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In re:)
)
Public Hearings on Preliminary)
Design Plan Approval)

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

The following is the TRANSCRIPT OF
PROCEEDINGS, taken before Julie A. Brooks, Notary
Public, Registered Professional Reporter, at Hennepin
County Library, 300 Nicollet Mall, Minneapolis,
Minnesota, commencing at 5:30 p.m., Wednesday, August
13, 2014.

Public Hearing - 8/13/2014
In re: Public Hearings on Preliminary Design Plan Approval

1 APPEARANCES :

2 Metropolitan Council:

3 Susan Haigh
Sandy Rummel
4 Adam Duininck
Jennifer Munt
5 Steve Elkins
Steven Chavez
6 Gary Cunningham
Wendy Wulff
7 Katie Rodriguez
James Brimeyer
8 Marie McCarthy

9
10 Hennepin County Board:

11 Peter McLaughlin
Jan Callison
Marion Greene
12 Mike Opat

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1 PROCEEDINGS

2 Whereupon, the TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS
3 was commenced at 5:30 p.m. as follows:

4 ***

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6 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Good evening, everyone.
7 We are going to start about two minutes after the
8 appointed time. The Met Council members were all
9 attending a Met Council meeting, which has concluded,
10 and they are making their way across from Saint Paul
11 here to Minneapolis. They should be here shortly. But
12 in order to respect your time, I wanted to start this
13 meeting off.

14 I'm going to ask the folks here at the
15 dais to introduce themselves. I'm Peter McLaughlin.
16 I'm chair of the Regional Railroad Authority.

17 Jennifer, introduce yourself.

18 MS. MUNT: Hi, folks. I'm Jennifer
19 Munt. I represent District 3 on the Metropolitan
20 Council.

21 MS. CALLISON: Jan Callison, from the
22 Hennepin County Board.

23 MS. GREENE: Marion Greene from the
24 Hennepin County Board.

25 MR. OPAT: Michael Opat, Hennepin

1 County.

2 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: I'd like to welcome all
3 of you to this joint public hearing between the Met
4 Council and the Hennepin County Regional Railroad
5 Authority, and the Hennepin County Board regarding the
6 Southwest LRT municipal consent plan.

7 When the other Metropolitan Council
8 members get here, we'll make sure they introduce
9 themselves.

10 If you would like to speak this evening,
11 please make sure you sign up at the sign-in sheet at
12 the registration desk, which is right outside the doors
13 here. We will call you in the order that you have
14 signed up.

15 We also have comment cards available if
16 you prefer to provide written comments. Those will be
17 included in the public record for this hearing.

18 This is an opportunity for you to
19 provide your comments and input to Hennepin County, the
20 Hennepin County Railroad Authority, and the Met
21 Council. We're not going to respond to questions
22 tonight. That is not the format here. That's not the
23 purpose. But your comments will all be kept and will
24 be used by the staff and the public policy makers in
25 reaching a final decision on this line.

1 Speakers will have up to three minutes
2 to speak. I ask you to state your name and your
3 address for the record. If you are representing a
4 group, please identify the group that you are
5 representing as well.

6 We will be keeping time, and we will let
7 you know when you have one minute left.

8 Where is that sign going to be? Who has
9 the one-minute sign?

10 The clerk will be sitting right next to
11 me when we start up. Then I would ask you to respect
12 everyone else's time here tonight by respecting the
13 time limits. And I'd also ask you to refrain from
14 applauding or cheering during the public hearing.

15 To expedite the process, I'm going to
16 call two names at a time. Would the second name please
17 come forward and be ready to speak once the person
18 ahead of you is finished. That will allow us to turn
19 this over faster.

20 Before we begin the public testimony
21 tonight, we will have a short presentation from Jim
22 Alexander, Southwest LRT design and engineering
23 director. He is going to walk us through the municipal
24 consent process and the modifications to the
25 Minneapolis plan that came about as a result of the

1 mediation between the City of Minneapolis and the
2 Metropolitan Council.

3 So I ask Jim Alexander to come to the
4 microphone and make that presentation.

5 We're all going to move down so we don't
6 have PowerPoint on our foreheads.

7 MR. ALEXANDER: All right. Good evening
8 everyone. Can everyone hear me okay in the back there?
9 All right.

10 I have a short presentation to go
11 through on the municipal consent process and talk about
12 some of the items in Minneapolis that the commissioner
13 has spoken off.

14 We had an open house starting at 4:30.
15 We are now starting the public hearing. After my
16 presentation to you all, you'll have an opportunity to
17 comment on the project.

18 So the purpose is to really allow the
19 public an opportunity to just comment on the process.
20 We have county commissioners here, and we also have Met
21 Council folks showing up, councilmembers showing up
22 after they make their way from Saint Paul to hear the
23 comments.

24 We have some similar activity with the
25 other cities this summer.

1 So the line here of the map,
2 essentially, starts out in Eden Prairie and makes its
3 way through Minnetonka into Hopkins and Saint Louis
4 Park. And we'll be focusing on the Minneapolis portion
5 tonight, The West Lake Station, 21st Street Station,
6 the Van White Station, and the Royalston Station. The
7 line would end at Target Field Station, which was put
8 into play in May of this year.

9 So in terms of the scope, overall, there
10 are 17 stations on this proposed scope, and it does
11 include the 21st Street Station. And there are just a
12 little under 16 miles of track. This includes a
13 shallow tunnel on the south portion of the Kenilworth
14 Corridor south of the channel.

15 As part of the discussions with
16 Minneapolis, the tunnel north of the channel was taken
17 out of the proposed project and 21st was put back in.
18 And it also includes the operations and maintenance
19 facility that will be located in Hopkins. The overall
20 budget here is up to \$1.653 billion.

21 So there is a state statute that
22 requires the Council, at any time we endeavor on a
23 project such as this, we need to seek municipal consent
24 from local jurisdictions. In this case, it would be
25 the City of Minneapolis and Hennepin County, so that's

1 what we are here for tonight, to go over those plans.

2 The process started on July 10, when we
3 submitted -- the Council submitted the revised plans
4 that I'll be talking about and giving an overview of
5 tonight. 30 days need to transpire before we hold this
6 joint hearing, which we are doing tonight, on the 13th.

7 Currently, what is scheduled to go
8 forward next week is Minneapolis will have their
9 hearing on the 19th. By statute, this needs to
10 culminate 45 days after that joint hearing, this joint
11 hearing tonight. So that can go out as far out as
12 September 27th. The City of Minneapolis has already
13 calendared August 29th to vote on the project.
14 Hennepin County will be voting on the project on the
15 19th, for the Minneapolis portion.

16 As indicated, we have had some activity with the other
17 cities. Saint Louis Park, Eden Prairie, Minnetonka,
18 and Hopkins, we do have municipal consent from those
19 entities. We also have municipal consent from the
20 County for those areas of the project. So we still
21 need to focus on the Minneapolis piece, again on the
22 19th for the County and the 29th of this month for
23 Minneapolis.

24 So there are some -- a number of
25 sessions of discussion with Met Council staff and some

1 councilmembers. There was also Minneapolis folks
2 involved in a number of discussions that were
3 facilitated by Judge Arthur Boylen. The outcome of
4 that was two things.

5 First, there is a design piece, which we
6 will be talking about tonight. The second piece is
7 property ownership. As we had discussions with the
8 City of Minneapolis, it was really apparent that they
9 are very concerned about the ownership through that
10 corridor be retained as public ownership.

11 Today HCRRA or Hennepin County Regional Railroad
12 Authority owns the land which the tracks lie on through
13 the corridor today. It is Minneapolis's desire, and
14 the council agrees, that we would love to find ways to
15 keep them in public ownership.

16 Tonight I'll be focusing on the design
17 piece of those discussions. So in terms of this
18 agreement, we had a memorandum of understanding that
19 our council has passed. The City will be weighing in
20 on this later in the month.

21 It includes an enhanced non-motorized
22 connection, really looking at the pedestrian and
23 bicycle experience around the five stations within the
24 city of Minneapolis; secondly, improving and enhancing
25 the park-like setting within the Kenilworth corridor;

1 and the third, it reinstates the 21st Street Station,
2 as I spoke of; and eliminates that north tunnel segment
3 north of the channel we had talked about previous to
4 this.

5 Overall, this captures a \$30 million
6 savings by taking out the tunnel and putting the 21st
7 Street Station back in and adding enhancements around
8 the stations that I'll give you an overview on.

9 So in terms of the municipal consent, it
10 really looks at the physical design components of the
11 project. It is really the line and grade of the LRT,
12 where the tracks are going to go, where the stations
13 are going to go. We focus, at this stage of the
14 project, on these features here.

15 For Minneapolis, of course, we will not
16 be focusing on OMF, the operation maintenance facility,
17 as I indicated, which will be located in Hopkins in the
18 proposed plan.

19 It does also talk about freight tracks
20 as well.

21 So let's start with West Lake Station.
22 What this would look to do for the base project -- to
23 get folks oriented, the line in green is the LRT line
24 that's proposed. Freight would be running alongside,
25 essentially, where it is located today. We have a

1 station located here, West Lake Station. Just south of
2 West Lake, there's a bridge that goes over this
3 corridor area, and we have vertical connection from
4 that station up to the bridge here.

5 So under the discussions with the City
6 of Minneapolis, we would be looking to modify the
7 roadway network a bit here to, possibly, enhance
8 development and allow for a better movement of peds and
9 bikes through this area here, enhancing the sidewalks
10 and ADA ramps at each of these intersections where the
11 circles are located at.

12 We'd also be looking at enhancing the
13 sidewalks along here. Folks who have been walking
14 that, particularly in the wintertime, know it is an
15 inhospitable walk. We'd like to improve that through
16 these non-motorized safety enhancements here.

17 There we go. So up in the Kenilworth
18 Corridor, we are now just north of the West Lake Street
19 Station down here. Lake Street is down here. We have
20 Cedar Lake and Lake of the Isles. What this would look
21 to do is to enhance the green space, if you will, up
22 through here.

23 Part of this discussion with
24 Minneapolis, what we agreed to do is go out on a
25 separate procurement to hire a landscape architect

1 which would look at this area specifically, along with
2 the design of the other components they are putting
3 together for the LRT.

4 We also have some safety features. We
5 are looking at adding inner track rail, as you can see
6 in this picture here in the areas in red up through
7 here. And we also would be looking at some enhancement
8 of the 21st Street Station area, which I'll cover in
9 the next slide here.

10 Finally, looking at some potential
11 intersection control at the Cedar Lake -- sorry, yeah,
12 at the Cedar Lake Parkway where the trail crosses
13 today. So in the 21st station area -- excuse me, I
14 need to -- so the 21st Street Station area here, we are
15 looking again to have an at-grade station shown in
16 yellow here. What we are looking to do is enhancing
17 the pedestrian access along 21st and looking at the
18 idea of having some proposed connection to each in this
19 location here.

20 Also, as we move inland a little bit,
21 look at sidewalk enhancements along this stretch here,
22 along Thomas and 22nd, making its way up to 24th, with
23 some access over to the Kenilworth Corridor Trail here.

24 The thing I do want to emphasize here,
25 as we look at this design and look at the shallow

1 tunnel on the south part of the project, south of the
2 corridor or that channel there, it goes between Cedar
3 Lake and Lake of the Isles and has the trail up on top
4 with the freight rail, essentially, where it is today
5 in that location. As we get north of the
6 channel, we will have all those at grade as we proceed
7 up to Penn Station, which I'll go to in a moment here.

8 Okay. Penn Station, anyway, to get you
9 oriented here, we are just north of 21st now. We've
10 got 394 up here. The Penn Station platform is located
11 here. As part of the base project, not shown, just for
12 clarity, we have vertical circulation coming up, and
13 there will be a ped access to get over to Penn Avenue
14 proper here. What the improvements would look to do is
15 enhance the ped experience up through here, through
16 Thomas, where there is an existing bridge that goes
17 over 394 right here.

18 Likewise, as we head along Penn and go
19 over 394, we are looking to enhance the sidewalks along
20 this area and make our way all the way up to Mount
21 View. And then we would look to do some improvements
22 at the intersection of Cedar Lake Avenue up there.

23 And then, finally, there's an existing
24 trail that runs from the corridor itself going up over
25 the Kenilworth Parkway. We would look to enhance the

1 lighting and adding way finding in that location.

2 Moving over to Van White, we would be
3 looking to -- maybe, I'll talk about the base here
4 first. We have the station platform located here.
5 There is vertical circulation. What I mean by
6 "vertical circulation" is stairs and an elevator
7 getting up to Van White Boulevard where the bridge is
8 located.

9 As far as the discussions with
10 Minneapolis that we've agreed to, it is to add a new
11 ped connection with this bridge coming over LRT, over
12 the freight, and landing in Bryn Mawr Meadows. There
13 is an existing ped bridge that does that down here.
14 Under this proposal, that would be removed and replaced
15 with this connection here.

16 And as we move south of the station,
17 we'd be looking to improve the ped-bike connections up
18 through this reach here. And then as we get under 394,
19 it is rather dark down there. We're looking to enhance
20 that area with lighting as we go on Dunwoody over to
21 the stadium in this location.

22 The last station I'd like to address is
23 the Royalston Station area. And what this is looking
24 to do is to enhance the connection over to Farmer's
25 Market, primarily, where we would have improved walk

1 access going from the south of the station. The
2 station is located right through here. And we would do
3 some enhancements along this stretch, as well, to add
4 to that connection piece.

5 There are also contemplated to have OCS
6 poles. You see here, these would be more of an
7 architectural-style pole up through this reach, as
8 opposed to a white phalange pole we have planned for
9 most of the project. Also we'd be looking at doing an
10 embedded track, similar to what you see on the central
11 corridor or Green Line, if you have been out there, as
12 opposed to a ballasted track that you see on Hiawatha
13 as you head south towards the airport.

