December 30, 2012

Hennepin County
Housing, Community Works & Transit
ATTN: Southwest Transitway
701 Fourth Avenue South, Suite 400
Minneapolis, MN 55415
via US mail and email to swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us

Re: Comments on the Southwest Transitway Draft Environmental Impact Statement

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Outcome: The Cedar Lake Regional Trail, Kenilworth Trail and Cedar Lake pathway should provide a continuous uninterrupted loop around Cedar Lake similar to the loop trails around Lake of the Isles, Lake Calhoun, and Lake Harriet. If the Kenilworth Trail remains east of the LRT tracks, trail users will be forced to cross tracks where 250 LRT trains/day will be passing. Trail users circulating Cedar Lake should have the same safe, efficient, and pleasant experience offered by the regional paths around the other three lakes in the regional trail system. If the Cedar Lake or Kenilworth trails cross the SW LRT line, the trails should be grade-separated from the LRT line.

2. Intersection of West 21st Street and SW LRT tracks

Outcomes: Uninterrupted access to east Cedar Lake beach and to homes on the 2000 block of Upton Avenue South. Station design should enhance safety for Cedar Lake Park users and local residents. Cedar Lake Park and the surrounding corridor should maintain their "up-north" feel. They are quiet spaces with multiple layers of vegetation—grasses, bushes, and trees. An estimated 250 LRT trains/day will mar the tranquil, green setting of this area. Tunneling or trenching LRT tracks and land bridging over them would best mitigate the visual and noise pollution caused by LRT service in this area.

3. Kenilworth Channel and Bridge

Dredging the Kenilworth Channel helped form the Chain of Lakes as a historic and regional amenity. **Outcome:** People and wildlife that are experiencing this area should enjoy naturally occurring lights and sounds. **This location is unique in its lack of artificial light.** No street-grid lighting is located here, due to the expanse of lake water, park land, and open space. Headlights from LRT trains during dark hours would forever change the character and night sky experience of this unique urban space.

4. Cedar Lake Parkway-Grand Rounds

Outcome: Preserve the integrity of the Grand Rounds National Scenic Byway by maintaining the ambiance, views, and park experience at south end of Cedar Lake and Beach. An LRT bridge of Cedar Lake parkway is insufficient. It would spread noise and block views. It would also be visually jarring and inconsistent with the park setting. Tunneling or trenching LRT under Cedar Lake Parkway would minimize the adverse effects at this unique intersection.

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Conclusion
Given the Kenilworth Corridor's value as a critical greenspace and waterway connector and as a non-motorized recreational and commuter pathway, LRT impacts must be substantially mitigated. Minneapolis has a history of mitigating impacts from rail traffic. A nearby example is the 2.8 mile east-west depressed rail trench from Cedar to Hennepin avenues. More recently, Minneapolis built a tunnel for new LRT service at the airport. These examples should apply to any LRT routing through Kenilworth.

One component of the mitigation should include a rail tunnel from Lake Street to Franklin Avenue or to I-394. The length would be approximately one mile. The tunnel would go under Cedar Lake Parkway, the Kenilworth Channel, and West 21st Street. The tunnel would resurface in the open space below Kenwood Hill and the historic water tower.

A tunnel in Kenilworth is essential to mitigate the impacts of 250 daily LRT trains in this sensitive corridor. A tunnel would follow Minneapolis' precedent of rail trenching. It would minimize traffic congestion at Cedar Lake Parkway, a **National Scenic Byway,** and at West 21st Street. Most importantly, the tunnel would help preserve natural assets of regional and state significance—the Kenilworth greenspace, the Minneapolis Chain of Lakes Regional Park, and Cedar Lake Park Wildlife and Nature Preserve.

An LRT route connecting Minneapolis to southwest Hennepin County is a 100-year decision. The environmental impacts of LRT service must be carefully considered. Substantial and meaningful mitigation must be designed, funded, and implemented for the SW LRT line to achieve its full potential.

Thank you for your consideration.

Catherine Puzak
George Puzak

Catherine and George Puzak

Jeff Urban

12/30/2012 10:21 PM

To "swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us" <swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>
cc
bcc
Subject SW Lightrail DEIS

Hello,

My name is Jeff Urban and my family and I reside in St. Louis Park. We have been following the discussions regarding the SW Lightrail DEIS. We do not feel the DEIS has fairly evaluated the freight rail alternatives, specifically, the freight rail colocation (3A-1). Relocating the freight rail through the heart of St. Louis Park's middle class neighborhood and high school is not only not safe, but will forever change the economics on the city. Simply by looking at a map of St. Louis Park and the existing neighborhoods and you realize the freight rail will travel through the heart of the largest section of middle-class housing in the city. This economic impact, the ripple effect, is not addressed.

Speaking personally, we have lived in the Birchwood neighborhood for over 15 years. We have never imagined leaving St. Louis Park. We are now having this discussion. We would love to stay in SLP, but the housing options are very limited if the freight rail goes through. Houses are either too expensive or a step down. There are very few options. We are also very concerned about our daughter attending the high school with the proposed location of the freight rail. The DEIS does not consider these very real impacts on the city – middle class families leaving the city.

We hope it is realized that the DEIS has not fairly evaluated or represented the freight rail options.

Thank you,

Jeff, Susan and Sydney Urban

Comment #484

Christopher Johnson

12/30/2012 10:41 PM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us
cc
bcc
Subject DEIS Southwest Light Rail - Christopher B. Johnson Comments Submitted 12-30-12 @ 10:41pm

Operating cost/revenue?

- It's documented that the cost to operate & maintain the SWLRT in the 1st year is $32.7M, with operating revenue of $9.2M, with a net operating loss of $23.5M.
  - *How is the net operating loss covered and who pays for it?*
  - *What about operating losses for subsequent years, if any how will they be paid?*
  - *What is the plan to grow the SWLRT revenue to $32.7M to break even?*
  - *How many years will it take to make the SWLRT a break even concern?*
  - *How many riders per year will it take to make the SWLRT self-sufficient?*
  - *How many years of revenue will it take to pay for the amount it takes to build the rail line?*

Noise abatement:

- The Metropolitan Airports Commission has a program for neighbors who are affected by airplane take-off and landings in a geographical area. Metropolitan Airports Commission neighborhood noise abatement efforts: http://www.macnoise.com/our-neighbors/msp-noise-abatement-efforts
  - *What is the noise abatement plan or program for property tax payers who live along the Kenilworth trail if the SWLRT is built at grade or on a bridge at Cedar lake Parkway?*

Health and economic effects:

- What are the impacts: given 258 trains per day
  - *What are the negative health effects on people who live within 100' of a LRT line along the Kenilworth trail?*
  - *What are the results of the environmental justice study for the entire SWLRT line?*
  - *What is the data on single family homes in an established neighborhood with homes that typically sell at prices well above the median home value in Minnesota?*
  - *How will property values be impacted by an LRT line?*
  - *What are the positive impacts of the SWLRT line along the Kenilworth trail?*
  - *Why would the people along and around the Kenilworth trail use the LRT?*
  - *Given there is already traffic congestion during rush hour on Cedar Lake Road, how will traffic be handled if there is a train every 3.5 minutes during peak time and the train is built at grade.*
  - *What is the plan to prevent random cars from parking on neighborhood*

streets near the rail stations?

- *If Single family dwelling property values drop along the SWLRT, what will be done to help these people who are adversely affected by the existence of the rail line.*

Tunneling option:

- The length of the tunnel that links the two terminals at the MSP airport is 7,400' at a depth of 70'. Per the attached article there was no disruption of at grade activities during construction. The cost to build the tunnel was $120M or $16,216 per foot.
  http://www.hatchmott.com/projects/twin-light-rail-transit-tunnel-underground-lindbergh-terminal-station-minneapolis-st-paul
  - Using inflation at 3% compounded annually since 2005 or 8 years the cost in today's dollars to build a "like" tunnel would be $152M. $152M/7400' = $20,540 per foot.
- The distance between the West Lake Street Station and the 21st Street Station is 1.08 miles or 5,702 feet.
  - Using the distance of 5,702' X $20,540 per foot = $117M to construct a tunnel 70' below grade from West Lake Street Station to 21st street station.
- Benefits of the tunnel:
  - No disruption of at grade activities on the roads, bike path or walking paths.
  - No re-routing of local streets or disruption, specifically Burnham Blvd. or at Cedar Lake Parkway.
  - Preserves the quiet natural neighborhood for decades and beyond.
  - No eminent domain required to accommodate the LRT at grade or with Bridge option at Cedar Lake Parkway.
  - no mitigation for the single family homes would be required sound or sight,
  - Co-location of freight rail saves $52M to re-route through St. Louis Park (based on a $48M 2009 estimate with 3% inflation).
  - There is no security check point between the Lindberg and Humphrey terminals, anyone can get on and ride the LRT between terminals.
  - The overall cost with the tunnel option along the Kenilworth trail would be a 3% increase over the total budget of $1.25B up to 1.287B.
- *Why has this option not been considered? It solves a lot of concerns of neighbors who live along the Kenilworth section of the SWLRT.*

