

*Comments typed verbatim from audio recording during table report out session.*

**Freight Rail – Table 1**

We were discussing and learning about freight rail systems and the things that impact them, in the first question about what was your area. We were talking about fact that there are potential damages and costs to the City of Minneapolis that are way in excess of the benefits the city is going to get, particularly since some of the benefits like the 21<sup>st</sup> Street Station have been removed and the fact that there aren't many potential riders along that whole stretch anyway. And the possibilities of accidents and things such as oil fires, like they have had in North Dakota, water quality problems and noise and vibrations. The people that live along there said that they would really prefer to have 3-4 freight trains that they have now per day, rather than 200 LRT trains. We didn't have anything to contribute to question 2, question 3 what is anything did you table discuss we discussed that could inform freight rail. We learned, we were lucky to have a retired person from the Minnesota Department of Transportation at our table, so we learned a lot of history. The St. Louis Park Right of Way is very narrow and is only lightly used and the big problem for the rail road, from their point of view, is there is 47 foot grade difference of the two tracks that need to be connected out there. We didn't have anything for 4. Questions 5, what were the other key themes or take aways, we felt the hunger for federal money on the part of everyone in this process is trumping good planning and design. The Federal rules used to prefer suburban commuters on LRT lines, over city commuter, but in this Metropolitan area we have just learned that Minneapolis is the area where the population is growing and not in the suburbs. We like the idea of moving the Right of Way north of Cedar Lake because it is much bigger. The City could still have the Van White station that they want badly and move the LRT to St. Louis Park and keep the freight trains in Kenilworth. There was a strong sigh of relief at our table when someone mentioned that at our table, everyone thought that was a great idea. Then what was the hardest and most challenging part? Question 6. Why do the railroads always get their way and apparently that is because of this Federal Surface Transportation Board is very powerful and is the elephant in the room, along with the Federal dollars, and that the railroads have condemnation Right of Way powers and all sorts of other things going forth that trump the State Government and everybody else. So that's it.

**Water Quality – Table 1**

I'll just follow my notes, there is no real organization to them. But there was a lot of emotions, water, our City's water is an emotional issue. Questions were, is the shallow tunnel already a given and that perhaps the deep tunnel should not be off the table, and that we should do some water and soil evaluation of that as well? And would the deep tunnel be environmentally better or worse? Are we getting the latest technology and costs? Many of the cost estimates for the tunnels and other forms are years old and technology is always improving and is also cheaper than it was years ago. So are we getting those current cost? What are the dewatering impacts, thermally, biological, groundwater etc? There was news recently about an apartment building that needs to keep belching into the City waters and with the big study of tunnels, wouldn't there be those kind of issues that we did not foresee? We disrupt the soil, anytime you disrupt the soils there are contaminants and things that you can never expect to run into. There was, I guess there was distrust and fear, kind of a skepticism of the whole process, afraid of polluting and losing our lakes mostly. Climate change is all about water and so it seems like most of the people at our table oppose the route completely. A bad decision seems to have been made, reroute the LRT, it seems like it is being sort of railroaded or hurried through so that we don't lose our federal funding. And it is just too risky to lose our lakes. Drilling and we don't we know the processes. Drilling a few holes along the way during one season, there are 4 very district seasons or

maybe 8 seasons. So it is just too risky. The Kenilworth Corridor seems like, this is all interrelated to water, but this seems like a bad choice. There won't really be a lot of ridership around it, which has already been addressed. There is no room for development, a coffee shop, whatever you want to develop. Why not have the route go way from the lakes and to businesses that it could help. Someone mentioned that a Bridal Veil Creek was dredged up to relieve flooding and there were all sorts of chemicals and it killed all the fish, and there was a lot of concern expressed for wildlife on all short of levels. Microorganism, it would totally, we feel, disrupt our environment and we really don't trust the study. Mostly just unexpected consequences of any digging. And I don't care how many studies you do.