14 A couple other items related to Van
15 White and Royalston, start with Van White. Van White
16 Station is located down here. We are looking to,
17 essentially, kind of get the connection of the trail.
18 It stops here just off of Second and starts back up
19 here at Fourth. We would connect those pieces there to
20 allow for a trail to come along Fremont and make its
21 way onto Van White through here.

22 And finally, we were looking to do some
23 bicycle lane improvements all the way up to Plymouth
24 along Seventh. We start from Second. On these one-way
25 curves, we look to improve bike lanes, likewise, all

1 the way up through here.

2 So as far as public comments we have
3 tonight, we are anxious to hear all your comments on
4 this part of the project. We do have avenues for you
5 to submit comments that you see here through U.S. mail,
6 other venues as well.

7 Turn to the next steps. As I spoke, we
8 have the dates here. The Hennepin County Board action
9 is slated for the 19th on this Minneapolis portion.
10 And Minneapolis is going to be holding a public hearing
11 similar to the meeting tonight. Then on the 29th, the
12 City Council would have to take an action on those
13 municipal consent plans for the City of Minneapolis.

14 One thing I want to stress -- I get this
15 question a lot and this comment a lot -- we are in the
16 early stages of design. What this municipal consent
17 process does is really it sets the stage in terms of
18 where the train is going to be, where the tracks is
19 going to be, where the stations are going to be. We
20 have a lot more design to do. There is a lot more
21 design detail that needs to happen.

22 Presuming we get approval from municipal
23 consent, we would move on and enhance design on all of
24 these bases, the station design, freescape, looking at
25 the track features, the roadway details, the OMF in

1 Hopkins, and further advancing the bridge and tunnel
2 designs and systems as well.

3 AUDIENCE MEMBER: What is OMF?

4 MR. ALEXANDER: There is a previous
5 slide in there, I think. It is the operations and
6 maintenance facility.

7 So that concludes my presentation. I'll
8 give it back to the commissioner.

9 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Jim, thank you very
10 much. Thank you for the presentation.

11 I was remiss as Hennepin County
12 commissioner in not welcoming you to the Minneapolis
13 Central Library. We are very proud of this facility.
14 It was built with referendum money when the Minneapolis
15 library system was separate. Now it is open seven days
16 a week for the first time since the Kennedy
17 administration. We are very proud of the library and
18 the whole library system.

19 I ask the members of Met Council who
20 have arrived -- we decided to try to start on time. We
21 knew you were en route.

22 So, Steve, are you coming up? We're
23 working on a chair.

24 So I'll ask the other councilmembers.

25 MS. WULFF: Wendy Wulff, my district is

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1 16, which is a portion or two-thirds of Dakota County
2 and a portion of Scott County.

3 MS. RUMMEL: Sandy Rummel, District 11
4 has the eastern portions of Ramsey County and eastern
5 Washington County.

6 MR. CUNNINGHAM: Gary Cunningham,
7 District 7. You are sitting in it in South
8 Minneapolis, downtown, North Minneapolis, and
9 Robbinsdale.

10 MR. ELKINS: Steve Elkins, District 5.
11 My district includes Hopkins, Edina, Richfield.

12 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Go ahead, reintroduce
13 yourself again.

14 MS. MUNT: I'm Jennifer Munt. I
15 represent District 3 on the Met Council. It includes
16 the cities of Eden Prairie and Minnetonka along the
17 Southwest Light Rail line.

18 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: I'm Peter McLaughlin,
19 from the Hennepin County Board.

20 MS. CALLISON: Jan Callison, the
21 Hennepin County Board.

22 MS. GREENE: Marion Greene, Hennepin
23 County Board.

24 MR. OPAT: Michael Opat, Hennepin County
25 Board.

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1 MR. DUININCK: Adam Duininck,
2 Metropolitan Board, District 8, Minneapolis.

3 MR. CHAVEZ: I'm Steve Chavez, Met
4 Council member, District 15, which covers Eagan,
5 Rosemount, Inver Grove Heights, and Burnsville.

6 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: All right. Then just
7 again to review the rules quickly, everyone is
8 allocated three minutes to speak. Our timekeeper is
9 here. You'll be notified when there is one minute to
10 go. We ask that you try to wrap it up in that final
11 minute.

12 We'll call two people's names at once.
13 I'll have the speaker, then the person on deck. So the
14 person on deck come up and be ready to go as soon as
15 the speaker is finished.

16 I'll start with the names. First is
17 Kent. Is it Daily?

18 MR. DILG: Dilg.

19 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Dilg, sorry. Then
20 Sarah Brenner would be number 2.

21 Mr. Dilg, welcome.

22 MR. DILG: Thank you. My name is Kent
23 Dilg. I'm a resident of the Harrison neighborhood in
24 North Minneapolis.

25 MS. NORWOOD: I'm Vicki Norwood. I also

1 live in the Harrison neighborhood and participate in
2 the Harrison Neighborhood Association.

3 MR. DILG: I wanted to come and thank
4 you all tonight for this. We are very enthusiastic
5 about this program and see it as a critical life line
6 for jobs.

7 We also see this particular station at
8 Van White, for my neighborhood -- the transit-oriented,
9 development can, potentially, bring some economic
10 development to my neighborhood, which is crucially
11 needed. The City has included the Bassett Creek
12 development as part of the development going forward.
13 We want to encourage that and feel like the light rail
14 is an integral part of bringing that to our
15 neighborhood.

16 MS. NORWOOD: We want to make it very
17 clear that we have always supported this LRT and will
18 continue to support it. We support the Van White
19 Station and the Penn Station.

20 And the equity commitments that have
21 been made by the County and Met Council are very
22 important to this project.

23 Tonight we also ask that the
24 transit-oriented development staff from Met Council,
25 the County, and the City work together to coordinate

1 their activities to guarantee the full buildout of the
2 development in Bassett Creek Valley. We see this as a
3 catalyst for greater development for North Minneapolis.

4 And thank you very much for allowing us
5 this time.

6 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Thank you very much.

7 Sarah Brenner. And then, on deck, Aasim
8 Shabazz.

9 MS. BRENNER: I'm Sarah Brenner, 2526
10 Upton Avenue South, Minneapolis.

11 I've tried various methods to give input
12 to both the Met Council and Hennepin County. I've
13 never, ever felt heard, so today I am going to get
14 personal. I've tried poetry. I've tried other things.

15 Hennepin County, it all started with
16 you. Your process was horrible. You neglected to
17 assess the issue of co-location. You neglected to
18 assess the issue of the freight train. You decided,
19 not by democratic process, but by hubris and vanity
20 what the route would be. Then when you knew it was a
21 mistake, when co-location became clear that it was the
22 only way you were going to be able to move forward, you
23 were never willing to go one step back to create a
24 better solution. You never engaged the freight to
25 examine the possibility of moving. Your suburban

1 centric focus is a reflection of the makeup of most of
2 your membership.

3 I especially take umbrage with you,
4 Mr. McLaughlin. Your single-minded focus on pushing
5 this alignment was shameless and shameful. One can
6 only wonder what you got out of this.

7 I have always been a progressive
8 democrat. But my involvement with this issue has
9 pushed me to look for more libertarian progressive
10 candidates who value democracy first and foremost and
11 practical solutions.

12 To the Met Council, you are an unelected
13 body of government, and your hubris and manipulation of
14 this process has been despicable. Your promotion of
15 this alignment by pitting, first, Minneapolis and
16 Saint Louis Park and then North Minneapolis and
17 southwest, then the south and the north Kenilworth
18 neighborhoods makes me realize that we must all work to
19 ensure that you are dismantled as an unelected body.

20 As Congressman Sabo said, it is
21 disgusting how North Minneapolis has been used to
22 promote this project as it skirts North Minneapolis, at
23 best, and the last four stations are in unpopular
24 industrial and parkland areas.

25 It is clear that the alignment does not

1 rise to the standard of its aim or its price tag. For
2 every prospective cost, safety, environmental ridership
3 for Minneapolis, quality of life, sprawl, equity,
4 decision making, and democracy, it has been a big, fat
5 failure.

6 Finally, I'd like to say, as we move
7 forward, to those of you on the north side of
8 Minneapolis who have supported this, when your bus
9 route is gone, when your shelters aren't built, when
10 you can't get to your job, when there is no money to
11 meet equity commitments because LRT is swallowing it
12 up, I feel bad. I feel bad that you've been duped.

13 To those who supported the south tunnel
14 when these officials decide not to build it or to build
15 it and we turn into a city of swamps or decide to build
16 it and lose the bike trail, I'll feel bad for all of
17 us, that we all must suffer the consequences of these
18 ill conceived decisions.

19 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Okay. We'll try to be
20 respectful of all the speakers.

21 Next is Aasim Shabazz, and next would be
22 Constance Bonniwell.

23 MR. SHABAZZ: Good evening,
24 commissioners and councilmembers. As you already said,
25 my name is Aasim Shabazz. 1729 Lyndale, in

1 Minneapolis. I'm also a part of the Transit Equity
2 Commitments Coalition.

3 First, we want to state we are in
4 support of the Southwest Transit LRT. We are in
5 support in the aspect that it lives up to its
6 commitments that we are looking for as we look to
7 innovate how we engage communities of color and how we
8 build an inclusive regional system that can support the
9 economies of all communities.

10 We want to make sure, though, that the
11 capital investments we requested in our transit
12 commitments are honored, the \$50 million we asked for
13 for entrepreneurs and for small businesses and for
14 projects that will come online, to finance them and
15 support their payroll.

16 Two is a written response from the
17 County to the commitments that we've submitted to you
18 all so that way we can compare those in better
19 coordination to ensure that the commitments are
20 executed.

21 We also are looking for a more equitable
22 investment. When I use "equity," we use it as a sense
23 of ownership. Whenever somebody has equity, they have
24 ownership. They have a decision making apparatus in
25 the process. The decision making apparatus of equity

1 comes from our tax dollars that we all contribute. And
2 we want to make sure that as we look to elevate
3 Minneapolis for generations to come, we don't get stuck
4 in the past and that we keep a light on the future.

5 On the Transit Equity Commitments, which
6 is a part of, I want to say, 30 organizations,
7 including myself, Summit OIC, Alliance, and others, we
8 sat down and worked representing our various
9 communities across the transit corridor. And we ask
10 for your support and inclusion, even working with
11 Minneapolis, to make sure that we have a thoughtful
12 design that is inclusive, that connects, reduces
13 transit times in order to ensure opportunities can be
14 seized. It shouldn't take three hours to get to
15 southwest, where you can just get straight on a
16 one-point connection.

17 With that, I close. We ask that you,
18 again, adopt and respond to our Transit Equity
19 Commitments. That's it. Thank you for your time.

20 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Thank you very much.

21 The next speaker is Constance Bonniwell,
22 and Sylvia Winkelman will be on deck.

23 MS. BONNIWELL: 312 37th South,
24 Minneapolis. I'll quote the Minneapolis Building and
25 Construction Trades Council regarding southwest. "It

1 may not be the line you like, but it is next. We can
2 probably put some ornaments on the Christmas tree, but
3 this is the deal."

4 This is who you expect us to trust with
5 Cedar Lake, Lake of the Isles, and Kenilworth. If you
6 made Bottineau a hundred percent system, you would have
7 the money to build the southwest LRT that stays
8 completely out of the Kenilworth Corridor. But you
9 have already said that the only route you will consider
10 is the Kenilworth route. You could go along the
11 existing rail line north of Cedar Lake past Cedar Lake,
12 but you insist on the Kenilworth Corridor no matter
13 what.

14 If you get sued and this opportunity for
15 mass transit is missed, you have only yourselves to
16 blame.

17 What I see coming is you get sued, and
18 then you blame rich, white people for denying black
19 people for denying economic opportunities. How many
20 people of color have been working on the Bus Rapid
21 Transit projects that have been going in all over the
22 metro for years now. Was someone at the academy ever
23 approached to work with the BRT project?

24 I've heard a north side activist proudly
25 pointing out an exclusive contract they had regarding

1 transit developments at the impound lot.

2 And there's another Bottineau route
3 going through a 15 percent carless population, when
4 north side neighborhoods on both sides of the I-94
5 corridor are 40 to 49 percent carless. The area around
6 the Van White Station is 60 percent carless. It would
7 be a great site for a combined LRT-BRT station, whether
8 or not these LRT's get built, but we've never heard of
9 any such plan.

10 What I am wondering is whether the
11 Trades Council, LRT construction companies, and you are
12 using black people on the north side as media and
13 political leverage to get paid for building these
14 LRT's. You are using Bottineau DIS to eliminate BRT as
15 an option there, trying to make it an LRT-or-nothing
16 proposition. If you get sued over Bottineau, you have
17 only yourself to blame there, too.

18 I have another concern. Does this LRT
19 process have a problem with women being bullied to get
20 these built? First, three Golden Valley councilwomen
21 voted no on Bottineau and to end the LRT in the
22 northwest metro. Much pressure was applied to those
23 women, until one caved in for a three-to-two vote.
24 They did a re-vote. The two no-voting councilwomen are
25 no longer on the Golden Valley City Council, and all

1 the yes votes are.

2 Then there was the Star-Tribune article
3 that twice referred to very acrimonious meetings that
4 Mayor Hodges endured. She caved in after she had
5 gotten a letter from the Parks & Lakes Alliance lawyers
6 letting her know that she was off the hook. Then she
7 knew she was no longer the last resort to stave off the
8 LRT in Kenilworth.

9 Next, I went to see a Minneapolis
10 employee, but his phone was two years ago. Choosing --

11 I have more specifics for wondering
12 about whether there's a bullying problem.

13 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Thank you very much.

14 Next is Sylvia Winkelman, then Louis
15 King.

16 Welcome.

17 SYLVIA WINKELMAN: Yes, my name is
18 Sylvia. I belong twice. And I applaud you for the LRT
19 system, and I think it is a good system.

20 However, I think that the north side
21 residents of Minneapolis have a higher rate of poverty.
22 Many are trying to climb the ladder of prosperity. The
23 plans for shelters in that area will meet the needs of
24 the people in the suburbs, but it will not meet the
25 needs of the people in North Minneapolis.