Sincerely,
Christopher B. Johnson

Comment #485

Anna Kabe

12/31/2012 12:23 AM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us
cc
bcc
Subject Southwest Corridor comment

To whom it may concern-My husband and I live about a block from the future Southwest corridor line in Hopkins, just west of Blake Road. Any of the options would pass closely to our home thus we have no particular opinion on which option is chosen and believe the Commissioners will make the correct decision based on ridership and costs. However, there are several adjustments that we request related to the proposed light rail line. One of the main attractions to our home that we bought in 2009 was the bike trail that runs from Lake Calhoun to Eden Prairie. This is a great asset for the community. Thus, we hope that the bike trail can stay in its present state with the addition of the light rail. Also, we live near the 43 Hoops Basketball Academy. The building that it occupies is owned by the Metropolitan Council and is the possible site of a light rail train station. This business has been a great asset to the community as many community events have been held there along with providing summer hot lunches to young people in a neighborhood that this is needed in. Also, having the train station on 2nd street would lead to more traffic issues and make it less accessible to riders. A train station on the other side of the tracks from 43 Hoops would make more sense as it would enter from Excelsior Blvd, a much busier and more accessible road. We hope the council considers these issues when planning the new light rail. Thank you for your consideration.

Comment #488

Derek

12/31/2012 09:06 AM

To "swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us" <swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>
cc Rachel
bcc
Subject St. Louis Park residents oppose expansion of Southwest Transit Line

SWLRT - DEIS;

I am writing to you today to express my disapproval of relocating the fright trains through the St. Louis Park community.

As a relatively new resident in SLP, let me begin by explaining why my wife and I chose this community to call home. First and probably most important, we love the neighborhood feel of SLP. It has always felt like a small, quaint neighborhood with all the added bonuses of being near Minneapolis. By relocating your freight trains through our neighborhood you will be destroying one of the main attractions for residents: our peace. Secondly, the properties in SLP, and Lennox neighborhood specifically, have been able to maintain a somewhat reasonable market value. As we all know, the housing market is not strong throughout the country, but due to several key factors, example; location, limited availability, and high demand, our little city of St. Louis Park continues to withstand the continuing downward spiral of the housing market. By expanding the train tracks you will not only be taking away our peace, you'll be crushing our property values as well. A financial blow that most residents simply could not withstand. Thirdly, we really value our safety. Safety in our streets, around our schools and safety in our community. Adding more bigger and faster trains to a train system that is already dangerously close to hundreds of homes, not to mention St. Louis Park High School, just isn't a good idea. Finally let me finish with one last reason we do not favor the expansion of the train system. Noise. The residents of SLP simply do not need more noise. Setting the existing train noise aside, we already tolerate the onslaught of airplanes flying over our homes on what seems to be an international highway for the MSP airport. Adding more freight trains to an already busy track system is going to exponentially increase the noise level throughout our peacefully quiet SLP neighborhood.

Thank you and please reconsider your proposal of moving your freight trains through our little community.

St. Louis Park Residents for over three years,
Derek and Rachel Lindquist

Sent from my iPad

Comment #489

Rachel Seurer

12/31/2012 09:21 AM

To "swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us" <swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>
cc
bcc
Subject Community impact of SWLRT station

I would like to again state that placing a station at the current location of 43 Hoops (Hopkins at 2nd Street, just West of Blake Road) would remove a much needed (and much appreciated!) community asset. We understand that there is an alternative location for this station site, which would be South of the rail corridor, and it is overwhelmingly agreed upon by our near neighbors and others that this would be a much more positive location for the station as it would minimize negative impact on the immediate neighborhood, surrounding community and City of Hopkins in general.

The Light Rail itself is a much needed and long overdue asset to the Metro area, and although it will bring about multiple changes in multiple areas, we are all very concerned with keeping these changes moving toward the betterment of both our local community and of those around us. The opening of 43 Hoops has been a very positive change in our community – please don't force them out in order to replace one positive asset with another, especially when there is a possibility of keeping both.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

Rachel Seurer

Blake Road Corridor resident, homeowner and parent.

Comment #49

Jane Cracraft

12/31/2012 10:07 AM

Please respond to
Jane Cracraft

To "swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us" <swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>
cc
bcc
Subject Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) project

Hello,

Please don't re-route freight via the proposed route. It will ruin the neighborhood, and I've heard that SEH says there are viable alternatives.

I am concerned about the proposed increase of heavy freight rail traffic on the north/south MN&S spur and the BNSF mainline in St. Louis Park. I understand that the MN&S spur was not intended and not designed to handle freight rail traffic of the density and frequency proposed by the Hennepin County Railroad Authority. We support the creation of light rail in our community.

Thanks,

Jane Cracraft

Comment #493

Jutta Ellermann

12/31/2012 10:30 AM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us
cc Jutta Ellermann
bcc
Subject COMMENTS ON LRT DEIS from Dr. Jutta Ellermann and Dr. Kamil Ugurbil

Please find attached our comments.
Dr. Kamil Ugurbil and Dr. Jutta Ellermann

Minneapolis, 12/31/2012

Dr. Jutta Ellermann
Dr. Kamil Ugurbil

COMMENTS ON Southwest Transitway Chapter 4 Draft Environmental Impact Statement Environmental Effects /October 2012

A. COMMENTS AND CONCERNS ON OVERALL IMPACT ON LAND USE CENTERED ABOUT THE KENILWORTH LAGOON ABOUT A MILE TO THE NORTH AND SOUTH

1. The land centered about the Kenilworth Lagoon has been set aside for specific uses and therefore is eligible for special protection (National Register of Historic Places). This is in the constitution. This is one of the most amazing historic visions put into law, and is what keeps this country so extraordinarily beautiful. Whereas public transportation is an important task to be solved in this century, and I am in favor of it, it cannot done in a way that overrides the historic protection of such a national treasure. There is, and there has to be the understanding, that those rules are there for us, for our children, for the future.
2. In other words, our generation cannot just destroy forever, such an area preserved up until now and used by millions strolling, running, biking, canoeing etc. for a short sided, "cheapest" solution for a transportation problem. The City Lakes are the "Central Park of Minneapolis" and in my opinion even much more beautiful and much more essential to the lifestyle or city affords and the desirability of living in the city as opposed to in suburbs surrounding it. Coming with your canoe from Lake of the Isles leaving the skyline of Minneapolis behind and experiencing the quite tunnel of greenery of the Lagoon opening up again to the lightness of Cedar Lake far removed from the buzzing of everyday life is magical and it is here for all of us and for this cities long term viability.
3. The scope of the impact of the LRT on this most sensitive stretch has not been realized and is not at all appropriately addressed in the DEIS and the respective planning process. Therefore, I would like to suggest an official meeting of all authorities and citizen

representatives involved at this Kenilworth lagoon area to experience first hand what is at stake here, rather than just read it in reports and comments on reports like this one.

COMMENTS:

a) While the DEIS recognizes that "portions of the land between Cedar Lake and Lake of the Isles are very high sensitivity," the DEIS puts no particular focus on this area, i.e. the Kenilworth Corridor, in its evaluation of the impact of the proposed LRT solution or possible measures that can be undertaken to mitigate the environmentally detrimental consequences.

b) Instead, the environmental assessment is spread more-or-less evenly across the 15 miles of the proposed transit way (the "study area"). An exception is the Freight Rail Relocation Segment which receives much attention in terms of its potential impact on residents in St. Louis Park. This is not to fault an emphasis on the relocation analysis. It is simply to draw a contrast between the different levels of data gathering and technical analysis.

c) The entire study area is viewed as "dominated by urban land use." This perspective comes across particularly clearly for the Kenilworth Corridor, in direct contrast with the perspective of the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board. The MPRB, for example, views the Kenilworth Regional Trail as an area focused on "serenity, habitat restoration, minimal development and passive recreation." Nor is the urban-land-use perspective consistent with the fact that the DEIS identified fourteen federal or state-listed species and native plants within one mile of the proposed transit way. Ten of the species and native plants are found in Segment A of the transit way (primarily the Kenilworth Corridor), which is significantly more than is found in any other segment. No adverse environmental impact is noted with respect to any of the ten species. Little-to-no analysis is offered to support this conclusion.

d) Few measures are proposed to mitigate the potential adverse environmental impacts of the project, and nearly none that are of a specific nature. For example, the DEIS notes that "[t]he impact of replacing an

existing bridge over the channel that connects Cedar Lake and Kenilworth Lagoon could be substantial because of sensitive receptors traveling the lagoon." However, no mitigation measures are set out in the DEIS. Instead, the bridge design, bank treatment and aesthetics for the new bridge are to be addressed later, after the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) has been approved.

e) The DEIS sees the habitat as typically of low quality, and states that the native habitats are mostly concentrated in areas other than the Kenilworth Corridor. Only 2.5% of Segment A is said to have native habitat, something that strikes me as an understatement. The DEIS does note, however, that increased habitat fragmentation "could be expected from the construction of required safety/security barriers to separate the light rail tracks from adjacent bicycle/pedestrian trails," which could be mitigated "through the use of wildlife underpasses." This is one of the few specific mitigation measures proposed in the EIS, and seems to run counter to the determination that there is little to mitigate.

f) The DEIS is required to analyze the cumulative impact of reasonably foreseeable future developments. This is also true for the potential indirect effects that may occur in the future. For example, the stated intent of LRT stations is to precipitate development on nearby property. The environmental effects of that future development, when added to the impact of the LRT, may have a significant environmental impact. However, no analysis of the potential cumulative or indirect effects of the Southwest LRT within the Kenilworth Corridor was conducted. Instead, it is simply stated that those effects could be controlled by existing regulations.