### **Vegetation, Greenscape, Trails – Table 1**

My name is David Lilly and I can't jam my notes into the contours of the question outline, I'll just review things as they came up. First questions was, we cannot replace the old trees that are currently there and that would come out, at least under the current proposal. Trees provide a sound buffer and essential aesthetic element in the neighborhood. And actually how much land should be co-located? How much land around the shallow tunnel will be available for re-vegetation? The concept of a great deal of concrete and a lot less dirt in which things can grow. Will vegetation be removed from private property and in that regard how much condemnation will actually occur. The width of the bridge, the proposed bridge, was viewed by our tables as being totally inconsistent with the aesthetic of the both chain of lakes and the existing trail system, which brought us to the point that the alignment is inappropriate given its overall environmental impact. It is interesting, and I didn't bring this up, but at our table, it was pointed out that we have spent a great deal of money, we, the Metropolitan Council has allocated a great deal of money for suburban mitigation, close to \$300 million to move the alignment away, in the suburbs from their bike path. Leaving the project left with insufficient funds in Minneapolis to do the right thing in terms of alignment or mitigation. The claim is now made that it is, our group was most concerned about preserving the characteristics of the corridor. Whatever is done, please do not make it look artificial. There was a great deal of discussion about need for important landscaping design. One idea was to add an additional bike trail through existing park, to the west of the corridor, as a possible way to relieve some congestion. We believe a bike safety analysis should take place. We don't know what the provisions are for grade crossing and there was a feeling there should be intense neighborhood involvement in designing grade crossings to make them safe for pedestrians, bikers and for children. And we believe that as many people and as many constituents as possible should be involved in overall grade level design. We wanted to know what the re-vegetation will look like. There have been no, there have been no believable computer renderings and it is a relatively trivial task to provide designs that can be analyzed and reviewed before ultimate decisions are made. There is insufficient visual data for anyone to understand what the ultimate look and feel of this project will be. There was also basic questions like, how wide is the track, haven't really been analyzed, or something that is not understood by the local population. There was as strong feeling that we need to talk about lighting on the trail. Currently there is not lighting. Reflecting early comments, overall question, why isn't this trail serving greater population density in Minneapolis. This trail runs fundamentally neighborhoods that are neither dense nor have populations that would actually use transit, assuming there are station stops, actually use this corridor. It is not moving people that desperately need public transportation to suburban jobs, it is not designed to do that and does not reflect the new Obama administration guidelines. And finally, we thought we need to step back and we put this in the context of a 100 year investment and in the context of Theodore Wirth's vision for our parks. What are we doing to what is essentially an interconnected and interrelated, stunning urban environment?

### **LRT Ridership and Route – Table 1**

My name is Judy. So we had a lot of people around these two tables and it was very hard to hear. So number one involved this process it was hard to hear and that I might not do as good a job about reporting because it was hard to hear. So that was a concern. Another concern about process involved posters up around the room, being biased by whoever wrote them. Biased against questions about the alignment. Now about ridership and route the vast majority of comments here really questioned the alignment. A couple points about ridership. The projects ridership, according to the DEIS, much of it is poached from bus riders. Many of the ridership is Eden Prairie have the Southwest Transit and love that service and do not want to switch to get on LRT. Another point about ridership was that Uptown has a burgeoning population and that we would really love to see southwest neighborhoods with transit dependent populations served by mass transit. This alignment doesn't do that. Another point about ridership, this current alignment favors suburban riders over Minneapolis riders and was it based on Federal criteria under Bush, those have actually changed and under Obama our Federal Transit standard or priorities favor urban density. This alignment does not serve Minneapolis. A point was made about the argument that some have made, that this alignment is somehow going to help North Minneapolis, comments at this too tables, suggest that that is simple not true. Ridership projections for those North Minneapolis stations are very low, this alignment does not go deeply into North Minneapolis and it should not be used as an argument for this alignment. Finally a similar point was brought up to another table, was the fact that Eden Prairie did get a \$300 million in mitigation change to the alignment and why is Minneapolis not going to get the same thing. Thank you.

