

Hearing - 5/29/2014
Public Hearings on Preliminary Design Plan Approval

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6 Public Hearings on Preliminary)
7 Design Plan Approval)
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14 TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

15 The following is the TRANSCRIPT OF
16 PROCEEDINGS, taken before Julie A. Brooks, Notary
17 Public, Registered Professional Reporter, at Hennepin
18 County Government Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota,
19 commencing at 6:00 p.m., Thursday, May 29, 2014.

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1 APPEARANCES:

2 Metropolitan Council:

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

9 Hennepin County Board:

10 Peter McLaughlin
11 Jan Callison
12 Marion Greene
13 Linda Higgins
14 Randy Johnson

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1 PROCEEDINGS

2 Whereupon, the TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS
3 was commenced at 6:00 p.m. as follows:

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6 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: I want to welcome you
7 to the joint public hearing tonight on the package of
8 plans that have been submitted by the Metropolitan
9 Council for municipal consent to build the Southwest
10 LRT line. This step in the process, which is a long
11 one, comes after many, many years of consideration.

12 This hearing is being hosted tonight by
13 the Metropolitan Council and the Hennepin County
14 Regional Railroad Authority, as required by statute.

15 I want to take this opportunity to
16 introduce my colleagues from the Hennepin County Board.
17 They are Commissioner Linda Higgins, our newest
18 commissioner, Marion Greene --

19 I think this is your first public
20 hearing. There you go. Welcome.

-- Randy Johnson and Jan Callison.

Now I'd turn it over to my friend and
Metropolitan Council member, Adam Duininck, who is also
the chair of the transportation committee at the
Metropolitan Council.

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1 MR. DUININCK: As everyone can see, I'm
2 not Sue Haigh. I'm sitting in for her. She will be
3 arriving here a little bit later. She had a work
4 commitment.

5 As Peter said, I'm Adam Duininck,
6 Metropolitan Council member from Minneapolis. I want
7 to also do the same and recognize my colleagues who are
8 here tonight. Steve Elkins, Bloomington; Sandy Rummel,
9 Councilmember Katie Rodriguez, Councilmember Jim
10 Brimeyer. Also, Councilmember Jennifer Munt is here,
11 too. I think she is making her way upstairs.

12 If you'd like to speak but haven't done
13 so tonight, please sign up. We will be taking sign ups
14 as the evening continues. Tonight is your opportunity
15 to provide input to the Hennepin County Regional Rail
16 Authority and the Met Council. And we will not be
17 directly responding to questions and answers. This is
18 just a public-input process meeting tonight.

19 Individuals will have up to three minutes to
20 speak, and organizations will be given up to five
21 minutes. We ask that people designate that in their
22 sign-in sheet, so we hope to have that information in
23 front of us here. Watch the timing device. We will
24 have time being shown to try to keep people to the time
25 limit. The light is located near the microphone mount

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1 on the podium, so it is right in front of you.

2 To ensure that everyone that wants to
3 speak has the opportunity, we ask that you respect
4 these time limits and refrain from cheering and
5 encouragement and so forth.

6 Also, to expedite the process, we will
7 call two names at a time. We will call the person who
8 is about to speak and the person who is then up next.

9 So with that, I think --

10 MR. MC LAUGHLIN: I think we're going to
11 have a short presentation about where this event is
12 within the process for proceeding with the light rail
13 line. We've asked Jim Alexander from the Metropolitan
14 Council staff to take on that task.

15 Mr. Alexander, welcome.

16 MR. ALEXANDER: Thank you.

17 Councilmembers, Commissioners, I just have a short
18 presentation to cover tonight.

19 (Interruption in proceedings to turn
20 microphone on.)

21 MR. ALEXANDER: Okay. We can go ahead
22 and advance.

23 So as the Commissioner and Councilmember
24 spoke of, there was an open house earlier at 5:00, and
25 we're holding a public hearing tonight at 6:00.

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1 The purpose of today's public hearing is
2 to provide an opportunity for stakeholders, anyone,
3 citizens to provide public comment on this project.

4 And the project that we're speaking of
5 is on slide 4, the Southwest LRT. That's the image of
6 the routing stations. We are running from Mitchell
7 Station, the westernmost station out in Eden Prairie,
8 going through Minnetonka, through Hopkins, Saint Louis
9 Park, Minneapolis, and ending at Target Field Station,
10 the station that just opened on May 17 that the County
11 has sponsored.

12 So a little bit about the project, where
13 we are. We have a project scope that we're suggesting
14 with these consent plans that has 16 stations, 15.8
15 miles long from that Mitchell Road up to Target Field.
16 There are LRT tunnels for the -- in the Kenilworth
17 Corridor for the LRT. There would be an LRT bridge
18 going over a channel between the Lake of the Isles and
19 Cedar Lake in Minneapolis. And there's also an
20 operation maintenance facility in this project slated
21 for Hopkins. The overall budget is a range of 1.673
22 billion to 1.683 billion.

23 So a little bit about the municipal
24 consent process. It is Minnesota State Statute
25 473.3994 that dictates this process, where the council,

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1 we will distribute plans, which we have done, that talk
2 about line and grade of the project, station location,
3 and we'll have more detail on that. But it is an
4 opportunity for the Cities, the five Cities and the
5 County to weight in on those plans and to approve or
6 disapprove the physical design component.

7 So in terms of timing, we issued those
8 plans on April 22nd, and we are holding the joint
9 hearing tonight. It is the Met Council and the HEPRA
10 Board. And that really sets the stage for 45 days
11 after today, we need to have all five Cities and
12 Hennepin County proper weigh in on these plans. So
13 there will be a board meeting by all those entities.
14 There have been some -- there are individual hearings
15 as well. The state statute calls for all five cities
16 and the County to hold separate hearings. And two of
17 those have taken place already. Saint Louis Park and
18 Eden Prairie were held earlier this month.

19 So the physical design components, that
20 talks to the track location, both horizontal and
21 vertical. It talks to the station locations, where
22 they're located, the layout, whether it is a center
23 platform or a side platform. It talks of roadway
24 features that are affected by the project. So we'll
25 have some information on the plans about turn lanes and

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1 lane widths and traffic signaling and sidewalks,
2 trails, pedestrian crossings, the OMF, the operations
3 maintenance facility, and the freight rail track
4 information is in here as well, and systems elements
5 that are tied to the LRT system.

6 So just a quick overview of the
7 alignment. Go to the next slide, please. The Eden
8 Prairie project highlights there are five stations in
9 Eden Prairie. Starting at Mitchell Road, Mitchell
10 Station is the westernmost station. And we head up
11 farther into Eden Prairie. As we get closer to Trunk
12 Highway 62 and 212, there's a City West Station.

13 As we move into Minnetonka, there's one
14 station within Minnetonka's city boundary. That's Opus
15 Station.

16 As we head northward, in Hopkins, we
17 have three stations and that OMF that I spoke of. Go
18 to the next. Thank you. The OMF that I spoke of is
19 just south of the Shady Oak Station, as you see there.
20 And so that is the three stations in Hopkins there.

21 As we move into Saint Louis Park, there
22 are also three stations, and also within Saint Louis
23 Park, we have a freight rail track where we have a
24 southerly connector from the Bass Lake spur, which
25 centrally runs along the SWLRT alignment shown in green

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1 and matches up to the M&S Railroad alignment that runs
2 north-south through Saint Louis Park near Louisiana
3 Station.

4 As we head into Minneapolis, we have
5 stations starting at Westlake, and then from there, we
6 head into the Kenilworth Corridor, where I spoke of the
7 LRT tunnels, as we go through that kind of a corridor
8 that you see there on the map. The Van White Station
9 Royalston, and we end at the Target Field Station,
10 where we link in to the west end of that station
11 platform.

12 So tonight sets the stage for submitting
13 public comments. They will be accepted until 4:30 on
14 Monday, June 9th, through these various venues, in
15 addition to tonight. So we welcome the public to
16 supply comments on this project, the entire project
17 from Eden Prairie in through Minneapolis, through any
18 of these venues here.

19 If there's ever any question, just go to
20 swlrt.org, and there's a lot of information on the
21 project there.

22 So I would just suggest, after municipal
23 consent, we are not done. We have more design to do.
24 We will be evolving that design, assuming we have
25 approval from the five Cities and the County on this

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1 design set. And so we will start working on station
2 design. Next slide please. We will be working on
3 station design, public art associated with the
4 stations, streetscape, utility relocation design.
5 There will be design advancement on all these features
6 you see where we talk about the LRT track features,
7 roadway details, more OMF details, bridges and tunnels.
8 We have a number of bridges on this project, so quite
9 an amount of work to do there. LRT system elements,
10 and, finally, freight rail features will be part of
11 that design evolution process. So we just have a lot
12 of slides just for information.

13 That concludes my presentation.

14 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Thank you,
15 Mr. Alexander.

16 We've been joined by several other Met
17 Council members. Adam, would you like to introduce
18 your colleagues.

19 MR. DUININCK: Yes, please.

20 We've been joined by Councilmember
21 Jennifer Munt, Councilmember Steve Chavez, and
22 Councilmember Marie McCarthy.

23 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Thank you.

24 So we'll proceed to the public hearing
25 portion of the meeting tonight. I would remind you

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1 that this is your opportunity to provide your comments
2 and input on a major, major public works project that
3 would help define the infrastructure of the region for
4 the next hundred years.

14 And this timing device, the way it
15 works, it is like a semaphore. It is green when you
16 should proceed. It is yellow when you should try to
17 wrap up. You've got 30 seconds left at that point.
18 And red is when you should come to a halt, if you
19 possibly can. So that's how it works. There is no
20 trap door, but we would ask you to respect the other
21 people who are trying to make their comments heard
22 tonight by respecting the time limits.

23 What I'm going to do is call two names
24 at a time. We ask the first name would be first up,
25 and then the second name would be on deck. So if the

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1 second person could come up and be in the vicinity of
2 the microphone so that we can proceed quickly tonight.
3 We have a number of people who would like to testify,
4 and it works a lot better if people are ready to go as
5 soon as their time for testimony comes up.

6 So with that, do any of the
7 councilmembers or my fellow commissioners have any
8 comments they'd like to make before we proceed, anyone?
9 All right. Thank you very much.

10 The first testifying will be John
11 Hartwig, and on deck would be Lisa Moe.

12 Welcome, Mr. Hartwig.

13 MR. HARTWIG: Thank you, sir. You are a
14 gentleman and a scholar and a judge of fine whiskey.

15 MR. MC LAUGHLIN: Thank you.

16 MR. HARTWIG: First of all,
17 congratulations on your election. Good for you.

18 The reason I'm here tonight, I oppose
19 this light rail. The reason for it is we are moving
20 into the 22nd Century in 85 years, which is going to be
21 a lot faster than most of us believe. Yet, at the same
22 time, we want to put forth a project that is from the
23 17th, 18th, 19th Century. Ladies and gentlemen, we're
24 going into the 22nd Century. Let's put this light rail
25 to bed and get rid of it.

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1 I have two forms here from the New York
2 Times, one dated 2012, the other here just a couple
3 weeks ago. One says, "Infostructure is the New
4 Infrastructure." We aren't going to need 20 lanes in
5 the New Jersey Turnpike or 100 billion high speed rail
6 lines to save us from national gridlock it is a lot
7 cheaper, and it is a lot more efficient to move
8 information than it is to move bodies.

9 The second article -- and I'd like to
10 present this to the people here. Excuse me, late
11 morning joke. "Subway Derailment in Queens Injures
12 19." What you are going to look for with this light
13 rail, sooner or later, it is going to go off the
14 tracks, and a lot of people are going to get hurt.

15 With that, I would like to end with this,
16 regardless of what decision you make, why don't we do
17 this. Take something from the medical profession, and
18 that is do no harm. Whether you vote for the light
19 rail or vote against it, do no harm. What's the best
20 way to go? Thank you.

21 MR. MC LAUGHLIN: Thank you very much.
22 Our next witness will be Lisa Moe, and John Shardlow is
23 on deck.

24 MS. MOE: Good evening. Lisa Moe, my
25 address is 1000 West 80th Street in Bloomington. I am

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1 the CEO of Stuart Companies, and I am here on behalf of
2 the owners of three large apartment properties in the
3 area between Opus and the Shady Oak Station, directly
4 off Santana Road.

5 Over the course of the last 12 months,
6 we have met with the staff of the Southwest Light Rail
7 Office and have attended several open houses. We have
8 also been meeting with the staff and elected officials
9 of both the cities of Hopkins and Minnetonka. We have
10 had many successful and productive meetings and
11 appreciate all the work from the staff from all
12 agencies in the cities.

13 Our goal is to call your attention to an
14 area along the proposed line that has been overlooked.
15 I believe all of you received a flier earlier, thanks
16 to Yolanda, that was provided by our office,
17 highlighting the area. It is a large gap between the
18 Opus and Shady Oak Stations. The front site here
19 identifies the two proposed stations in red, the Shady
20 Oak station on 17th Street and the Opus Station in the
21 city of Minnetonka.

22 These two stations, while they have
23 great value for future business development, they do
24 not serve a very large area, specifically the area
25 along Santana where over 6,000 residents, owners and

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1 renters, living there today could benefit opening day
2 with immediate and easily-accessible access. They also
3 include the highest concentration of affordable housing
4 along the corridor in Minnetonka.

5 What has been described in previous
6 reports by Hennepin County and the Met Council has been
7 a half a mile radius of these two stations, Shady Oak
8 and Opus, could serve our area. But the fact of the
9 matter is, the walksheds are much closer to the quarter
10 mile radius than a half a mile, as shown in the station
11 area plan and that the Southwest Light Rail will likely
12 be unused by these 6,000 residents. You would need to
13 travel over a mile and a half from Santana to reach the
14 Shady Oak Station, through the roadways, housing, and
15 rail line.

16 For access to the Opus Station, all
17 neighborhood residents would have to wind through the
18 Opus development to access the station.

19 It is not too late to resolve this issue
20 and provide a pedestrian-friendly station day one that
21 could benefit over 6,000 residents. We ask that both
22 Hennepin County and the Met Council direct their staff
23 to pursue this option as part of the original
24 construction of Southwest Light Rail.

25 I thank you for your time and your

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1 consideration.

2 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Thank you very much.

3 Our next witness would be John Shardlow, and on deck
4 would be Bob Carney.

5 MR. SHARDLOW: Mr. Chairman,

6 Commissioners and Councilmembers, my name is John
7 Shardlow with Stantech Consulting. I am here this
8 evening representing AGNL. Lisa Speltz from AGNL is
9 one of the directors, and she is here with me this
10 evening.

As you know, the final stretch

11 of the corridor from the Southwest station to the Metro
12 Road Station was recently changed. So as a result of
13 that, it wasn't included in the draft environmental
14 impact statement. Unfortunately, my client, literally,
15 found out about the change in the alignment the day of
16 the hearing, and we have been scrambling since that
17 time to try and understand the implications of the
18 change in the alignment that will put the train within
19 37 feet of their building.