B. COMMENTS ON SPECIFIC ISSUES:

4.7.3.4 Projected Noise Levels from page 4-84

Table 4.7-2 in the DEIS summarizes the sound exposure levels used in Southwest Transitway detailed noise analysis. Noise Levels range from 84 dBA (light rail vehicle Pass-by on embedded track) to 106 (stationary

crossing signal) and 114 dBA for light rail curve squeal. This is in stark contrast to the actual ambient noise levels, which were measured as low as 48 dBA/ 51 dBA for Segment 1. FTA GUIDELINES ("Transit Noise and vibration Impact assessment (FTA 2006) defines for an existing noise level of about 55 db in increase of 4-7 db = moderate impact and above 7 dB = severe impact. The increase, however, would be 40 dB from and existing level of 55-56 dB to a projected noise level ranging from 81-116 dB.

40 dB gain change should give about the ratio of 8 (eight times) for sensed volume and loudness, and a 40 dB change gives the ratio of 200 for calculated sound power and acoustic intensity. The data given, underline the SEVERITY of the noise impact.

a) There is growing scientific evidence, that chronic noise pollution has severe health effects, specifically on the cardiovascular system (1) and cognition in children (2,3). A recent study by the World Health Organization summarizes the available study results, mostly form Europe in a meta-analysis (4). These results reveal that the Minnesota regulations for land use type 1 as the park lands have to be classified with day time (7.00 am - 10.00 pm) upper limits of 60 dB and night time 50 dB are to be considered save. However, values imposed by the Light Rail of more than 80 dB are a significant health risk (. Note, that motor boats are prohibited on the city lakes.

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noise.

b) FTA noise impact criteria are based on land use and existing noise levels. The Federal Transportation Agency (FTA) has three land-use noise categories: Category 1 is for land where quiet is an essential element of its use; Category 2 are residences and buildings where people normally sleep; Category 3 are institutional land uses such as schools, libraries and churches. ***The park land to the west of the Kenilworth Corridor is shown as a Category 3 land use in the DEIS. The residential properties to the east and west of the Corridor are shown as Category 2. This categorization is absolutely false and cannot be justified. It is at all not clear how it is or it can be justified. Appropriately, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) has objected to the characterization of its park land as Category 3, believing instead that it is Category 1.***

c) Low ambient noise levels cause the impact threshold to be lower. For example, if the existing noise level is 50 dB, then an increase to 55 dB is a severe impact according to FTA standards. If the existing noise level is 55 dB, then the noise level has to increase to 62 dB before the impact is severe. ***It does not appear as though any direct measurement of existing noise level was taken within the Kenilworth Corridor. The closest location appears to be Kenilworth Place and Upton Avenue South, which is identified as being "representative of noise-sensitive land use in the Kenwood Neighborhood, away from major thoroughfares." This claim is not justifiable and cannot be justified***.

d) Within Segment A, the DEIS estimates that there are 73 moderate noise impacts and 183 severe impacts. It states that "[m]any of the impacts are due to low existing ambient noise levels combined with proximity of residential neighborhoods to the alignment and high speeds of operation." Other impacts were associated with the warning signal use at the 21st Street station coupled with low ambient noise levels.

e) The DEIS states that noise levels that result in a severe impact presents a compelling need for mitigation. ***However, the DEIS does not recommend any specific mitigation measures for the Kenilworth Corridor and does not evaluate if the mitigation measures possible for a on-grade LRT system***

can accomplish the necessary mitigation. In fact, the only specific recommendation in the DEIS calls for the use of Quiet Zones and this is recommended only for the freight rail relocation segment in St. Louis Park.

f) The DEIS identifies 247 Category 2 vibration-sensitive land uses in Segment A, which are mostly single-family and multifamily residences. The DEIS assessment predicts that there will be 124 potential vibration impacts from the LRT caused by geological conditions (west of Van White station)and increased train speeds.

g) Potential mitigation measures listed in the DEIS include special trackwork, vehicle specifications, ballast masts and floating slabs***. However, the need for and selection of specific measures is deferred until the completion of a detailed vibration analysis*** which "will be conducted during the FEIS in coordination with Preliminary Engineering."

City Proposed overpass bridge:

For the reasons listed below, the "adequacy" of the analysis and conclusions in the DEIS relating to the proposed LRT overpass is highly questionable and subject to challenge.

a) The DEIS acknowledges that the proposed LRT bridge over Cedar Lake Parkway (CLP) "would have a substantial [visual] impact on this historic landscape." A similar long-term architectural impact is acknowledged. However, further consideration of these impacts is deferred to the "Section 106 consultation process", which likely means to occur after the approval of the FEIS.

b) Separate from these acknowledgements, Cedar Lake Parkway (CLP) is a part of the Grand Rounds Historic District, which is eligible for the National Register of Historic Properties(NLRP).

c) Because of Cedar Lake Parkway's eligibility for the NRHP and because the SW LRT project has and will receive federal funding, the DEIS identifies

Cedar Lake Parkway as a "property" under Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act of 1966. Section 4(f) is intended to prevent the conversion of historic sites, parks, recreation areas and wildlife and waterfowl refuges to transportation uses, except under certain limited circumstances. For purposes of Section 4(f), the prohibition applies whenever the protected property is directly incorporated into a project or the project is so proximate to a protected property that it results in an impact that causes substantial impairment to the property's use or enjoyment (so-called "constructive use"). Substantial impairment occurs when the protected attributes of the property are substantially diminished. Exceptions to the prohibition arise when there is no feasible and prudent alternative to the use of the property and the action included all possible planning to minimize harm to the property resulting from the use. ***This Requirement has not been fulfilled in the DEIS document.***

d) Instead, for an unstated reason(s), the DEIS concludes that the proposed LRT overpass is neither a direct or constructive use of the historic attributes of Cedar Lake Parkway. Therefore, the DEIS finds that there is no Section 4(f) prohibition applicable to the construction of the bridge. ***This is clearly unsupportable and unjustified. The DEIS contains no analysis of the proposed bridge's proximity to park property as an independent basis for finding a constructive use under Section 4(f).***

e) Further, the DEIS does not make any assessment of the potential noise impact of elevating the transit way nor the visual intrusion of the elevated transit way to nearby residents or to bike/pedestrian trail users***. However, the noise impact, will certainly be more severe at a given distance from the in an elevated track and will also extend further.***

f) ***Finally, the DEIS has no analysis of potential measures to mitigate the visual and noise impact caused by trains traveling across the proposed overpass nor any assessment of the impact of alternatively tunneling the transit way underneath the Parkway.*** While the MPRB did conduct a preliminary assessment of a trenched LRT underpass, no reference was made to a below grade crossing in the DEIS.

21st Street Station:

a) The DEIS identifies the 21st Station as a "park and ride" site with parking for 100 vehicles and 1000 daily LRT boardings. ***No assessment of the traffic flow associated with parking at the site, nor the site plan showing the location of the parking lot is provided.***

b) The MPRB believes that the western most track is on park land adjacent the proposed station. ***If this is true, the DEIS needs to conduct a Section 4(f) analysis of the use of park land. No such analysis has been undertaken. The DEIS does state that the land ownership adjacent the station is complicated and that additional survey work may be necessary***.

c) Separate from the track location, the proposed station and associated parking lot could constitute a constructive use of the adjacent park land. ***The DEIS does not address this issues specifically. Instead, the DEIS makes a general statement that there are no constructive uses of Section 4(f) protected property within the Kenilworth Corridor.***

d) ***No analysis was conducted as to whether the proposed station and parking lot would comply with the requirements of the City's Shoreland Overlay District, particularly those governing storm-water runoff and point and non-point source discharges of pollutants***.

e)The DEIS acknowledges that the implementation of LRT service and stations along Segment A (mostly the Kenilworth Corridor) "would likely result in some land use change surrounding the stations…" ***No assessment was done of the cumulative impact of those changes nor was any mitigation proposed to protect the natural character of the area surrounding the proposed station.*** The City/HCRRA Design Team recommended only minimum infrastructure at the 21st Street station with no development at all on adjacent property. This recommendation is not included in the DEIS as a mitigation measure.

C. SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS

Specific Land Use Preservation, Noise Mitigation etc. using a tunneling option:

There is a specific advantage Minneapolis has because of it's geological conditions, whereby the respective layer for the tunnel contains soft material, which can be excavated with in a very economical way. This has been done at the airport already. The length of the tunnel that links the two terminals at the MSP airport is 7,400' at a depth of 70'. Per the attached article there was no disruption of at grade activities during construction. The cost to build the tunnel was $120M or $16,216 per foot. http://www.hatchmott.com/projects/twin-light-rail-transit-tunnel-underground-lindbergh-terminal-stationminneapolis-st-paul.

The distance between the West Lake Street Station and the 21st Street Station is 1.08 miles or 5,702 feet. Using the distance of 5,702' X $20,540 per foot = $117M (adjusted for inflation) to construct a tunnel 70' below grade from West Lake Street Station to 21st street station.

- **Benefits of the tunnel:**
  - No disruption of at grade activities on the roads, bike path or walking paths.
  - No re-routing of local streets or disruption, specifically Burnham Blvd. or at Cedar Lake Parkway.
  - Preserves the quiet natural neighborhood for decades and beyond as it is defined by the .
  - No eminent domain required to accommodate the LRT at grade or with Bridge option at Cedar Lake Parkway.
  - no mitigation for the single family homes would be required sound or sight,
  - There is no security check point between the Lindberg and Humphrey terminals, anyone can get on and ride the LRT between terminals.
  - The overall cost with the tunnel option along the Kenilworth trail would be a 3% increase over the total budget of $1.25B up to 1.287B.

- ***This option needs to be seriously considered.***

THERE HAS TO BE AN ANALYSIS OF THIS OPTION, WHICH IS A FEASIBLE OPTION, ANS SPECIFICALLY FEASIBLE IN AN ECONOMICAL WAY IN MINNEAPOLIS AREA due to its unique geology.

TUNNELING A SHORT STRETCH WOULD SOLEVE ALL OF THE AFORE-LISTED PROBLEMS. IT REPRESENTS A HISTORIC CHANCE, THAT ONCE AGAIN MINNESOTA CAN LEAD THE COUNTRY IN PUBLIC TRANSSPORTATION, WHICH IS ENVIRONMENTALLY AND ECONOMICALLY SENSIBLE. THIS APPROACH IS ALREADY A TRADITION IN OUR STATE: WE PRESERVED THE LAKES IN THE CITY, WE ARE THE LEADING BIKE CITY IN THE COUNTRY. THE CURRENET ON-GRADE LRT, IN ADDITION TO VIOATING MANY ORDINANCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS AND REQUIREMENTS AND OVERLOOKING, IS ALSO NOT COMPATIBLE WITH THIS TRADITION.

Comment #494

Jutta Ellermann

12/31/2012 10:36 AM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us
cc Jutta Ellermann
bcc
Subject Fwd: COMMENTS ON LRT DEIS from Dr. Jutta Ellermann and Dr. Kamil Ugurbil

Minneapolis, 12/31/2012

Dr. Jutta Ellermann and Dr. Kamil Ugurbil,

COMMENTS ON Southwest Transitway Chapter 4 Draft Environmental Impact Statement Environmental Effects /October 2012

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4. In March 2011, a joint WHO-JRC "Report: Burden of disease from environmental noise. Quantification of healthy life years lost in Europe", reviewing the evidence of health effects consequent to noise exposure, estimating the burden of disease in western European countries, and providing guidance on how best to quantify risks from environmental noise.

b) FTA noise impact criteria are based on land use and existing noise levels. The Federal Transportation Agency (FTA) has three land-use noise categories: Category 1 is for land where quiet is an essential element of its use; Category 2 are residences and buildings where people normally sleep; Category 3 are institutional land uses such as schools, libraries and churches. ***The park land to the west of the Kenilworth Corridor is shown as a Category 3 land use in the DEIS. The residential properties to the east and west of the Corridor are shown as Category 2. This categorization is absolutely false and cannot be justified. It is at all not clear how it is or it can be justified. Appropriately, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) has objected to the characterization of its park land as Category 3, believing instead that it is Category 1.***

c) Low ambient noise levels cause the impact threshold to be lower. For example, if the existing noise level is 50 dB, then an increase to 55 dB is a severe impact according to FTA standards. If the existing noise level is 55 dB, then the noise level has to increase to 62 dB before the impact is severe. ***It does not appear as though any direct measurement of existing noise level was taken within the Kenilworth Corridor. The closest location appears to be Kenilworth Place and Upton Avenue South, which is identified as being "representative of noise-sensitive land use in the Kenwood Neighborhood, away from major thoroughfares." This claim is not justifiable and cannot be justified***.

d) Within Segment A, the DEIS estimates that there are 73 moderate noise impacts and 183 severe impacts. It states that "[m]any of the impacts are due to low existing ambient noise levels combined with proximity of residential neighborhoods to the alignment and high speeds of operation." Other impacts were associated with the warning signal use at the 21st Street station coupled with low ambient noise levels.

e) The DEIS states that noise levels that result in a severe impact presents a compelling need for mitigation. ***However, the DEIS does not recommend any specific mitigation measures for the Kenilworth Corridor and does not evaluate if the mitigation measures possible for a on-grade LRT system can accomplish the necessary mitigation*** . In fact, the only specific recommendation in the DEIS calls for the use of Quiet Zones and this is recommended only for the freight rail relocation segment in St. Louis Park.

f) The DEIS identifies 247 Category 2 vibration-sensitive land uses in Segment A, which are mostly single-family and multifamily residences. The DEIS assessment predicts that there will be 124 potential vibration impacts from the LRT caused by geological conditions (west of Van White station)and increased train speeds.

g) Potential mitigation measures listed in the DEIS include special trackwork, vehicle specifications, ballast masts and floating slabs***. However, the need for and selection of specific measures is deferred until the completion of a detailed vibration analysis*** which "will be conducted during the FEIS in coordination with Preliminary Engineering."

City Proposed overpass bridge:

For the reasons listed below, the "adequacy" of the analysis and conclusions in

the DEIS relating to the proposed LRT overpass is highly questionable and subject to challenge.

a) The DEIS acknowledges that the proposed LRT bridge over Cedar Lake Parkway (CLP) "would have a substantial [visual] impact on this historic landscape." A similar long-term architectural impact is acknowledged. However, further consideration of these impacts is deferred to the "Section 106 consultation process", which likely means to occur after the approval of the FEIS.

b) Separate from these acknowledgements, Cedar Lake Parkway (CLP) is a part of the Grand Rounds Historic District, which is eligible for the National Register of Historic Properties(NLRP).

c) Because of Cedar Lake Parkway's eligibility for the NRHP and because the SW LRT project has and will receive federal funding, the DEIS identifies Cedar Lake Parkway as a "property" under Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act of 1966. Section 4(f) is intended to prevent the conversion of historic sites, parks, recreation areas and wildlife and waterfowl refuges to transportation uses, except under certain limited circumstances. For purposes of Section 4(f), the prohibition applies whenever the protected property is directly incorporated into a project or the project is so proximate to a protected property that it results in an impact that causes substantial impairment to the property's use or enjoyment (so-called "constructive use"). Substantial impairment occurs when the protected attributes of the property are substantially diminished. Exceptions to the prohibition arise when there is no feasible and prudent alternative to the use of the property and the action included all possible planning to minimize harm to the property resulting from the use. ***This Requirement has not been fulfilled in the DEIS document.***

d) Instead, for an unstated reason(s), the DEIS concludes that the proposed LRT overpass is neither a direct or constructive use of the historic attributes of Cedar Lake Parkway. Therefore, the DEIS finds that there is no Section 4(f) prohibition applicable to the construction of the bridge. ***This is clearly unsupportable and unjustified. The DEIS contains no analysis of the proposed bridge's proximity to park property as an independent basis for finding a constructive use under Section 4(f).***

e) Further, the DEIS does not make any assessment of the potential noise impact of elevating the transit way nor the visual intrusion of the elevated transit way to nearby residents or to bike/pedestrian trail users***. However, the noise impact, will certainly be more severe at a given distance from the in an elevated track and will also extend further.***

f) ***Finally, the DEIS has no analysis of potential measures to mitigate the visual and noise impact caused by trains traveling across the proposed overpass nor any assessment of the impact of alternatively tunneling the transit way underneath the Parkway.*** While the MPRB did conduct a preliminary assessment of a trenched LRT underpass, no reference was made to a below grade crossing in the DEIS.