#### **LRT Tunnel – Table 1**

My name is Patty Schmitz and I will also make an effort to respond, although our responses do not follow the construction of the report out form. The questions that we had before us, one of them was what are you most concerned about when it comes to LRT tunnels. There were concern, one big concern was that they won't be built, even though they are promised. There is concern about newly understood information from a condo building that understands now that the shallow tunnels will be constructed of the Shallow Tunnel will be dug between 1 and 2 feet of the foundation of their 98 year old building condo, former grain elevator. Concern about that bikes and pedestrians, these tunnel will destroy and disrupt, there is just not enough space to logically include bikes and pedestrian trails along that. And a note that this is considered to be a national historic area. The tunnels as they are proposed would significantly degrade those. There is a questions or a consider that to make sure Minneapolis reps, or all reps, keep an open mind to hearing the thought of folks sharing their opinions. There are concerns about the noise and crash walls that are proposed with the shallow tunnels. And then there is also a questions or comment about the \$300 million that was granted to Eden Prairie so that they could move the LRT off of their owned HCRRA, which is what Kenilworth is so why doesn't Minneapolis get that same consideration. The next question about the concern on water resources with the shallow tunnel, and then do you have the same concerns about the deep tunnel and what aspects are you most concerned about. That was probably the shortest one, people don't generally have concerns about the deep tunnel. Most the concerns are about the shallow tunnel and that it will damage either Cedar Lake or the channel in some way, shape or form. There was also concern that the elected officials, they didn't really consider or give the deep tunnel a fair shake and not sure that they had all the information to inform what the costs would be. There is also some frustration that the process has gone this far and that the shallow tunnel is being proposed with what feel like insufficient facts. Then the third question had to do with preservation and what does corridor character preservation mean and look to us. Easy answer, we seem to be unified, it should look the same. Preservation is not restoration. And again the FTA considers this stretch park land and feels like the park land is being changed so that Eden Prairie riders can get to downtown, by in large. And then, a comment that just other cities are trying to

replicate what we have in our park system and so to think we would just willing give up something that people admire and try to achieve in their cities. And then finally the questions, what do you want decision makers to know about light rail in a tunnel and there were comments, such as the decision making process felt like a train wreck, felt like decisions were made before the facts were know. There is a big lack of trust so the fear is that promises will be made and then at the last minute there will be a reason why it can't be done. Also frustration that neighbors who are active in voicing their concerns are just considered NIMBYs and opposed to people that are really concerned about preserving something unique and yep. Then the comment that the tunnels, that LRT is being built in tunnels all across the world, in the US. They are built in tunnels or in commercial corridors and the shallow tunnel feels like neither. That was it.

