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**SLP-01**

2-12-14

These meetings are such a waste of time. There are hidden agendas of the Met Council-> to the point they are working our city when proposing the re-route. The Kenilworth option is the only option. There is nothing there except some shitty apts & nothing to see. Yet you would rather destroy a school & community. Just try it & see what happens.

**SLP-02**

2-13-14

It's simple. Keeping freight in Kenilworth corridor is the safest, least intrusive, and most viable alternative. Move the bike path!

**SLP-03**

2/12/14

Kenilworth Corridor is clearly the choice! Cheapest, Safest, Least Impact (only bicycle trail impacted), Serve the most people, Most Direct Route, Fastest to So Suburbs, and Mostly in place. No Question!

**SLP-04**

2-12-2014

WE DON'T WANT THE FREIGHT RAIL REROUTE.

**SLP-05**

2-12-14

- Leave freight as is, Deep bore for LRT under the Kenilworth channel
- OR re-route LRT to population centers-Uptown, Eat Street & Mpls Conv. Center
- All world class cities connect LRT to their convention centers
- Eden Prairie businesses are then directly connected to Conv. Center & Airport

**SLP-06**

2-12-14

The TransSystem reports leave many unanswered questions on traffic flow through the Lake St./Walker Ave/Dakota Ave. area. The treatment of Hwy 7 frontage road in front of my building at 6416 Hwy 7 has a major impact on the property, yet appears to be based on no examination of elevations and conflicting transit flows. It really calls into question the thoroughness and validity of this study – and its value to ongoing SWLRT discussions. This is just one example of the many areas in which the study appears to be careless & hurried

**SLP-07**

2/12/2014

long-time SLP Resident

“We don’t need a train running through the center of St. Louis Park” I don’t want to lose my apartment and I don’t want the railroad to take away homes, schools, and McDonalds. STOP

**SLP-08**

2-12-14

The cost is just too high to build and maintain the train.  
Rapid Bus Service makes much more sense!”

**SLP-09**

2-12-2014

THE MET COUNCIL CONTINUES TO BE NON-RESPONSIVE TO US, AND IN LOCK-STEP.

**SLP-10**

Feb 12’2014

As a business owner affected by these plans it is very frustrating to make plans regarding the future of our business. Prior to a year ago all signs pointed towards development was going to be towards the North side of the tracks. All that changed a year ago, to the point of all 3 of our properties have been targeted at various points.

- What will happen to the access to our property at the corner of Lake St & Brownlow?
- Is ther going to be a service road at the level of highway 7 under the bridge near Walker St?
- Why isn’t the bike trail reroute on the table?

**SLP-11**

2/12/2014

Can you put freight rail in the tunnels in Kenilworth?

- run light rail at grade (quieter)
- hide freight rail in tunnels
- no reroute necessary

**SLP-12**

February 12<sup>th</sup>, 2014

I have little doubt that this hearing in just as much a sham as all the other hearings and reports have been. Time after time, a freight reroute has been shown to be impractical, more expensive then collocation and markedly less safe. Yet, the county keeps cooking the books and hiring new consultants in an attempt to fit a square peg into a round hole.

The continued re-ve-al REevaluation of freight reroutes has served to erode this entire community’s faith in our elected AND appointed officials, our state agencies and even in the democratic process. You have driven a wedge between Minneapolis and SLP which will take DECADES to heal, if They are ever actually healed.

**SLP-13**

2/12/2014

WHY IS THE ST. LOUIS PARK PLAN ON THE TABLE WHEN A VIABLE SAFER RAIL CORRIDOR IS AVAILABLE IN MINNEAPOLIS?

HOW MUCH DO I NEED TO CONTRIBUTE TO GOV. DAYTON’S CAMPAIGN TO HAVE THE FREIGHT REROUTE TAKEN OFF THE VIABLE OPTIONS LIST?

**SLP-14**

2-11-4

The closing of 29<sup>th</sup> & 28<sup>th</sup> may not seem important and you say you will put a thru on 27<sup>th</sup>. 28<sup>th</sup> Street is the main entry for emergency vehicles to the Birchwood Neighborhood. 27<sup>th</sup> will not be as close or quick – you need to rethink this.