20 I want to say, on the record, we're
21 certainly not opposed to the project at this point.
22 We're really trying to understand it and understand
23 some of the issues about it. We've been meeting with
24 the project design team and also with the City of Eden
25 Prairie. And we appreciate their cooperation as we

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1 continue to do that fact finding.

2 I want to just flag a couple important
3 issues. And our objective in doing so is we think, the
4 sooner those issues are flagged in the process, the
5 more thoroughly it can be reviewed in the environmental
6 review process and the more completely it can be
7 addressed in the design process.

8 One of those is noise and vibration.

9 There is, on the campus, an auditorium that's used,
10 most of the time, as just a typical auditorium. But
11 sometimes it is used as more of a broadcast studio
12 where they actually do presentations that are then
13 broadcast throughout the Optum network. So we want to
14 make sure that we fully understand that the project
15 design team fully understands the implications of the
16 sensitive technology that's on that site.

17 And second, and I would suggest,
18 perhaps, most importantly, the soil conditions on the
19 property, there are very significant soil issues on the
20 property, what's called fat clays. It is really unique
21 soil on that property. Very substantial structural
22 considerations went into the design of the property.
23 And so we're concerned, first of all, wanting to make
24 sure we have the opportunity to share information that
25 we have about that with the design team so that, again,

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1 not only the environmental review process but the
2 design process can be informed by that.

3 We appreciate the opportunity to speak
4 this evening, and we appreciate the opportunity to
5 continue to work with the team.

6 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Thank you,
7 Mr. Shardlow.

8 Next is Bob Carney. On deck would be
9 Owen Duckworth.

10 MR. CARNEY: Thank you. Hi. Bob
11 "Again" Carney, junior. "Again" is in quote marks.
12 Minneapolis, 42nd and Colefax South.

13 I am very concerned about this, and I
14 want to start by commenting on the role of the
15 Metropolitan Council. This is an unelected body. It
16 was originally put together to coordinate sewers, and
17 it has now found itself in the role of transit czar in
18 the Twin Cities. It really bothers me that an
19 unelected body is coming to elected bodies and giving
20 an agenda saying you are going to approve this on this
21 date, and then these people are going to approve it,
22 and then we're going to start spending 1.6 to \$1.7
23 billion, maybe more. This thing started out under a
24 billion dollars. This is not how our process of
25 government works.

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1 I'm going to the Republican convention
2 in Rochester tomorrow. Marty Seifert is one of the
3 leading candidates. He wants to eliminate the Met
4 Council.

5 You need to realize this is a very
6 controversial issue, not only for Southwest Light Rail
7 and the wisdom, or lack thereof, of that plan, but also
8 more fundamental issues as to what the role of the Met
9 Council should be.

10 I have got a plan for an alternative
11 that uses buses instead of light rail, metro-mobility
12 size. I'm circulating a petition -- there was one
13 person who signed it -- stating that, "We, the
14 undersigned, call on MnDot, Metro Transit, and Hennepin
15 and Ramsey County, and the Cities of Minneapolis and
16 Saint Paul to designate technical experts for MnDot and
17 Metro Transmit, one for the other entities, to attend a
18 one-day presentation by Bobby 'Again' Carney, Junior,
19 detailing a Southwest Light Rail alternative plan and
20 more broadly a transit revolution plan using smaller
21 buses and providing five-minute service frequency and
22 to provide written answers to questions on a free-form
23 technical assessment to determine, on a preliminary
24 basis, if the proposed plan could be a realistic,
25 cost-effective alternative to light rail and streetcar

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1 project currently under consideration."

2 I will be circulating that. It will be
3 no problem for me to be able to speak for a full day on
4 this. I've got a lot of material and a very detailed
5 plan.

6 The point is I think we can do much
7 better than we're talking about with this current plan.
8 If the original route had been presented, it would
9 never have had municipal consent. We've now gotten to
10 the point we are talking about digging tunnels under a
11 bike path. This is crazy. We need to rethink,
12 fundamentally, what we are doing with this particular
13 transit requirement and corridor. And I have to say we
14 need to rethink the role of the Met Council in our
15 system of the government. Thank you.

16 MR. MC LAUGHLIN: Thank you, Mr. Carney.

17 Next is Owen Duckworth, with Louis King
18 on deck.

19 Welcome, Mr. Duckworth. You are
20 representing the Alliance for Metropolitan Stability.

21 MR. DUCKWORTH: Yes, that's correct. My
22 name is Owen Duckworth. I'm a coalition organizer with
23 the Alliance for Metropolitan Stability. Thank you all
24 for your time.

25 Very quickly, the Alliance for

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1 Metropolitan Stability is a coalition organization made
2 up of both issue-advocacy organizations and
3 community-based organizations working primarily in low
4 wealth and communities of color in our region. We work
5 primarily on regional growth and development issues
6 with a racial, economic, and environmental focus.

7 We've been working with a coalition of
8 around 30 different community organizations on
9 developing a list of equity commitments related to the
10 Southwest Light Rail. This group of organizations
11 believes that the Southwest Light Rail can and must
12 work to provide greater transportation access, connect
13 people to employment and career opportunities, and
14 boost economic growth and small business opportunities
15 for communities of color along the line.

16 We sent out the documents to members,
17 Met Council members, members of the Hennepin County
18 Board. So you guys should all have it somewhere in a
19 long list of e-mails, I'm sure. But this document,
20 like I said, specifically asks that we would like to
21 see the Met Council, City of Minneapolis, and Hennepin
22 County consider us as part of putting together an
23 agreement for the Southwest Light Rail.

24 A number of community organizations who
25 are part of this group are going to be presenting, over

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1 the course of the hearing tonight, on specific issues
2 that they've identified as concerns in their community,
3 very pressing issues. So I will not speak to those
4 specifics. I'll let others do so.

5 Again, at the Alliance, we believe that
6 the Southwest Light Rail is an important piece of the
7 buildout of the regional transit system.

8 However, we know that, historically,
9 communities of color and indigenous communities in our
10 region have been left out of important decision-making
11 processes, such as these, that impact our communities.
12 And, the needs and interests of those communities are
13 often the last to be considered and first to be
14 dismissed in these processes. We feel this line will
15 not be a success without these communities being
16 included.

17 We want to encourage you to see this
18 document, obviously, as a tool toward implementing
19 equity in this line, but also see it as a good piece of
20 public policy as well. And that is in order to ensure
21 the Southwest Light Rail works for all who live along
22 the line.

23 I appreciate your time and consideration
24 on this. Thank you.

25 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Thank you very much.

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1 I would be remiss if I didn't
2 acknowledge the presence of Shawn Broom (phonetic) from
3 Congressman Ellison's office.

4 Thank you, Shawn, for being here.

5 Our next witness is Louis King with Mel
6 Reeves on deck.

7 Mr. King, welcome.

8 MR. KING: Commissioner McLaughlin,
9 Commissioner Greene, I bring you greetings from Tony
10 Ross, president of OIC of America, my good friend.

11 To my friends from the Met Council and
12 Hennepin County, I am pleased tonight to come before
13 you and, first of all, encourage you to adopt the
14 equity measures that these very brilliant young people
15 have put together.

16 I think we learned some lessons on the
17 Central Corridor. If you recall, there were some stops
18 that weren't to be included until the people stepped up
19 and said this is what we need. We had to stop the
20 process in order to make that happen. We have the
21 opportunity this time to engage as partners.

22 I'm happy to see my friends from the
23 downtown council and the chamber here tonight as we
24 unite to bring this opportunity to all the people of
25 this region.

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1 Those of you who know me know that my
2 thing is jobs. The best social service program in the
3 world is a job. In Hennepin County, we spend a lot of
4 money on taking care of people. In the future, we
5 won't have that kind of money. I shared with some of
6 you a map from 1935 that refers to North Minneapolis as
7 a slum, the largest in the city, the negro section. 80
8 years later, not much has changed. There's a railroad
9 track on that picture, that map, that divided the slum
10 from the gold coast, which is what we call Kenwood
11 today. Ironically, that same rail can now be used to
12 connect people to the golden triangle and opportunity.

13 So not only do we want to help build
14 that rail, we also want to be partners in connecting
15 the workforce of the future to the jobs. Commissioner
16 Munt talked about job growth in that region. And
17 there's a structural mismatch around opportunity,
18 because those people have been isolated far too long.

19 Finally, it is important to consider the
20 quality of the system throughout. And I am reminded of
21 a particular bus stop that I see in my mind in North
22 Minneapolis that is a simple bench. Whereas my CFO,
23 who lives in Waseca, on the other side of Minnetonka,
24 takes the 19 and the 699, and he talks about the
25 disparate differences between the experience on this

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1 ride and the experience he gets to the other side,
2 where they have the amenities.

3 So as we take this opportunity, it is
4 not just about building. It is also about ensuring
5 quality and access. Too long we've had isolation. And
6 we have the opportunity.

7 Final point, there will be those who
8 don't understand the role of special governmental
9 units, nor do they understand how this process works
10 and that we will disagree along the way. What we
11 commit to is being your partners throughout the process
12 and working all along to ensure that we come to an
13 equitable solution. Friends tell friends tough truths,
14 and you can count on us to be there for you.

15 Thank you and have a good day.

16 MR. MC LAUGHLIN: Thank you, Mr. King.

17 The next witness is Mel Reeves. On deck
18 would be Avi Viswanathan.

19 Mr. Reeves, welcome.

20 MR. REEVES: Good afternoon, folks, good
21 evening. I don't have a lot to say different from, I
22 think, the last two people that came before me. I just
23 want to, I guess, remind folks that we've just -- the
24 Met Council, especially, just successfully completed
25 the CCLRT. We are calling it the Green Line now. I

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1 get confused. The Saint Paul line is what I recall
2 that we call it.

3 It was completed. And we set goals, and
4 the goals were achieved, which tells me that this thing
5 can be done.

6 I'm a little disturbed these days
7 because I live in a city that has the worst disparity
8 in black and white unemployment. That doesn't sit well
9 with me. I see a lot of people and I hear a lot of
10 people talking about equity. I here it is like a new
11 buzz word. And I think, if we're serious about equity,
12 we will use this, what, \$1.6 billion line to actually
13 close the gap on equity.

14 I notice that the two train stations
15 that are near my community, the Penn Station and the
16 Van White Station -- I actually assumed they were a
17 little closer than what they are. They are a little
18 farther from the folks in North Minneapolis than I
19 thought they would be. I am hoping that you definitely
20 will make sure people can get from the concentration of
21 folks in North Minneapolis to those deserted train
22 stations. I'm saying it kind of jokingly. I hope you
23 all figure out a way to make that happen. We keep
24 thinking there's an assumption that light rail from
25 Minneapolis -- that will connect Minneapolis to Eden

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1 Prairie are going to connect folks to jobs. I think
2 I'm safe in that assumption. So if we're talking about
3 that, we should make sure that happens.

4 Also, I want to make that -- I'm sure
5 you all know this already, but I want to reiterate.
6 You know, if we talk about equity, we're talking about
7 jobs. We're talking about jobs and economic
8 opportunity. We want to see that happen. I think, if
9 that doesn't happen, this will be a failure in a lot of
10 respects. So I want to encourage you all to make sure
11 that equity is made real. It is one thing to continue
12 to talk about it. It is one thing to have meetings
13 about it, forms, or what have you. It is another thing
14 to put your money where your mouth is. Or as the new
15 saying is, I think this light rail should show us the
16 money, so to speak. See our part. When I say "our
17 part," I'm speaking on behalf of folks in North
18 Minneapolis and people in poor communities who don't
19 always get their share. I'm hoping you all make sure
20 folks get their share. Of course, as you, you know me,
21 and I'll be right there insisting we get our share.
22 Thank you.

23 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Thank you very much.

24 The next witness is Avi Viswanathan, and
25 Frank Rhame is next.

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1 Welcome.

2 MR. VISWANATHAN: Thank you. My name is
3 Avi Viswanathan. Mr. McLaughlin, you pronounced it
4 perfectly. I greatly appreciate that.

5 I am the campaign director for Hire
6 Minnesota. Hire Minnesota is a campaign, excuse me,
7 that works to ensure that public investments and job
8 creation work to achieve racial equity and employment.

9 So this is really pretty simple. When
10 talking about equity in the Southwest Light Rail, for
11 us, it is about jobs, jobs. Mel touched on this a
12 little bit. This is nothing new. We've seen Central
13 Corridor Light Rail construction, for instance, be
14 incredibly successful. We're seeing construction
15 across the region, hiring people of color at incredible
16 numbers, things that we haven't seen before. This is
17 an opportunity to build off of that and keep moving
18 forward.

In terms of construction jobs, we would like to see -- and I want to point out that we are part of the group that put together the equity document. The section on employment equity was our key contribution. Looking at the percentage of people of color employed on this construction project is going to be a huge part of it. Ensuring that that 32 percent

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1 goal is not just met, that it is exceeded, that it goes
2 up to what the percentage of people of color in the
3 city of Minneapolis is. So if we are going to talk
4 about equity and we are going to talk about
5 Minneapolis, we need to reach for that. We need to
6 ensure there's opportunity for people to be recruited
7 and trained to be able to work on that project. We are
8 seeing a precedent for that right now with the
9 construction of the football stadium, where there is an
10 employment assistance firm that is open, active,
11 recruiting hundreds of people right now who are looking
12 for employment on construction.

13 I wanted to thank Commissioner Higgins
14 for being part of the legislature at the time and being
15 a key champion for getting that in on the senate.

16 Beyond that, we're also looking at jobs with
17 anchor institutions along the line, taking people from
18 where they are and bringing them to those job centers.
19 We need to ensure those companies are engaged and are
20 part of the process and that we are creating
21 opportunities for people to be trained into those
22 professions as well. This train is going to be
23 incredibly important in moving people into places where
24 there will be work, and that is going to be part of
25 what we need to do. In that respect, it is an equity

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1 train.

2 You know, one of the things that has
3 been frustrating for us throughout this process, as we
4 talk to communities of color and we work with people in
5 developing equity principles and we see what people
6 want, are people saying no to the line and acting like
7 they know what people want, saying this is what people
8 are saying, even though they are not talking to them.
9 They are not listening to them. This is a coalition of
10 people who have come together, who are representing
11 these communities. We are proud to be part of that.
12 We are not sitting here saying that we know everything.
13 That's why we've been asking people what do they think
14 and what do they want. That's what this document
15 represents.

16 We've brought together -- in a lot of
17 respects, what we have here are facts. My old boss
18 Senator Franken once got chastised for saying on the
19 floor of the senate, "We are entitled to our own
20 opinions, not our own facts." These are the facts.
21 You can't challenge what we are talking about. You
22 can't challenge the success that we've seen on other
23 lines. You cannot challenge that, because it is true.
24 You can have your own opinions, but those are the
25 realities. There is equity here, and we are showing

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1 you what that looks like.