### **LRT Tunnels – Table 2**

Hello, first of all I want to thank Tina, Sue and Charlie for being here from the State and the Met Council people. I appreciate all the work you guys have been doing, it is a lot of work and I, you've taken a lot of crap from all of us and I just want to let you know that we appreciate it. I won't repeat a lot of the stuff that people have said but we are trying to figure out why the deep tunnel is off the table. Our hope, our whole table, 100% of the people at the table want a deep tunnel. I gotta believe that 100% of these people want a deep tunnel and it is off the table. The governor had stated that he wanted all alternatives back on the table, all alternatives in the past research. Well the deep tunnel is not being researched and we want to know why it's not. We also want to know why the deep tunnel is not being compared apples to apples on other sites. It is for example, the shallow tunnel is about 6,000 linear feet and the deep tunnel is about 8,000 linear feet and if you bring these apple to apple, of 6,000 feet then the price is considerable less. We don't believe that you have to tear down the bridge, the Lake Street Bridge or have a deep station. We believe from the research we have done, talked about and we have an engineer at our table, we believe you can start the tunnel at the West Lake Street Bridge and go down and come back up, so there will be no environmental impact, the water table shouldn't be affected. You don't need a new bridge as I said. We let's see here...we also believe that there is also another alternative where you could go with a deep tunnel from the West Lake Street Bridge, once you get to Burnham Road, that is the Burnham Road Bridge and then come up and go with a shallow tunnel for the rest of the way or something like that, again we are not engineers but if you put those two together then that could be the same cost as relocating freight to St. Louis Park at a cost of \$200 million. We don't think, nothing has been analyzed, we have ask for it from the State, the local government and no one has given us an answer of why they are not looking at the deep tunnel. Cheap is not always better and we believe if it costs \$40 million more to have the deep tunnel than having it rerouted through St. Louis Park, it is well worth it. We will preserve all the natural resources, we are not going to lose 1,000 trees. We believe it is not a 100 year solution and... we could talk all day long about the deep so, so all we are asking is to analyze the deep tunnel, analyze it thoroughly. We also believe that CNA has not been contact on doing it, they did the deep tunnel at the airport and I don't believe they have not been contacted. And why they have not been contracted when they did the bridge, I mean the tunnel at the airport, we have no idea why they are not. So that is all I have. Thank you very much.

### **LRT Ridership and Route – Table 2**

Hi my name is Kathy Schmidt and I live in the Wedge. I am going to succinctly try do this. One of the major concerns was green space, we want density Minneapolis but we are kind of destroying some of the green space someone said. So we are destroying one the major draws and so this green space is unique and a prize from Minneapolis so we don't want to destroy it. One of the major concerns of our was the density. There are no development opportunities along Kenilworth. Especially for the

demographics that live in the Kenilworth neighborhood. There was someone at the table who had experienced that the buses in the neighborhood past used to be full that go around the neighborhood. The demographics have changed and there are just fewer and fewer people riding the buses. It doesn't make sense in that area. We also had a discussion about possibly paying more to get it done right completely. Like making a long tunnel through Uptown somehow so that the density is served and that is serves us for a long period of time. The long term vision is also mentioned with regards to rail in general because we are becoming a denser city and we need more products and things to be moved to the city. Our freight and rail lines need to be able to handle that so we shouldn't take over current or existing freight rail lines with light if possible. Also to keep in mind climate change and cheap energy dilemmas as these things are studied. Also a thing. We also had the concern the service area was more for the south suburbs, connecting more like Hopkins to Eden Prairie but Minneapolis is receiving none of that benefit. And our major sticking point is that we just want the route to be reexamined. We, the table was basically saying that Kenilworth should be eliminated as an option to put the route where the density is and where development can happen, that is a major one, and consider paying more to do it right.

### **Freight Rail – Table 2**

Good evening, I am Ryan Fox and rather than reiterating some of the same things already said, I will focus on some of the things we had that were a little different. I think the big thing that came out of this one, was that we talked about how, the Green Line Extension is part of a regional transportation system that includes LRT, proposed streetcar, bus, car transportation, and bike and pedestrians as well. But it doesn't include freight rail because it proposes, it imposes a lot of impacts to the stations and we focused a lot on how do we get people to the stations. We when took a look at the metrics here, we didn't see how those metrics were being address there so we wanted to add in a couple. One being ridership, how are riders going to access the station when they are adjacent to freight rail tracks. Also wanted to measure some community access to those stations, so get a metric in for that. Also we felt that the transit oriented development opportunities along the stations would be impacted with freight rail next to those tracks. Wanted to have a look at alternative routes for the freight rail that were outside of St. Louis Park, father west. There was also consideration of double tracking the BNSF line, on the north side of Cedar Lake and then connecting father out west. There was also some consideration for, rather than berming in St. Louis Park connection, to put it in a trench so that you don't have the visual impacts of the fright on a berm but rather have it in a trench. That about covers it.