21st Street Station:

a) The DEIS identifies the 21st Station as a "park and ride" site with parking for 100 vehicles and 1000 daily LRT boardings. ***No assessment of the traffic flow associated with parking at the site, nor the site plan showing the location of***

the parking lot is provided.

b) The MPRB believes that the western most track is on park land adjacent the proposed station. ***If this is true, the DEIS needs to conduct a Section 4(f) analysis of the use of park land. No such analysis has been undertaken. The DEIS does state that the land ownership adjacent the station is complicated and that additional survey work may be necessary*** .

c) Separate from the track location, the proposed station and associated parking lot could constitute a constructive use of the adjacent park land. ***The DEIS does not address this issues specifically. Instead, the DEIS makes a general statement that there are no constructive uses of Section 4(f) protected property within the Kenilworth Corridor.***

d) ***No analysis was conducted as to whether the proposed station and parking lot would comply with the requirements of the City's Shoreland Overlay District, particularly those governing storm-water runoff and point and non-point source discharges of pollutants*** .

e)The DEIS acknowledges that the implementation of LRT service and stations along Segment A (mostly the Kenilworth Corridor) "would likely result in some land use change surrounding the stations…" ***No assessment was done of the cumulative impact of those changes nor was any mitigation proposed to protect the natural character of the area surrounding the proposed station.*** The City/HCRRA Design Team recommended only minimum infrastructure at the 21st Street station with no development at all on adjacent property. This recommendation is not included in the DEIS as a mitigation measure.

C. SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS

Specific Land Use Preservation, Noise Mitigation etc. using a tunneling option:

There is a specific advantage Minneapolis has because of it's geological conditions, whereby the respective layer for the tunnel contains soft material, which can be excavated with in a very economical way. This has been done at the airport already. The length of the tunnel that links the two terminals at the MSP airport is 7,400' at a depth of 70'. Per the attached article there was no disruption of at grade activities during construction. The cost to build the tunnel was $120M or $16,216 per foot.
http://www.hatchmott.com/projects/twin-light-rail-transit-tunnel-underground-lindbergh-terminal-stationminneapolis-st-paul.

The distance between the West Lake Street Station and the 21st Street Station is 1.08 miles or 5,702 feet. Using the distance of 5,702' X $20,540 per foot = $117M (adjusted for inflation) to construct a tunnel 70' below grade from West Lake Street Station to 21st street station.

- **Benefits of the tunnel:**
    - No disruption of at grade activities on the roads, bike path or walking paths.
    - No re-routing of local streets or disruption, specifically Burnham Blvd. or at Cedar Lake Parkway.
    - Preserves the quiet natural neighborhood for decades and

beyond as it is defined by the .

- No eminent domain required to accommodate the LRT at grade or with Bridge option at Cedar Lake Parkway.

- no mitigation for the single family homes would be required sound or sight,

- There is no security check point between the Lindberg and Humphrey terminals, anyone can get on and ride the LRT between terminals.

- The overall cost with the tunnel option along the Kenilworth trail would be a 3% increase over the total budget of $1.25B up to 1.287B.

- ***This option needs to be seriously considered.***

THERE HAS TO BE AN ANALYSIS OF THIS OPTION, WHICH IS A FEASIBLE OPTION, ANS SPECIFICALLY FEASIBLE IN AN ECONOMICAL WAY IN MINNEAPOLIS AREA due to its unique geology.

TUNNELING A SHORT STRETCH WOULD SOLEVE ALL OF THE AFORE-LISTED PROBLEMS. IT REPRESENTS A HISTORIC CHANCE, THAT ONCE AGAIN MINNESOTA CAN LEAD THE COUNTRY IN PUBLIC TRANSSPORTATION, WHICH IS ENVIRONMENTALLY AND ECONOMICALLY SENSIBLE. THIS APPROACH IS ALREADY A TRADITION IN OUR STATE: WE PRESERVED THE LAKES IN THE CITY, WE ARE THE LEADING BIKE CITY IN THE COUNTRY. THE CURRENET ON-GRADE LRT, IN ADDITION TO VIOATING MANY ORDINANCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS AND REQUIREMENTS AND OVERLOOKING, IS ALSO NOT COMPATIBLE WITH THIS TRADITION.

Comment 503

Jonathan Pribila

12/31/2012 12:13 PM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us
cc
bcc
Subject SWLRT

To whom it may concern:
I have attached a copy of my comments to the DEIS for the proposed SWLRT as a word document.
Thank you
Jonathan Pribila

Southwest Light Rail Transit Way - Draft Environmental Impact Statement Response Letter

The Southwest Light Rail Transit Way will significantly impact the people that live along the entire length of its path, the wildlife and vegetation along the proposed route, and the people who use the bike and pedestrian paths along the tracks. The Cedar-Isles-Dean and Kenwood neighborhoods that line the Kenilworth corridor will likely experience the largest impact because the homes and parkland are in close proximity to the proposed route.

The primary purposes of the DEIS are (i) to identify the potentially significant environmental impacts of the proposed transit way, (ii) to identify and analyze the reasonable alternatives, and (iii) to identify measures that would mitigate the significant environmental impacts of the proposed project, including both the construction-related and long-term impacts.

The primary aim of this response it to minimize the impact that the light rail will have on commuters and residents along the railway as well as the surrounding wildlife and environment. The observations below relate to a failure of the DEIS to adequately assess the potential environmental impacts within the Kenilworth Corridor, particularly given its acknowledged environmental sensitivity, and to identify and recommend mitigation measures. These deficiencies should be corrected in the FEIS.

1. KENILWORTH CORRIDOR

While the DEIS recognizes that "portions of the land between Cedar Lake and Lake of the Isles are very high sensitivity," the DEIS puts no particular focus on the Kenilworth Corridor. Instead, the environmental assessment is spread more-or-less evenly across the 15 miles of the proposed transit way (the "study area"). An exception is the Freight Rail Relocation Segment which receives much attention in terms of its potential impact on residents in St. Louis Park. This is not to fault an emphasis on the relocation analysis. It is simply to draw a contrast between the different levels of data gathering and technical analysis. Given the high sensitivity of the portions of land along the Kenilworth Corridor and the significant number or residents that will be affected, it deserves the same level of attention.

2. NOISE AND VIBRATION

The entire study area is viewed as "dominated by urban land use." This perspective comes across particularly clearly for the Kenilworth Corridor, in direct contrast with the perspective of the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board. The Federal Transportation Agency (FTA) noise impact criteria are based on land use and existing noise levels. The FTA has three land-use noise categories: Category 1 is for land where quiet is an essential element of its use; Category 2 are residences and buildings where people normally sleep; Category 3 are institutional land uses such as schools, libraries and churches.

The park land to the west of the Kenilworth Corridor is either shown as a Category 3 land use in the DEIS or is not characterized. The residential properties to the east and west of the Corridor are shown as Category 2. This parkland has been inappropriately characterized. The MPRB, for example, views the Kenilworth Regional Trail as an area focused on "serenity, habitat restoration, minimal development and passive recreation." Based on the MPRB definition, the Kenilworth Corridor should be classified as Category 1 land use because it consists of "buildings or parks where quiet is an essential element of their purpose." The noise and vibration analysis needs to be recalibrated in light of the adjacent parkland being appropriately identified as Category 1 land use.

There are also problems with the methodology used to determine noise and vibration impact. It does not appear as though any direct measurement of existing noise levels was taken within the Kenilworth Corridor. The closest location appears to be Kenilworth Place and Upton Avenue South, which is identified as being "representative of noise-sensitive land use in the Kenwood Neighborhood, away from major thoroughfares."

Using the current, but incorrect categorization system outlined in the DEIS, 3, Within Segment A, the DEIS estimates that there are 73 moderate noise impacts and 183 severe impacts. It states that "[m]any of the impacts are due to low existing ambient noise levels combined with proximity of residential neighborhoods to the alignment and high speeds of operation." Other impacts were associated with the warning signal use at the 21st Street station coupled with low ambient noise levels. The DEIS states that noise levels that result in a severe impact present a compelling need for mitigation. However, the DEIS does not recommend any specific mitigation measures for the Kenilworth Corridor. In fact, the only specific recommendation in the DEIS calls for the use of Quiet Zones and this is recommended only for the freight rail relocation segment in St. Louis Park.