2 You know, jobs, when we talk about jobs
3 and we talk about careers, ultimately, what we're
4 talking about is building wealth in communities,
5 bringing people together, lifting up those living in
6 poverty. So it is time to stop listening to just the
7 wealthy elite and start building wealth in those
8 communities.

9 Thank you.

10 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Thank you very much.
11 Frank Rhame is next, and then Harry Savage.

12 MR. RHAME: I'm here taking some of your
13 time. I appreciate it very much, because I have a
14 passionate view. I hope it is not too late that this
15 view could prevail, that we are about to make a
16 gigantic blunder in this light rail.

17 You see before you, the routes 3(c),
18 which was rejected and 3(a), which was accepted in
19 2010. Four things have changed since this decision was
20 made, which, I think, force reconsideration.

21 The first is the enormous increase in
22 residential construction, in residential development in
23 downtown Minneapolis and in Uptown Minneapolis. Much
24 of that is along the Green rail.

25 The second thing that's changed is that

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1 the original financial projections were made
2 unfavorably for the Nicollet Island because a tunnel
3 was needed. Now we need a tunnel in Kenilworth.

4 The third thing that has changed is the
5 Vikings Stadium and Ryan Company downtown east
6 development, which will shift downtown towards the
7 east. And this 3(c) routing would have people wind up
8 five skyway protected blocks from the edge of that
9 reconstruction.

10 The last thing that's changed is there's
11 now going to be a major development at the Kmart site.
12 You'll see at the 28th Street Station on 3(c) is
13 exactly where the Kmart redevelopment is going to be.

14 I think it was always a bad idea to not
15 have the south Minneapolis routing. And I think,
16 first, that was the case because of the issue of urban
17 density. Happily, Metropolitan Council has always
18 favored urban density. Well, Kenilworth is a route
19 designed to get suburbanites in in the morning and out
20 in the evening. It is not a contribution to an urban
21 transportation system, which is absolutely essential
22 for urban density.

23 The second reason why it was always a
24 good idea is development potential, which wasn't really
25 considered in that. There is no development potential

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1 in Kenilworth. It is too pastoral. Even if there
2 were, the wealthy and powerful people along that would
3 prevent any development for decades. Nicollet Island
4 and Westlake Street cry out for development, and it is
5 a great place to have development.

12 Well, I thank you for your indulgence.
13 I know this is not too likely to come to pass, but I
14 hope that reconsideration can be made.

15 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Thank you for being
16 here tonight. Good to see you again.

17 Next up would be Harry Savage, followed
18 by Alex -- Tsatsoulis is it? I can't quite read the
19 end of it. T-s-a-t-s-o-u- something -s. I can't read
20 it.

21 Mr. Savage, welcome.

22 MR. SAVAGE: Thank you, Mr. McLaughlin,
23 sir. My name is Harry Savage. I live in Uptown
24 Minneapolis.

25 Sir, I remember when you were running

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1 for mayor a while back, and you said about how you got
2 us the light rail. I, in my foolishness, said wasn't
3 that Jesse? Everybody laughed. But I realize now all
4 your hard work, all of what you have done.

5 What we need to do on this line, I don't
6 know all the particulars of it, but I do know that, if
7 this line fails, it is a great tragedy to this Metro
8 area that needs that line to go through. What we're
9 hearing now from a lot of rich, white people that show
10 up here and argue about this little nuance, that little
11 nuance, oh, it is going to get too close to the bike
12 trail, oh, it doesn't go far enough out there in Eden
13 Prairie is really nothing more than classism, classism
14 and ethnic bigotry that could be in the back of minds.
15 Although they don't see themselves as possibly being
16 with structural racism there, it can be seen to be
17 there, because you are opposing this line that so many
18 people are going to need and use.

19 Even in the current form, north
20 Minneapolis people will still be able to get there. A
21 five line right there. Take the five. It will drop
22 you right off there by Target Field. Wow. You are
23 right out to, you know, Eden Prairie. This project
24 makes sense. This project is what we need.

25 I encourage, you know, our governor, if

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1 he listens to this, to do an executive order and
2 override municipal consent, because the petty bourgeois
3 rich people could kill this through these, you know,
4 tiresome back channels. We need it now.

5 I'd call on the president of the United
6 States to ram this thing through. We can't wait. We
7 can't wait for petty disputes in Kenwood to get
8 resolved. People need this now.

9 I want us to be a great -- I want us to
10 start looking more like Europe. I want the high-speed
11 rail. I want the trains. I want everything. Say no
12 to petty right-wing Republican extremism that all they
13 do is say no, no, no. It is time we say yes, yes to
14 development, yes to transit, yes now.

15 This project is amazing. It is going to
16 be awesome. It is going to be transformational. And I
17 love you Peter McLaughlin. Give us this line. Give us
18 this line now. I worship you, and I will do everything
19 if you give us this line now. Thank you.

20 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Thank you. Thank you,
21 Mr. Savage. Did somebody get that on tape, I hope.

22 Let me try it again. Alex Tsatsoulis.
23 Next is Shawn Lewis.

24 It is a hard act to follow.

25 MR. TSATSOULIS: Well, I'll try. Thank

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1 you for having me. My name is Alex Tsatsoulis. I'm
2 here in my role as volunteer chair of the Sierra Club,
3 North Star Chapter, land use and transportation
4 committee. We are also proud partners that contributed
5 to the Southwest LRT document.

6 I'm here to say that we need to build
7 the Southwest Light Rail, Southwest LRT. We need to
8 build into it concrete equity commitments. This is
9 more than just about one train. This is more than just
10 about one line. This is an investment in the system.
11 It is a system -- it is a critical investment in a
12 system. It is also an investment in our region's
13 shared vision for a connected, efficient transitway
14 system.

15 If we don't build this, we are not
16 meeting our commitment to a city that works and
17 connects people to jobs they need. The Southwest Light
18 Rail project will not be successful without real
19 commitments to the equitable outcomes to all
20 communities along and connecting to the corridor,
21 including low-wealth communities and communities of
22 color.

23 And it goes beyond, as I stated, just
24 this one light rail line. It is about how we grow our
25 city and our region to benefit all our residents. It

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1 is about the future we want to create for Minneapolis
2 and for our region. What that means is mindful land
3 use planning around stations. That means maximizing
4 the development potential of all communities along the
5 line. We don't want to see a big sea of park-and-rides
6 at every station. We want to see smart growth that
7 reflects the communities along it.

8 To sum up, build this line, and build it
9 in a way that is equitable, smart, and benefits all of
10 us. Thank you.

11 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Thank you very much.

12 Next is Shawn Lewis, followed by Reverend
13 Jerry MacAfee.

14 I'm on number 12.

15 MR. LEWIS: Hello. My name is Shawn
16 Lewis from the Minneapolis Urban League.

17 And, you know, when I think about these
18 public hearings, I think about my days at the
19 university when we put up a sign and talked about
20 democracy. It comes from the Greek word "demo" meaning
21 people and "kratos" meaning rule. So I'm always
22 excited to see these kinds of public hearings because
23 it gives the public a chance to get up and speak
24 directly to their elected officials with passion and
25 verve.

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1 I work in the work for solutions
2 department at the Urban League. Our present CEO, Scott
3 Gray is not able to make it tonight. He is out of
4 town. But he does want to say that he does wish he
5 could be here.

6 And we are excited about this
7 opportunity to put people to work. Every day, people
8 from the Minneapolis Urban League come, and they come
9 for various reasons. They are looking for
10 opportunities for employment. They're looking for
11 opportunities for wealth accumulation. They are
12 looking for opportunities that deal with education as
13 well as health.

14 So one of the things that has taken
15 place is the Alliance for Metropolitan Stability has
16 put together a number of groups to work on this issue.
17 And we're dealing, obviously, with the intersection of
18 transit and equity.

19 When I think of the term "equity," some
20 people may confuse it with equality, if you give
21 everyone the same thing, that they'll be okay. Equity
22 is more than that. Stop and think about everyone has
23 two arms, two legs. Think about your feet. And when
24 you think about equity, think about shoes. And what
25 you want to do is -- when you think of the concept of

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1 equity, you want to have the right length and the right
2 width and the right fit. If you don't have that, it is
3 not comfortable. So some of our solutions that evolve
4 around dealing with racial disparity and unemployment,
5 they have to have the right fit. You can deal with the
6 issues that a rising tide lifts all boats, but that is
7 not taking place.

8 And one of the things that we are
9 excited about this light rail opportunity is to put
10 people to work. We run, you know, the Big Step
11 program, which takes people up to Lino Lakes, and they
12 get training to be union laborers. And we've had one
13 graduate that was very successful, not only becoming a
14 union laborer -- but you go back up there in the off
15 season to get more training -- now she's a welder. We
16 are looking to expand that.

17 We also have the LEAP program, that
18 deals with labor, education, apprenticeship program.
19 So we have a deep and rich history in terms of working
20 in the building trades.

21 And the Urban League has been in
22 existence for eighty-eight years, so it is nice to know
23 that people are getting more passionate. They are
24 getting more strategic around the issue of equity. We
25 have been around a long time. We're glad to see people

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1 at the table. Not only do we want to see jobs for
2 people, but opportunities for minority contractors to
3 get some of those contracts when it comes to some of
4 these large projects. I know one of the strategies is
5 to unbundle some of these contracts so they can be more
6 manageable for employers of color.

7 So we want to see things progress. We
8 want to see training now. We want to see investments
9 in non-profits like ours to make a difference so people
10 can get to work.

11 And thank you for allowing us time to
12 speak.

13 MR. MC LAUGHLIN: Thank you very much,
14 Mr. Lewis.

15 Next is Reverend Jerry MacAfee, with Al
16 Flowers on deck.

17 Reverend, welcome.

18 REVEREND MACAFEE: Welcome. I greet you
19 with the Master's name, the Lord and Saviour Jesus
20 Christ. And for my brothers on the block, what's up.

21 I've heard two speakers in particular
22 utilize the term "opportunity." It is rare in history
23 where opportunity and desire can be on parallel paths.
24 You are not in the offices you are in because you lack
25 desire. When you wanted to be a commissioner, be it in

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1 Hennepin County or Metropolitan Council, it is because
2 you wanted and desired change.

3 I don't need to give you the gory
4 details of what happens on the streets of north and
5 south Minneapolis every day. The one gentleman spoke
6 of the noise of the rails. If you listen to those in
7 north and south Minneapolis, they talk about the noise
8 of the gun. He talked about the soil. If you talk to
9 those in north and south Minneapolis, much of the soil
10 is with blood. Poverty is at an alarming rate.
11 Education, chemical abuse, health disparities, housing,
12 all of that happens on a daily basis.

13 And now you have the opportunity to
14 match it with your desire, to put 1.6 or \$1.8 billion
15 around and through these communities. You have the
16 opportunity to move people from poverty to progress.
17 Because whenever you talk about solving crime, I'll
18 guarantee you, if you solve poverty, you will solve
19 crime. And unless we have another project that is
20 coming within the next couple of months that would be
21 this same amount, I don't know how you cannot vote for
22 this. We need it, as I speak on behalf of the
23 Minneapolis NAACP, as well as New Salem Baptist Church,
24 we need the change.

25 Lastly, nothing happens in life without

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1 agitation, irritation, and interruption. Your clothes
2 are a result of something that was agitated and
3 irritated. Your hair, when you had it, was a result of
4 agitation and irritation. But if you stay on the
5 process long enough, you can see the change. So we are
6 asking for your support to make this happen because we
7 need it. Thank you.

8 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Thank you very much,
9 Reverend MacAfee.

10 Al Flowers is next, and then Saga.

11 MS. STEVIN: Saga.

12 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: What's your last name?

13 MS. STEVIN: Stevin.

14 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Stevin. Okay. I
15 couldn't read it. I'm having more trouble reading the
16 writing then pronouncing it. So Saga Stevin is next.

17 Mr. Flowers, welcome.

18 MR. FLOWERS: Good evening,
19 commissioners and board members of Met Council. The
20 guy got up -- Savage got up, and Harry got up and did
21 so good. He said he wanted to come through, so I don't
22 know what else anybody else can say. I know he said he
23 voted for me when I ran for mayor in 2009. I like that
24 about him.

25 But I've come to say that this

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1 conversation about equity is going. And as an African
2 American, I am doing a project community standard
3 initiative about responsible communication, respect,
4 and responsibility. It is responsible. We know jobs
5 are going to come with this light rail. I believe it
6 is coming.

7 I'm more interested in we got a
8 population of young African American students in
9 Minneapolis and in the State that is not graduating
10 high school. So it doesn't matter. If they don't
11 graduate high school, if they don't get an education,
12 they're not going to get these jobs everybody is
13 getting up talking about. So that has to be a top
14 focus.

15 Also, about economic opportunity, about
16 building a business of color. If whatever resources
17 come down that you put out, besides doing the light
18 rail, they need to be focused on those issues, because
19 African Americans are last in housing, last in
20 education. We're last in everything that's going on in
21 this great state of Minnesota. So I hear everyone
22 talking, and I just don't want our community to be used
23 at this time. I want this to be real. I want it to be
24 real. I want to see something that's coming back to
25 our community. I'm not representing any group right

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1 now. I'm talking about what's happened over and over
2 in our community when these things come down. And I
3 don't want the light rail to pick our people up in the
4 community and drive them out to the suburbs and they
5 don't get a job and they are just stuck out in the
6 suburbs, which is a bad deal. So, I mean, keep all
7 this in mind when you are making these decisions.

8 I will stay with it and stay focused.

9 I'm interested in us building ourselves up
10 economically. We need economic. And this might could
11 do it. I'm not putting all my stake in this. I am
12 putting my stake in getting us educated and keep
13 fighting for economic growth by our community. It is
14 bad.

15 So I sit here and look at the
16 commissioner, the Met Council. And I watch as -- I
17 think Louis King talked about somebody, when you ride
18 out in the suburbs, you got great service out there,
19 but when you come in our community, they talk about how
20 bad it is, where all the crime is. But them are the
21 ones riding the Met Council bus. The community is
22 keeping the Met Council alive, so the Met Council needs
23 to make sure that our community is served well in this
24 initiative here of building this Southwest Light Rail.

25 I don't know about it. I don't know if

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1 this is going to be successful for our community. I
2 want to know. So we got a short time here, 45 days.
3 You are talking about something got to happen in 45
4 days. What we are going to have in writing by our
5 community, in writing saying -- you can't start talking
6 about a community benefit today. You must know what
7 you are going to do with resources that come to our
8 community. And that's what I would say to my Met
9 Council friends, Mr. Cunningham, Mr. Duininck. That's
10 what I would say to my friend Commissioner McLaughlin,
11 Commissioner Higgins. That's what I would say to you.