**SLP-15**

2.12.14

THE REASON FREIGHT REROUTE IS STILL ON THE TABLE IN SPITE OF VIOLENT COMMUNITY OPPOSITION IS THAT SOMEONE'S GOAL IS TO CREATE A PRISTINE, FREIGHT FREE KENILWORTH CORRIDOR IN ORDER TO PROTECT VERY VALUABLE REAL ESTATE INVESTMENTS ADJACENT. MIGHT BE MET COUNCIL MEMBERS, MIGHT BE HENNEPIN CTY COMMISSIONERS OR THEIR FRIENDS OR RELATIVES. WE DON'T KNOW EXACTLY WHAT IT IS. YET.

**SLP-16**

Feb 12/14

RECONSIDER THE LPA – REVISIT LRT IN UPTOWN TO CBD –

**SLP-17**

2/12/14

This “new” option from TranSystems is just a slight redo of the other option with berms. It still necessitates a huge NO to this reroute for safety, cost, community impact. Please take the relocation option off the table for good!

**SLP-18**

2-12-14

IF THE PLAN/DESIGN IS NOT TO UNDULY IMPACT THE SURROUNDING COMMUNITY, HOW IS THE REROUTE STILL ON THE TABLE? IT TAKES NUMEROUS PROPERTIES AND BUSINESSES, BLOCKS/CLOSES ROADWAYS, IMPACTS SCHOOLS AND TRANSPORTATION TO THE SCHOOLS, AND PUTS OUR KIDS IN HARMS WAY. WHAT IS YOUR DEFINITION OF UNDULY IMPACTING A NEIGHBORHOOD? PLEASE CONSIDER MOVING A BIKE TRAIL OR USING AN EXISTING CORRIDOR FOR THE FREIGHT RATHER THAN DESTROY A COMMUNITY.

**SLP-19**

2-12-14

Kenilworth Corridor Vegetation Inventory. Why is there no St. Louis Park Safety Inventory?

Mitigation re: freight re-route. Where's the data? Why aren't mitigation costs included in the re-route cost totals? Why is there no St. Louis Park Cost Mitigation Inventory (over please)

Can you guarantee that St. Louis Park will be as safe as it is now, if freight traffic is re-routed? If not, why not?

What are the current railroad standards for putting rail past schools & in residential neighborhoods?

Besides safety & mitigation costs, what are the livability costs and standards?

**SLP-20**

2-12-14

1. WOULD IT MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE TO THE RAILROADS IF THE LRT DID NOT GO DOWN KENILWORTH?
2. WHAT IMPACT WILL THERE BE ON THE SHALLOW TUNNELS WITH VIBRATIONS FROM THE TRAINS?
3. HOW WILL THE HEAVY RAIL AFFECT HOME VALUES FOR THOSE WITHIN 2-4 BLOCKS OF THE RAILROAD LINES?

**SLP-21**

2/12/14

The Kenilworth Corridor was chosen for faster commuter times from Eden Prairie to Minneapolis. However, there is already express bus service from the southwest suburbs to downtown. Could the Uptown route for light rail be reconsidered, and more express buses offered and commuter rail service between the southwest suburbs and Minneapolis?

**SLP-22**

At the last meeting, we were asked what we wanted to see from the process. Unless we are going to go back and start with the selection of the LPA and compare costs and community impacts with the freight rail included in the analysis, I don't care about the process. Unless we are going to really look at the least expensive options, I don't care about the process. The process for years was manipulated and skewed to produce a pre determined outcome.

I do care about the result. The result I want to see is a safe, livable community in St. Louis Park that is not irreparably damaged by this proposed reroute.

The various reroute options that have been presented over the years have been shown to be unsafe, uneconomical for the railroad, hugely expensive and destructive to our community. Yet every time we turn around, we see the same plan wrapped in different colored paper. It's time to remove the dark cloud from our community and let us take down our signs and do things beside attend meeting after meeting. Take the reroute option off the table for good.

**SLP-23**

2/12/14

If the same criteria was used for the MN&S as other routes, the MN&S would be eliminated also. Community impacts & taking of property being some. We again lose homes, business & this time a school. Then cost. This is not a 'reroute' but a major construction of a new railway, since the MN&S is not adequate. There were absolutely no details presented about the reroute other than a line on Google maps. There is no way to inform anyone about this 'new concept'. I have also seen two other maps/drawings that have not been presented. This is a major impact to our community yet information is being withheld.