1 And many of them are trying to climb the
2 ladder to success. But there are rungs missing in that
3 ladder of success, with the spacing of the shelters,
4 the number of shelters that are heated.

5 So in spite of being in favor of
6 building this line, do not treat people in North
7 Minneapolis like second class citizens.

8 And by the way, my address is 63rd and
9 Orchard, in Brooklyn Center, since '58, so a long time.
10 Thank you.

11 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Keep it down, folks.
12 We're trying to keep going here.

13 Mr. Louis King, then Avi Viswanathan.

14 MR. KING: Met Councilmembers and
15 commissioners, thank you for the opportunity tonight.
16 Louis King, president and CEO of Summit Academy OIC,
17 935 Olson Memorial Highway.

18 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Speak into the mic,
19 please.

20 MR. KING: For 25 years, I've
21 volunteered and worked in that community. I was sent
22 here as a soldier on a three-year tour, and I'm still
23 here.

24 What I've come to learn is that North
25 Minneapolis -- I appreciate people speaking tonight on

1 behalf of North Minneapolis. I find that very
2 interesting. There is an economic debit, an isolation.
3 And because of the city planning, I understand very
4 well how this happened and how the city developed.

5 And whether people accept it or not,
6 Europe and the East Coast are well ahead of us in terms
7 of rail. It is good for the environment. We simply
8 need to make it happen. It is good for the people. It
9 is good for business.

10 I also want to remind people of
11 something as well. Progress does not occur without
12 sacrifice. It is a beautiful democracy that we have
13 that we can all be here tonight. Certainly, the
14 citizens of Rondo would appreciate that when they ran
15 in '94 or back in Jacksonville, Florida, when they tore
16 up my neighborhood and put freeways in. I feel your
17 pain.

18 At the same time, we have to have a
19 strong infrastructure for the future. I remind folks
20 that many people like myself will not be here in the
21 economic game as baby boomers exit the stage. We are
22 building this rail for the future. And if you go to
23 Uptown and see the density there and the young people
24 that are coming to our great city, we understand that
25 they have to have ways to move around without suffering

1 the congestion. It is not only good for the people of
2 North Minneapolis, but it is also something good that's
3 happening for them. Thank you.

4 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Next is Avi
5 Viswanathan. After that will be Asad Aliweyd.

6 Welcome to the hearing.

7 MR. VISWANATHAN: Thank you. My name is
8 Avi Viswanathan. I am the Hire Minnesota campaign
9 director. We are at 2525 East Franklin.

10 I'm here to say that it is not enough to
11 build the rail. You must build it with a focus in
12 equity. Hire Minnesota is part of the coalition of 30
13 organizations that created the Equity Commitments
14 document that I know that all of you have seen. We'd
15 like to thank the Met Council for responding to that
16 document in significant detail. Chair Haigh and the
17 other councilmembers here were all part of that process
18 and have come up with a thoughtful response, in
19 writing, to create a dialogue with the community. For
20 that, we are grateful.

21 The Met Council has admitted to us that
22 they don't know everything they are doing. They are
23 not the experts in equity, but they want to work with
24 community in creating a dialogue so we can make this as
25 equitable as it can.

1 We are here to ask Hennepin County to do
2 the same. We know there are people on the commission
3 who believe strongly in equity and are a hundred
4 percent behind the equitable principles that we come up
5 with. But we need the County to put that in writing
6 and begin that dialogue with people of the communities.

7 We've heard a lot about people from
8 North Minneapolis being used or the words "disgusting"
9 and "despicable." The truth is what we are doing and
10 what the Met Council and the community is doing is
11 entering into a conversation about how to make this the
12 most beneficial for communities of color that we can.
13 That's what we need Hennepin County to continue doing.
14 You know, again, it can't just be building rail. It
15 has to have a focus on equity.

16 For decades, we've seen public
17 infrastructure and development and investments not have
18 that focus, where various government agencies were not
19 looking at the things they could do to create equity.
20 They weren't enforcing hiring goals, for instance. In
21 the recent past, excuse me, with the Green Line
22 development and others, we've seen, when you have a
23 focus on equity, when you are creating jobs through
24 public investment and you do look at equity, it works.
25 The needle moves. More people of color are getting

1 access to jobs. It works. So we must focus on equity.

2

3 We need Hennepin County to respond to
4 that to create the dialogue so that communities of
5 color and our government agencies can work together to
6 make this as equitable as possible. Thank you.

7 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Asad Aliweyd and then
8 Bob Carney, Junior.

9 MR. ALIWEYD: Good evening. My name is
10 Asad Aliweyd. I work with the Eden Prairie Somalia
11 Community. The Somalian community that I work with in
12 Eden Prairie supports the Southwest Light Rail project.

13 We are asking the County and the Met
14 Council to approve this light rail train and work with
15 the cities along the corridor to make it a success. We
16 support the stations, the station stops that serve our
17 community members in Eden Prairie and Edina and Hopkins
18 and Saint Louis Park. Those stations should have
19 opportunities of economic development, jobs, and
20 especially, housing.

21 We endorse and are a founding member of
22 the Equity Commitment Coalition for the Southwest Light
23 Rail project.

24 We believe that adopting the strategies
25 the coalition is calling for would secure jobs and

1 economic opportunities for all our communities, for the
2 Minneapolis and the suburb cities along the corridor.
3 We want to create more opportunities for business
4 leaders in our community. The Equity Commitment
5 document laid out for us to achieve this goal.

6 We have ideas for the marketplace in
7 Eden Prairie, an empty Hennepin County building that
8 has been vacant for almost two and a half years now.
9 We invite the County and Met Council staff to work with
10 us to reach this.

11 Because of the Southwest Light Rail
12 project, our community gets a voice. We never had an
13 opportunity to talk to the decision makers. Many
14 people they say Metropolitan Council is unelected
15 officials. But, to us, they are the ones that give us
16 an opportunity to say what we like to say.

17 As you know, Minnesota's demography is
18 changing. If you look at the last census in 2010, you
19 will see a lot of the population is moving to the
20 southwest area of the Twin Cities.

21 This project will connect our community
22 to jobs, healthcare facilities, and most important,
23 economic opportunities in the Twin Cities. We have
24 been working over 40 years now to get this project
25 approved. Please support the Southwest Light Rail

1 project, and let's move forward together. Thank you.

2 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Thank you very much.

3 Next is Bob Carney, Junior, followed by
4 Captain Jack Sparrow.

5 Mr. Carney: Hi. I'm Bob "Again"
6 Carney, Junior. That's what was written on the form in
7 giving my name. Minneapolis, 42nd and Colfax South.

8 Last Wednesday, I was at the trail,
9 Kenilworth and Cedar Lake Road, and I videotaped a
10 train with 80 ethanol cars going through that corridor.

11 I spoke with the president of that
12 company. And we have a dispute, because he says he
13 doesn't remember or didn't hear that I told him that I
14 was tape recording it. He is demanding that I take
15 down the video of that 80-car train and his
16 conversation, which I view as an interview. I
17 described myself as a candidate-journalist. I am
18 refusing to do that.

19 He told me -- and this is on YouTube.
20 Of course, here's the sign. I have a Bob Again channel
21 on YouTube, and I'm asking people to take a look at
22 this and report on it, because it has not been reported
23 on yet.

24 The fact is, he told me, that according
25 to federal rules, his railroad is required to ship any

1 chemical that anybody wants to ship through Kenilworth,
2 including chlorine. That is used as poison gas in
3 warfare. He said the train that went through there was
4 empty. But again, he is required to ship any
5 chemicals.

6 He told me that the insurance that he
7 has got has been increased significantly. He said that
8 potential liability of a -- we were talking about a
9 catastrophic event -- could be \$500 million.

10 We are talking about a plan that has
11 co-location. We were originally told there would be no
12 co-location. That plan calls for a tunnel that could
13 have up to two light rail trains in it, three cars
14 each. There could be a thousand people in it. You
15 could have a chemical train going over it. If there is
16 a derailment or if there is sabotage, you can have
17 flowing, burning ethanol or oil going into that tunnel.

18 This is an absolute outrage, first of
19 all, that it has not been reported on and, second, that
20 this is even being considered as something that would
21 be ethical to build. As a matter of public policy, it
22 is outrageous that this kind of design would be
23 proposed to make possible a 19th Century industrial
24 accident. I am calling on everybody to work together
25 to either stop or reroute this project.

1 I've got a detailed plan to send it
2 through the greenway to Hennepin and tunnel under
3 Hennepin. There aren't any chemical trains on
4 Hennepin.

5 We cannot go forward with this plan as
6 it is proposed today

7 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Next, Captain Jack
8 Sparrow. You are going to need to take your --

9 MR. CARNEY: I'll do that. He'll leave
10 it up, and then we'll get it.

11 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Then on deck is Julie
12 Sabo. Julie Sabo is next.

13 MR. SPARROW: My name is Captain Jack
14 Sparrow. I'm a candidate for Hennepin County
15 Commissioner, District 4. I live at 3522
16 (unintelligible) Avenue South, in Minneapolis.

17 I want to follow up on what Bob Carney
18 had to say about a tape-recorded conversation with the
19 Mr. Wegner, the president of the Twin Cities & Western
20 Railroad. Mr. Wegner maintained his company does not
21 transport chlorine, but Mr. Wegner said he didn't
22 transport any kind of chemical. They have to, by law,
23 transport any chemical somebody wants to ship through
24 that corridor.

25 I'm particularly concerned about

1 chlorine, because, a lot of times, it has been used as
2 a weapon of war, in World War I and, recently, the
3 Syrian civil war. At very low concentrations, at .03,
4 it can be lethal. If you pour gasoline and mix with
5 water (unintelligible). It also causes blindness at
6 even higher concentrations.

7 Both federal and state law require a
8 study before light rail transit is begun. There has
9 been a preliminary environmental study done, but it
10 didn't include this alignment. We need one that does
11 include this alignment.

12 Hennepin County Commissioner Peter
13 McLaughlin has been appointed to a one-year term as
14 chair of the National Association of Counties and is on
15 their transportation steering committee. McLaughlin,
16 an incumbent for the Hennepin County, District 4, has
17 been pushing for the Southwest Light Rail transit
18 project without regard to the cost. We hope he
19 delivers on his promises to provide equity for the
20 citizens of North Minneapolis without the environmental
21 impact.

22 While it has been part of the means of
23 getting the citizens of North Minneapolis to the jobs
24 south of the route, Congressman Martin Sabo, at a press
25 conference at City Hall a couple months ago, called

1 this notion despicable and laughable.

2 Peter McLaughlin should not only be
3 replaced as the chair of the National Association of
4 Counties transportation steering committee, he should
5 be replaced as Hennepin County commissioner.

6 AUDIENCE MEMBER: We can't hear back
7 here.

8 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Next is Julie Sabo,
9 followed by Alex Tsatsoulis. I don't think Ms. Sabo is
10 here.

11 MS. PATTOCK: Number 15.

12 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: You are number 15,
13 Mary, but we're not at 15 yet.

14 We're at Julie Sabo, number 12. We'll
15 get there. Alex Tsatsoulis, then LaShella Sims,
16 followed by Mary Pattock after that.

17 MR. TSATSOULIS: Hi. Thank you for
18 giving us the opportunity to speak to you tonight. I
19 am Alex Tsatsoulis.

20 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Pull it up even
21 higher.

22 MR. TSATSOULIS: Is this working?

23 I'm Alex Tsatsoulis. I am here on
24 behalf of the Sierra Club, which is at 2327 East
25 Franklin Avenue. I am chair of the Sierra Club land

1 use and transportation committee, representing 14,000
2 of our members across the state, including 10,000 in
3 the Twin Cities metro region.

4 I'm here today to tell you that we fully
5 support the equity agenda of the Equity Coalition, of
6 which we are members, particularly the employment and
7 investment goals of that coalition.

8 The light rail isn't just a southwest
9 metro priority. It is one for our entire region. Over
10 the past few years, we have made remarkable strides
11 connecting our community and helping them move where
12 they live, work, and play.

13 We're not done yet. Southwest Light
14 Rail is an important component for moving that forward.
15 It is part of the truly great 21st Century
16 transportation network we are building. The return on
17 investment when we finish this integrated system is
18 going to be impressive.

19 The Sierra Club supports the light rail
20 tonight and the preferred alignment using Kenilworth.
21 We urge you to approve the single tunnel solution now.
22 Thank you.

23 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Thank you.

24 Next is LaShella Sims, then Mary
25 Pattock.

1 Welcome to the hearing.

2 MS. SIMS: Greetings. I'm LaShella
3 Sims. I'm an organizer with MICAHA, Metropolitan
4 Interface Council on Affordable Housing. Also, I do
5 organizing for Black Veterans of America.

6 Today I'll be speaking to the aspects of
7 the equity, the authentic community engagement, and the
8 accountability. We are concerned who is going to be
9 accountable or responsible for putting out consequences
10 to the powers that be, the local government, if these
11 things do not happen, if equity doesn't happen, if
12 authentic community engagement doesn't happen. Just
13 being accountable, who is going to step up and say, if
14 you don't do these things, these are the consequences?

15 The Metropolitan Council seems to be
16 sending mixed messages out about equity, and it is
17 causing a lot of confusion and distrust. So that
18 brings me to the Environment Justice Policy guidelines.
19 And the Environment Justice Policy is a document put
20 out by the U.S. Department of Transportation, the FTA
21 administration. It legally binds and says that any
22 entity that accepts public dollars has to include
23 community engagement, authentic community engagement
24 and equity, the equity piece.

25 So this -- I think some of our community

1 organizations may not be aware of it, but it is out
2 there, a legal document through the government that
3 says you have to be included in all the plans and stuff
4 as they are being made.