Several options for noise mitigation need to be clearly outlined prior to FEIS. Specifically, a tunnel option in which the light rail is below the current grade through the Kenilworth corridor should be fully evaluated and included in the FEIS. The increased cost of tunneling should be thoroughly and thoughtfully evaluated relative to the substantial improvement in noise pollution between west lake station and 21st street. This short segment is narrow and extremely close to housing units. Mitigation through large berms or sound barriers, which have been used along the Hiawatha Line, are likely not going to be possible because of the very limited space available.

In addition to the housing units affected, users of the Grand Rounds bike and pedestrian trail will experience a significant change in the level of ambient noise because of the frequency of the train. The effect of increased noise on these users of the Kenilworth trail are completely omitted from the analysis in the DEIS since the Kenilworth trail was not identified as a Category 1 land use. These trails are immediately next to the rail with little or no space for mitigation. What are the plans to mitigate the noise to the recreation trails immediately adjacent to the proposed railway? Specific plans for appropriate noise mitigation need to be included in the FEIS.

Furthermore, the impact on the number of bikers and pedestrians that use the Kenilworth trail has been significantly underestimated. According to the DEIS, bicycle and pedestrian counts were performed in September (6.3.1.4). As everyone in Minneapolis knows, the bike and pedestrian trails receive much higher use during the summer months. These counts need to be obtained several times per day during the summer months to accrue data that will allow for a realistic summer time average.

3. LIGHT POLLUTION

The DEIS fails to address, in any fashion, the impact that the ambient light from the rail will have. The current freight rail adds little light to the surrounding wildlife areas and homes. The proposed light rail will run many times an hour and frequently at night. The change in ambient light levels along the Kenilworth corridor will be significant and will disrupt the serenity of the neighborhood. What are the proposed mitigation measures for this light pollution? Running the train below grade or tunneling the train through this highly sensitive area would mitigate this light pollution.

4. WILDLIFE AND NATURAL HABITAT

The perspective of the DEIS on urban-land-use is inconsistent with the fact that the DEIS identified fourteen federal or state-listed species and native plants within one mile of the proposed transit way. Ten of the species as well as native plants are found in Segment A of the transit way (primarily the Kenilworth Corridor), significantly more than are found in any other segment. From personal experience, bald eagles and peregrine falcon are routinely seen along the Kenilworth Trail. No adverse environmental impact is noted with respect to any of the ten species listed in the DEIS and there is little-to-no analysis offered in the DEIS to support this conclusion.

Moreover, the DEIS sees the habitat as typically of low quality, and states that the native habitats are mostly concentrated in areas other than the Kenilworth Corridor. The DEIS claims that only 2.5% of Segment A is said to have native habitat. While this may be technically true, it vastly underestimates the area of vegetation and woodlands adjacent to the proposed route. In addition, by the DEIS' own claim, within 1 mile of the proposed route, Segment A contains tamarack swamp and a bat colony which are

considered high quality or unique natural communities. No mitigation is proposed for the effect of the light rail on these unique communities.

The DEIS does note that increased habitat fragmentation "could be expected from the construction of required safety/security barriers to separate the light rail tracks from adjacent bicycle/pedestrian trails," which could be mitigated "through the use of wildlife underpasses." This is one of the few specific mitigation measures proposed in the DEIS, and seems to run counter to the determination that there is little to mitigate.

5. KENILWORTH CHANNEL AND BRIDGE

The historic water connection between Cedar Lake and Lake of the Isles remains a defining characteristic of the Minneapolis Chain of Lakes Regional Park. The 1913 Kenilworth Channel is part of the Grand Rounds Historic District that is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. It is critical to preserve the historic nature of the Channel.

In addition, The Kenilworth Channel was central to creating the Minneapolis Chain of Lakes and provides a critical connection between Cedar Lake and Lake of the Isles. Trail access is necessary for people as is year-round channel access for both people and wildlife. It is also a critical link in the City of Lakes Loppet (winter ski race) and City of Lake Tri-Loppet.

According to the DEIS (3.6.3.3) …the bridge design, bank treatment, and aesthetics for the new facility and the potential replacement or modification of the existing pedestrian bridge would have a substantial effect on this historic landscape… In addition, (3.4.5.3)…Potential long-term effects may occur at the following properties: Kenilworth Lagoon/Channel, Grand Rounds (potential effects of the construction of new bridge structures within the historic district; the design and footprint of these structures may affect the banks of the historic channel and may affect the district's overall feeling and setting). While the DEIS notes that these issues will be addressed during preliminary engineering, it is essential that the historic nature of the channel and recreational access between the Lake of Isles and Cedar Lake must be maintained.

Few measures are proposed to mitigate the potential adverse environmental impacts of the project, and nearly none that are of a specific nature. For example, the DEIS notes that "[t]he impact of replacing an existing bridge over the channel that connects Cedar Lake and Kenilworth Lagoon could be substantial because of sensitive receptors traveling the lagoon." This has a significant impact on several aquatic federally and state listed species including the Black Sandshell (mollusk), Pugnose Shiner (fish), and Least Darter (fish). Despite identifying these concerns, the DEIS offers no specific mitigation measures.

In addition, by the DEIS' own account, the area between Cedar Lake and Lake of the Isles is considered a zone of very high sensitivity to pollution of the water table system. The current bridge is constructed of creosote soaked wood pylons. Creosote is a known carcinogen and its use is monitored by the Environmental Protection Agency. Will the necessary reconstruction of this bridge address the creosote pylons that extend into the canal connecting Cedar Lake and Lake of the Isles?

No mitigation measures are set out in the DEIS to address these concerns. Instead, the bridge design, bank treatment and aesthetics for the new bridge are to be addressed later, *after* the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) has been approved. These need to be addressed prior to the FEIS and need to minimize the affect on water pollution and these federally and state listed aquatic life.

6. INDIRECT EFFECTS OF LTR

The DEIS is required to analyze the cumulative impact of reasonably foreseeable future developments. This is also true for the potential indirect effects that may occur in the future. For example, the stated intent of LRT stations is to precipitate development on nearby property. The environmental effects of that future development, when added to the impact of the LRT, may have a significant environmental impact. However, no analysis of the potential cumulative or indirect effects of the Southwest LRT within the

Kenilworth Corridor was conducted. Instead, it is simply stated that those effects could be controlled by existing regulations, primarily those of the City.

7. CEDAR LAKE PARKWAY INTERSECTION

LRT BRIDGE OPTION

The intersection of cedar lake parkway and the proposed light rail transit way are a source of significant controversy and represent significant safety issues for the vehicular traffic on Cedar Lake Parkway and bike and pedestrian traffic on the pathways. For these reasons the intersection of the proposed transit way and Cedar Lake Parkway needs to be carefully considered.

The DEIS acknowledges that the proposed LRT bridge over Cedar Lake Parkway (CLP) "would have a substantial [visual] impact on this historic landscape." A similar long-term architectural impact is acknowledged. However, further consideration of these impacts is deferred to the "Section 106 consultation process." This is a federally-mandated collaboration process. The City and MPRB are parties to the process. Any resolution of the bridge proposal is likely to occur after the approval of the FEIS.

Separate from these acknowledgements, Cedar Lake Parkway (CLP) is a part of the Grand Rounds Historic District, which is eligible for the National Register of Historic Properties(NLRP). Because of Cedar Lake Parkway's eligibility for the NRHP and because the SW LRT project has and will receive federal funding, the DEIS identifies Cedar Lake Parkway as a "property" under Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act of 1966. Section 4(f) is intended to prevent the conversion of historic sites, parks, recreation areas and wildlife and waterfowl refuges to transportation uses, except under certain limited circumstances. For purposes of Section 4(f), the prohibition applies whenever the protected property is directly incorporated into a project or the project is so proximate to a protected property that it results in an impact that causes substantial impairment to the property's use or enjoyment (so-called "constructive use"). Substantial impairment occurs when the protected attributes of the property are substantially diminished. Exceptions to the prohibition arise when there is no feasible and prudent alternative. This is clearly not the case since the DEIS discussed several other alternate routes that do not disrupt the Grand Rounds Historic District.

For an unstated reason(s), the DEIS concludes that the proposed LRT overpass is neither a direct or constructive use of the historic attributes of Cedar Lake Parkway. Therefore, the DEIS finds that there is no Section 4(f) prohibition applicable to the construction of the bridge. The DEIS contains no analysis of the proposed bridge's *proximity* to park property as an independent basis for identification as a constructive use under Section 4(f). The explicit reason(s) as to why the proposed LRT overpass is neither a direct or constructive use of the historic Cedar Lake Parkway must be clearly identified and explained in the FEIS.