### **Freight Rail – Table 3**

Hi, hi, I am Adam Platt and I live in Kenwood. Our group was also discussing freight rail. It was kind of a mix of St. Louis Park and Minneapolis residents so there was not a lot of consensus among the group. People were pretty well set into certain camps and there is lot of opinion being expressed which isn't necessarily consistent with a lot of the facts that have been exposed or delineated in a lot of the studies done to date. I would say that a lot of the skepticism of the things on many of these boards seems to be rooted in the government agencies failure to properly anticipate the problems of the St. Louis Park reroute and alignment. It has caused people to call almost everything that is being posited right now into question. As a specific concerns under number 3, safety kept coming up as a big priority both among St. Louis Park and Minneapolis residents. Clearly, St. Louis Park, it is a primary concern for St. Louis Park, but also with the Shallow Tunnel and the bridges, noise and vibration in Minneapolis is also a consideration there. For the Minneapolis folks the issue of keeping the promise of moving freight rail out of the corridor is primary to a lot of people. It is perceived as a betrayal. A lie on the part of government and whatever the outstanding issues are or the mitigating factors, the failure to keep that

promise looms very large. People are concerned about property values, whether the trains are moved or retained. If their property values decline, how will they be compensated, will they be compensated. Will they be required to sell their homes at a loss and just suck it up. From the stand point of vegetation and greenscaping the main concern was tree loss and tree loss as a result of the building of tunnels, especially the shallow tunnel because of the mode of construction. The key themes or major take aways, from the discussion was questions about the railroad's roles or prerogatives. The idea that the railroads have a veto kept coming up, why do railroads have this veto. Are we being too, are we giving the railroads too much of a presumptive control over this process and is it worth considering the options of challenging the railroads perspectives if what the citizens and government want is not in line with what the railroads want. As I stated before, there is a lack of consensus. There is a general lack of consensus between the Minneapolis residents and St. Louis Park residents on the appropriate outcomes. What is consistent is that there is a distrust of the railroads and their intentions. There is a lot of catastrophic fears being expressed, worst case scenarios. I don't know how many of those scenarios are rooted in likely hood but there is a lot of talk about horrific train derailment and fuel, oil conflagrations, etc, etc. As far as our most hard or challenging questions, one person considered whether the 29<sup>th</sup> Street Corridor could be reestablished as a freight rail route. The closure of that corridor at Hiawatha Avenue is what put the freight rail trains into the Kenilworth Corridor to begin with. If we are looking at spending \$300-500 million more to build tunnels, what if those monies were spent instead on getting the trains out of Minneapolis without putting them in St. Louis Park and that is why the 29<sup>th</sup> Street route was a questions. Or are these plans C or D or the UTU option, the Chaska cut off. Of course they are not easy solutions. There are no easy solution left, but given the sums at money that are look at being spent in Kenilworth or St. Louis Park could those options be made to work and create a win - win for these two constituencies that are so concerned. Is the state of the economy or the improvement in the economy likely to make additional funds available for the project. Finally there was some concern about what are the future freight movements in the corridor and if there could be many additional freight trains in the coming years due to the stronger economy. That is the gist of it.

### **Water Quality – Table 2**

I am going to stand up here, not because, well because that is where our table is. So my name is Will Schroeer and number 1, our topic area, is the water resources and we had three suggestions for the water study that we hope the study will reflect. One of which comes before the water study is released and this is really, I think, our top recommendation. Is that the decision criteria should be announced before the results of the study. There was some concern expressed that if you wait to announce the decision criteria until the results of the study are known, like what will be the phosphorus level be, then the criteria will just changed to be just under that what the decision criteria is. So announce that now, or asap. And then, put those decision criteria not only in the static context of where the lakes are now but what the goals for what those lakes are and the dynamic context going forward. Number 2, help the community understand ascertains of certainly or comfort to the extent possible. So we spent some time talking about the fact, echoing the gentleman, a lot of work has already been done and we are grateful for that work. Some skepticism about some of the results that have already been release and we had a discussion about that with no particular resolution. We bring it to experts, is there a way to help get the community comfortable with assertions of near certainty about likely impacts. The suggestion to the extent that we had them in terms about how the Council and contractors could help the community get to that comfort level was to provide the community with examples from elsewhere or case studies for elsewhere, where something similar kinds of constructions were made and similar situations, if that is possible, and X result happened. Contrary to that, the table wanted the Council and other decision makers to understand that some of the skepticism coming out of current experience with the condo on