**SLP-24**

Feb 12 2014

Why isn't the plan to move the bike trail back on the table? It MUST be! Don't play politics with St. Louis Park children's safety and SLP quality of life. This "plan" to re-route freight to SLP is UNJUST, This "plan" to re-route is inadequate to even consider – it is very unconvincing – it is irresponsible – it is unethical.

**SLP-25**

2/11/14

The shallow tunnel & freight through Kenilworth seems to meet the needs of all communities. They do not unduly impact either St. Louis Park or Mpls. Fair is fair!

**SLP-26**

2/12/2014

SLP residents are flabbergasted as to why a reroute through St. Louis Park is still on the table. There are, in fact other viable options. Moving a small section of the trail remains the least expensive. Kenilworth corridor is not an official Park Land. It has always been, from its inception, a corridor for trains! Don't compromise the viability and safety of St. Louis Park & it's children!

**SLP-27**

2-12-14

The delay and this report are insulting. The passage of the shallow tunnel option was nearly a done deal and seems to have been swept aside for politics. DO NOT reroute freight rail through St. Louis Park. We will not rest until this terrible, dangerous, expensive option is 100 percent off the table. NO back-room deals, no loopholes. I almost cannot believe the words "objections to (moving the bike trail) included visual impacts and difficulties getting on and off the trails..." Unbelievably small potatoes compared with the berms, noise, disruption, vibrations, potential derailment, and loss of homes and businesses being proposed in St. Louis Park.

Enough Already!

**SLP-28**

February 12, 2014

The Kenilworth Corridor & the upper chain of lacks are beautiful places for residents in this area. Do not destroy it by putting LRT at grade. A shallow tunnel costs \$ but it solves all of our problems w/freight, safety & keeping this area quiet & beautiful.

**SLP-29**

2-12-14

When was the last time a ridership study was done to project the volume of use of the Lightrail line, given its current route through the Kenilworth corridor? That study should be done now, so the cost of building & operating the line, per rider, can be projected; and based on that analysis it should be determined if this project is cost effective public transport.

**SLP-30**

2-12-14

The Met Council claims they want to engage the public, but ignores the fact that the most common complaint in Mpls is that we want the LRT alignment to change because it isn't the best alignment in terms of when density & ridership. The Met Council repeats that to go back to the LPA will mean we would fall out of the federal queue. I have written to Peter Rogoff (DOT head) to ask if he will hold our place in line while we go back to the LPA because the freight issue was never dealt with. If the MET Council & all public officials were to ask if the clock could be stopped and hold our place in line, perhaps we could go back to the LPA and get a better more successful alignment. This would mean the freight could stay in Kenilworth. If the freight stays-LRT must go. If you try to move freight to St. Louis Park you

won't get municipal consent. If you collocate in Mpls through Kenilworth, you won't get Municipal consent. The ONLY option where you'll get municipal consent is if you change the LRT alignment

**SLP-31**

2-12-14

In Minneapolis there is concern over changing the aesthetics of Kenilworth Corridor. In St. Louis Park we are worried about derailments and train traffic affecting the safety of our children and a quiet learning environment in our schools.

**SLP-32**

2/12/14

Given the recent derailments of freight trains around the country often carrying noxious and explosive cargo, how can you ignore the potentially catastrophic consequences of running heavy, 115 car freight trains at 25 mph right by a large metropolitan high school, St. Louis Park High?! Relocating freight from a freight yard, the straight, level, with Kenilworth corridor to St. Louis Park with its narrow, curved track bed which changes grade and runs through neighborhoods & by schools makes no sense! What's more the safety concerns of St. Louis Park are hardly allayed by the Transsystem option!!

**SLP-33**

2-12-2014

The Kenilworth Corridor options (collocation) STRONGLY SUPPORTS THE GOALS across the board. both the shallow tunnel option & the cheaper all above grade w/relocation of bike trail option. MN&S South alternate does not strongly support even one of the goals. Trees can be replanted-I am fine w/shallow or even deep bored tunnel plans - & willing to pay w/my tax dollars.