12 We need to know, so we can tell it. I
13 do radio in our community on KMOJ. I do public access
14 TV to talk to our community. So I want to know from
15 you, because you are the ones going to make the final
16 decision. I hope you don't wait for the 45 days before
17 you tell us and then run the train through us and we
18 don't get anything. We are going to get jobs. If the
19 light rail comes through, we are going to get jobs. It
20 is more important to focus on education and making sure
21 we get economic stability with business in our
22 communities. That's what I would fight for. I hope
23 that's what you fight for. Thank you

24 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Thank you very much,
25 Mr. Flowers.

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3 Welcome.

4 MS. STEVIN: Thank you. I'm a former
5 Rotary member, and whatever I do -- and small business
6 owner. And whatever I do, I try to remember the
7 four-way test, which the first question is is it the
8 truth? The second question is is it fair to all
9 concerned? Then, will it build goodwill and better
10 relationships? And will it be beneficial to all
11 concerned?

I've heard a lot at this meeting here.
12
13 One of the things that I've noticed is that people that
14 are for this are in some way related to the Met Council
15 benefiting whatever. I was at a meeting in Eden
16 Prairie where somebody got up and spoke about his
17 community. I later found out that the Met Council
18 actually gave him a grant to help support it.

19 Cornerstone group, New American Academy, to name a few.
20 I just wonder. Full disclosure, I am
21 not getting paid by anybody. This is because I care
22 about my home. This is my home now. I wonder how many
23 speakers could get up here and say nobody is paying me.
24 I am not benefiting. I do not work for Met Council or
25 anything having to do with them. I will not benefit

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1 financially in any way, shape, or form if it goes
2 through. I wish there would be full disclosure before
3 anybody spoke.

4 I'm tired of being bullied by the
5 government. I'm tired of getting a lot of debt built
6 up on my shoulders. This is my money. Those of you
7 that are elected are here to represent me.

8 When things start getting out of control
9 and out of hand, we stop. In my house, we ask
10 ourselves what's the hurry? Where does the buck stop
11 here? From what I've heard, there's been a lot of
12 changes for this thing, and there's not even a full,
13 definite plan. So how do you know that the budget
14 stops at -- I don't know -- let's say 2 billion? That
15 would be with a b. Anybody here ever count from one to
16 a hundred? It's easy. Anybody here ever in their life
17 count from one to a billion? It is going to take a
18 while.

19 Evolving design sounds, to me, like you
20 are not ready. Again, what's the hurry? There's been
21 a lot of changes, a lot of recent changes. I don't
22 know. In my house, when we are doing remodel projects,
23 measure twice, cut once. If you don't have a set plan,
24 don't start, because it will cost more. Again what is
25 your hurry?

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1 It seems like the full impact of this
2 has not been done, the research. We do know that
3 Southwest Transit is working, and it is successful. We
4 do not know the full impact of SWLRT. We don't know
5 the unintended impact on environment. It is going
6 through Purgatory Park in Eden Prairie.

7 We don't know the unintended impact on
8 the residents. There are a lot of people who have
9 already been told, if this happens, your home value is
10 going to tank.

11 The traffic flow, we don't know the full
12 value of, the full unintended impact.

13 The pedestrian safety, I believe three
14 people have already died in the test rail. Those are
15 three lives.

16 The overall quality of life, in
17 particular, in Eden Prairie and along other parts of
18 this rail, they matter. What is your hurry?

19 In striving to do more with less,
20 wouldn't it be more prudent to expand Southwest
21 Transit?

22 The promotes job thing, seriously, if
23 somebody is going to hire people, they're going to sit
24 and wait? Oh, we can't hire until we get the Southwest
25 Light Rail. I don't think so.

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1 As far as promoting jobs, okay, you need
2 people to build it. But then what? I don't think it
3 is going to create jobs. I don't think that somebody
4 is going to say, well, nope, they're not having light
5 rail, so we're not going to have jobs, or light rail is
6 here, so we are being to hire a bunch of people.

7 That's not really how the world works. At least, being
8 a small business owner, I haven't experienced that.

9 A few facts I do know -- and if you want
10 citations on where they are at, I have those. Southwest
11 Light Rail will cross three of the five most dangerous
12 intersections in Eden Prairie. "Car and Driver"
13 Magazine said that light rail transit is the second
14 deadliest form of transportation behind motorcycles.
15 Again, we've had three deaths, and it is not even open
16 yet.

17 You need a strong density to
18 support this. There's 5600 people per square mile.
19 The light rail needs 14,720 to succeed.

20 Light rail does not reduce air pollution
21 or traffic. In all major cities with light rail, only
22 3.5 percent or less of motorized traffic is carried on
23 light rail.

24 It will increase commuting time of
25 people who currently take Southwest Transit buses or
drive their own vehicles.

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1 Nationally, 70 percent of all light rail
2 transit operating costs are footed by taxpayers.

3 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Ms. Stevin, can you
4 wrap up.

5 MS. STEVIN: I will. Who here wants
6 more debt, \$2 billion? Not worth it. Do your
7 homework. Get everything done. Then come back when
8 you've got a solid plan.

9 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Thank you, Ms. Sevin.

10 Andrew Hestness is next, and then Karen
11 Rosar.

12 Welcome.

13 MR. HESTNESS: Thank you for the
14 opportunity to speak today. I'm Andrew Hestness. I'm
15 the vice president of the Native America Community
16 Development Institute in south Minneapolis, also the
17 co-chair of the Franklin Area Business Association.

18 I'm here today to stand with our
19 partners who have been speaking already on the equity
20 commitments. We are a co-signer on that agreement. We
21 do support this line. We believe it will bring equity
22 to our region with those strong commitments from our
23 government partners in making sure the access and
24 connectivity and jobs components are included.

25 I am here to speak specifically, though,

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1 about an issue related to the alignment through the
2 Kenilworth Corridor. So our organizations represents
3 interests on Franklin Avenue. The American Indian
4 community is strongly concentrated in the Phillips
5 neighborhood in south Minneapolis, and quite a bit of
6 that is around Franklin Avenue.

7 We've done a substantial amount of work
8 to create better access and equity for American Indian
9 folks, as well as all people in the Phillips community,
10 to have access to jobs, access to opportunity, to
11 training. And we were very excited about the Southwest
12 line and its opportunity to connect Franklin Avenue to
13 all those job opportunities and all the things that we
14 have heard that would be accessible through this new
15 transit line.

16 The challenge is the 21st Street Station
17 has been proposed to be eliminated in the plan that you
18 have before you. That has been included in the plan
19 previously. And because of the addition of the
20 tunnels, the shallow tunnels in Kenilworth, that
21 station is eliminated. That is the most viable station
22 to connect bus service from Franklin Avenue to this
23 train line. We believe, by eliminating that station,
24 you are going to make it harder for people in our
25 community to access the train, access the pieces of

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1 opportunity, and really undermine some of the goals we
2 are all hoping to achieve with this line.

3 We really urge you to look at the
4 alternatives. There are ways, even within the shallow
5 tunnel framework, either eliminating the northern
6 tunnel or the deeper shallow tunnel. Both of those
7 maintain the 21st Street Station. We believe this is
8 one of the best ways to keep that access, to build a
9 regional transit system that includes access to both
10 north and south Minneapolis and will benefit the
11 largest number of people.

12 So with that, I thank you for your time.

13 MR. MC LAUGHLIN: Thank you very much.

14 Karen Rosar, and then Eleonore Wesserle.
15 Welcome.

16 MS. ROSAR: Thank you. Greetings to
17 Chairman McLaughlin, commissioners, councilmembers. My
18 name is Karen Lee Rosar. I live at 111 4th Avenue
19 North in Minneapolis. I am here today representing
20 2020 Partners. I am also a board member for the North
21 Loop Neighborhood Association.

22 I have been a board member for close to
23 nine years now as a volunteer elected, getting paid not
24 one cent for all that time. I have got no moneyed
25 interest involved here. I am here to advocate today

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1 for the Southwest Light Rail Transit. I've heard so
2 many good speakers, my neighbors on the north side
3 neighborhoods, right next to ours in the North Loop
4 neighborhood coming out to support this project, the
5 North Loop Neighborhood supports this project and 2020
6 Partners.

7 Let me tell you a little bit about it,
8 because I'm speaking on behalf of 2020 Partners
9 tonight. 2020 Partners is an advocacy group for
10 stakeholders located in neighborhoods surrounding
11 Target Field and comprises of businesses, government,
12 and neighborhood residents united to encourage economic
13 development on the west side of downtown Minneapolis.

14 I'm not going to read the whole
15 resolution here to you today. You also have a
16 presentation that has been passed out with the
17 resolution.

18 But getting to some of the points, the
19 proposed Southwest Light Rail Transit embodies the
20 principles which unite the 2020 Partners, which will be
21 essential and contribute exponentially to the robust
22 growth of our entire region. We are not just talking
23 about one little neighborhood here. We're talking all
24 the way from Saint Paul to Eden Prairie and from the
25 airport to Minneapolis, and then someday, hopefully,

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1 all the way up to Brooklyn Park and Maple Grove.

2 That's an entire metropolitan region.

3 Denial of this municipal consent by
4 impacted communities threatens to derail this important
5 project and derail transit for our entire region. I
6 would like to say, then, that the membership of 2020
7 Partners urges the five jurisdictions and the Met
8 Council to recognize the positive significance of this
9 transit line to our community and the metropolitan
10 region as a whole and expedite both public input and
11 municipal consent and, ultimately, affirm this project.

12 One last note, we got a presentation a
13 couple days ago from Mike Christenson. He is the
14 associate vice president for workforce development at
15 MCTC. It was a fantastic presentation. It was
16 technical, and it was all quantifiable. I urge you to
17 access that presentation. It was talking about the
18 corridor down to Eden Prairie. And they have real time
19 data on a daily basis of what job openings are
20 available daily. It is just -- it kind of blew us away
21 when we saw this presentation. It is an incredible
22 amount of jobs that are open today and that will be
23 open tomorrow and in the future.

24 With that, I would like to thank you all
25 and move on.

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1 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Thank you very much.

² Eleonore Wesserle, and then Patty Schmitz.

3 Welcome.

4 MS. WESSERLE: Thank you very much for
5 the opportunity to speak. My name is Eleonore
6 Wesserle. I am a resident of the Stevens Square
7 neighborhood in Minneapolis. And I come to you as a
8 twin citizen who cares deeply about our region.

I, actually, grew up working poor in the city of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. About 15 years ago, I moved up to the Twin Cities to attend the University of Minnesota on scholarship. My whole life, because of my financial situation, I've struggled with a disconnected transit system. I am really grateful for our existing transit system. It is, literally, what has allowed me to move between educational opportunities, career opportunities, and volunteer opportunities, like testifying on issues that I believe in.

19 It is also how I was able to develop a
20 pretty deep relationship with lots of folks across the
21 Twin Cities region, which I am grateful for as well.

22 I am definitely here to tell you our
23 existing transit system is not enough. There is,
24 literally, not a day in my life that I have not wished
25 for a more connected, more efficient, more fair and

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1 just transit system. And the Southwest LRT is
2 absolutely a part of that.

3 These days, I've also added cycling to
4 my transportation mix, and I use the Cedar Lake Trail
5 about once a week, so I come to you as a cyclist as
6 well.

7 I strongly support the Southwest LRT for
8 its inarguable environmental benefits, particularly in
9 terms of reducing greenhouse gasses, for transportation
10 benefits, and also for its equity benefits.

11 I am absolutely incensed that
12 comfortable, deep-pocketed interests along the line
13 are -- have hijacked and, hopefully, not literally
14 derailed the conversation about this project. Their
15 agenda is selfish. It is shortsighted. It is myopic.
16 And it is totally reactionary. What I find
17 particularly hypocritical and disgusting is that these
18 wealthy interests feel entitled to comment on the
19 equity benefits and economic development opportunities
20 that they will not actually need at all. I urge you to
21 reject those comments out of hand.

22 You know, I trust -- there are several
23 people that I trust to speak to the needs of the
24 low-wealth communities and communities of color in
25 Minneapolis. Those are low-wealth communities and

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1 communities of color in Minneapolis. I trust the folks
2 of North Minneapolis when they talk about how this line
3 will benefit them, and I stand with them.

4 I support a very connected Twin Cities
5 metropolitan region with a functional Southwest LRT,
6 one is that is done in a way that connects
7 historically-isolated neighborhoods, one that is done
8 in a way that can foster investment into a connected
9 transitway system for the entire region, and one that
10 has real commitment to equity and economic
11 opportunities for communities of color and low-wealth
12 communities. And I urge you to support it as well.
13 Thank you very much.

14 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Thank you very much.

15 Next is Patty Schmitz, and then Ron
16 Williams.

17 I'd like to welcome Chair Susan Haig
18 from the Metropolitan Council.

19 If you would like to make any quick
20 remarks, please do so.

21 If you could just wait, Ms. Schmitz.

22 MS. HAIG: I appreciate people coming
23 tonight and providing their testimony to us, so thank
24 you for doing that. Appreciate it.

25 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Thank you.

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1 MS. SCHMITZ: Thank you. My name is
2 Patty Schmitz. I live in the south neighborhood of
3 Minneapolis, just a few blocks away from the Kenilworth
4 Corridor, not close enough to be directly impacted, but
5 close enough to be very familiar with the area.

6 When I first learned about the Southwest
7 LRT, I was excited at the prospect of having an LRT
8 station near enough to walk to. Previously, I have
9 lived very near to the Franklin-Hiawatha Station but
10 moved just prior to its completion.

11 Two years later, frankly, I am
12 disgusted. I have watched the flawed process used by
13 planners of the line, where important decisions, such
14 as alignments, are made with little citizen engagement,
15 where key considerations to an alignment are ignored
16 and dismissed, and worst of all, when citizens do
17 engage, they are criticized by elected leaders, the Met
18 Council, other citizens, and sometimes by the media.

19 This alignment in Minneapolis bypasses
20 urban density. That's not news. But also, it was
21 agreed to by Minneapolis under false pretenses, namely
22 the relocation of freight. What's incredibly
23 disheartening were those false pretenses were a known
24 fact for years by the planners of this line, and that
25 includes many of you. The parties to this planning

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1 failure include Hennepin County, HEPRA, and the Met
2 Council.

3 While those parties should be called to
4 accountability, it is Minneapolis citizens and elected
5 officials who are widely blamed and accused of being
6 NIMBYs and obstructionists, as the last speaker alluded
7 to.

8 Public integrity demands an
9 investigation to find out how this easily foreseen
10 failure occurred, who's responsible, and who'll be held
11 accountable. The delays in this project, which are
12 regularly blamed on the influential NIMBYs, according
13 to the Star-Tribune, are a direct result of the flawed
14 and negligent planning of the line.

15 To those who are here to speak on behalf
16 of equity commitments for SWLRT, those improvements are
17 needed and long, long overdue.

18 It is my hope that the next time a
19 transit project like this comes along, those needs will
20 not be an afterthought, and there will be an alignment
21 that actually goes directly through a neighborhood that
22 is currently underserved.