5 And that brings me to this. I remind
6 you folks, first and foremost, about the god-awful
7 commuting time. It says, under federal regulations,
8 you are required to hold a public meeting at convenient
9 and accessible locations and times. The timing for the
10 meeting should be designed to allow maximum
11 participation by each environmental group. Consider
12 work schedules, school schedules, rush hours, meal
13 hours, and religious worship hours when setting the
14 date and time for the meetings.

15 So community organizations, here, you
16 have power that says it. You need to make yourself
17 real familiar with it and hold people accountable.
18 Thank you.

19 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Thank you very much.
20 Mary Pattock. Next Sandra McAnany.

21 Welcome to the meeting.

22 MS. PATTOCK: Good afternoon. Thank
23 you. My name is Mary Pattock. I live at 2782 Dean
24 Parkway. I am a member of LRT Done Right.

25 Minneapolis residents and city officials

1 have previously told you about our concerns about this
2 project, but today I would like to frame those concerns
3 a little differently in the context of your
4 responsibilities as public officials.

5 In 2011, the legislative auditor, in his
6 report, Governance of Transit in the Twin Cities,
7 identified several principles of effective government
8 that should guide metro area transit. The report found
9 the Met Council in violation of several of those
10 principles. The people of Minneapolis have certainly
11 born the brunt of those violations throughout this
12 process. And I will name some of those principles.

13 First, there has been violation of the
14 principle of accountability. In this process, we have
15 seen what happens when Met Council members, who wield
16 enormous power but who are unelected, are accountable
17 to no one, effectively an organization out of control.

18 Although the governor appoints them, he,
19 apparently, cannot or will not hold them accountable
20 for this, the most costly public works project in state
21 history, even though he said that the problems
22 associated with southwest LRT, quote, could easily have
23 been foreseen for the Metropolitan Council five or ten
24 years ahead of time.

25 The second principle, consensus building

1 and participation, this process has instigated and even
2 fostered distrust and acrimony between suburbs and the
3 City and even, for a while, between ethnic groups in
4 parts of the City of Minneapolis. This is unethical
5 and shameful.

6 Three, the principle of credibility, to
7 many, the term "Met Council" has become synonymous with
8 bait-and-switch and broken promises. They have even
9 bullied Minneapolis to consent to the project without
10 knowing how it would affect the environment and
11 threatened to withhold funds -- this is according to
12 Minneapolis officials -- threatened to withhold funds
13 for -- Met Council funds for other city projects if
14 they did not vote for them, for LRT.

15 Strategic vision has failed with respect
16 to transportation, mixing transportation and
17 development goals, exacerbating urban sprawl, and
18 jeopardizing public safety in running trains bearing
19 highly-flammable ethanol only 11 feet from the
20 electrical wires of LRT through a neighborhood's
21 overlays next to commuter trains.

22 What will it take to get you to pay
23 attention to what we are saying and to respond
24 responsibly? Will it take an explosion? Will it take
25 environmental damage? Whether you are elected or not,

1 I hope you remember that you are public servants.

2 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Thank you.

3 Sandra McAnany, followed by Andrea
4 Irber. Sandra McAnany. I'm sorry.

5 MS. MCANANY: Hi. I'm Sandra McAnany.
6 I'm a resident of Coon Rapids.

7 I feel very fortunate and grateful for
8 the choices that I have there. I can take the North
9 Star, or I can go to Foley Boulevard and be in a heated
10 environment to get on the bus.

11 My question today is, as a region, if we
12 could spend over \$1 billion on a transit system for the
13 southwest area, can we find a way to buy 34 bus
14 shelters that are heated for North Minneapolis and
15 other high rider areas. We have them in the suburbs.
16 We can get in our car and go there.

17 A lot of area residents of Minneapolis
18 don't have access to vehicles, and they rely on buses
19 for their transportation. The winters here are brutal.
20 And as a community, how do we value their safety and
21 well-being while we're also planning this transit
22 system?

23 My next question or concern is, right
24 now, the bus fare and light rail fares are pretty
25 equal, and there's a difference in operating costs.

1 And as the system is being developed, will fares be
2 higher for the transit -- or for the light rail system
3 than they are for buses or the bus system? Will it be
4 a lower fair?

5 Next, the connections for North
6 Minneapolis residents to connect to the Southwest Light
7 Rail system, I hope they'll be coordinated routes and
8 that the transit system -- since resources are limited,
9 that the light rail won't replace the buses that are
10 currently in place.

11 Thank you for the opportunity to speak
12 today. I really appreciate the time commitment that
13 you each make to this mission. And this is a real
14 exciting opportunity for long-term progress. It is
15 also a time that we can build in equity for urban
16 transit riders across the system. Thank you.

17 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Andrea Irber, followed
18 by Susu Jeffrey.

19 MS. IRBER: Hi.

20 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Welcome to the
21 hearing.

22 MS. IRBER: So I live at 24th and
23 Aldrich Avenue South. I'm a Sierra Club unpaid intern
24 and volunteer.

25 And I wanted to say almost nothing that

1 I wrote down here because everyone is being so mean.
2 Now I'm traumatized to go into much detail here.

3 I just think that it is an important
4 project and it is going to be good for commuters, and I
5 am hoping it won't be park and rides going through.
6 And if you guys could just kind of make it more
7 pedestrian-bike friendly and -- yeah, that's about it.

8 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Thank you.

9 MS. IRBER: Sorry everyone is being mean
10 to you guys.

11 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Thank you. Susu
12 Jeffrey, and then Margaret Telfer.

13 Welcome to the hearing.

14 MS. JEFFREY: Thank you. Susu Jeffrey,
15 1063 Antoinette Avenue, in Bryn Mawr, Minneapolis.

16 I'm concerned about the water. I've
17 heard that word. I keep trying to get information
18 about it. The only thing I know is there is no
19 technology we know that can clean ground water.

20 So you are going to have this box
21 inserted into the landscape.

22 I forgot to say I'm speaking for Friends
23 of Coldwater.

24 So you are going to insert this box into
25 the landscape that's 35 feet wide and 55 feet deep. It

1 is solid steel walls. What are you going to do with
2 the water? You are going to put, apparently, about
3 15,000 gallons a day, every day, into the sewer system,
4 which wasn't built for that kind of volume. Then
5 there's another maybe 9,000 gallons that is supposed to
6 be put through rocks and cleaned and returned, not to
7 the lakes -- because this is right between Cedar and
8 Calhoun, Cedar with three beaches, Calhoun with two,
9 five of the 12 beaches in Minneapolis. What about the
10 water? What about the water quality? What are you
11 going to do with the water?

12 Well, apparently, they're looking at,
13 maybe, some flood problems. Because you are going to
14 have this box, this wall 55 feet deep and the water is
15 going to hit it, and it can't go sideways or down
16 because that area is already watered. So it is going
17 to go up, so flooding residential areas, um, um, um.

18 It's 10 or more feet beneath the water
19 table in some areas; therefore, there's potential to
20 block horizontal ground water flow, potentially result
21 in an increase in water levels. That's from the Burns
22 & McDonnell water study for the Met Council.

23 The water study by the Minnehaha Creek
24 Watershed District, which, by the way, spent \$15
25 million to buy the land where the Blake Station will

1 be. It is a development organization, rather than a
2 watershed. They quoted the McDonnell & Burns (sic)
3 study in their study. So those are the two separate
4 water studies.

5 What are we going to do with Cedar Lake,
6 which is my swimming lake and is spring fed? You know,
7 because, when you swim across it, you feel cool areas.

8 That's half a mile long of a solid wall
9 that is going to stop the horizontal flow of water. I
10 think it is the beginning of the loss of more lakes.
11 We lost Loring Lake. We lost Browning Lake. We lost
12 Powderhorn Lake and Spring Lake. Nokomis is bisected
13 by a road. Wirth Lake is stopped at the top by Highway
14 55.

15 You have got to think about the water.
16 We're water people. Thank you.

17 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Thank you.

18 Next is Margaret Telfer. And then I
19 can't read it. Vaughn Carny? Is it Carny? Oh, Larry.
20 I see. I know who it is. Sorry about that. I
21 couldn't read the name.

22 Ms. Telfer, welcome.

23 MS. TELFER: Thank you for once again
24 purporting to listen to the community. We've met many
25 times.

1 There are so many things we can do to
2 get equity and economic development on the north side.
3 These stations, for billions of dollars, are not the
4 best way to do that. These people who are promising
5 you things have no integrity, and they have no
6 accountability. Those of us who have been talking to
7 them for ten years know that, because the story keeps
8 changing.

9 From Hennepin east to Chicago, there is
10 new density in need of transit. This project does not
11 address any of that. Minneapolis is about to become a
12 national laughingstock for allowing the destruction of
13 precious urban green space with old technology. And
14 you are the architects of this and will live with the
15 shame of what you are doing.

16 That is all I have to say, except that I
17 held the first fundraiser to raise \$15 million to build
18 this building. My neighbors did that, too. A lot of
19 them will be leaving if you do this.

20 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Thank you.

21 Vaughn Larry, followed by Jay Bad Heart
22 Bull.

23 MR. VAUGHN: Good evening, everybody.
24 My name is Vaughn Larry. I am a survivor of '94. I'm
25 also on the Green Line. We survived that, too. You

1 can, too.

2 This is one of the things that we
3 actually do need. People don't want to get out of one
4 car, one people's car on the highway. Guys don't want
5 to do that. We have to move people around. Light rail
6 will do that, three cars, 600 people.

7 So what I hear is nobody wants to do
8 like they did in '94, which destroyed my community,
9 Rondo, and it still hasn't come back to its glory. So
10 Green Line, we survived that, but with community input.
11 The community had a lot to say about that. We actually
12 changed federal policy on some of that stuff.

13 We are all for equity, which means
14 fairness, fair. You have to be fair.

15 And we got to also remember that we're
16 Americans. We can go wherever we want to go. If we
17 need to find a job way out in Eagan, we need to get
18 there, some way, somehow. Where the jobs are is where
19 our folks want to go to.

20 It also improves the tax base of our
21 state, and nobody is saying that. It will improve our
22 tax base.

23 It will also, maybe, put us on par with
24 cities like New York, Denver, Portland in their
25 transportation system. We do, necessarily, need these

1 systems.

2 So you have to understand that, with the
3 housing, it is one of the things, too, that is being
4 built up with the transportation system, active
5 affordable housing. Because right now -- and we see
6 it -- there's only one affordable house made for every
7 17 market rate. That is not right. It is not fair.
8 It is not equitable.

9 So what happens where I'm at? Well, we
10 bear the tax. So a little bit of sacrifice on your
11 part, will improve the whole state. Thank you.

12 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Thank you. Jay Bad
13 Heart Bull followed by Stuart Chazen.

14 Welcome to the hearing.

15 MR. BAD HEART BULL: Howdy, councilers
16 and commissioners. Thank you for taking the time
17 tonight. My name is Jay Thomas Bad Heart Bull. I am
18 the -- my address is 3660 43rd Avenue South, in the
19 Howe neighborhood. I am president and CEO of the
20 Native American Community Development Institute in
21 South Minneapolis. We're working to improve the lives
22 of American Indian people, communities of color, and
23 our allies in this great city and region.

24 I also represent the Little Earth of
25 United Tribes Housing community, which is an American

1 Indian-specific housing area in South Minneapolis and
2 East Phillips with close to 2,000 residents,
3 representing over 30 different tribal nations.

4 So I want to thank the Met Council,
5 first, for responding to the equity document the
6 Transit Equity Racial Disparity team has coordinated.
7 I am also especially proud of the fact that we are
8 talking about the 21st Street Station, which would
9 connect one of the most diverse communities in the
10 state of Minnesota -- I'm talking about the Phillips
11 neighborhoods -- that also face some of the greatest
12 disparities in the country directly to the Southwest
13 Light Rail line through -- primarily, through the
14 Number 2 bus route on Franklin Avenue. Really, we need
15 together, the Hiawatha line and the new proposed line,
16 so we are in favor of that.

17 We would also like to make sure that the
18 Hennepin County and City of Minneapolis are having
19 these conversations around equity, especially around
20 inclusion of development, with jobs, with housing, with
21 entertainment, that the southwest line would,
22 particularly, make available to our communities of
23 color, in particular, the American Indian community.

24 So we're in favor of the line. We're in
25 favor of the 21st Street Station. We're in favor of

1 equitable inclusion throughout this process. So thank
2 you very much for your time. Have a good evening.

3 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Thank you.

4 Next is Stuart Chazen, then the next
5 person is Rick Heimark. Does that make sense? What is
6 it? Heimark. All right.

7 Go ahead.

8 MR. CHAZEN: Thank you for allowing me
9 the opportunity to speak with you this evening. My
10 name is Stuart Chazen. I'm here on behalf of Lakes &
11 Parks Alliance of Minneapolis.

12 As most of you know, Tom Johnson, of
13 Gray, Plant, Mooty, and Lou Remele, of Bassford Remele,
14 represents us and, on our behalf, sent a letter to
15 Mayor Hodges and council president Barbara Johnson
16 informing them that the municipal consent process for
17 the Southwest LRT project does not comply with state
18 law.

19 They also sent a letter to Marisol
20 Simon, of the Federal Transportation Administration,
21 and Ken Westlake, of the National Environmental Policy
22 Act office of enforcement and compliance assurance,
23 informing them that the environmental review process
24 for the Southwest LRT project is not compliance with
25 state and federal law. And we requested that they

1 defer future funding until full compliance is achieved.

2 The Minnesota Municipal Consent Statute
3 requires that the draft environmental impact statement,
4 the DEIS, be available at the time cities are
5 considering whether to give their consent to the
6 proposed Southwest LRT design. No DEIS has been
7 completed for the Southwest LRT design now being
8 proposed, so the DEIS is not available as required by
9 Minnesota law.

10 Since the DEIS is not available, there
11 is no way for the public to know the true environmental
12 impact of the proposed design and to participate in an
13 informed, meaningful manner in a public hearing. The
14 current process is legally defective. And moving
15 forward on this without the draft environmental impact
16 statement is wrong.