**SLP-34**

2/12/14

Please stop re-stating facts that we have known for years & that we are frequently updated/reminded of. Please focus on ACTION steps for resolution of freight issue. Shallow tunnel or moving bike path are viable options whereas re-route has too many safety issues. Bike riders like myself will use a relocated path, but, freight re-route & high berms will create a division of SLP Standards of living.

**SLP-35**

2-12-14

Mpls options were eliminated due to the taking of properties. However now the re-route through St. Louis Park that does require the taking of properties is back on the table. The same criteria that applies to Mpls, must be applied to St. Louis Park to be fair.

**SLP-36**

2-12-14

Bring back the bike route option and moving the bike trail. It is the most cost effective options for collocating the light rail and freight rail. It does not require taking properties. It is the lowest cost alternatives and needs to be reconsidered. We asked the question several times about why the option was taken off the table. The Met Council danced around the question without answering it honestly. They seem to have a memory lapse on the issue.



**SLP-37**

2-12-2014

Why not up the greenway or up high 394 The greenway – Please Please Please consider this; why one rich neighborhood to another, when you could have multicultural ridership and leave Kenwood & SLP out of it.

**SLP-38**

2/12/90

Please put the LRT up in the greenway. The fight would be over and people in non affluent neighborhoods could have transportation.

**SLP-39**

2/14/2014

The CMC needs to reconsider the option to move the bike path and ALL options must be included in the final report with OBJECTIVE criteria applied to ALL with no criteria left out. Be Transparent!

**SLP-40**

2-14-2014

As a St. Louis Park taxpayer and resident since 1970, I would like to affirm our wonderful school system and community. I do not favor any more freight rail near our schools.

**SLP-41**

2/12/2014

As a long time resident of St. Louis Park and PA announcer numerous High School athletic events. I strongly oppose the rerouting of freight rail through the city. My girlfriend, who lives at the corner of Lake St & Library Lane would lose her home as well as many other residents and it would also raze other businesses in the area. I feel that collocation is the best potential solution for LRT. We don't want SLP to suffer because of this loss. We want it to prosper and make it a viable community for residents. As for the stadium, the proposed reroute would take away the newly installed turf field which is also used by community groups. It would deny future athletes the opportunity to use the turf.

**SLP-42**

Feb. 12, 2014

St. Louis Park has been named one of the Top 100 Communities for Kids for 6 years running. This demonstrates our community's commitment to putting Children First. We ask that you also put our Children first!

Thank you-

STEP Volunteer & SLP Parent

**SLP-43**

12-FEB-2014

SWLRT is a mistake our population density of around 6,000 is far short of the 14,000 needed for "viability" (a word you like)

Buses cheaper, more flexible and people would like them better if they had to pay the unsubsidized cost.

**SLP-44**

2-12-14

This entire process has been an extremely frustrating process. I have attended these meetings for almost four years and have felt that my voice and comments have been ignored. The comments are not addressed and questions are not answered honestly

**SLP-45**

2-12-14

The new re-route does not clearly identify or include if it does not cost estimates for the acquisition of properties and businesses nor does it include any costs estimates for mitigation or safety or environmental. There needs to be noise and vibration studies.

**SLP-46**

2/12/2014

-Why won't you hold a vote on LRT and put it on the ballot. With a \$1.8 billion price tag, why isn't this being voted on by the public?

-With the increase of population estimated for communities along the Lightrail corridor, has any consideration been made on the impact of increased school enrollments and the impacts it will have on each school district?

-Since trains run on electric power it will have an impact on power stations throughout the Twin Cities. Will you need to upgrade power stations to meet the needs of light rail trains and if so, who is going to pay for these upgrades?

-My other concern is that Light Rail needs to be refurbished and updated every 30 years at a cost equal to or more then the original cost to build

-The Urban Land institute says the minimum density needed to support light rail is 14,720 people per square mile. The population density along the proposed LRT route is only 5, 600 per square mile according to the federal transit administration. Without the population density for this to succeed, why is LRT being forced on us?

-Lastly, the Met Council is overstepping its boundaries & authority by forcing Light Rail on the Twin Cities.