23 And I caution you, like Al Flowers
24 stated, that firm commitments should be reviewed by
25 attorneys and in writing. The planners of this line

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1 were not able to follow through on the most basic of
2 conditions known at the start of the planning. Please
3 do not be fooled like the City of Minneapolis was.
4 Thank you.

5 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Thank you.

6 Next is Ron Williams, followed by Jami
7 LaPray.

8 Welcome.

9 MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you, Commissioner
10 McLaughlin and other commissioners and Metropolitan
11 Council members. I'm Ron Williams, from Robbinsdale.
12 I am a Vietnam veteran, a retired banker. And I have
13 been a bus commuter to jobs in Saint Paul and
14 Minneapolis for 30 years, so I understand the
15 connection between transportation and jobs.

22 And some remarks from people who
23 preceded me here said, well, you should have density in
24 Minneapolis. Well, fine. I encourage that, too.
25 Infilling is great. But the fact of the matter is

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1 we're in a metropolitan area, not just downtown
2 Minneapolis. We have jobs elsewhere, not just in
3 downtown Minneapolis, but all over the Twin Cities.

4 And Southwest Light Rail, one of the
5 things it does is facilitate people getting to jobs in
6 Eden Prairie, for example. It doesn't manufacture
7 those jobs, but it allows people to -- from North
8 Minneapolis or south Minneapolis to get to those jobs
9 and apply for them because they have transportation.
10 They can actually get to the jobs. So I think it is a
11 really important system, and it is a critical equity
12 matter that these communities who have trouble getting
13 jobs -- because 40 years -- it took 40 years to take
14 away jobs from these areas. It would be nice if
15 somebody would have a program to put jobs back in those
16 areas. In the meantime, the least we can do is
17 facilitate transportation so people can get to the jobs
18 where they are.

19 And there's another thing. A lot of
20 times, the policy people seem to just juxtapose people
21 driving cars or trucks against people who are using
22 public transportation. Well, it doesn't make any
23 sense, because the people who drive cars, if they're
24 going to get where they need to go efficiently, we are
25 going to have a system where there's no gridlock.

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1 Well, if you don't have the kind of light rail system
2 where we started and are continuing, then in the
3 future, there is going to be gridlock. It will be
4 gridlock not only for people in cars but for people in
5 trucks delivering services all over the Twin Cities.

6 So this is really important. The
7 Southwest Light Rail is important, not just for people
8 who use it, but for people in cars who want to get to
9 where they want to go on time.

10 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Mr. Williams, your time
11 is up. If you could wrap up, that would be great.

12 MR. WILLIAMS: There's only one more
13 thing I would say. It is an opportunity for
14 development along the lines, development that can't
15 occur otherwise.

16 Thank you very much.

17 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Thank you,
18 Mr. Williams.

19 Jami LaPray, followed by Joe LaPray.
20 Welcome.

21 MS. LAPRAY: Hi. Thank you for allowing
22 me to speak tonight. I'm Jami LaPray, resident of
23 Saint Louis Park and co-chair of the Group Safety in
24 the Park.

25 Shortly, after the locally-preferred

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1 alternative was chosen for the Southwest LRT project,
2 Hennepin County commissioned several studies. These
3 studies had to do with what to do with the freight in
4 Kenilworth. These studies overlooked legal realities,
5 economic and engineering realities that have,
6 ultimately, cost millions and have caused many of us to
7 lose faith in the system.

8 I am concerned that, because of these
9 poor studies, which I have been commenting on since the
10 early -- since the mid-1990's and into the early
11 2000's, these poor studies and the fact that there were
12 undocumented promises, the re-route in Saint Louis Park
13 is still officially part of this project.

14 As long as the re-route remains part of
15 the project, there will be those, especially people in
16 Minneapolis, who will push to remove the freight from
17 Kenilworth to Saint Louis Park. So I'm here to ask two
18 things tonight. First of all, I believe that this is
19 an important project and it needs to move forward. And
20 I hope that consent will be given by all
21 municipalities.

22 Second, as we move forward with the
23 SDEIS and the final Draft Environmental Project, I
24 would like to see the documentation about the freight
25 re-route in Saint Louis Park to show, not only that it

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1 does not make safety, economic, or engineering sense to
2 this project, but that it does not make safety,
3 economic, or engineering sense to any project. And it
4 should never, ever be brought forward again. Thank
5 you.

6 MR. MC LAUGHLIN: Thank you.

7 Joe LaPray, followed by Georgianna
8 Ludche.

9 Mr. LaPray, welcome.

10 MR. LAPRAY: Thank you, sir. My name is
11 Joseph LaPray. I live at 3256 Blackstone Avenue, Saint
12 Louis Park. And I would like to thank you
13 commissioners and councilmembers for this opportunity.

14 The history of the SWLRT's planning is
15 characterized by inexplicable choices. Safety in the
16 Park, an organization of which I am affiliated, has
17 always supported SWLRT. And we pointed out four years
18 ago that, for engineering reasons, the plan advocated
19 by the County for SWLRT was unworkable. We were
20 ignored.

21 In 2011, the plan for the SWLRT freight
22 rail re-route presented in the environmental assessment
23 worksheet was rejected by the Twin Cities & Western
24 Railroad, which had veto power over the re-route plan.
25 They were ignored.

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1 And the DEIS, which came out later
2 was -- contained the same unworkable plan.

3 After years of attending innumerable
4 meetings and sitting through long-winded and
5 patronizing presentations and filling out comment cards
6 and lobbying for appointments with political leaders,
7 our specific engineering concerns were answered by
8 Governor Dayton's office with a form letter extolling
9 the virtues of mass transit.

10 In 2013, the Metropolitan Council's
11 engineers charged with building the system were forced
12 to acknowledge engineering costs and legal realities,
13 and they recommended an end to the study of re-routes,
14 which spurred Governor Dayton to bring the project to a
15 halt because, according to him, the public had not been
16 heard.

17 And there needed to be yet another
18 study, like all the other earlier studies, which would
19 fail to consult with railroads and ignore legal realty,
20 but manage to delay the project enough to increase the
21 overall model cost by an estimated \$45 million.

22 Given the history of bogus studies and
23 willful blindness that went into planning the SWLRT, we
24 will never know if the current plan is the best plan or
25 if some other configuration or routing would have been

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1 chosen if engineering studies had been objective
2 analyses instead of propaganda pieces. But this is the
3 plan that we are stuck with. And if something isn't
4 done, highway congestion is only going to get worse.

5 Please resolve to stop wasting money trying
6 to re-route freight trains and give municipal consent
7 to this flawed and tainted but necessary project.

8 Thank you very much.

9 MR. MC LAUGHLIN: Thank you.

10 Georgianna Ludche, followed by Richard
11 Adair.

12 Welcome.

13 MS. LUDCHE: Thank you. I'm here to
14 draw attention to one small part of the process
15 regarding SWLRT. I will be reading the following for
16 Jeanette Colby, who sat on the Community Advisory
17 committee for SWLRT but could not be here tonight.

18 Jeanette writes, "I thought the
19 commissioners would like to know that, in April, the
20 Southwest project office decided to suspend the
21 Southwest LRT Community Advisory Committee until fall.
22 This came as a surprise to committee members. And
23 although reasons were given, there was no discussion on
24 the decision. In fact, it was presented to the
25 committee as a fait accompli. We were told that a new

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1 community advisory committee would be formed in
2 September, after the Southwest project office
3 determines which groups it wants represented on the
4 committee, application forms are sent out, and
5 submitted, and Chair Haig has an opportunity vet
6 candidates."

7 Considering that the committee is
8 supposed to be a mechanism for community voices, the
9 experience Jeanette recounts, in my opinion, is one
10 that seems to show the Met Council as being
11 unaccountable to anyone they haven't okayed. In fact,
12 the process seems stacked in their favor. Thank you.

13 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Thank you very much.

14 Richard Adair, followed by Steve Cramer.
15 Welcome.

16 MR. ADAIR: Thank you. And as the other
17 speakers have said, thanks for listening, particularly
18 to somebody wearing a T-shirt and shorts. And that's
19 because I went to a ball game in an open air stadium
20 today, an 83 degree, sunny day in Minnesota in May.

21 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Did we win?

22 MR. ADAIR: No.

23 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Oh. We won Monday --

24 MR. ADAIR: Almost.

25 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: -- Tuesday.

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1 MR. ADAIR: Lost by one run.

Also, I want one person to say -- to
thank all of you for listening to this wonderful
variety of opinion and comment. If another person says
you don't listen to the public, I can personally
dispute that. I was there ten years ago when we
carefully thought about running the train down Nicollet
Avenue instead of the Kenilworth Corridor. And trust
me, we talked just as much then as we do now, so I'll
try to be brief.

11 I'm here because I am a grandparent. I
12 have five little grandchildren, who I love very much.
13 And all I want is for them to inherit a Twin Cities
14 metropolitan area that works, that is prosperous, and
15 that is fair.

16 And I testified one other time. A
17 seminal event in my adult life was being in Cleveland,
18 Ohio, during the race rights in Glenville and Hough
19 neighborhoods in 1967 and 1968. And these occurred
20 because there were segments of Cleveland that -- where
21 the population generally felt they did not have a stake
22 in the economic prosperity of the area.

23 I was very impressed by the comments of
24 some of my neighbors earlier today, who were very
25 measured and very polite. But I urge you to listen

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1 carefully to the comments of my neighbors on the north
2 side.

3 Okay. So I live in Bryn Mawr, at 200
4 Uptown Avenue South. Bryn Mawr is a neighborhood that
5 has both north and south Minneapolis addresses in it.
6 I'm going to suggest that, if you are looking for a
7 balanced or centrist approach, you might look carefully
8 at what the Bryn Mawr Neighborhood Association has
9 recommended.

10 The Bryn Mawr Neighborhood Association
11 supports the two-tunnel option. Bryn Mawr is split
12 down the middle by Penn Avenue, and the 22 bus line is
13 extended to come to the Penn Station. We will have and
14 we will take part in all of that stuff.

15 I've lived in Bryn Mawr for 27 years,
16 and this allows me to have friends on the north side
17 neighborhoods, south side neighborhoods and hear
18 everything they have to say. The south side people in
19 Kenwood are concerned about losing parkland. The north
20 tunnel will help preserve parkland for those people.

21 My friends in the north neighborhood,
22 Hawthorne and Willard Hay and so forth, are concerned
23 about jobs and transit. This alignment will take care
24 of their concerns. I think it is a balanced approach.

25 MR. MC LAUGHLIN: Thank you.

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1 Steve Cramer, followed by Matthew
2 Hollinshead.

3 Mr. Cramer, welcome.

4 MR. CRAMER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman,
5 commissioners, council members. I'm the president and
6 CEO of the Minneapolis Downtown Council, 81 South Ninth
7 Street, downtown Minneapolis.

8 Mr. McLaughlin, I don't want you to
9 misunderstand this first comment, because we've known
10 each other for a long time, but I personally worship
11 Steven Chavez. You'll have to explain that to Chair
12 Haig.

13 MS. HAIG: I'm excited to hear that.

14 MR. CRAMER: I want to start by
15 congratulating --

16 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Two would be too many
17 worshippers in one night, I will say.

18 MR. CRAMER: I want to start by
19 congratulating the County on your completion of Target
20 Field Station and the Met Council on the pending
21 opening of the Green Line. I think both projects
22 demonstrate the efficacy of your actions and the
23 capabilities of both organizations to conceive of,
24 plan, execute complicated, complex, controversial
25 projects. And those are just two of many, many

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1 examples.

That support stems from our 2025 intersection plan, a ten-point plan for the future vision of downtown Minneapolis, which contains, among the goals, the aspirational hope that we can one day lead the nation in transportation options. I think we would all have to acknowledge that's an aspiration today. If we can buildout the regional transit system, I think we would be in that conversation. Moving forward with Southwest, as others have said, is an important part of that building block towards that future.

18 Our overall plan, with that goal as a
19 part of it, envisions a vital, healthy, economically
20 strong downtown as a core of a vitally strong, healthy
21 region. We think a strong downtown creates an
22 environment for job creation and vitality elsewhere.
23 And combined with the kind of equity measures that
24 people have been talking about tonight, particularly
25 reorienting the bus traffic in parts of -- along the

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1 alignment from North Minneapolis, in particular, to
2 serve various stations can be a really powerful one-two
3 punch making sure a vital -- that downtown Minneapolis,
4 a vital region, serves many interests and makes sure
5 our community as a whole is strong going into the
6 future.

7 So thank you for your consideration.

8 Good luck with this tough decision, among the many you
9 have made over the years.

10 MR. MC LAUGHLIN: Thank you, Mr. Cramer.
11 Matthew Hollinshead, followed by Deb
12 Heiser.

13 Welcome.

14 MR. HOLLINSHEAD: Thank you. Well, I,
15 too, don't want to offend you Chairman McLaughlin, but
16 I happen to worship Sue Haig.

17 I spent ten years myself along the
18 Central Corridor and University Avenue, and I can't
19 wait for June 14th. I stand here as the conservation
20 chair and ex-con member of the Sierra Club North Star
21 Chapter, State of Minnesota, 14,000 members, the
22 biggest chunk of whom live in Minneapolis and the
23 second biggest chunk of whom live in Saint Paul.

24 I also stand here as a resident of Saint
25 Paul. I want to emphasize, for the record -- first of

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1 all, I want to urge the municipalities to give their
2 consent to the line. The investment we've made in this
3 planning process is already immense. We need this
4 line. We need to build a complete system. As a
5 resident of Saint Paul, this is an extension of the
6 Green Line, from my perspective, the Green Line that
7 will open on June 14th.

8 I would challenge whoever opposes this
9 line to go to the Metro Transit website, use the trip
10 planner, put in a real address from east Saint Paul or
11 from Frogtown, or from any of the low-income
12 neighborhoods in Saint Paul, put in a real address of
13 an employer in Eden Prairie or somewhere in the
14 southwest metro and see what the time is and see what
15 the number of transfers are and see what the challenges
16 are of getting from the first address to the second
17 address in southwest metro. I think you will find that
18 it would be -- you would be hard pressed to make that
19 trip every day for a job out in the southwest metro.
20 So this is not just a Minneapolis issue or a Saint
21 Louis Park issue or west metro issue. This is an east
22 Metro issue.

23 I would also just reference the people
24 who have talked about the price of this line. I think,
25 if you take the number of drivers in the metro area in

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1 the Twin Cities and multiply it by the cost of a car
2 per year, you will end up with a cost figure for
3 vehicles alone -- never mind the highways and the roads
4 and traffic enforcement and everything else, you will
5 end up with a price per year for the vehicles alone of
6 our major 97 percent transportation system of somewhere
7 between 5 billion and \$20 billion, depending on how you
8 do the numbers. That's per year. I don't think \$1.6
9 billion is an unacceptable price for a line that will
10 connect tens of thousands of job seekers in Saint Paul
11 and North Minneapolis and south Minneapolis with tens
12 of thousands of jobs in the southwest metro, which is
13 one of our most booming job markets.