Knox and the ground water impacts on the challenges and the presumption that that project went through many of the same environmental reviews that this project is going through and those processes did not catch what is now a substantial problem and which has have substantial impacts to the channel. Number 3, a general process concern, and in addition to sharing that, which has already been shared, is a desire that these studies not be rushed to... be... arbitrary deadlines. Does that capture the top three? I just want to make sure I am reporting appropriately. Thank you.

### **Other – Table 1**

My name is Steve Smith. The other table, where people that just kind of wondered in and didn't know where to fit in here. One of the main components of the folks that were discussing here is the distrust and the poor leadership during this entire process. From the voting on the stadium that we didn't get to vote on, the people of Minneapolis didn't get to vote on this as well. There is distrust of the Fed, State, the Hennepin County, the City of Minneapolis and the Met Council and that kind of flowed through all of our discussions. They thought both buses coming out were more effective than a light rail and a couple times, a couple folks said, this is not a light rail project this is a commuter project, much like Northstar. It is bringing in Eden Prairie folks into Minneapolis with no benefit to Minneapolis. Eden Prairie and a few of the other suburbs out there have the Southwest Transit. They have those new buses with their Wi-Fi. They get to the Twin Cities in 20 minutes with no stops. Why would they want to take a light rail and stop a number of times and take 40 minutes? That does make any sense. You are cannibalizing the existing structure that is already there. The cost effectiveness of, you know, the 1.6, you know, million..tril...how much does this cost? Billion dollars, getting my numbers mixed up. Along with all the national debt that doesn't have the money, so they are just borrowing from future generations of this. All of Twin Cities will be taxed for a few ridership. Minneapolis is bearing more of the burden and less of the benefit for this entire project. They have a number of limited stops. They can't use it. Why are the Minneapolis trees and water valued less than Eden Prairie's. That was a question that was brought up a number of times. The concern was to promote suburban sprawl, which is the opposite of what is happening. People are moving back to Downtown, back to urban areas. This is going to contribute to suburban sprawl. The freight issues again, the involvement of the Federal Government has kind of already been said and the alignment and ridership. This is the only project going through a neighborhood. All the other projects have gone through industrial or all the other projects that could be re-gentrified. This is going through an existing neighborhood with no prospect of that. The folks in Eden Prairie aren't going to spend 1.5 hours riding the light rail to Minneapolis then all the way to the airport, they are still going to jump in their cars and drive 20 minutes to the airport. So this again this is just a commuter line with no benefit to Minneapolis what so ever.

### **LRT Ridership and Route – Table 3**

I'll be super brief cause most of the other topics were already cover. The largest amount of time we spent at this table was one the routing through Kenilworth vs. the Nicollet route and the topic of density and we all read the board. But I don't feel that, or I should say that, the tables as a whole, did not feel like those were good reasons, why that isn't a, still a viable route. There is some issues about trust and the reasons why Nicollet is not an options. The reasons seem to keep changing. The ridership numbers are changing as well, and again nothing up there, the cost does not seem to be an insurmountable cost. There were some other discussions here about if we have looked at a Louisiana route for the LRT and maybe the possibility of a West End Station. We also discussed the Deep Bore Tunnel and if there could be an independent analysis on whether that was a viable option to solve some of the safety issues. The key challenge at the table though was trust, trusting the numbers, trusting what we have heard. And then I will also note, there was also a difference of opinion at the table, with some participants feeling



that it is more important that we have a line than no line, and other feeling it is more important that we have a right line vs. a line.