**SLP-47**

*Prepared Comments from St. Louis Park Mayor Jeff Jacobs*  
Metropolitan Council SWLRT Town Hall/Community Meetings  
Feb. 12, 2014

Good evening. My name is Jeff Jacobs and I'm the Mayor of St. Louis Park. I'd like to welcome you to our community and thank you for listening to the comments and concerns that you're hearing tonight. Most importantly, I'd like to thank you for listening to the facts.

I stand here before you tonight not just as a longtime mayor and resident of St. Louis Park, but as a representative of a unified St. Louis Park City Council that has been a consistent supporter of the SWLRT project. We have also been consistent in our long-standing position that we will not support re-routing freight rail traffic in our community if other viable options exist. And we repeat that position tonight.

The St. Louis Park City Council is united in its belief that a decision on a freight rail route must be decided on the facts which have emerged over months and months of study, discussions and deliberations.

Please indulge me as I share some of these facts.

The TranSystems plan for rerouting trains in St. Louis Park is not materially different from the plans that have already been rejected.

It also fails to include an effective or accurate cost comparison between its suggested route and the previously identified routes. For example, the TranSystems cost estimate does not include:

- the cost of property acquisition or relocating residents, businesses or the community's emergency assistance program and food shelf called STEP;
- it does not include additional costs for construction on the former National Lead superfund site or costs of mitigation for lost wetland or the many other mitigation needs previously identified; and
- it does not include any costs for the so-called "clipping" of the Xcel Energy substation.

But even though we don't know yet what the cost of the TranSystems plan would be, we do know that there are at least five viable combined LRT and freight rail options in the Kenilworth corridor. And, in fact, TranSystems has acknowledged that routing freight rail in the Kenilworth Corridor is viable.

So let us be very clear about the two freight rail options before you, and what it would require to undertake the at-grade LRT and TranSystems St. Louis Park plan as compared to the Kenilworth freight rail and LRT options:

The TranSystems St. Louis Park plan requires taking homes and businesses. The Kenilworth option recommended by the Corridor Management Committee does not.

The TranSystems plan requires over 3,000 feet of new freight rail bridges. The Kenilworth options do not.

The TranSystems plan requires lowering a state highway by three to four feet. The Kenilworth options do not.

The TranSystems plan requires the construction of 4,500 feet of retaining walls. The at-grade Kenilworth options do not.

The TranSystems plan would require closure of important local streets and rerouting traffic circuitously around schools and within neighborhoods. The Kenilworth options do not.

The TranSystems plan would require raising the elevation of the tracks, which in some places will be over 20 feet above adjacent single-family yards. The at-grade Kenilworth options do not.

The TranSystems plan would require elevated trains to "clip" a major Xcel substation site. The Kenilworth options do not.



And the TranSystems plan has trains that will pass close enough to a high school to disrupt learning and create safety issues each time they pass. The Kenilworth options do not.

There is an option that has already been proven as viable, recommended by Met Council staff and endorsed by the Corridor Management Committee by a nearly unanimous vote: freight rail continuing to exist at grade and the use of shallow tunnels for LRT in the Kenilworth corridor.

The Met Council has indicated its goal is not to select the cheapest route to accommodate freight and light rail, but to select the best overall solution. This shallow tunnel option is not the least expensive option, but we believe the shallow tunnel option meets this goal. We also believe this option is fair to both Minneapolis and St. Louis Park.

Under that plan:

- St. Louis Park would continue to have freight traffic just like it does today and experience light rail traffic at grade through the community too.
- The Kenilworth corridor would continue to have freight traffic just like it does today. And light rail trains would travel through the Kenilworth Corridor too, but they would be almost entirely hidden underground instead of travelling past homes and valued green space.

The shallow tunnel plan has been on the table for months. It's undergone intense scrutiny and it has enjoyed strong support from corridor leaders. It is a sound solution selected through a transparent and thorough process.

If that process can't be respected and a reroute through the core of St. Louis Park is back on the table, then all of the less costly Kenilworth options need to be back on the table too, including freight and light rail both at grade.