Further, the DEIS does not make any assessment of the potential noise impact of elevating the transit way nor the visual intrusion of the elevated transit way to nearby residents or to bike/pedestrian trail users. This needs to be fully evaluated in the FEIS. It is also unclear whether the proposed bridge would violate Mineapolis' shoreline ordinance restricting the height of permanent structures close the city's lakes. This needs to be addressed in the FEIS

Finally, the DEIS has no analysis of potential measures to mitigate the visual and noise impact caused by trains traveling across the proposed overpass. Clear mitigation measures need to be fully detailed in the FEIS.

AT GRADE CROSSING OPTION

The intersection of Cedar Lake Parkway and the Kenilworth Trailway is heavily travelled by both cars, pedestrians, and cyclists. This creates two problems: 1. Safety for all users of the intersection. 2. Traffic delays. The DEIS acknowledges the problems with a grade crossing and have proposed a grade separated crossing as an alternative.

In 2011, according to the Metropolitan Council's annual visit estimates, Kenilworth Regional Trail had approximately 624,400 visits and the Chain of Lakes Regional Park had 5,122,900 visits. This is significantly higher that the DEIS estimates. Once again, extrapolating bike usage for a 2 hour period in September, fails to reflect the extremely high usage that the trail receives in the summer. This intersection, particularly in the peak of summer, is already very dangerous and has resulted in a number of accidents.

Cedar Lake Parkway is heavily travelled particularly at rush hour. It represents one of three ways out of the Cedar Isles Dean Neighborhood and the most direct west exit from the neighborhood. Lake of the Isles and Dean Parkway are the only other options. Given the high degree of pedestrian and vehicular traffic, this intersection is already dangerous and in the summer can result in significant delays. In fact, the DEIS estimates that it will degrade the intersection to a D, E or F status. South of the intersection, traffic would likely back up along the west end of Cedar Lake Parkway and extend on to Dean Parkway. It would block the vehicular traffic exiting Benton Blvd and limit access to the Excelsior Blvd. North of the intersection, it would also limit access to Burnham Road. Further, such impacts are inconsistent with one of the basic design characteristics of the Grand Rounds: a continuous recreational driving experience. Please see the above discussion of Section of 4(F) prohibition of direct or constructive use of the historic attributes of Cedar Lake Parkway.

A grade crossing would also increase the noise and air pollution at this intersection due to the high frequency of trains that will cross here. For an at-grade crossing, high levels of track, bell, and whistle noise would significantly diminish the quality of experience in adjacent parkland and along the trails. Frequent traffic delays for train crossings are expected to diminish air quality for park and trail users.

The frequent closing of the intersection would cause significant delays in fire, police, and emergency medical response to residences, park facilities, and beaches. Given the limited numbers of ways in and out of the Cedar Isles Dean neighborhood, this could significantly limit access of emergency services to these residents. In addition, due to the proximity of South Cedar Lake Beach, timely emergency medical access across this intersection is critical.

The effects of adding LRT into this intersection would result in frequent delays for parkway and trail users along Cedar Lake Parkway, and create visual obstructions. Both of these impacts would significantly diminish the quality of experience for parkway, park, and trail users. Further, such impacts are inconsistent with one of the basic design characteristics of the Historic Grand Rounds: a continuous recreational driving experience.

TUNNELING TRENCHING OPTION

The DEIS acknowledges that there are fundamental safety, vehicular and pedestrian traffic concerns with an at grade crossing at Cedar Lake Parkway. The MPRB has recommended tunneling or trenching the transit way underneath the Parkway. While the MPRB did conduct a preliminary assessment of a trenched LRT underpass, no reference was made to a below grade crossing in the DEIS. In fact, the DEIS does not even mention tunneling or trenching the transit way. Tunneling or trenching the transit way is a very valid alternative and one generally favored by the residents of the Cedar Isles Dean neighborhood who would be primarily affected by the proposed light rail.

For the above reasons, the "adequacy" of the analysis and conclusions in the DEIS relating to the proposed Cedar Lake Parkway is severely lacking.

8. 21st STREET STATION

The DEIS identifies the 21st Station as a "park and ride" site with parking for 100 vehicles and 1000 daily LRT boardings. There was no assessment of the traffic flow associated with parking at the site. Nor was

there a site plan showing the location of the parking lot. Both of these issues need to be addressed in the FEIS.

The MPRB believes that the western most track is on park land adjacent the proposed station. If this is true, the DEIS needs to conduct a Section 4(f) analysis regarding the use of park land. No such analysis has been undertaken. The DEIS does state that the land ownership adjacent the station is complicated and that additional survey work may be necessary.

Separate from the track location, the proposed station and associated parking lot could constitute a constructive use of the adjacent park land. The DEIS does not address this issue specifically. Instead, the DEIS makes a general statement that there are no constructive uses of Section 4(f) protected property within the Kenilworth Corridor. If Section 4(f) does apply, a feasible and prudent alternative is to forgo the station entirely or at least the parking component.

In addition, no analysis was conducted as to whether the proposed station and parking lot would comply with the requirements of the City's Shoreland Overlay District, particularly those governing storm water runoff and point and non-point source discharges of pollutants.

The DEIS acknowledges that the implementation of LRT service and stations along Segment A (mostly the Kenilworth Corridor) "would likely result in some land use change surrounding the stations…" No assessment was done of the cumulative impact of those changes nor was any mitigation proposed to protect the natural character of the area surrounding the proposed station. The City/HCRRA Design Team recommended only minimum infrastructure at the 21st Street station with no development at all on adjacent property. This recommendation is not included in the DEIS as a mitigation measure.

In conclusion, the DEIS addresses several specific environmental and economic impacts of the Southwest Light Rail. However, it fails to recognize that the proposed Southwest LTR will fundamentally change the character of the Kenilworth corridor. Most of the residents chose to live here because of the privacy, the park-like setting, and the proximity to nature and recreation trails. The DEIS assumes that the Kenilworth corridor is dominated by urban land use because of the presence of the freight train but it fails to recognize the significant impact that conversion to light rail traveling over 200 times a day at speeds of 50 miles an hour would have. While the DEIS begins to address some of these concerns, it is severely flawed and does not adequately address protecting the environment (Goal 3, DEIS) and preserving and protecting the quality of life (Goal 4 , DEIS) along the Kenilworth Trail. There are flaws in the assumptions made within the DEIS, the methodology used to determine the environmental impact, and most profoundly in the lack of specific mitigation proposed for all of the areas of environmental concern.

Thank you for allowing us to submit our comments. We look forward to hearing your response to each of these concerns.

Jonathan Pribila and Steven Thiel
2830 Benton Blvd
Minneapolis, MN 55416

Comment #505

"Dahlquist, Barbara D"

12/31/2012 12:38 PM

To <swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>
cc
bcc
Subject personal DEIS response

With the DEIS study, it becomes clear that the recommended “fly over” at Cedar Lake Parkway, and at grade track will be an unacceptable alternative for the light rail installation between the Lake Street station and the 21st street, after further consideration. I am in favor of either a tunnel or cut and cover through this area. Cedar Lake Road should remain at grade level.

Noise: the biggest concern:

As a biker who frequently uses Kenilworth trail, I see a completely different experience than we have all become accustomed to. I was under the impression that light rail meant light noise compared to the train which we are used to on that track. I live at Calhoun Isles and am not bothered by the train as the noise level is at a low octave. It runs 2 to 3 times a day, as compared to a suggested 200 to 250 times a day with light rail. The impact suggested by the DEIS is 114 dB, and “severe impact” compared to 44dB ambient noise level currently experienced in the area. According to data I have reviewed, on a normal linear scale this is an increase over ambient of one million times in intensity and is compared to live rock musing or an auto horn at one meter distance. This does not take into consideration the additional source of noise that would occur with a LRT flyover bridge over Cedar Lake Parkway. I am interested in knowing how the dB measurement would change for Calhoun Isles and Cedar Shores which are at a 20 foot distance from the track after landscaping and barrier walls were installed. Please advise. It would certainly be a different experience when biking/blading/walking as well.

I know it would be more expensive to go below grade with the track, but perhaps not so extremely different when you consider that there would not have to be a flyover bridge, as it could be a continuation of the cut and cover or tunnel trench. The trench barrier wall installation would be likely to be similar to the cost of the combination of landscaping and barrier wall which would be required if it is not installed below ground. The additional landscaping for the cut and cover/tunnel, I would think, would not be necessary.

Vibration has not impacted the townhome’s structural integrity with the infrequent nature of the industrial trails. I am concerned that the increased frequency of light rail (from 2-3 times daily to 200-250 times daily) could really cause damage to our units. I will look forward to your report on how this would change as well.

Visual:

Of course, introducing heavy commercial traffic into an area which is surrounded by parkland, Grand Rounds trail system, and a residential neighborhood would be incomprehensible! This statement relates to noise and vibration as well.

Since that nature of this rail traffic is so completely different from the infrequent industrial use, is it not required that the neighborhoods affected would be given a chance to vote on this change?