17 Thank you very much for your time.

18 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Rick Heimark, followed
19 by Jamie LaPray.

20 Welcome.

21 MR. HEIMARK: Good evening. Thank you
22 for having me. Rick Heimark, 3727 11th Avenue South.
23 I'm here for the community and the citizens of
24 Minnesota.

25 The light rail, the Blue Line, the Green

1 Line, have far exceeded the expectations when we put
2 them in. And I see no reason why the Southwest Light
3 Rail Line wouldn't also do the same and exceed our
4 expectations and serve the community.

5 The community is people like me that
6 refuse to drive because city streets are too crowded,
7 people don't pay attention to what they are doing when
8 driving, making it a hazard to drive. It is so much
9 safer to be in one of the big buses. Hit me all you
10 want, and I won't feel it.

11 The Green Line and the Blue Line have
12 both also really benefited the areas they are in by the
13 economy growing, jobs. We have training for
14 professional people, construction people, and just
15 serving the communities.

16 Keep up the good work and thanks again.
17 Have a great night.

18 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Thank you very much.
19 Jamie LaPray, followed by Kenya
20 McKnight.

21 Welcome to the hearing.

22 MS. LAPRAY: Thank you. Jamie LaPray,
23 3256 Blackstone, in Saint Louis Park. I am co-chair of
24 the group Safety in the Park.

25 First, I want to thank the Met

1 Council staff for their professionalism and for taking
2 a poorly-scoped plan and finding a way to build it
3 safely.

4 The west metro needs mass transit, and
5 even with its flaws, we need the SWLRT project. It is
6 unfortunate starting over is not a realistic option.
7 Had Hennepin County taken the opportunity to shape a
8 different project, we might be months or even years
9 ahead of where we are today. Instead, Hennepin County
10 ignored engineering and safety realities by not doing a
11 comprehensive rail study prior to making assumptions
12 about the feasibility of moving freight. They
13 continually ignored advice from the railroads going
14 back to 2001. Hennepin County also repeatedly twisted
15 facts about the Golden site cleanup but lauding
16 promises that did not exist.

17 And they did not, Hennepin County, did
18 not allow the cost associated with moving freight to be
19 part of the SWLRT scoping project.

20 Furthermore, these unfortunate actions
21 by Hennepin County have caused residents in Saint Louis
22 Park and Minneapolis feeling abused and disillusioned.

23 The deal between Minneapolis and the Met
24 Council that is part of the municipal consent package
25 that has lots of extras and upgrades appears to be a

1 good faith effort to begin regaining the trust of
2 Minneapolis.

3 However, despite the fact that there
4 have been multiple, professional, independent studies
5 focusing on rerouting freight rail traffic from
6 Minneapolis to Saint Louis Park, none has identified a
7 route and design which is safe, livable for Saint Louis
8 Park residents, and operationally feasible for the
9 railroads. The residents of Saint Louis Park are still
10 vulnerable to possible future reroutes because of this
11 deal.

12 Therefore, I am here to ask you to make
13 a commitment, in writing, to the residents of Saint
14 Louis Park that the rerouting of freight from the
15 Kenilworth Corridor to Saint Louis Park will never
16 again be considered for any reason for any project.
17 Let Saint Louis Park have trust again, too. Thank you.

18 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Thank you. Next is
19 Kenya McKnight, followed by Camille Burke.

20 MS. MCKNIGHT: Good evening,
21 commissioners and Metropolitan Councilmembers. My name
22 is Kenya McKnight. I am a resident of North
23 Minneapolis and also a member of the Equity Commitments
24 for Southwest Light Rail Transit Coalition and, I'd
25 like to say, a regional political leader, as well, that

1 works closely with Metropolitan Council.

2 I'll start off by saying thank you to
3 Met Council for your leadership in responding to our
4 equity commitments and taking a step in the right
5 direction of laying out your plans to make some
6 commitments to the transit improvements that we know
7 are long overdue and needed. I encourage Hennepin
8 County to take that lead -- to follow Met Council's
9 lead and also respond to our equity commitments in
10 writing and identify what you think is your role in
11 delivering on those equity commitments.

12 And we all know that we can't stop
13 there. The transit amenities are things that we do
14 need. It is broader than North Minneapolis. It is
15 about making sure communities of color throughout our
16 entire region have access to those amenities.

17 However, our economic needs are much
18 greater. So I'm here tonight to say to the people who
19 are in support of North Minneapolis and people of
20 color, if you will, thank you for that idea that we
21 should not be used as a political tool with no real
22 intention on delivering on any commitments. We agree
23 with that. For that reason, that's why we are here, to
24 represent our own interests and needs.

25 I welcome you to join us in figuring out

1 what is important to us, because we do have ideas.
2 Part of that is about making sure that you all respond,
3 Hennepin County, to our equity commitments, but also to
4 deliver on the economic opportunities that are
5 associated with the Southwest Light Rail Transit.

6 We want direct access to the 60,000 jobs
7 that will be created. We want direct access to the
8 business opportunities, and we want direct access to
9 the existing jobs within the corridors.

10 I should say that we also believe the
11 Southwest Light Rail is not a solution for poverty. It
12 is not a solution for economic need. But it is an
13 opportunity that we want part of. Thank you.

14 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Thank you.

15 Camille Burke. Aster Nebro is on deck.
16 Is Camille Burke here? Aster is next.

17 Welcome to the hearing.

18 MS. NEBRO: Good evening. My name is
19 Aster Nebro. I live in the Harrison neighborhood. I
20 am a member of Redeemer Lutheran Church and a member of
21 ISAIAH.

22 I am here because the decision you make
23 affects my life and the life of my community. While
24 I'm happy about the progress that has been made to your
25 commitment to our 24 new bus shelters, it is not

1 enough. Throughout the cold winter, my loved ones and
2 I have stood in the cold. The current plan only makes
3 74 percent of the needs. That must be a hundred
4 percent.

5 But most importantly, I am here to call
6 you to ensure that every Southwest Light Rail stop
7 receives bus service to connect North and South
8 Minneapolis.

9 For too long, north side and South
10 Minneapolis has been connect -- disconnect, whoops, and
11 suffered. We need to be connected to jobs. It is a
12 mistake to miss the opportunity to connect North and
13 South Minneapolis with this \$1.6 billion.

14 Your decision whether to provide bus
15 service at every Southwest Light Rail stop affects
16 whether my community remains shut out from the
17 opportunity. I urge you to ensure that this bus
18 service to connect my community to opportunity at the
19 Southwest Light Rails. You can change it. And once
20 and for all, please have bus service.

21 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Thank you. John
22 Hartwig, followed by Pastor Grant Stevensen.

23 Welcome to the hearing.

24 MR. HARTWIG: Thank you, sir. My name
25 is John Hartwig, and I live on 32nd and Humboldt Avenue

1 South.

2 What we've been discussing here --

3 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Excuse me, we can't
4 hear you, and we want to.

5 MR. HARTWIG: My name is John Hartwig.
6 3228 Humboldt Avenue South.

7 What we've not heard here this evening
8 is about 19th Century technology. 85 years from now,
9 we're going into the 22nd Century. What we want to
10 start doing now with computers and other gear here is
11 start moving information. We no longer have to start
12 moving people.

13 What I would like to see, within 5- or
14 600 years, is the Minneapolis Institute of Art is still
15 here, that the bridge over the Mississippi, the Stone
16 Arch Bridge is still here, plus our lakes are more
17 pristine than they are today.

18 When we talk about this, it is sort of a
19 connection there. My great grandfather was a stone
20 mason. He was one of the gentlemen that built the
21 Stone Arch Bridge. I would like to see it here for,
22 like I say, the next 6- or 700 years.

23 As far as the urgency is considered, the
24 City of Detroit is seriously considering selling their
25 art, including Rembrandts and other paintings, in order

1 to pay for industrial. In other words, the water and
2 sewer system is deficient. They are going to have to
3 do something. They own -- the art museum owns the art
4 there and the paintings there. I don't want to see us
5 having to go to the Minneapolis Institute of Art and
6 grabbing their paintings in the name of the people in
7 order to rebuild our water and sewer system.

8 We know what happened to Los Angeles
9 last week. The CLA was gutted out, and they are having
10 real problems.

11 So let's get back to the 22nd Century.
12 Forget about the light rail. Move information, not
13 people. Thank you.

14 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Thank you.

15 Next is Pastor Grant Stevensen, followed
16 by Amity Foster.

17 Welcome to the hearing, Pastor.

18 MR. STEVENSEN: Thank you. My name is
19 Grant Stevensen. This is Lenny Nelson. And we're
20 bringing to you a statement from 35 members of the
21 clergy. It is difficult for clergy to be at a hearing
22 on Wednesday night. They do church stuff.

23 MR. NELSON: Greetings. The clergy and
24 congregation of ISAIAH have committed to stand with
25 each other in demanding a change of course from

1 generations long practiced that have left many,
2 particularly people of color, on the margins of our
3 metropolitan community.

4 Over the course of the Governor Dayton's
5 first term, ISALIAH congregation have been in an ongoing
6 dialogue with the administration about how to
7 meaningfully advance the racial and economic equity in
8 our communities. Most recently, over 1500 delegations
9 from over 120 congregation gathered with Governor
10 Dayton at the Minneapolis Convention Center to share
11 our Faith Equity Agenda and launch prophetic voters
12 campaign, a campaign to engage 56,000 people of faith
13 in Minnesota to vote their values in November.

14 Meanwhile, the Metropolitan Council is on the
15 verge of missing an enormous opportunity. The leaders
16 we have elected and those whom have been appointed in
17 Minnesota must not simply talk about racial inequality
18 but have concrete policies that begin to reverse the
19 historic racial and economic disparities that plague
20 our communities.

21 The plague of racial disparity is not
22 the result of a single decision but the result of a
23 thousand missed opportunities and delayed actions.
24 Transit is a crucial public service for many
25 hard-working families and persons in our congregations.

1 And we have the opportunity right now to demonstrate
2 our recognition of the basic dignity of those who ride
3 the bus every day to get to where they need to go.

4 In our faith communities, over the past
5 six months, ISAIAH congregations conducted over 4,000
6 surveys asking people to name their daily challenges.
7 Affordable and accessible transportation was a common
8 struggle named by the families in our faith
9 communities. Our partner Neighborhoods Organizing for
10 Change has engaged hundreds of bus riders in similar
11 conversations. Together, we have reached reasonable
12 and concrete requests for much-needed improvements in
13 our transit and bus systems. They are as follows.

14 Heated bus shelters, we need to meet a
15 hundred percent of the need for bus shelters at bus
16 stops in high-used areas of our city and region.

17 Lower bus fares, bus riders are the
18 backbone of our whole regional transit system. We need
19 to plan low fares and keep them stable for regular,
20 everyday riders.

21 Equitable amenities, right now it is
22 easier to put cameras, heat, and shelter, than in a
23 neighborhood in Minneapolis and Hopkins where more
24 people ride the bus to get around.

25 Buses at all stops.

1 Thank you.

2 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: We have a copy of your
3 written statement.

4 MR. STEVENSEN: Along with the names of
5 the clergy.

6 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Thank you. We'll put
7 that in the record. Thank you very much.

8 Next is Amity Foster, and then Mel
9 Reeves.

10 Welcome to the hearing.

11 MS. FOSTER: Thank you. My name is
12 Amity Foster, and I'm a member of NOC and ISAIAH. My
13 NOC T-shirt did not fit, but it is back on my chair.

14 I rely on public transit every day to
15 get home, to get to work, to get to the north side of
16 Minneapolis. I have waited for buses on the north side
17 with no shelters, no signs, and no lights. I've stood
18 on a corner thinking it was a bus stop, then watched
19 the bus stop across the street and go past me and
20 waited until an hour for the bus to show up.

21 The Met Council has an equity commitment
22 that plans to add 24 new shelters on the north side by
23 2015. That's not enough, and it only gets us 74
24 percent of where we need to be. We need the Met
25 Council and elected officials to prioritize racial

1 equity so we get to that 100 percent. This can be
2 built into the Southwest Light Rail if there's a real
3 commitment to it and a real commitment that connects
4 the north side to that light rail.

5 Transit investment is a good thing. Too
6 many transportation investments have been used to
7 divide us and destroy our communities. Southwest Light
8 Rail needs to be different. Thank you.

9 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Thank you.

10 Next is Mel Reeves, followed by Russ
11 Adams.

12 Welcome to the hearing.

13 MR. REEVES: She was kind of quick. Can
14 I take some of her time?

15 You guys look a little bored. I
16 understand. I'm not going to bore you. I'm going to
17 repeat some of what you heard already.

18 Folks have been talking about equity.
19 So, actually, one of my colleagues, who is part of the
20 coalition of folks I'm sure you've heard from, the
21 Equity Coalition, we call ourselves the SWLRT Equity
22 Coalition -- Commitments Coalition. Some of you looked
23 at our documents. I wanted to repeat some of the
24 things that were on there a little bit and make the
25 point of when people ask what is equity. For us,

1 equity is about creating connections that allow people
2 and communities to prosper equitably.

3 First and foremost, we would connect
4 people of color to jobs and better career
5 opportunities, you know, along the line. It would also
6 look like leveraging the project to help the resilient
7 local economies within the communities of color along
8 the line.

9 We want to exceed the 32 percent hiring
10 goal. The Vikings stadium -- they don't want to call
11 it that anymore. For a reference, the Vikings stadium
12 is exceeding those goals, and we would like to see that
13 happen on the Southwest Light Rail line as well. We
14 would like to use it as a showcase. That's what equity
15 would look like.

16 Equity is also about bringing the
17 communities to the table and working together to
18 fashion solutions, to work out challenges, and to
19 achieve outcomes. So we want transit and land
20 use-based planning that will be community driven.
21 You've all heard this already, I'm sure.

22 The bottom line is that equity is about
23 creating new innovative systems to meet the goals. We
24 don't have a problem with the train. We don't want to
25 be left off the train, so to speak. At this point,

1 status quo is unacceptable. And we want to build a
2 bold, viable path for moving forward and want to have
3 all options on the table.