All of these facts make clear that there is a fair, viable option for locating both freight and light rail in the Kenilworth Corridor. If instead those facts are ignored and the rerouting of trains in St. Louis Park is viewed as the chosen option, it will be difficult for the St. Louis Park City Council to see a path forward to municipal consent.

In closing, let me say once again how much we appreciate you taking time to listen to our community. We look forward to working with the Metropolitan Council to bring the SWLRT project to completion. Thank you.

**SLP-48**

February 12, 2014

Susan Haigh, Chair  
Metropolitan Council  
390 Robert Street North  
Saint Paul, MN 55101

Dear Chair Haigh and Metropolitan Council Members:

The St. Louis Park School Board is opposed to the TranSystem option to relocate freight rail traffic in St. Louis Park, traveling only 35 feet from our high school parking lot and within 85 feet of classrooms. The proposal substantially and unacceptably increases the safety risks to our students and families, and creates negative educational impacts. Moreover, the report proposing relocation is riddled with factual errors, and fails to consider any of the concerns we raised in our previous letters of October 31, 2008, June 13, 2011, and July 11, 2013.

Apparently the authors of the report never visited the affected St. Louis Park schools. For example, the chart on page 27 refers to Central Junior High which closed in 1980, but 500 elementary (Park Spanish Immersion, 'PSI') and another 500 preschool students are housed in the Central building today. The chart also refers to St. Louis Park Independent Study, a reference which is unclear to the district today, but may refer to short-lived alternative programs at the high school.

Most importantly, the measurements are inaccurate as well. The St. Louis Park High School is listed at 115' from the MN&S tracks when in reality the high school parking lot is approximately 35' from the centerline of the tracks. The southeast corner of the building is 75' from the centerline to the tracks, and there is classroom space within 80-85' of the tracks.

Significantly, the TC&W does not approve this reroute proposal. Mark Wegner, President of the TC&W said a preliminary look at the latest plan shows it shares some of the elements of the rejected options, citing curves and changes in elevation that pose safety hazards. President Wegner said the plan still poses a risk of derailment for modern trains with 110 cars that stretch and bunch up in and out of curves and up and down elevations. (Star Tribune, February 6, 2014)

Given these errors, we are particularly troubled by the very short time frame allowed to consider this very conceptual report, and the Metropolitan Council's plan to choose an option without fully studying the safety, educational, environmental, and traffic impacts of this new proposal. Nor do we know the cost of this route. We will summarize the concerns we have based on the limited information available, including those related to possible mitigation, in this letter.

#### Increased Safety Risks for Students

Our primary concern is always the safety of the 1450 students in our high school, the over 500 students in each of the elementary schools located very near to the reroute, Peter Hobart and Park Spanish Immersion (PSI), and the hundreds of preschool students also located in the Central Community Center.

The proposed upgrade of the MN&S track to 25 mph, coupled with the restricted view a train engineer has around the curves as the train approaches the Dakota Avenue and Library Lane crossings, will limit the time and distance the engineer has to stop the train in the event of an emergency. This creates a significant safety risk because not only do students have to cross the tracks on Dakota Avenue to reach the athletic field, there is a McDonald's restaurant directly across the tracks which is frequented by many students and staff.

Drawings of the proposed closing of Lake Street indicate that the reroute would convert the southeastern high school parking lot into a public road. If so, this road would pass within a few feet of the high school running track and the actual high school building. This is a stunning suggestion. This new street would end at Dakota Avenue just at the point where the track also intersects with Dakota, as described in the previous paragraph.

In addition the reroute proposes closing some or all of Walker Street, Lake Street and Library Lane, critical streets in our current transportation system that requires a tightly timed bus route linking PSI and the high school. The road closings and tenfold increase in trains (both in length and frequency), as well as the construction process, pose significant operational concerns to the St. Louis Park School District. The School District has staggered school start times so the same buses can run several routes; thereby reducing transportation expense and freeing up money for classroom teachers. The blockage of key intersections with traffic delays will upset the timely running of the bus routes, in turn disrupting school start times and raising safety concerns for children left waiting on street corners for delayed buses. This is an added safety concern, especially during our Minnesota winters.

Any adjustments in the bus transportation design and schedule due to traffic delays will increase district transportation expenses and pull dollars away from the classroom. Restricting railroad operations for 30 to 60 minute windows twice a day is one option that could help. We expect that compensation for any related increase in transportation costs would be part of the mitigation.