Thank you for addressing these concerns. I know that if there is a below ground passage between Lake Street station and 21st street, the introduction of light rail can be positive for the city and county.

Barb Dahlquist

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Comment #506

John Howard

12/31/2012 12:55 PM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us
cc
bcc
Subject Draft EIS Comment

Hello,
I heard at the Eden Prairie town hall meeting that comments would be accepted until Dec. 31st. I hope that is still the case.
I have the following comments in regards to the Draft EIS, which are also attached:

- I feel the 3C-1 route would be the best option, as it maximizes service possibilities. I came to this conclusion because this route:

- leads into the heart of downtown where many southwest metro residents work. While this route is projected to take 8 minutes longer than the LPA, that time would be made up by a shorter walk to the office. Therefore this may increase ridership and make this option more cost effective than anticipated in the DEIS.
- passes through the Uptown and Lyn-Lake area, which would mean the LRT is used on weekends because that area is a very popular weekend and evening destination for young people. The LPA route would really just be a commuter route. Additionally the 3C routes would allow many more Minneapolis residents to commute to work in the west metro without a car, and therefore could greatly reduce parking and traffic congestion. By serving the heavily populated areas of Minneapolis, ridership should be high and yet again improve the overall project economics.
- Utilizing the 3C-1 route would enable a shorter co-location option than 3A-1. Co-location would only occur from West Lake to Louisiana, versus Penn through Louisiana on 3A-1. Co-location seems to mitigate a major concern by St. Louis Park residents.

- I am perplexed that the 3C-1 option is projected to have only 24,550 daily boardings while 3C-2 option is expected to receive 28,850 boardings. This information is presented in the Table ES 1 on page ES-14. Considering the 3C-2 and 3C-1 have similar routes, except once they get to downtown, I don't see why they should differ by nearly 17.9% of the 3C-1 riders (4, 400 daily riders). There would be major cost effectiveness implications if the 3C-1 route has ridership nearly equal to the 3C-2 route, or vice versa.

- I am confused by the noise ratings that appear on page ES-16. The LPA has the lowest rating, yet it is intuitive that the co-location route would be the quietest as it keeps rail noise to established corridors. The relocation option puts freight rail in much more residential areas than are currently utilized.

- I am also confused by the table on page ES-19 that compares freight rail options. It appears that the relocation options for freight could lead more cars into residential areas, most notably by St. Louis Park High School. While freight certainly could be carried safely, there appears to be increased risk to civilians by relocation, albeit minor. More importantly, I feel the categorizations in the second criteria, "Continuous flow of freight rail throughout the study area" should be opposite of the current labels. Freight operations would be disrupted by removing a rail line and relocating all freight to the MN&S line, however these options are labeled as "Yes" mean freight is free flowing. The options that either do not impact rail lines (No build and Enhanced Bus) or have less impact (Co-location) are labeled "No", indicating freight rail would not be continuous. All options might be some form of "yes", but there are certainly gradations that are not captured by the figure.

- In Section 6, Transportation Effects, the 3C-1 line is described as not connecting with the other lines. While it does not go to the Interchange/Target Field station, it certainly is still near the Interchange (10-15 minute walk) and intersects the Hiawatha/CCLRT line.

- Edina is mentioned as being serviced, yet no stations are located in the city.

- I also contend that the overall summary chart on ES-21 is overly critical of the 3C options and Co-location option. Specifically:

- In regards to Goal 2, the 3C options are given "does not support goal" rating, yet are only 1% more expensive per passenger mile. While they do add time to a full line length commute, they also provide more options for ridership possibilities, which might cancel out the additional time. Therefore it seems the 3C options are deserving of a "somewhat supports goal" qualification under the assumptions of the preparers, and likely a "supports goal" if my conclusions in the comments are considered.
- For Goal 3, the co-location and 3Cs receive the "does not support goal" score, yet there is little difference between these two and the LPA in the Goal 3 chart (page ES-15 and 16). Thus it seems reasonable to give the co-location and 3C-1 routes a "somewhat supports goal" rating equivalent to the LPA.
- In regards to Goal 4, the Co-location and 3C-1 option receive bad marks, which seem to be undeserved, in my opinion. The co-location route should have positive impacts to St. Louis Park residents who would otherwise receive additional rail traffic. This is the only difference from the LPA as far as I can tell, so it seems the co-location option should have a better rating than the LPA. For the 3C options, there also seem to be positives not accounted for in the Goal 4 chart. The 3C options provide service to more people, many of whom would appreciate reliable and affordable public transportation. By providing a route to uptown and Lyn-Lake, many young people could have access to nightlife areas and have a safe ride home to the West metro. Similarly, residents from Uptown to Franklin could use the line to access the West Metro or downtown. These benefits might outweigh the adverse Environmental Justice impacts anticipated in the DEIS. Also, by having a tunnel for the 3C-1 route, community impacts are likely to be low, and this does not seem to be factored into the Goal 4 Table.

- Certainly if my comments are considered valid, the Overall Performance rating would be higher for the co-location and 3C options.

Thank you,
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- Certainly if my comments are considered valid, the Overall Performance rating would be higher for the co-location and 3C options.

Thank you,

John Howard

Comment #508

Lisa Bailey

12/31/2012 12:58 PM

To "swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us" <swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>
cc
bcc
Subject DEIS for SWLRT

My husband and I (Scott Anderson & Lisa Bailey) are relatively newcomers to Park Lane (we are at). We have, however, lived in the Cedar Isles area for over 20 years and have watched various government projects change the character of neighborhoods in this area. Most have been positive so we were stunned to learn that the SWLRT will add a very unattractive and noisy bridge over Cedar Lake Parkway. It seems to us that the bridge fails to take in to account that doing so will destroy the character of the neighborhood and will negatively impact the use & enjoyment of the Kenilworth Trail and the swimming beach.

We ask you to consider that the SWLRT, unlike the Hiawatha or University lines, is situated in the middle of a recreation area and established neighborhoods. Ourselves and our neighbors will watch our property values drop but will gain no real benefit from the line. We believe our losses could be mitigated by having the SWLRT be built below grade and urge you to consider this option.

As a final note, we find it ironic that the 21st Street station is proposed when over the years the City of Minneapolis has spent time and money to regulate activities at Hidden Beach including off street parking. During the summer the 21st Street area is very congested as Hidden Beach grows in popularity. We have no idea why a station would be built that would bring even more off street parking to the area. Moreover, based on what I have seen over the years at Hidden Beach I wouldn't consider walking to or from the station after dark.

Thank you for consideration of our comments. We have supported light rail over the years but would like to see an alternative to an unsightly bridge over Cedar Lake Parkway.

Sent from my iPad

Comment #509

"Harris, Scott"

12/31/2012 01:28 PM

To "swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us" <swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>
cc "Cheryl Harris (
bcc
Subject Comments to Lightrail Draft Environmental Impact Statement

Please accept our comment to the DEIS. We live at , near Cedar Lake. While we support the expansion of our lightrail system, we have serious concerns about the impact of this proposal at and about the crossing at Cedar Lake Parkway. This is currently a very congested and dangerous crossing, in light of the substantial vehicle, pedestrian and bicycle traffic that converges there. It is also a key point in our wonderful bicycle trail system and a necessary passageway for neighborhood foot and vehicle traffic—as well as a busy throughway for non-local traffic. We are strongly opposed to both the grade option under consideration and the proposed bridge option, which promises to be visually intrusive and quite noisy. We believe that an underground solution will best serve safety, traffic, noise and aesthetic interests at this very critical crossing. It also does not appear to us that an underground approach is disproportionately expensive, as compared to the bridge option. We thank you for your careful consideration of this alternative. Truly, Cher and Scott Harris.

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Comment #50

A.J. Colianni

12/31/2012 01:38 PM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us
cc
bcc
Subject DEIS Comments

Please accept the following comments on the SW LRT. I am a homeowner on Upton Ave an my property is adjacent to the existing trail and HCRRA right-of-way.

Relocation of Freight Rail: We fully support the relocation of freight rail as part of this project, and don't believe that co-locating the freight rail, light rail, and walking / biking trails will be appropriate.

Cedar Lake Parkway: We believe that trenching or tunneling the light rail line near the cedar lake parkway is the only acceptable solution. It is currently a difficult intersection with the bike trail and various roads. A trench or tunnel could support a redesign of this intersection that would be safer for all constituents. (chapter 3, page 3-115)

Noise mitigation: Please employ whatever noise mitigation solutions are available to limit the noise from the trains. (chapter 4, page 4-84)

Light pollution: Will the tracks be lit?

Vibration: We currently experience moderate low-frequency vibration from the freight rail. We support the KIAA's opinion that a vibration assessment be performed to determine need for additional mitigation.

Respectfully submitted,

A.J. Colianni