14 So as an east metro resident, I want to
15 strongly support this line. I want to urge all the
16 municipalities to give consent and get it done. Thank
17 you.

18 MR. MC LAUGHLIN: Thank you,
19 Mr. Hollinshead.

20 Next is Deb Heiser, followed by Kathy
21 Law.

22 Welcome.

23 MS. HEISER: Good evening, Chair and
24 councilmembers. So I'm very happy to be here this
25 evening. My name is Debra Heiser, and I am the

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1 engineering director with the City of Saint Louis Park.
2 On behalf of the City of Saint Louis Park, I would like
3 to provide you the following comments.

4 First off, thank you very much for this
5 opportunity to speak about this important project. The
6 City of Saint Louis Park has been and continues to be a
7 very strong supporter of the SWLRT. We are extremely
8 hopeful that, as time goes on, the questions, concerns,
9 and issues of the project can be resolved in order to
10 allow for a successful opening in 2019.

11 Since the municipal consent plans were
12 released to city staff, we have been working closely
13 with staff from SPO and others to address the various
14 issues associated with the project, some of which were
15 identified by the City many months ago. The City of
16 Saint Louis Park City Council has been meeting on a
17 regular basis for some time now to stay fully apprised
18 on the project in order to be able to act on the
19 municipal consent plan in a timely manner. However, in
20 order to do so, the questions and issues we've
21 identified for the SPO still need to be resolved, to
22 have some sort of resolution, and have our questions
23 have some sort of agreement for further analysis and
24 consideration in order to assure that the Southwest
25 Light Rail Line, ultimately, functions in the way the

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1 Met Council, Hennepin County, and the City hopes it
2 will from an infrastructure and transit-oriented
3 development perspective.

4 In closing, the City of Saint Louis Park
5 will explore to continue (sic) positive dialogue with
6 Met Council and others in the coming weeks with the
7 goal of the project continuing to move forward in a
8 positive and productive light.

9 I would like to thank you for your time
10 this evening, and I hope to have a wonderful evening

11 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Thank you very much.

12 Kathy Law, and then Dan Duffy. Kathy
13 Law or Kathy Low. I don't see anyone coming to the
14 podium. So Dan Duffy, followed by Todd Klingel.

15 Welcome, Mr. Duffy.

16 MR. DUFFY: Thank you. Good evening,
17 Mr. Chair, councilmembers, and commissioners. My name
18 is Dan Duffy. I am here tonight representing the Twin
19 West Chamber of Commerce and also as a member of the
20 Southwest LRT Business Advisory Committee.

21 Last March our business advisory
22 committee sent a letter to Met Council Chair Sue Haig
23 and members of the CNC outlining our group's support
24 for the SWLRT project. Likewise, Twin West Chamber of
25 Commerce delivered a similar letter of support for the

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1 project. I would like to briefly talk on some of the
2 points that both of these organizations have
3 highlighted in support for this important transit
4 project.

5 The BAC and Twin West view this project
6 as vital to the economic development and improved
7 mobilities of commuters throughout the entire
8 metropolitan region. Both organizations also recognize
9 that improving transit options in the southwest metro
10 region will help support the 60,000 jobs that are
11 expected to grow over the next two decades.

12 Our support has been focused on how the
13 Southwest LRT can provide the most economic return in
14 job growth. This line will help connect employers with
15 employees from all parts of the metro region, not just
16 the southwest region.

17 It will help provide the development
18 opportunities that may not exist without this transit
19 option. Not only will this project provide much needed
20 access to transit for all residents, but it will help
21 to spur new opportunities. For example, in Eden
22 Prairie, the Golden Triangle Station is already
23 beginning to jumpstart talks of new development, such
24 as an office tower and a hotel.

25 In Minnetonka, at the Opus Station, the

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1 Transitional Station area Action plans identify key
2 factors at the station that present opportunities for
3 future redevelopment that include the presence of
4 older, low rise, light, industrial buildings near the
5 proposed station platform that may be ripe for
6 redevelopment into more intense mixed use.

7 In Hopkins, at the Shady Oak Station,
8 the plans identified nearly 50 acres of long-term
9 redevelopment sites around the station, including high
10 density, commercial, retail, office, residential, and
11 light industrial. At the downtown Hopkins station, the
12 city has identified Eighth Avenue North at Excelsior
13 Boulevard as the artery that includes redevelopment.
14 Currently, Gallery Flats on First Street South is under
15 construction on the site of the former Park Nicollet
16 Medical Clinic.

17 The Blake Station has the potential for
18 FDA joint development and a park-and-ride structure.
19 In addition, future development has been identified at
20 the co-storage site, and Transitional Station area
21 action plans have identified Blake station as having a
22 strong redevelopment potential for high density, mixed
23 use.

24 In Saint Louis Park, Bell Line Station
25 is already identified as a potential site for joint and

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1 new transit-oriented developments. The Wooddale
2 Station has new transit-oriented development potential
3 near the station which already has concentrations of
4 apartments and senior housing in close proximity.

5 At the Louisiana Station, the connection
6 to Methodist Hospital will be an important asset to
7 seniors and other less ambulatory residents who live in
8 the region.

9 In Minneapolis, at the Van White
10 Station, while the immediate station area largely
11 consists of industrial uses today, the Bassett Creek
12 Valley redevelopment calls for a transition to higher
13 density and mix of uses, including significant housing
14 and commercial development adjacent to the LRT station
15 platform. New mixed use, high density will generate
16 transit ridership at this station.

17 At Royalton, this station will provide
18 access to the Minneapolis Farmers Market, social
19 service organizations, and connecting bus service.

20 At the Penn Station, there is
21 redevelopment potential on the northern bluffs and
22 access to Kenilworth and the north Cedar Lake trails.

23 And, finally, the Westlake Station will
24 provide a connection to West Calhoun-area businesses
25 and access to the lake areas. And the Target Station

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1 will provide connections to the rest of the region.

2 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Mr. Duffy, could you
3 wrap it up.

4 MR. DUFFY: Sure. If we want to grow
5 and improve as a major metropolitan region and remain
6 competitive in attracting new businesses while
7 retaining our current employers, then the Southwest LRT
8 is an important piece of the entire Metro Transit
9 system that will help to accomplish these goals.

10 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Thank you very much.
11 Appreciate your comments.

12 Todd Klingel, followed by Frank Lorenz.

13 Mr. Klingel, Welcome.

14 MR. KLINGEL: Good evening. I'm Todd
15 Klingel. I'm the president of the Minneapolis Chamber
16 of Commerce, 81 South Ninth Street, Minneapolis
17 Minnesota.

18 I have spoken to you many times before,
19 so I want to take a little different bent. We do need
20 to build this. You know we need to build this. There
21 are so many reasons. They were articulated very well
22 tonight. I was disappointed I wasn't number two or
23 number three. Now I am glad I got a chance to hear the
24 other 29 speakers in front of me. Actually, I am very
25 glad to hear that because there were some very

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1 thoughtful comments in there.

2 A number of you have joined us on our
3 intercity leadership trips, where we have gone to other
4 markets around the country and looked at what has
5 happened with transit-oriented development, looked at
6 what happened in just the vigor and vibrancy, not only
7 in the downtown, but in the community as a whole.

8 And as you a jump to 2020 and 2025 and
9 say who is going to live here? who is going to replace,
10 frankly, most of us in that time frame? why are they
11 going to come to Minneapolis-Saint Paul? why are they
12 going to stay in Minneapolis-Saint Paul, transportation
13 and transit options are a big part of that.

14 At the Chamber, we work on roads and
15 bridges. We work on BRT. We work on the main bus
16 line. As you know, we are supportive of the
17 circulation system that moves goods and services and
18 people. We know transit gets 67 percent of the people
19 that are going to work -- on the buses, are going to
20 work. 13 percent are going to school. We need those
21 ones going to school to go to work.

22 My challenge to you is -- I think this
23 is going to happen. I urge you to work with your
24 staffs, both at the commission, at the county, and at
25 the Met Council to truly maximize the opportunities

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1 beyond what's anticipated. We had some great speakers
2 about what could be done out of North Minneapolis. I
3 have had a chance to meet with Steve Cramer. We met
4 with almost all the city councilmembers, who understand
5 the importance of this line but want to make sure
6 Minneapolis gets as much as it can in helping to get
7 those jobs to their citizens and going the other way.
8 So I challenge them to say how do we ensure this
9 reverse commute works? How do we become the leaders in
10 showing how you use build equity, as you want to do,
11 Chair Haig, across the community using this line as one
12 example. If Bottineau will be behind it, I assume some
13 things in Saint Paul will follow that. And to me, it
14 is more than just the pencil and paper. It is what
15 does this really mean, and how do we make this happen?

16 My last piece is I, too, would support
17 looking at the 21st Street Station again. I know the
18 north tunnel would probably have to be eliminated to
19 make that happen. But, again, that's more access, more
20 opportunity. I think many people who live in Kenwood,
21 like I used to, might actually get on the train and
22 come down for a concert or game or a play or dinner.
23 And the Franklin Avenue site is an important discussion
24 also.

25 Thank you very much and keep doing the

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1 great work. I worship every single one of you, because
2 I'm politically minded.

3 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Thank you, Mr. Klingel.
4 Thank you very much.

5 Frank Lorenz is next, and then Amanda
6 Kappes.

7 Mr. Lorenz, welcome.

8 MR. LORENZ: Thank you, Commissioner.
9 Frank Lorenz, Edina, Minnesota, Hennepin County
10 District 6.

11 The Met Council Chair has stated
12 publicly and in print in "Thrive 2040" that she is
13 building for the next hundred years and intends to
14 force development back into the two central cities and
15 first-ring suburbs only. If this is true, why does the
16 Southwest LRT go all the way to Eden Prairie, a
17 third-ring suburb? If she can see the future for a
18 hundred years, why can't she differentiate between one
19 and three?

20 Met Council has spent tens of thousands
21 of dollars on environmental studies for LRT routes,
22 vibration, dust, drainage, vehicle traffic. But for
23 the residents living near the, line and, especially,
24 the stations, EMI and public scoping, oddly, doesn't
25 include noise. What you should be doing is playing

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1 loud speaker simulations for 200 trains a day at 85
2 decibels a.m. and p.m. for residents of Kenwood,
3 Kenilworth, Eden Prairie, wherever. But you won't do
4 that. So your so-called scoping is just sophistry, a
5 deceptive, elitist, snob joke.

If all six metro LRT lines are built,
they will only serve 1 percent of the nine county metro
population at a cost of more than \$10 billion plus
another \$4 billion in bond interest over 25 years.

23 But the City of Minneapolis refuses to
24 accept the Kenilworth alignment, and Met Council now
25 wants to appoint a retired district court judge to

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1 mediate the dispute so Met Council doesn't have to take
2 the heat of a decision.

3 But the Minneapolis mayor wants money
4 for their vote, an extra 400 million from Met Council
5 to pay for all of their unneeded first city streetcar
6 line. Does that judge have the legal authority to
7 authorize \$400 million in new taxes or an incentive, as
8 they call it? If so, from whom flows that authority?
9 Will the feds pay half of that incentive?

10 The Target Field Station is the central
11 hub where all LRT lines intersect. At a cost \$70
12 million, it sits on top of the main BNSF railway line
13 that carries nine trains per day of volatile crude oil,
14 shale oil. The station is next to the Twins baseball
15 stadium. At the last minute, the Metro Transit Police
16 withdrew their plans for a new headquarters building
17 next to the station. Why? Do they sense the danger of
18 an explosion of 3.3 million gallons of crude oil?

19 MR. MC LAUGHLIN: Mr. Lorenz --

20 MR. LORENZ: I'm about to be done.

21 MR. MC LAUGHLIN: You are usually good
22 with the time limit.

23 MR. LORENZ: Is that an acceptable risk
24 for Met Council and the County Regional Rail Authority
25 to assume for our citizens? Depraved indifference to

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1 human life and negligence are felonies, even for
2 officials, elected or unelected, who can see into the
3 future for a hundred years.

4 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Thank you, Mr. Lorenz.

7 Welcome.

8 MS. KAPPES: My name is Amanda Kappes.

9 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: I apologize.

10 MS. KAPPES: That's okay. It is very
11 common.

12 MS. SIMS: We are acting as a group in
13 regards to our time.

14 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: You are LaShellla Sims?

15 MS. SIMS: Correct.

16 MS. KAPPES: We are here on behalf of
17 the Metropolitan Interfaith Council on Affordable
18 Housing, and we are in support of the Southwest Light
19 Rail Line, along with all the other corridors.

20 We would just like to ensure that there
21 is affordable housing within the corridors. As we
22 build projects like this, we need to ensure that all
23 systems work together. So if we are building a light
24 rail line, we need to ensure that the people that are
25 currently living within the corridor system, want to

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1 move toward the corridor system have access and that
2 they are not property taxed out of their homes, that we
3 make sure the affordable housing we currently have
4 remains, and that we also add additional affordable
5 housing that we need.

6 We are seeing job growth in our state of
7 Minnesota. Unfortunately, a lot of that is part-time
8 work and not at a livable wage at this time. So in
9 order to make all of our systems work together, our
10 light rail systems, affordable housing, the jobs we're
11 currently creating, we need to ensure that there is
12 important access and that when we have -- the light
13 rail lines come through, that our bus rapid transit
14 systems kind of work in a circular, target motion to
15 ensure that everyone that lives outside of the walking
16 distance to those light rails are able to access that
17 through the bus systems.

18 MS. SIMS: Greetings. I'm LaShella
19 Sims. I'm also with MICAH. I'm coming from a
20 different point, but we're both MICAH.

21 I was hoping that part of the Met
22 Council's legacy would be equity and community
23 engagement. At this point in time, I'm highly
24 agitated. There is no equity in continuing to hold
25 such important meetings at a time when a large part of

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1 our community is not available. It seems as if, by
2 holding these meetings at these God awful times, you
3 are letting these times do a type of social selection
4 of people you don't want to attend these important
5 meetings.

6 Number two, when you send
7 representatives out to the community, they should be up
8 to date and current on your information, and they
9 should not be injecting their personal biases that
10 confuse the community persons who are eagerly waiting
11 to participate and to let their voices be heard. Who
12 are these people accountable to?

13 What is about to happen is quickly
14 eroding your possible legacy of equity and community
15 engagement. We're looking for transparency, equity,
16 and facts. An example of this is why is the 21st
17 Station being eliminated? Why does Minneapolis have to
18 keep the freight rail going against a previous
19 agreement made? Thank you.

20 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Thank you very much to
21 both of you.

22 Catherine Fleming is next, followed by
23 Vicki Muae.

24 Welcome.

25 MS. FLEMING: Thank you. I'm here

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1 representing two organizations. One would be Project
2 Sweetie Pie, which is a multi-award winning non-profit,
3 and also the Betty J. Robinson Group, which is a real
4 estate development company.