4 And I want to reiterate what my friend
5 and colleague Nekima Levy-Pounds has said, you know, it
6 is one thing to talk. Talk is cheap, folks. We have
7 people nodding their head, yeah, we like those ideas.
8 We really want you guys to take them seriously enough.

9 In fact, Met Council has already looked
10 at our proposals and commented on them. We would like,
11 for Peter, you and your crew to comment on our proposal
12 as well. The Equity Commitment Proposal that we made,
13 we would like to see you guys comment on it and make a
14 real, solid commitment to them.

15 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Thank you.

16 Russ Adams, then Nancy Eder.

17 MR. ADAMS: Thank you, commissioners and
18 councilmembers. I'll be really brief. I'll try to
19 keep this to about a minute or a minute and a half.

20 All of my colleagues that are involved in the
21 Equity Commitments Coalition for SWLRT have said the
22 messaging and talking points better than I would. I'll
23 just say a couple of things about this. I think it is a
24 real opportunity, I think, having worked at the
25 legislature the last couple sessions trying to move a

1 large transit and transportation bill in communities of
2 color.

3 When we talk about what would equity
4 look like and that, we haven't always had a clear idea.
5 We always get stuck on a spending bill. And this is
6 going to be about implementation and how that money is
7 spent.

8 This whole process of exploring a
9 question that Met Councilmember Gary Cunningham first
10 asked, which was how would communities of color benefit
11 from this project, this whole process of looking at
12 that and examining that on all sides has given us some
13 really good, specific ideas about how to improve the
14 ridership experience for transit riders, to honor the
15 most dependable riders in the system, the bus riders on
16 the regular routes, to look at catalytic
17 transit-oriented development.

18 First and foremost, as Nekima
19 Levy-Pounds said, How do we put money in people's
20 pockets? She has challenged the communities and
21 organizations that talk about equity about how do you
22 move wealth into these communities, not only help them
23 shape and define the communities, but to come up with
24 wealth-creating strategies.

25 We think the Equity Commitments document

1 has forward-looking strategies to do that, many of
2 which were described by Mel right before me. We think
3 it creates a pathway to shared prosperity for people in
4 those communities. We also know what we are asking the
5 Met Council and what we are asking the City of
6 Minneapolis and what we are asking Hennepin County
7 today is to take a risk and go out on a limb.

8 I'm already past two minutes. I'll
9 finish up, though.

10 We're asking you to take a risk. When
11 we say let's work on equity, let's look at economic
12 benefits, community benefits. We know you are going
13 out on a limb. We know not all your colleagues are
14 ready for that conversation, or the staff in your
15 departments.

16 What our message to you is you are not
17 going to go out on that limb alone. We will be there
18 with you every step of the way. You have a partner in
19 making this project the most economically and socially
20 beneficial that it can be. Thank you.

21 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Thank you.

22 Next is Nancy Eder, number 33, then
23 number 34 Kathy Low.

24 MS. EDER: My name is Nancy Eder. I
25 live in Burnsville. I'm a member of ISAI AH. And we

1 have been going to meetings and talking about equity
2 for as long as I have been living down here, which is
3 five years now.

4 And the reason I live in Burnsville and
5 not closer to where my children live in North
6 Minneapolis or Richfield is because I couldn't afford
7 to live in Minneapolis. So that's one of the issues
8 that still is standing in the way of people having a
9 more equitable life in this area.

10 34 more shelters in North Minneapolis
11 and areas where more people ride the bus, I don't think
12 that's something that the Met Council can easily
13 dismiss as many times as it has been brought up.

14 Not to raise the fares so people like me
15 can still afford to take public transportation.

16 Better coordination of the lines, so
17 that when I want to take the Greyhound bus to Chicago
18 to visit my daughter, I don't have to haul my suitcase
19 five blocks through downtown Minneapolis. I don't
20 understand why there isn't a bus that goes to the
21 Greyhound bus depot.

22 Also, when I want to go to Saint Cloud
23 on the North Star, why can't I go up there? The trains
24 come down here every morning. Why don't they go back
25 up there again in the morning, too? I know there are

1 lots of people who would like to be able to take the
2 train from Minneapolis to Saint Cloud, so let's see if
3 we can work on that. Thank you.

4 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Thank you.

5 Kathy Low followed by Felipe Illescas.
6 Welcome.

7 MS. LOW: Thank you. I changed what I
8 was going to say because no one is talking about costs.
9 The cost benefit of this project is out of whack.

10 AUDIENCE MEMBER: We can't hear you.

11 MS. LOW: The cost benefit of this
12 project is out of whack. The Met Council projects it
13 will get only 4,000 cars off the road, and that's by
14 2030, because this is the wrong route. The three
15 stations near downtown Minneapolis have shockingly low
16 ridership forecasted, again, by 2030. The Met Council
17 forecasts that there will be, on an average weekday,
18 310 from Van White, 273 at Royalton, and 930 at Penn.
19 If you assume that the people take round trips, that's
20 only 750 people on an average weekday using those
21 stations.

22 But people of all income levels are
23 going to be taxed to pay for this suburban commuter
24 train. The opportunity cost of spending this much
25 money on one mega project means that pressing transit

1 needs of the area will not be met. There's been a lot
2 of talk of bus shelters tonight. Some calculated this
3 amount of money, and that's just the up-front cost,
4 could buy 25,000 heated bus shelters. That's when the
5 project only cost \$1.5 billion.

6 If you vote for this project, your
7 legacy will be to ruin what the park board calls a
8 particularly fragile and critical location in the
9 Kenilworth Corridor in an area that is a prominent
10 asset to this region. Thank you.

11 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Thank you.

12 Felipe Illescas, then Roxanne Smith.

13 MR. ILLESCAS: That was very close.

14 Thank you.

15 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Give me a hint. What
16 is it?

17 MR. ILLESCAS: Illescas. You said it
18 right.

19 My name is Felipe Illescas. I'm here
20 speaking on behalf of the Centro de Trabajadores
21 Unidos. That's Spanish for Center for Workers United
22 in Struggle. That's CTUL for short. CTUL is fighting
23 for fair wages, fair working conditions, and a voice in
24 the workplace for all workers in the Twin Cities.

25 We are here today to express our support

1 for the equity principles that have been mentioned by
2 different organizations today.

3 We're also in support of the expansion
4 of public transportation to the Southwest LRT. These
5 projects are providing easier access to jobs for low
6 income and minority populations in the metro area.

7 However, at the same time, we are coming to
8 express our concern about one key area in the
9 development of the Southwest transit project, the
10 growth of good jobs along the proposed route that
11 provide fair wages, fair working conditions, and are
12 accessible to low income minorities which were --
13 and/or around the proposed route.

14 The proposed route for Southwest LRT,
15 will no doubt provide significant beneficial economic
16 effects to large employers along the route. Yet we
17 wonder about the economic impact to the low income and
18 minority populations who work for those companies or
19 are subcontracted to the work at those locations.

20 We can look to the example of the
21 Hiawatha Line to better understand this question.
22 Large employers and companies along the Hiawatha Line
23 and retail companies at the Mall of America have
24 profited significantly from the Hiawatha Line by having
25 more access to potential clients from the surrounding

1 metro area. Most of the employees that work for those
2 companies have not seen the same beneficial economic
3 impacts.

4 According to a recent study from the
5 Center for Transportation Studies of the University of
6 Minnesota, Hiawatha-related transit upgrades are
7 estimated to have brought more than 5,000 low-wage jobs
8 into areas near downtown Minneapolis and suburban
9 Bloomington light rail stations.

10 While it is positive that the Hiawatha
11 Line has provided transportation alternatives to low
12 income communities, it has provided access to jobs for
13 traditionally low income communities.

14 It is concerning to note that the
15 Hiawatha has, in fact, created more low income jobs,
16 rather than creating living wage jobs that are
17 accessible to traditionally low income communities.
18 Rather than having a positive impact for low income and
19 minority populations, the Hiawatha Line appears to have
20 created a line of poverty through the southern metro
21 area. We hope they take accommodations today to
22 prevent this from happening again.

23 Other transportation projects should not
24 only provide positive economic outcomes for larger
25 employers in wealthy populations, they should also

1 provide positive economic effects for low income and
2 minority populations.

3 Very quickly, the three accommodations
4 are conducted for workers on jobs on the route before
5 and after construction, engage low income and minority
6 populations in the studies of potential effects of the
7 proposed route in their communities, and ensure
8 construction jobs in this project are open to low
9 income and minority populations. Thank you.

10 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Thank you very much.

11 Next is Roxanne Smith, number 36, and
12 Ashley Horan, number 37.

13 Welcome.

14 MS. SMITH: Thank you. Good evening.
15 I'm Roxanne Smith. I am an ISAIAH leader. I'm also
16 the social director at Saint Joseph the Worker Church.
17 I am passionate about each and every one of God's
18 children having access to opportunity.

19 I say hello to my fellow councilmembers
20 and to the commissioners. I am delighted to be here
21 tonight.

22 ISAIAH and others have been highlighting
23 a set of concerns about how the \$1.68 billion
24 investment in Southwest be leveraged for racial equity.
25 Southwest must connect meaningfully with the north

1 side, which has historically been marginalized and
2 segregated and excluded. This is effectively a giant
3 barrier, a huge gap between North Minneapolis and South
4 Minneapolis. This gap is reinforced by I-394 and the
5 industrial areas around Van White and the lack of
6 passageways. Let's use this opportunity to bridge that
7 gap to make sure that the north side residents don't
8 have to go through the clogged downtown waste to get to
9 South Minneapolis and the southwest suburbs.

10 We know -- when I was on the council, we
11 talked about these gaps. We got this area. We have an
12 opportunity in front of us right now. I went to -- the
13 transit -- we all know. I know we all agree that
14 transit is a good investment and that too many
15 transportation investments have been used to divide us
16 and destroy communities. Let's let this one be
17 different.

18 I went to the policy link conference in
19 Detroit. What we learned there -- many of my
20 colleagues in this room, we heard there that equity is
21 a superior growth model. We have the opportunity to
22 use this opportunity to do that. So I just ask you to
23 do that, and I totally support the Southwest Light
24 Rail. Thank you.

25 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Thank you.

1 Next is Ashley Horan, followed by Frank
2 Lorenz.

3 Welcome to the hearing.

4 MS. HORAN: Thank you. Good evening.
5 My name is Ashley Horan. I am the executive director
6 of the Minnesota Unitarian Universalist Social Justice
7 Alliance, and because it is so long to say, we call it
8 MUUSJA. We are also a member of the Hire Minnesota
9 coalition.

10 Just as a transit -- just as transit
11 must be a system to get entire communities where they
12 need to go, the process by which the Southwest LRT is
13 built needs to be a system to ensure equity and to
14 increase the opportunities provided by this project,
15 especially to communities of color.

16 I'm a preacher, and we like metaphors.
17 So here's one for you. We want you to build a local
18 and not an express line, as you move forward with the
19 Southwest LRT. Some folks have said that the final
20 destination of just building the Southwest LRT is
21 enough, but we believe there must be multiple stops
22 along the way so that as many people as possible can
23 get on board along the way and get where they need to
24 go.

25 Specifically, the stops are things like

1 hiring goals, mentioned in the equity commitment
2 document, of at least 32 percent workers of color,
3 connecting people of color to jobs and career
4 opportunities along the corridor, supporting and
5 developing people of color-owned businesses along the
6 way, and ensuring that people of color-owned
7 contractors are receiving their fair share of the work.

8 If the Hennepin County Board makes
9 explicit commitments to these goals as outlined in the
10 equity commitment document -- and we thank the Met
11 Council for already responding to that -- we believe
12 that you will ensure that the Southwest LRT has the
13 necessary stops along the way so that all the members
14 of our communities can get on board and head in the
15 right direction.

16 Thank you. We are grateful for your
17 service, and we are hopeful for your vision and
18 commitment to all of the people impacted by this
19 project. Thank you.

20 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Thank you.

21 Frank Lorenz, then followed by Shelly
22 Dargis.

23 Mr. Lorenz, welcome to the hearing.

24 MR. LORENZ: Thank you. My name is
25 Frank Lorenz. I'm a resident of Edina, but I'm also a

1 citizen of the state of Minnesota, Hennepin County, the
2 United States of America, the Minnehaha Creek Watershed
3 District, and several other taxing authorities.

4 So my quadruple citizenship or, perhaps,
5 seven citizenships is significant, because one of the
6 lies that mass transit is based on is that, somehow, we
7 here in Minnesota and Minneapolis are somehow gaming
8 the system vis-a-vis the federal government who will
9 pay half of the capital costs of these light rail
10 segments.

11 The problem with that is that my taxes,
12 which I have to send to Washington D.C. and Saint Paul,
13 Minnesota, and Hennepin County, and the various
14 watershed districts, it is my taxes. And so one way or
15 the other, I'm paying for all, not just 50 percent, but
16 all of the light rail transit. If it is a bad idea,
17 the fact that you are able to move the shells around a
18 bit so it doesn't look like it costs as much doesn't
19 make it a good idea.

20 But the advocates of light rail transit
21 all mount the same tired lies. Fixed rail mass transit
22 is absolutely essential for metro areas to grow and
23 thrive in the future. Without it, people will be
24 unable to get to and from their jobs.

25 But let's look at the reality coming out

1 of the 2008 recession. The unemployment rate in
2 February of 2014 in Minnesota was 4.8 percent and lower
3 in the metro area. In Chicago, which has had an
4 extensive rail system for decades, the unemployment
5 rate was 9.8 percent. Dallas, Texas, 6.7 percent.
6 Portland, Oregon, the uber all of transit, 6.4 percent.
7 Denver, who we have to keep up with -- I'm praying that
8 Denver doesn't decide to build a 600-foot diameter
9 Ferris wheel, because then Minneapolis and Minnesota
10 will have to have one too, and it will have to be 700
11 feet in diameter, because we are number one.