#### Educational Harm

The initial studies found a net gain in noise based on a conservative estimate of the combined traffic of the current and future operations. However these are measures of the average noise over a 24-hour period, which is not what brings the learning process in a classroom to a complete halt. It is the intermittent noise of a train that currently causes instruction in the high school classrooms near the tracks to halt, an experience that would be extended in its frequency and length.

In addition, we already experience problems with ceiling mounted projection equipment in the southern part of the high school due to vibrations from passing trains. This, too, would increase, causing additional educational interruptions and expense to the district.

While a quiet zone near the high school has been mentioned, it would involve barriers that would make it impossible to turn left from Dakota into one of our two parking lots. This lot is next to the entrance to our athletic facilities and is used by many school buses as well as cars each day.

Our letter of June 13, 2011, discussed possible mitigation steps including building new classrooms on the north side of the building, replacing windows and adding air conditioning, as well as using cement ties for the track. Yet we do not know if those will be sufficient for now or the future, because there have not been any long-term estimates of changing rail traffic. The report notes that the rail industry is growing, tracks are becoming sparse (increasing use of existing tracks), and the trend is toward heavier loads, longer trains (the report notes 125 car trains), and heavier locomotives. At a minimum the noise, vibration and safety impacts of this new design ought to be studied before a decision is made about this proposal.



Community Harm

The rerouting of the track southwest of the high school harms our community by potentially isolating the athletic field and eliminating the already tight parking. While we often refer to it as the football field, it is our stadium field. It is the site of physical education classes for elementary students at PSI in Central, decades of high school graduation ceremonies, and practices and games for our soccer, lacrosse, football and other teams. We recently installed artificial turf as a cost of \$1 million to increase school and community athletic and recreational use of this asset. The noise from the increased freight traffic and reduced access risks making this community asset unusable except for the most basic recreational uses.

The reroute still requires berms, which increase the risk to students and community members passing to and from our stadium field, PSI and Central Community Center and the high school. Noise will travel further, and any derailment risks trains rolling further from the track. While we trust safety will be a priority in design, derailments are a fact of life and no one can guarantee they will not occur.

Our district relies heavily on the generosity of our community members, both residents and businesses, who have supported school levy referendums for many years. This proposal eliminates homes and businesses, thereby reducing the tax base, which could have a long-term impact on district finances, affecting our ability to serve our students. In particular we are concerned about the proposed loss of the building housing STEP, the St. Louis Park food and clothing service for low income families, many of whom are students in St. Louis Park schools.

Setting Priorities

None of this happens in the Kenilworth corridor. Should the St. Louis Park option be adopted, the message sent by the Metropolitan Council to the youth of our community will be that freight trains are more important than our children. That's not what we believe in St. Louis Park, where we receive national recognition annually for our "Children First" philosophy and practice. We expect similar consideration from the Metropolitan Council.

For all of the reasons given, including safety, educational, noise, vibration, environmental, and operational impacts and the increase to our costs that takes funds out of the classroom, we the members of the St. Louis Park School Board, on behalf of the children of St. Louis Park schools and our entire community, urge the Metropolitan Council to colocate freight rail and reject the St. Louis Park re-route option.

Sincerely,

Nancy Gores, Chair

Ken Morrison, Treasurer  
Julie Sweitzer, Vice-Chair  
Karen Waters, Director

Bruce Richardson, Director  
Joe Tatalovich, Clerk  
Jim Yarosh, Director

cc: Superintendent Rob Metz  
Governor Mark Dayton

Mayor Jeff Jacobs, St. Louis Park  
City Manager, St. Louis Park Tom Harmening

**02/12/14 SWLRT Town Hall Meeting  
St. Louis Park High School**



State Representative Steve Simon  
State Representative Ryan Winkler  
St. Louis Park City Council Members  
U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar  
St. Louis Park Schools Staff  
Twin West Chamber of Commerce  
Parents of St. Louis Park Students  
Katie Hatt  
Ben Schweigert  
Editor, The Patch

Gail Dorfman, Hennepin County  
State Senator Ron Latz  
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