5 So one of the items I'd like to talk
6 about is the fact that we're interested in green space
7 and making sure that the residents around the transit
8 stations receive equitable participation and equitable
9 health considerations. One of the things that we do is
10 make sure we focus on environmental and economical
11 factors when we are talking about mass transit.

12 I have lived in Atlanta, Miami,
13 New York, New Jersey, and a number of other states as
14 an IT consultant. I can tell you, in Atlanta, the
15 influx of the, I believe it is called, MARTA was an
16 amazing injection of economic development for the
17 community. So I've seen firsthand what that can do.
18 And we are in support of the equity commitment
19 document.

20 We would like to add that we want to see
21 more youth targeted for jobs. We want to see
22 sustainability, not just construction jobs. We want to
23 make sure that people will have a working wage so they
24 can live a good life and not just survive.

25 We also want to make sure that you are

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1 held accountable. I've seen at these meetings that
2 have been held before. And there's a lot of talk, but
3 nobody is accountable to this. I mean, they've told me
4 beheadings are out, so I'm not sure what else we can do
5 with you. We want to make sure you are accountable for
6 what you are doing, make sure you are accountable to
7 the community. And that's it. Thank you.

8 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Thank you very much,
9 Ms. Fleming. Next is Vicki Muae, then Susu Jeffrey.

10 MS. MUAE: Hi. Vicki Muae. I live in
11 the Harrison neighborhood, 2032 Second Avenue North. I
12 participate in the Harrison Neighborhood Association,
13 but I'm not a board member. And I am not paid to be
14 here tonight.

15 I am here because I want to talk about
16 how this is going to benefit my community, myself, my
17 neighbors, and I want to thank everybody for allowing
18 us to do this. I want to send a special thank you to
19 Jennifer Munt, who has been to every public meeting
20 around the Southwest LRT, I think, for the last three
21 or four years and has chaired many a very difficult
22 conversation and has done a great job.

23 Thank you.

24 Jennifer has also come out to my
25 neighborhood more than once to talk to us about our

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1 vision about what can happen around the Van White
2 Station. She is an active listener.

3 I have listened to everything everyone
4 has said, and I respect the difference of opinion that
5 has been presented tonight. It is our diversity that
6 makes this region strong. It is our diversity and
7 openness that is provided to us to express that
8 diversity, so thank you so much.

9 We've heard a lot tonight about the jobs
10 along the line and the jobs created when building the
11 line. On the Harrison neighborhood, the Bryn Mawr
12 neighborhood, the small business in both of our
13 neighborhoods have been working on a development plan
14 for the last 20 years. It really, basically, is the
15 area between the Penn and the Van White Stations and
16 the Target Field.

17 I bring this up because some people
18 would like to have jobs in their community. And this
19 is a development plan that will create those jobs. it
20 will create jobs for young people, and it will create
21 jobs for older people. Jobs are important. Equity is
22 important. There have been discussions about the
23 importance of getting something in writing. We do
24 support the equity document that's been provided to
25 you. We have participated in its drafting.

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1 And I would say that my neighbors would
2 really like to see some firm commitments, not just
3 throwing the word "equity" around or saying you are
4 going to get a job. What we want to know -- we don't
5 want to be part of the future. We are part of the
6 present.

7 I would sort of challenge you. When you
8 come in on 394, if you look at the south, you see the
9 sculpture garden. It is beautiful. If you look to the
10 north, you are going to see public works, rock
11 pressure, an impound lot. It doesn't serve our
12 community well. It doesn't represent who we are. You
13 know, we work. We pay taxes. We have families. We
14 want a fair share of the equity and the possibility,
15 the potential that provides and comes to all of us
16 through this line. We have supported this line from
17 the very beginning. We will support the line until
18 opening day.

19 You know, it seems like LRT is a
20 marathon. It is snowing. It is sleeting. There's
21 rocks. There's downed trees. I know that you guys
22 will be there. We will be there, too. And we will
23 continue to support you. Thank you.

24 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Thank you.

25 Susu Jeffrey, followed by Kathleen

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1 Murphy.

2 Welcome.

3 MS. JEFFREY: Thank you, Chairman,
4 commissioners, members. Susu Jeffrey. I'm
5 representing Friends of Coldwater. I am a Sierra Club
6 member. My address is 1063 Antoinette Avenue in Bryn
7 Mawr.

8 Among the many words we've heard
9 tonight, we haven't heard the words "tree" or "trees"
10 and "water." I'm afraid that, when planners see maps
11 and they see parkland, they think of this as
12 developmental, as empty. I'm thinking of what happened
13 to Minnehaha Park and Coldwater Spring with the
14 redevelopment along Highway 55 and the Hiawatha Line.
15 Coldwater Spring, the last natural spring in Hennepin
16 County is down 27,500 gallons a day every day.
17 Development along highway Interstate 394 took --
18 permanently dewatered the Great Medicine Spring in
19 Theodore Wirth Park and also historic Glenwood Spring.
20 That permanent dewatering is two and a half million
21 gallons every day.

22 When you dry out the land, the land
23 dries out. You are drying out the land. You are
24 putting all this pristine ground water in pipes and
25 sending it out. That's what would happen to Cedar lake

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1 with this unfortunate shallow tunnel plan. I see this
2 as a water issue. We've already lost Browning Lake,
3 Loring Lake, Spring Lake, Powderhorn Lake to
4 development. How many Lakes can we lose before we
5 become the city of stadiums?

6 The Met Council is demanding that the
7 environmental impact review process be set aside until
8 after the project has been approved by the
9 municipalities. This is not a mail order bride
10 situation. This is backwards. We can see this.
11 There's some technical study out about 480 trees that
12 are a certain diameter, except that 90 percent of the
13 trees were not counted in the tree loss. We're talking
14 about 10,000 trees.

15 Every climate change person says, if
16 there's one thing you want to do, it is plant trees.
17 10,000 trees. Oh, but those trees aren't significant,
18 I forgot, just like some of the people aren't
19 significant.

20 We have a population density problem.
21 You are running against the statistics here with
22 projected ridership on this line. It just doesn't make
23 sense.

24 So we need to look ahead. I know
25 there's been a lot of talk about looking ahead. And

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1 here we get into this really unfortunate racialized
2 issue, which now we're calling equity. The fact is
3 that the demographics of the city of Minneapolis are
4 changing, that people are moving in. You have huge,
5 high-end condominium development. Rents are
6 skyrocketing around the area. And it looks like
7 economically-stressed families will be pushed farther
8 out from the center. So I would suggest, yes, transit.
9 Let's go back to the drawing board. Think Uptown,
10 Nicollet, I-35W or 394. But think for sure water and
11 trees. Thank you

12 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Thank you very much.

13 Kathleen Murphy, then Kent Dilg.

14 Welcome, Ms. Murphy.

15 MS. MURPHY: Good evening. Thank you,
16 Commissioner and all of the Met Council, and especially
17 to Jennifer Munt, because she was with Transit for
18 Livable Communities, which I am a part of. I wear my
19 button proudly that says "Move Minnesota," because
20 that's what it is all about, to complete the circle of
21 our transit system so that all parts of the Twin Cities
22 metropolitan area will have a part of this transit
23 system and will not be left out.

24 In 2004, we opened the Hiawatha Blue
25 Line, and I was with Transit for Livable Communities

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1 the year before and happy to be working on something
2 that happened. And our commissioner was there with us
3 to proudly say we have a new light rail line. And we
4 all say, today, it works. And there are people who
5 doubted us, but it works.

6 Now the Green Line is going to be
7 opening in June, June 14th, and our commissioner was
8 there proudly with TLC to say, hey, we need to get this
9 done because this is important to our transportation
10 system.

11 Now we are talking about the Southwest
12 LRT, and our commissioner is here fighting with us. So
13 I want to say thank you, Commissioner, and to Jennifer
14 Munt, who was with TLC for many years and is now with
15 the Met Council.

16 To push out these issues transportation
17 for people throughout the Twin Cities is important for
18 those who cannot drive and do not drive and for seniors
19 and for all of those who have the need for jobs and
20 opportunities and for North Minneapolis to --
21 hopefully, to change once the light rail comes through,
22 that crime can come down and that these people can open
23 their lives to better things than to crime every day
24 and every summer. Thank you.

25 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Thank you very much.

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1 Kent Dilg, and then Jonathan Vlaming.

2 Welcome.

3 MR. DILG: Thank you, and thank you so
4 much for doing this. It is really appreciated.

5 My name is Kent Dilg. I'm a resident of
6 the Harrison neighborhood, 324 Gramercy Avenue North.
7 I am on the board of the Harrison Neighborhood
8 Association, and I chair the transit equity committee,
9 although, I'm here just speaking as a transit rider. I
10 am transit dependent. I don't have access to a car. I
11 don't have a driver's license. Transit is how I get
12 around town.

I would hazard a guess that people here
who are arguing against this project all have cars and
don't necessarily depend on transit for their needs. I
do. I am here to encourage this. I want to encourage
this. I want to encourage my mayor and the council to
get it together and come up with a solution. There
isn't going to be a perfect one. I understand that
someone will be unhappy regardless of which way things
are going.

22 But one of the things I wanted to
23 mention is, inadvertently, public policy in the form of
24 highway systems have created the situation that we find
25 ourselves in now, the donut hollowing of the inner city

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1 out to the suburbs, a culture that requires a car, by
2 and large, for access around town to jobs, to
3 education, to shopping, and what have you. And it is
4 important to note that we have an opportunity now to
5 design for the future a transportation system that
6 isn't dependent on personal transportation automobiles.
7 We can improve the quality of life within the region by
8 going ahead with the light rail.

9 Really, all we want -- there's been a
10 lot of talk about equity. There's been a lot of talk
11 about aesthetics and things of that nature.
12 Personally, the equity issues are the most important to
13 me. You can't have a good life if you can't get from
14 one side of town to the next. You have to have access
15 to the jobs. I want to encourage the Council and the
16 City to look at this as a comprehensive project of
17 transportation, not just Southwest, but we also have
18 Bottineau. In the Harrison neighborhood, we have the
19 project for the Bassett Creek Valley development. We
20 are talking high-density, mixed-density, mixed-use,
21 mixed-income. And it is dependant on this Southwest
22 transit light rail coming in.

23 Someone mentioned what's the hurry here?
24 Well, we do have a hurry in the sense that we have
25 federal funding available for this project. If we

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1 screw this up, we are going to go to the back of the
2 line. We are not going to have the opportunity to
3 improve our life within the city. Thanks.

4 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Thank you very much.
5 Jonathan Vlaming is next, followed by
6 Joanne Hager.

7 Welcome.

8 MR. VLAMING: Welcome and thank you.
9 Good evening, everybody. My name is Jonathan Vlaming.
10 I am the associate superintendent of planning and
11 design for Three Rivers Park District.

12 The park district has been around 57
13 years. Throughout that time, we've enjoyed a strong,
14 positive, collaborative partnership with both the
15 Metropolitan Council and Hennepin County. We're
16 responsible for, roughly, half the acres in the entire
17 seven-county metro regional park system. We host over
18 10 million visitors a year, and we operate over 125
19 miles of regional trails at this time.

20 The Cedar Lake Regional Trail runs
21 adjacent to the proposed Southwest LRT. The trail is
22 heavily used. There's over 500,000 annual visits on
23 that trail. The use of that trail is evolving. It is
24 evolving from a recreational-based trail to a
25 commuter-based trail. Our own data shows trends that,

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1 if they continue at the current trend line, we expect
2 the majority to be commuters by within five years.

3 The LRT and the trail are a paired
4 system. They complement each other. And if they are
5 designed together correctly, they'll promote both LRT
6 and non-motorized transit use.

7 Recognition and celebration of this
8 successful trail as an integral LRT component will help
9 secure federal funding for this project. However, as
10 depicted in the current Southwest LRT design plans, the
11 at-grade trail crossings at Blake Road, Wooddale
12 Avenue, and Beltline Boulevard should be considered an
13 omission.

14 Omissions, by your own definition,
15 indicate a discrepancy that affects the configuration,
16 the functionality, the operations, the maintenance, or
17 the safety of the Southwest LRT system. The at-grade
18 trail crossings will significantly limit the
19 functionality of the trail as a non-motorized component
20 of the Southwest LRT system.

21 SPO staff has indicated that at each of
22 these at-grade crossings there could be a delay of up
23 to 90 seconds for bicycle commuters to wait to have
24 safe passage across those roads. Together, this is
25 four and a half minutes of wait time. That translates

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1 to a reduced bike travel shed of over a mile in all
2 directions. At-grade crossings are also going to
3 discourage new bicycle commuters from using the train
4 and trip chaining with the LRT.

5 Also, from a behavioral viewpoint, the
6 at-grade crossings are an omission with regards to
7 safety. The design plans need to take into account the
8 situation and circumstances at these sites that are
9 going to, undoubtedly, lead to erratic behavior by
10 vehicle drivers and bicyclists. The increased traffic
11 at peak commuting hours for both facilities, the
12 confusion of the park-and-rides, the confusion of the
13 kiss-and-rides with people racing to reach their
14 trains, the visual clutter introduced by the LRT, the
15 short tempers of people waiting to proceed whom are
16 delayed by the LRT, all of these situational variables
17 are coming together in a perfect storm to create unsafe
18 conditions for bicyclists.

19 So the solution, then, is a trail tunnel
20 at Blake and a trail tunnel at Wooddale and simply
21 moving or extending the already proposed trail bridge
22 at Beltline so that it also crosses Beltline Boulevard.

23 Three Rivers respectfully requests that
24 the Metropolitan Council recognize these two tunnels
25 and the Beltline bridge extension as an omission to the

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1 design and to correct that omission through
2 incorporating these elements into the base design plans
3 for the Southwest LRT. Thank you for your
4 consideration.

5 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Thank you very much,
6 Mr. Vlaming.

7 Next is Jenny (sic) Hager, then Arlene
8 Fried.

9 MS. HAGER: Is that Joanne Hager?

10 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Yes, it is. Thank
11 you.

12 MS. HAGER: I didn't know if there was
13 another Hager.

14 Good Evening. My name is Joanne Hager,
15 and thank you so much for offering this format for us
16 to speak. I'm a resident of North Minneapolis.

17 First of all, thank you all for
18 answering the call to serve, and we appreciate you as
19 public servants very much. And thank you for your
20 leadership. Many of you are leaders on this.

21 As you listen to all of us and you sort
22 out what needs to be done and where the priorities are,
23 I strongly support this project. I am -- as I said, I
24 am a resident of North Minneapolis. But I'm really
25 here --

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1 First of all, I want to thank the people
2 who put together the equity plan. There's lots of
3 great stuff in there. I got excited when I read it.
4 It has a lot of great comments in there.