12 But all of these towns, these cities,
13 these states that we have to keep up with have
14 unemployment rates 50 percent higher than we do. And
15 yet, you are telling me that if we don't build a light
16 rail, fixed rail mass transit, the earth is going to
17 fall off its axis.

18 Los Angeles County switched their mass
19 transit. And in Los Angeles, the county, not a
20 council, runs the bus system. They switched their
21 buses to natural gas. They are reducing their
22 emissions by 25 or 30 percent, and gee, it works just
23 fine. I wonder what we don't know.

24 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Thank you. Next is
25 Sally Dargis, followed by Caleb Murphey. I'm sorry, is

1 Sally Dargis here, number 39?

2 Number 40 is Caleb Murphey, followed by,
3 number 41, Eric Larsson.

4 Mr. Murphey.

5 MR. MURPHEY: Hello. My name is Caleb
6 Murphey. I'm here representing Neighborhoods
7 Organizing for Change, People's Transit Coalition, and
8 North Minneapolis as my hometown.

9 I am actually here to discuss economic
10 and racial equity within this project. I have a friend
11 who, actually, has to put a \$10 bill in the slot when
12 she gets on the bus with her children. This is
13 ridiculous. That's entirely too much.

14 Me, personally, I have been fired from a
15 job for stealing money out of the cash register just to
16 make sure that I had enough money to get to work on
17 public transit the next day.

18 My point here is that, when I started
19 riding the bus, it cost me 25 cents to be on the bus
20 for a two-and-a-half hour ride. It now costs me \$1.75
21 for that same two-and-a-half hour ride. Where is the
22 service? If my price is going up, why is my service
23 not getting better?

24 This is a \$1.6 billion project to run a
25 light rail that's barely going to touch North

1 Minneapolis. The fare is entirely too high for the
2 service that me and my fellow transit riders have been
3 receiving. Both I feel that way, and many people that
4 I have talked to also feel that way.

5 In low income areas like North
6 Minneapolis, we need to see a reduced fare zone like
7 they have along Nicollet Mall. If all those people can
8 get a reduced fare zone, there's no reason low income
9 communities can't have one as well. In fact, they
10 deserve one before the people downtown do.

11 Furthermore, I would just like to say that
12 the transfer windows need to last longer. It should be
13 at least four, four and a half hours. I mean, the
14 price has more than doubled. There's no reason the
15 ride shouldn't, at least, double.

16 Met Council, essentially, is milking
17 people for all the money that they have, and they are
18 doing it to the people with the least of it. This is
19 unacceptable.

20 We want to see firm racial and economic
21 equity commitments coming out of this project. Too
22 many projects have divided, isolated, and even
23 destroyed our communities. This one had better be
24 different.

25 I'm a bus rider, but I'm also a voter.

1 And I think that both the Met Council and elected
2 officials need to remember to prioritize both racial
3 and economic justice for North Minneapolis during this
4 project. Thank you.

5 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Thank you.

6 Eric Larsson is next, followed by David
7 Greene.

8 Did somebody find David? He stepped
9 out. Oh, there he is.

10 Eric.

11 MR. LARSSON: Hi. I'm Eric Larsson,
12 2440 West 24th Street, in Kenwood. This controversy
13 has brought to light the current risks of ethanol
14 transport through our neighborhoods, a risk that I was
15 unaware of until this proposed route was becoming
16 considered.

17 The National Transportation Safety Board
18 says ethanol trains are every bit as dangerous as the
19 Bakken oil trains. They are just as explosive, and
20 they carry their cargo in equally unsafe cars. Yet,
21 every day, one or more trains transport at least 5
22 million tons of ethanol through the Kenilworth
23 Corridor.

24 Obviously, the Met Council's plan to run
25 the Southwest LRT only 10 feet away from them would

1 greatly increase their danger. This should be a vital
2 concern, not only to those living in the vantage point
3 of the Kenilworth Corridor, but also to anyone living
4 anywhere along the freight route and all who plan to
5 ride the LRT and all the parks and lakes users.

6 As I said, this dangerous cargo is passing only
7 feet from our homes. Each tank car transports 100 tons
8 of ethanol. Should a train derail tomorrow, it will
9 likely erupt into a fireball, as others have done
10 before, jeopardizing lives and property in a half mile
11 radius.

12 We worry about the Bakken oil because it
13 did explode in a neighborhood. Yet, ethanol is
14 considered a greater liability. Unlike oil, ethanol
15 doesn't float on water. It mixes with it. A spill
16 into the Kenilworth Canal means the lake would have to
17 be pumped out over the course of a month. Meanwhile,
18 the ethanol would mix with ground water and enter
19 neighborhood basements causing further risks.

20 The U.S. DOT national response team
21 addresses this nightmare in its quick reference guide.
22 For example, it recommends fire departments facing a
23 disaster not pump water from the lake into their fire
24 hoses since it would contain the ethanol. Instead,
25 they recommend the responders to stay back and let it

1 burn out.

2 The NTSB recommends safe route planning,
3 proposing the risk of the explosion be balanced against
4 the safety of the tracks.

5 The Renewable Fuels Association reported
6 that, between 2006 and 2013, 226 cars derailed with 91
7 of them releasing ethanol. In the last seven years,
8 there were eight derailments that resulted in ethanol
9 explosions.

10 The American Association of Railroads
11 and the NTSB are asking the U.S. government to mandate
12 and fund major safety improvements in the tank cars.
13 But the RFA has also enumerated the other costs of
14 crashes, switching failures, inspection errors,
15 maintenance problems, human error, and lack of
16 communication between train crews. All of these
17 problems can be prevented. That's my comments.

18 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Thank you very much.
19 David Greene, followed by Harry Savage, 43.

20 MR. GREENE: Good evening. It is a
21 little past his bedtime.

22 So my name is David Greene. I live at
23 2724 Emerson Avenue South, in Minneapolis. I've been
24 working with a number of community groups on this
25 project for a long, long time.

1 Specifically, I want to focus on some of
2 the work I do with ISIAAH and the Harrison Neighborhood
3 Association. I've been doing that for about eight
4 years. In that time, I've really come to appreciate
5 what people in their own communities know. And they
6 know what their needs are. They know what their
7 opportunities are. And this is a giant opportunity, as
8 we've heard from many people, about advancing racial
9 economic equity in Minneapolis and in the region.

10 There's two points that I want to focus on
11 that I don't recall being brought up yet. The first
12 concerns the Penn Avenue BRT project. We've asked a
13 lot of questions about this and why it does not connect
14 at the Penn Southwest LRT station. The best answer
15 I've heard or the most complete answer I've been given
16 is that it would not serve those going downtown well.
17 Although, there's an entrance ramp right on 394 there
18 to shoot right into downtown, so I don't quite
19 understand that objection. But if that route can't go
20 to Penn Station, at least put it down Glenwood, instead
21 of duplicating the Blue Line service on Olson.
22 Glenwood is a forgotten commercial corridor. It could
23 use some love. It has a pretty low frequency route
24 right now, so that would be a nice upgrade.

25 If the BRT can't go to the station,

1 something must. Something has got to go down Penn
2 Avenue. Whether it is the 19, whatever it is, there
3 needs to be a connection, because that is an important
4 gateway for the north side out to the jobs and the
5 southwest suburbs.

6 The second item concerns the rail
7 maintenance layover facility for commuter and/or high
8 speed rail. We've heard a lot about this at the
9 Bassett Creek master plan. It doesn't seem to make a
10 lot of sense to put a rail facility right next to Van
11 White Station where we would hope that lots of economic
12 activity would develop. That's what the neighborhood
13 has been planning for 15 years.

14 So, you know, I'm all for high speed
15 rail. I'm all for, you know, rail to Duluth and
16 whatnot. We have to seriously look at some other
17 locations for that facility. It is an equity issue.
18 Why are we putting it in a neighborhood that has been
19 dumped on over the decades? That is all I've got to
20 say. Thanks.

21 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Thank you. Harry
22 Savage, and then Gerald J. Savage.

23 Welcome.

24 MR. HARRY SAVAGE: Thank you, Chairman
25 McLaughlin, Hennepin County Rail Authority, Met

1 Council. Thank you for your hard work.

2 Marion Greene, because you did vote for
3 the light rail, I ended up voting for you in the
4 primary. I'll vote for you in November. And if I
5 could vote for Peter McLaughlin, I would vote for him
6 in the morning. I would go out and get a beer and come
7 back and try to vote two more times, because you guys'
8 work is so important.

9 We've heard a lot of issues about race.
10 I've mentioned race in previous meetings, and we've
11 also heard how this is going to destroy Cedar Lake.
12 We've also heard how this is going to be economically a
13 boondoggle from our friends on the right.

14 What I want to bring up is we're a
15 civilization. These are projects important to a
16 civilized people to make us feel good about ourselves,
17 to make us feel like proud Americans. We built a
18 Transatlantic Railway. We've done a lot of great
19 things. If we can't do it, you know, we are on the
20 precipice of something terrible.

21 It took us 20 years to get to this point
22 of, maybe, doing a study. When Bush invaded Iraq, I
23 want to remind everybody, environmentalists and budget
24 hawks alike, it took him less than a little over a year
25 to finally make, you know, the attack, and that was

1 billions of dollars, billions in environmental damage.

2 This one project is going to do so much
3 good for us right here in Minneapolis, so much federal
4 funding. You know, let's just get over all these petty
5 disputes. Let's come together. Let's come together
6 and really do this. Because civilization -- I fear, if
7 we can't do it, you know, I don't know if we can call
8 ourselves a civilized people that can do things for the
9 greater good and glory of the United States of America
10 and for our country.

11 And I see light rail as a symbol of that
12 great triumph. If we can do it today like Eisenhower
13 did the highways, if we can really do it -- you know,
14 not just this line, but other lines -- we're going to
15 have a great system. And Minneapolis is a great
16 people. We are a great people, and we deserve to have
17 a fantastic, wonderful transit system, because we are a
18 civilized people.

19 And the way the world is going today
20 towards chaotic and uncivilized -- maybe in the Middle
21 East -- I fear -- I don't want that happening here. I
22 want civilization. I cherish civilization. And light
23 rail is that. Light rail is a civilizing factor that
24 we can all come and agree to.

25 Thank you Met Council and Hennepin

1 County Rail Authority.

2 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Thank you.

3 Gerald J. Savage, followed by Eric
4 Ecklund.

5 Mr. Savage, welcome.

6 MR. GERALD SAVAGE: My name is Gerald
7 Savage, 3228 Humboldt Avenue South, Minneapolis.

8 And I would like to present this to the
9 representatives of the Met Council, the representatives
10 of the Hennepin County Board. I have worked for a
11 bridge contractor for years, so I know that tunnels are
12 costly, timely, and during construction, that the
13 landscape is brutalized.

14 If the proposed south tunnel to the
15 Southwest Light Rail is abandoned, the project can move
16 ahead without the worry of a lawsuit from the
17 Minneapolis Park Board or interference from the Federal
18 Transit Administration. To facilitate this, use
19 eminent domain public condemnation to acquire 20 feet
20 of easement on each side of the Kenilworth Trail
21 between 26th Street and Lake Kenilworth. This will
22 affect about three private properties.

23 The city and the county have used public
24 condemnation for many years to widen their streets,
25 their avenues, their boulevards, and to acquire land

1 for parks and schools. This is not a unique procedure.

2 Then build retaining walls on each side
3 up to the limits of the easement. The walls can have
4 rock liner design on the outside and can be painted to
5 resemble lime stone, quite scenic, and they'll look
6 beautiful.

7 Now there should be more than enough
8 space to accommodate the train, the light rail, the
9 pedestrian path, and the bike path. No tunnel, no
10 pollution, no lawsuits. Condemnation might not
11 accommodate all, but it adds so much common sense to
12 the project. The project becomes quite simplistic.
13 The costs go down, and it just might gain approval.

14 Note, the properties affected by the public
15 condemnation should be fairly compensated for.

16 So I thank you all, and you have a good
17 evening. Good night.

18 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Thank you. Next is
19 Eric Ecklund, number 45, and then Mia Grimms. I'm
20 sorry, Mia Grimms.

21 MR. ECKLUND: Met Council and Hennepin
22 County, I'm Eric Ecklund, a resident of west
23 Bloomington.

24 Though I'm not a resident of one of the
25 communities to be served by the Southwest Light Rail, I

1 am concerned with how this project is being planned.
2 Like many people, I oppose light rail being routed
3 through the Kenilworth Corridor. I have biked and
4 walked through there many times. It is simply not a
5 place for light rail, both from an environmental
6 standpoint, but a transit planning standpoint.

7 The area around Cedar Lake Junction
8 where light rail also would go through would not serve
9 the people of North Minneapolis. Ridership projections
10 for that area are low, and Interstate 394 is a barrier
11 between North Minneapolis and Cedar Lake Junction.

12 One of the reasons the Kenilworth route
13 was chosen for the Southwest Light Rail was because of
14 the development opportunities at Cedar Lake Junction,
15 but these development projects would be built right
16 alongside an active freight corridor that has 17
17 freight trains daily, plus the 220 light rail trains
18 that would operate through the area as well.

19 People will begin to complain about the
20 freight trains and demand they be moved somewhere else,
21 a repeat of what has happened with the Kenilworth
22 townhouses and the potential reroute of freight trains
23 through the center of Saint Louis Park.

24 Light rail does not belong in the
25 Kenilworth Cedar Lake Junction. It belongs in Uptown.

1 Uptown has many transit-dependent people, a large
2 population density, and the midtown greenway.

3 For faster commute times, light rail
4 should be built on the ground between the Uptown
5 transit station and downtown Minneapolis. This would
6 provide a faster, more convenient option to get between
7 downtown and Uptown and still be a viable option for
8 commuters from the southwest suburbs.

9 I urge the City of Minneapolis to reject
10 municipal consent to this poorly planned project and
11 for Met Council to delay the Southwest Light Rail
12 project. The corridor between Minneapolis and Brooklyn
13 Park should be built next instead.