5 I just wanted to talk about one thing.
6 And I, too, also wanted to -- I'm sorry. I'm a little
7 nervous. I wanted to talk about one thing, that's
8 about the hiring goals. I just returned from
9 Sacramento where I attended a Women in Trades
10 conference put on by the Building and Trades
11 conference -- Women in Trades Committee of the Building
12 and Trades conference or council. And over 950
13 tradeswomen got together, and it was an exciting time.

14 I also attended an apprenticeship
15 conference there. I learned about some very exciting
16 models throughout the United States of construction
17 projects and cities that are trying to do more to serve
18 more people in their community, really interesting
19 models, like, in Seattle, New Haven, Connecticut,
20 Milwaukee. These are just some of the things I
21 remember hearing at this conference. And I think we
22 can do much better.

23 I saw your goals that you have set, and
24 I know that the equity program has come up with some
25 stronger goals. But I would suggest they're not

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1 enough. I am a laborer. I became a laborer at the age
2 of 47. I was a tax taker at that time. I was
3 underemployed for years. I looked forward to my tax
4 rebates every year because that was enough to help me,
5 with my low income status, to kind of get over the next
6 hurdle. What you are doing by setting aggressive
7 hiring goals is you are supporting careers to be
8 developed, not just jobs. It is careers.

If we set aggressive hiring goals, we will meet them and exceed them, but we need to set the bar high. We also need to look at the minority goals and the female goals. First of all, they are 6 percent. I don't know who the demographer is to come

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1 up with 6 percent. I know we're 50 percent. I know we
2 should have access to more of those jobs.

3 The other thing I wanted to point out is
4 I think the model of setting minority goals and female
5 goals needs to be changed. I think we need to set
6 minority goals for males and minority goals for
7 females. Because I see it out in the trades. I see it
8 out in the field that minority men are passed up in
9 this equation. If a minority woman can meet both of
10 those goals, those hiring goals, there's something
11 wrong with the system. So I just implore you to look
12 at those hiring goals and to revisit them and to be
13 really aggressive in setting those goals. Thank you
14 for your time.

15 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Thank you very much for
16 your comments.

17 Arlene Fried and then Kenya McKnight.

18 MS. FRIED: It is Arlene Fried.

19 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Fried, I beg your
20 pardon.

21 MS. FRIED: That's all right.

22 My name is Arlene Fried. Can you hear
23 me here? I live in Minneapolis. I live in south Bryn
24 Mawr, and I have lived there for many, many years. I
25 do not live along Kenilworth Trail, but I have a

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1 relationship with Kenilworth Trail. For many, many
2 years, I have rollerbladed on that trail. I have
3 experienced the specialness of that trail, the pastoral
4 quality of it.

5 I am here to point out that I
6 believe that light rail can be intrusive and dangerous
7 and should not be located along the Kenilworth Trail,
8 which is a nature trail and a recreational trail. It
9 is regarded as a regional treasure. So my request is
10 please do not locate light rail on Kenilworth. Thank
11 you.

12 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Thank you very much.

13 Kenya McKnight, then Sarah Brenner
14 Welcome.

15 MS. MCKNIGHT: Good evening. Thank you
16 for having me. So I wear quite a few hats, so tonight
17 my hat is of a resident of North Minneapolis. And I
18 was sitting here thinking, wow, everything I thought
19 about saying is already said. I'll be here just to
20 reiterate the importance of supporting the Southwest
21 LRT's development, which actually furthers building on
22 a regional system, transit system, which we really
23 need.

24 Communities like North Minneapolis, as
25 many of you know, are really regionally disconnected

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1 from the state of Minnesota, if you will. This
2 Southwest LRT route provides an access that doesn't
3 currently exist. Many of us, actually, shop and have
4 recreational outings in the southwest community, but we
5 have to either drive or take other routes to get there.
6 This light rail provides us greater access to enjoy,
7 not only the recreational, social activities there, but
8 access to the many jobs that are being created along
9 the Southwest LRT. And not just jobs, it is also about
10 career opportunities, right. It is about the long term
11 of our economic stability, which is about having a
12 career. It is also about having the economic
13 opportunities for entrepreneurs.

14 There are many business opportunities
15 that will derive from this. It is not just about jobs.
16 I want you to walk away understanding that it is
17 important for us to have some of the workforce jobs to
18 build this system, but it is just as important for us
19 to have access to the long-term career opportunities
20 and entrepreneurial opportunities, whether it be
21 through technology, whether it be through opportunities
22 to actually establish commercial businesses along the
23 corridor. That is our interest, and that is our need.

24 As many of you are also familiar with,
25 the original maps of Minneapolis in the early 1900's

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1 designate communities like North Minneapolis to be a
2 Negro slum, where there were no economic opportunities,
3 where there were segregational practices that our City
4 has actually been sued for, times over, at least twice
5 since the 1900's for relegating people of color,
6 specifically African Americans, to only live in North
7 Minneapolis, be it homeownership or rental. So while
8 many of you will sit here and say that wasn't my doing,
9 I didn't do that, we all sit here with the
10 responsibility of undoing that.

11 So the Southwest LRT is not a solution
12 for all of our problems, but it is an opportunity to
13 create some access to alleviate the distressed economic
14 situations in communities like North Minneapolis, as
15 well as the 21st Street connection for the Native
16 American community.

17 So I just urge you to remember that Met
18 Council, in itself, has bigger goals of creating an
19 equitable region in a way that creates communities
20 where opportunities exist for everyone. I urge the
21 County to take that same charge in creating a county
22 that is equitable, where people can live anywhere
23 throughout the county and not just a place where we
24 just stay in our places.

25 Lastly, I'll say that I was in Oakland,

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1 and I got to use the public transit, mostly because I
2 didn't have a car. It was very expensive to live
3 there. But in my riding of their BART System, as well
4 as the public bus system, I noticed that everyone used
5 it. I didn't see a train system for white people. I
6 didn't see a train system for Latino people. I didn't
7 see a train system for black people. I seen a train
8 system that everyone in the metropolitan region used.
9 I urge you to think about building a system in our
10 region that everyone can use. Thank you.

11 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Thank you very much.

12 Sarah Brenner, and then Amity Foster
13 Welcome.

14 MS. BRENNER: Hi. I want to welcome
15 Commissioner Greene. I'm glad to see you here.

16 I'm going to read a piece that I wrote.
17 The trees along the Kenilworth Corridor mean a great
18 deal to my family. They're personal. My husband Jim
19 and I moved into the Kenilworth triangle in 1988, the
20 year after we married. Our property backed up to the
21 Kenilworth Corridor, just south of the Burnham Bridge.
22 We chose our home because of the trees, especially a
23 large black walnut that engulfed the back of our home.

24 The year after we moved in, Jim began to
25 transform the meadow. Our home backed up to a meadow

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1 that ran along the then-abandoned railroad. He
2 imagined a small park behind our house, a place where
3 kids can play safely. Back then, there were no trains,
4 but the area had construction debris from the Burnham
5 Bridge. We collected old leftover, hundred-year-old
6 thick white pine timbers, metal rivets, and railroad
7 spikes. One of those timbers became a lovingly-crafted
8 coffee table.

9 We, along with neighbors, began to plant
10 trees. Initially, we planted pines, mostly white
11 pines, some Cedar.

12 My husband had grown up on tree farms.
13 His brothers, who are still in the tree business up in
14 the northern suburbs, had plenty of seedlings. Jim was
15 the black sheep of the family, steering clear of the
16 family business, choosing to go into medicine, a
17 profession that fit his communitarian ethic well. Yet,
18 he had spent his childhood steeped in trees and loved
19 them.

20 On one of our first dates, he took me up
21 to the family's northern Isanti County tree farm where
22 he stood me under a stand of white pine and asked me to
23 listen. The soft hum of the wind though those needles
24 made a distinct sound.

25 Over the years, many trees were planted

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1 on that corridor, pines, maples, oaks, willows, gingko,
2 magnolia, flowering crab, apple, ash, poplar and too
3 many black walnuts, inspired from the tree that had
4 caused us to buy our home.

5 My daughter's Kenwood kindergarten class
6 collected small tree seedlings, and those, too, were
7 planted, watered, nourished, and loved. Those earliest
8 trees are now as tall as 40 feet. He spent countless
9 hours digging out buckthorn from the surrounding forest
10 and replanting with seedlings. These trees now
11 surround the meadow. He carved a proper English hedge
12 from a half a dozen elms and planted a meadow gardens.
13 One year it was on the Hidden Gardens Tour.

14 In 2004, for Jim's 50th Birthday, I
15 bought him four trees to be planted on the four corners
16 of the meadow, each representing one in our family. I
17 wrote him a poem which honored this community legacy.
18 The poem is long but ends with, "And when we're old and
19 long in tooth, we shall return to view the birth of
20 other oaks, of other which roads, of all the seeds on
21 earthly pillows, a forest tall and meadow daring to
22 remind future generations of a man so caring. He loved
23 the meadow, spent hours giving, all his life, forever
24 giving."

25 Over the years, we placed picnic tables

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1 in the meadows. And after the Kenilworth trail was
2 built, many would stop to rest here. We mowed its
3 grass weekly. The kids and adults played soccer,
4 baseball, frisbee, football or badmitten, goodmitten as
5 my husband called it.

6 If we came into the meadow, sometimes
7 people who would sit in the meadow to rest would
8 apologize and get up to leave. But Jim would tell them
9 this is yours, it is for the people, it belongs to you.

10 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Could you wrap up,
11 here.

12 MS. BRENNER: Okay. I'm very close to
13 being done.

14 When the freight train was temporarily
15 put into the corridor in the mid '90s, he encouraged me
16 to be gracious, telling me it is temporary.

17 After we met the then CEO of TP&W, Kent
18 Shoemaker, who is a father's friend, and Kent assured
19 us that the freight was temporary and eventually would
20 be moved to Saint Louis Park, I was reassured.

21 When they LRT was to be built, Jim again
22 waxed philosophical, the freight will move, and the LRT
23 will take its spot. We are communtarians after all,
24 and we are there to build a beautiful, thriving city.

25 In 2008, my husband developed GBM, a

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1 terminal brain tumor. During the first years of his
2 illness, digging buckthorn and replanting healthy trees
3 in their place became a metaphor for his search for a
4 cure. He called buckthorn the thick spawn of satan's
5 loins. He would spend hours each day spring through
6 fall digging buckthorn up by its roots. It was a
7 difficult job, but he was hopeful.

8 He went through iterations of cancer
9 treatment, each time losing a bit but still moving
10 forward, digging buckthorn, planting and growing
11 healthy trees, repairing and nurturing brain cells,
12 digging more buckthorn.

13 By 2011, he could no longer dig
14 buckthorn. And slowly those thorny small trees began
15 to make their return. Still we would return to the
16 meadow, listen to the wind through the white pines,
17 feel the sun on our backs, and watch the stars.

18 Jim lost his battle to GBM in 2013.
19 This year I see buckthorn seedlings emerge, but I also
20 see towering trees that are and should be his legacy.
21 For me, Jim's lifelong legacy of trees along a small
22 part of the corridor is threatened by another scourge.
23 Kenilworth has fought valiantly against co-location,
24 and yet it is poised to become a reality. Many of the
25 trees along the western edge of this beautiful meadow

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1 will be cut down to make room for co-location of
2 freight and Southwest Light Rail. They include maple,
3 cedar, magnolia, smoke trees, oaks, and black walnuts.
4 Two of the trees are the trees that I gave to Jim for
5 his birthday.

6 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Please try to wrap it
7 up.

8 MS. BRENNER: One was a metaphor for
9 him, his strength and wisdom. They are part of his
10 league, a legacy that was filled with love of
11 community.

12 These trees will be cut down by a
13 disease, as he was cut down by a disease. But the
14 disease that will cut down these trees can and should
15 be stopped. Co-location should be stopped.

16 My heart breaks over the loss of this
17 regional jewel, which my husband helped to build. I
18 will continue to fight to protect that legacy. Thank
19 you.

20 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Thank you.

21 Amity Foster, welcome.

22 MS. FOSTER: Thank you for listening.
23 So my name is Amity Foster. I am a member with NOC,
24 Neighborhoods Organizing for Change. We are on the
25 north side of Minneapolis. I also work at Isaiah. My

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1 job takes me to the suburbs often, and I usually can't
2 get there because I am transit reliant. I take the bus
3 everywhere.

4 I have called Metro Transit's web --
5 called to find out how to get from Saint Paul to Maple
6 Grove at 3:00 o'clock in the afternoon. They've told
7 me that it is actually not possible and that I should
8 call a cab or find a friend to take me.

9 I'm white. I have a job. I make enough
10 money that I can take that cab ride. I get reimbursed
11 from work. I have a lot of friends who live in North
12 Minneapolis who, if they were told that was their
13 option, they would lose their job because they couldn't
14 do that. I think that's wrong.

15 I do support the Southwest Light Rail.
16 I think it is a great idea. It won't serve North
17 Minneapolis if the rest of the transit system isn't
18 developed along with it. We've met with a few of the
19 Met Council members already to talk about this.
20 They're interested in working with communities to
21 develop a fully equity transit system. I hope that the
22 rest of you are interested in those conversations, too.
23 So thank you.

24 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: Thank you very much.
25 I have no other names; is that right?

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1 No one else is signed in to speak. Is there anyone
2 else who would like to speak who has not? Going once
3 -- anybody else? Twice. All right. Third time.
4 Anybody else wish to speak tonight?

5 All right. Then I will close the
6 testimony part of the hearing. I want to thank
7 everybody for your participation. I think we had a
8 very -- people respected one another. I thought it was
9 well done. And we appreciate all the comments. All
10 this testimony will be submitted as a part of the
11 project record.

12 The Southwest LRT dot org -- the
13 swlrt.org website has more information about dates and
14 locations about city and county hearings. Some -- a
15 couple of the cities have had their hearings already,
16 Saint Louis Park and Eden Prairie. Others are
17 scheduled. Minneapolis has not scheduled a hearing
18 yet. So that website will tell you when the remaining
19 hearings are going to take place and where you can look
20 at the plans and the many ways that you can still
21 provide comments. The comment period is not over. you
22 are still able to submit written comments. Again, we
23 thank you.

24 I will turn to my co-chair tonight,
25 Chair Haig, for final comments.

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1 MS. HAIG: Thank you, Commissioner
2 McLaughlin, and thanks to everyone who came tonight and
3 testified. We appreciate it. I appreciate the
4 partnership with Hennepin County for hosting us tonight
5 here. And thanks to all the commissioners and the
6 councilmembers for joining us as well. And it was a
7 good public hearing. Thank you very much.

8 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: All right. With that,
9 does anyone else wish to make a comment?

10 With that, then, I will declare the
11 hearing closed, and we will be stand adjourned. Thank
12 you very much.

13 (Whereupon, the TRANSCRIPT OF
14 PROCEEDINGS was concluded at 8:30 p.m.)

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

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

4 That the foregoing TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS is a
5 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 WITNESS MY HAND AND SEAL this 5th day of June
11 2014.

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JULIE Brook's, Notary Public, RPR

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