14 After light rail is completed to
15 Brooklyn Park and Eden Prairie, I believe the Met
16 Council should focus more on improving public transit
17 in the urban core of Minneapolis-Saint Paul before
18 making more investments in public transit to the
19 suburbs and encouraging urban sprawl. While the
20 suburbs deserve decent public transit, the high-density
21 transit-dependent urban core deserves it more and
22 should be focused on first.

23 Met Council, I hope you do what is right
24 and, hopefully, get this transportation project done
25 soon. Thank you for your time.

1 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Thank you. Number 46
2 Mia Grimms. And then I have Caleb Murphey as number 47
3 from NOC. I'm assuming that's the same Mr. Murphey.
4 If it is not, please come forward, Caleb Murphey. Tom
5 Beimers would be number 48.

6 Welcome.

7 MS. GRIMMS: I'm Mia Grimms. I live on
8 50th and Penn, in South Minneapolis. I am here
9 representing Neighborhood Organizing for Change &
10 People. I'm also a campus organizer with the Minnesota
11 Public Interest Research Group.

12 I take the bus regularly and have waited
13 numb to the core at bus stops in the dead of February.
14 I have also been in positions where I've been waiting
15 for buses and did not realize that the stops were
16 probably 10 feet from each other and missed buses.

17 Low economic neighborhoods like the
18 north side, Lake Street, and Franklin Avenue need more
19 bus shelters to reflect the high ridership in the area.

20 I'm in favor of the Southwest LRT Line,
21 as long as stops are created to offer the most to
22 citizens. That means strategic stop placement in areas
23 where people are going to be riding the bus, needing
24 the bus more often, high frequency connecting routes to
25 these lines, and also ensuring that businesses owned by

1 and serving communities of color are able to also
2 economically prosper.

3 In the five to ten years that are coming
4 up after this light rail is built, property taxes are
5 inevitably, probably, going to rise. And what exactly
6 is being done to ensure that these neighborhoods, the
7 makeup of these neighborhoods, remains the same?

8 I'm a rider and a voter. I'm really
9 hoping that elected officials, including state
10 officials and the governor, hold the Met Council and
11 hold the Hennepin County commissioners responsible in
12 order to keep these economic and racial justice
13 commitments a priority.

14 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Thank you.

15 Number 47, Caleb Murphey.

16 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Scratch that.

17 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Okay. Tom Beimers,
18 number 48. Jeffrey Peltola, then Arlene Fried, number
19 50.

20 Welcome.

21 MR. PELTOLA: Good evening. My name is
22 Jeffrey Peltola, a founder of Public Works for Public
23 Good. It is a nonprofit. It has grown out of a lot of
24 transportation issues. I have also been involved with
25 our transit issues for a long time. You know, I'm

1 actually tired of testifying on Southwest LRT. Maybe
2 you are tired of testimony. But I think I'm, like,
3 third to last tonight.

4 So why am I here? By all means, vote to
5 adopt municipal consent from your perspective, again,
6 and let's get on with this.

7 What else? I've been thinking about it
8 quite a bit, and what I'm here to ask for is an
9 apology, not to me, personally. But a wrong has
10 definitely occurred, and Hennepin County is the
11 governmental entity most responsible.

12 Who deserves an apology? It is not the
13 Minneapolis or Saint Louis Park elected officials or
14 their staff. Actually, the biggest losers in this that
15 are largely forgotten are the thousands of people every
16 single day who will be using stations from West Lake to
17 Louisiana with freight railroad right next to them;
18 whereas, that wasn't the case with the original LPA.
19 That's what Hennepin County should apologize about.

20 And personally and professionally, the
21 thing I'm probably worst at is apologizing. There are
22 three parts to a good apology. I read that on a sign
23 at Jimmy John's the other day. All of them are hard.
24 I did something that harmed you. Two, I'm genuinely
25 sorry. Three, how can I make things better? Hennepin

1 County should bend over backwards to do everything it
2 can to help make things better at the stations and make
3 them as good as possible.

4 At the Minneapolis hearing, I'll testify
5 about a few particulars for Beltline and West Lake,
6 which should actually be looked at in concert. Thank
7 you.

8 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Thank you.

9 Arlene Fried, number 50. Then the last
10 person on my list is Neil Trembley.

11 Welcome.

12 AUDIENCE MEMBER: He is here.

13 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: I didn't see your name
14 on the original 50.

15 MR. TREMBLEY: My name is Neil Trembley.
16 I live at 37 Oliver Avenue South, in Minneapolis. I am
17 also a member and speaking for the Cedar Lake Park
18 Association.

19 It's nice to see the commissioners and
20 the councilmembers.

21 And, Sophia, you've really moved up in
22 the world.

23 I think a number of -- well, I got to
24 tell you. Last night, I was bicycling on the
25 Kenilworth Corridor. You guys need to get out there

1 and look at that corridor. It is beautiful. It is a
2 gorgeous corridor. And, you know, I didn't see a lot
3 of wealthy landowners. I just saw people biking that
4 corridor. So I do think that there's been kind of a
5 misperception that that area is, you know, in the hands
6 of wealthy people. It is in the hands of bicyclists
7 and walkers and families. It is a beautiful corridor,
8 and it needs to be protected.

9 Cedar Lake Park Association believes in
10 public transportation. And we have stated that, if the
11 Southwest LRT came through the Kenilworth Corridor,
12 care should be taken to protect the greater Cedar Lake
13 areas parks and trails.

14 And in particular, I want to talk about
15 the land and the land in the Kenilworth Corridor and
16 the land on which the freight rail lies on. The land
17 can't speak for itself. We've had a lot of people
18 speaking. The Kenilworth Corridor should remain in
19 public hands, especially the land under the freight
20 rail line.

21 This line the county promised to remove
22 from the corridor should be removed. It never should
23 have been part of and connected to this project. And
24 it does not mean that, just because this project gets
25 built, that we need to forget about the freight rail.

1 The freight rail should be removed. If not now, then
2 sometime in the future. I think some of the people
3 that have talked here made me even more aware of how
4 dangerous that freight rail is.

5 As we move forward, rerouting the
6 freight rail can only be accomplished if the land
7 continues to be publicly owned. If it gets sold to the
8 railroad, it is going to -- we're just going to have to
9 buy it back. If I remember right, Hennepin County has
10 already bought that land a couple of times.

11 So I think the other thing I want to end
12 with is the trail, the Kenilworth trail, needs to be
13 preserved and protected. It is going to be an ugly
14 year. That's what happens with construction. But
15 please remember that trail and remember all those
16 people, especially families and me going down that
17 trail. We're not rich. We just like to bike and walk.
18 And have yourself a good evening. Take care.

19 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Thank you very much.

20 There is one more speaker who signed up. 52,
21 Peter Berglund. Sorry. You are not last. We wish you
22 well. We're going to honor Mr. Berglund's request to
23 speak.

24 MR. BERGLUND: Peter Berglund, I live in
25 Shoreview. Just for full disclosure, I work for Met

1 Council, but in a different division.

2 I just wanted to put a plug in for mass
3 transit in general. There was a talk across the hall
4 on climate change and food issues, food problems. I
5 just want us all to realize that this is a lot of money
6 being spent. But what I would hope for in the future
7 with Met Council and Metro Transit is if we can do more
8 for transit in general.

9 Specifically, bus shelters is my
10 favorite issue. A woman earlier said she was "frozen
11 to the core." I've been riding buses for over 35 years
12 in the Twin Cities. And that's what I would like to
13 have the most, more bus shelters to help the overall
14 transit system. I love trains. Trains are great.
15 But, please, let's also put some energy and money into
16 bus shelters and helping all of the routes so the whole
17 system can flourish. We really need to do that.

18 There's a lot of information coming out
19 lately stating that we have to fix climate change. It
20 is a really, really urgent problem. We can't wait.
21 And transportation is one of the biggest consumers of
22 fossil fuels. If we can get people out of their cars,
23 get them using transit, help with bus shelters, that
24 can help overall with climate change. So, please, work
25 on the trains, as you like, but try to do a little more

1 with the rest of the transit system. Thank you.

2 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Thank you very much.

3 Is there anyone else who would like to speak?

4 Yes, sir, come forward.

5 MR. KING: Thank you. Thank you.

6 Thanks for the opportunity. My name is Greg King. I'm
7 a resident of South Minneapolis, at 51st and 17th
8 Avenue South.

9 I'm here for myself, my younger brother
10 who lives in northeast Minneapolis, and my many
11 colleagues and friends that live in North Minneapolis
12 by 94 and Broadway, because Minneapolis has a race
13 problem.

14 We've talked -- I heard a little bit
15 today. We talked about unemployment figures in the
16 state. They are fantastic. A lot of our standard of
17 living metrics are good.

18 When you look closely at communities of
19 color, that's not so rosy a picture. In the
20 northeast -- in the North Minneapolis neighborhoods
21 where this Southwest Light Rail would serve, you have
22 unemployment rates that are three to four times as high
23 as the rest of the state.

24 Traditionally I'm invested in -- this is
25 a phenomenal opportunity to bring investment and create

1 equity in our state. It is so exciting to see the
2 diversity of people here tonight. I think it really
3 represents what this light rail project could be.

4 For that to happen, I really encourage
5 the Met Council to do it right. There's some real
6 equity targets. I've heard about shelters. We need
7 heated shelters in those neighborhoods. I see how
8 different the investments look in my neighborhood in
9 South Minneapolis to North Minneapolis. Let's invest
10 there, too.

11 Let's make the fares such that people in
12 the neighborhoods can use the public transit system.
13 That would make it sustainable and, again, create
14 opportunity.

15 We need buses to all the light rail
16 stops.

17 And we need to make sure that those job
18 commitments to create equity are honored. So please
19 continue working on this project.

20 Again, I've heard some alarming things
21 about environmental impacts. I would hope we
22 understand that we need to create opportunity and
23 protect God's creation at the same time. It can't be
24 either/or. I think that's a false choice we are being
25 presented with. Thank you.

1 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Thank you very much.

2 One more speaker, it looks like. Please
3 introduce yourself.

4 MR. MCDOWELL: All right. How are you
5 all doing? Michael McDowell with Neighborhoods
6 Organizing for Change. I'm also with the People's
7 Change Coalition. It is a coalition made up of Take
8 Action Minnesota, Neighborhoods Organized for Change,
9 and ISAIAH.

10 I don't have anything prepped or
11 anything like that, just speaking from the experience
12 and sense, like the voice of the train, you could say.

13 So I've been organizing transit riders,
14 specifically, on the north side of Minneapolis. A lot
15 of their demands around this Southwest LRT have been
16 that they want cheaper fares and that they want to be
17 connected to the Southwest LRT. And they want to see
18 greater amenities coming out of this project.

19 Because, essentially, the north side of
20 Minneapolis has been underresourced for far too long.
21 And I'm going with the phrase that Gary Cunningham
22 coined himself that the condition that people of color
23 are in, especially with the transportation system, it
24 is still like we are in the back of the bus. Nothing
25 has changed. People of color are still in the back of

1 the bus. There are no shelters, no lighting, no
2 heating. There's nothing like that.

3 But you all are planning on building a
4 \$1.6 billion project through the north side of
5 Minneapolis, but we haven't seen anything in writing as
6 to how this project is going to benefit the north side
7 of Minneapolis.

8 So we are asking, as riders and as
9 voters, because we vote. Our votes, you know, put
10 these people in office, the governor, all of them. So
11 we're asking, as riders, that you all commit to adding
12 racial equity in writing to the commitments coming out
13 of the Southwest LRT. Because right now what you've
14 committed to, 24 shelters on the north side of
15 Minneapolis, is not enough. Like I said and Gary
16 Cunningham said, people of color are in the back of the
17 bus.

18 What are you are going to do to change
19 the conditions of people in color in underresourced
20 neighborhoods are in?

21 Southwest LRT is a great opportunity to
22 change the position that north side Minneapolis is in.
23 I'm asking you all to step up and do your job. Thank
24 you.

25 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Thank you.

1 Is there anyone else? Anyone else?

2 Anyone else?

3 All right. We're going to -- I just
4 want to thank the staff here of the library. Thank you
5 very much for your hospitality.

6 Thanks for the staff at Met Council and
7 Hennepin County for helping to get this organized.

8 Thank you all for attending and
9 commenting. We appreciate it very much.

10 And I'll turn it over to my colleague
11 and co-chair this evening Sue Haigh.

12 MS. HAIGH: My thanks to all of you for
13 coming out. I particularly appreciate the voices of
14 support for mass transit. And I look forward to
15 working with you in the many months ahead as we go to
16 the legislature and continue to ask for resources. I
17 appreciate it. Thank you for being here.

18 There is going to be an opportunity to
19 make public comments until 4:30, on August 25th.

20 The City of Minneapolis has scheduled a
21 public hearing on August 19th. If you go to our
22 website, southwestlrt.org, you will be able to find out
23 more information about where that will occur and how
24 you can provide your comments to the City of
25 Minneapolis.

1 Thank you very much tonight, and have a
2 lovely evening.

3 (Whereupon, the TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS was
4 concluded at 8:00 p.m.)

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Public Hearing - 8/13/2014
In re: Public Hearings on Preliminary Design Plan Approval

1 STATE OF MINNESOTA)
COUNTY OF ANOKA)ss.
2 CERTIFICATE

3 BE IT KNOWN that I, Julie A. Brooks, took the
foregoing TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS;
4

5 That the foregoing TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS is a
true record of the testimony given by said witness;

6 That I am not related to any of the parties
hereto, nor an employee of them, nor interested in the
7 outcome of the action;

8 That the cost of the original has been charged to
the party who noticed the TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS,
9 and that all parties who ordered copies have been
charged at the same rate for such copies;
10

11 WITNESS MY HAND AND SEAL this 19th day of August,
2014.

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Julie Brooks, Notary Public, RPR

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