

# **Southwest LRT METRO Green Line Extension**

Collected Comments from August 27 to September 11, 2015

# METROPOLITAN COUNCIL/HENNEPIN COUNTY/HCCRA

8/27/15 SWLRT Public Hearing

**\*All comments are recorded verbatim from comment cards\***

## **Comment 1:**

**Name: Alexis Pennie (NMBAC)**

**[REDACTED]  
Minneapolis, MN 55412**

Thank you to all involved. You made some difficult decisions around the revised preliminary design: eliminating public art (100%) and Mitchell Rose Station, and deferring Eden Prairie Town Center. As a mpls resident and active participant in transportation + T.O.D. policy I am highlighting my concerns around 75% cut to landscape budget of the project and the 50% reduction in furnishings/amenities at or adjacent to station areas, such as bike, trash receptacles. Some suggestions for the project are that we should increase our equity commitments around contractors, sub contractors, and hires so that its higher than the current goals of 32% minorities + 6% female. Numbers need to be 42% + 26% respectively. Additionally, Economic development and concerns around displacement + gentrification must be balanced. For example with the proposed zoning change for the Bassett Creek Valley project from multifamily residential to mixed used development perhaps 20% of these mixed use dev. projects should be workforce housing.

Also, concerns around eliminating the Bike-Ped bridge @ Penn Ave Station; want the at grade crossing to be safe. I am encouraged by the sidewalk improvements near Penn Station and improvements on Van White from 4<sup>th</sup> Ave N to 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave N AND 7<sup>th</sup> Street N, Downtown to N. Mpls. Make sure to include a seperated Bike-Ped trail on Van White between 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue N and 2<sup>nd</sup> avenue N.

## **Comment 2:**

**Name: Not provided  
MN 55411**

Improvements need to be made or extended from 4<sup>th</sup> and Van White to 2<sup>nd</sup> and Van White where it connects with the bridge. a multiuse path exists on the east side of the bridge and should extend all the way to 4<sup>th</sup>. In addition, or best case scenario would have a dedicated bicycle path on the east side with a new pedestrian path on the west side.

I also want to stress the importance of keeping the Royalston, Van White and Penn Ave

# METROPOLITAN COUNCIL/HENNEPIN COUNTY/HCCRA

8/27/15 SWLRT Public Hearing

## Comment 3:

**Name: Not Provided**  
**Glenwood Avenue N.**  
**MN 55405**

Van White Memorial Stop: - I want firmer discussion around the bridge from Bryan Mawr to the stop. Currently the bridge @ Bryn Mawr is used by a lot of kids and non-commuting bicyclists. It is important to ensure these (more recreational) bicyclists are safe and do not disrupt the commuter traffic (both bikes & cars). The current "swirly" bridge is not heavily used by commuters, who favor the bike path on Van White.

Traffic from cars, LRT. Now, all traffic is merging in one place. Commuting bikes, and recreational & kid bikes.

Penn Ave. Stop: I really like the proposed shift of the station, so that the trail path be at grade, and the proposed bridge from Penn to the Stop. I want to see better pedestrian and bike access from Penn Av to the stop, and @ across the Penn Ave bridge over I-394. There will be more pedestrian & bike traffic, and we need to ensure proper infrastructure.

Royalston Ave. Stop: I want to see better pedestrian & bike access to and across Glenwood Ave. N. As a regular bicyclist down Glenwood, it is a real mess, and the foot traffic to the Royalston stop will just add to it (especially on game/event nights).

## Comment 4:

**Name: Conrad Segal**

I am Conrad Segal a candidate for mayor of SLP. I want to be put on record that I am against this train. I feel that the cost/benefit of this project does not justify the \$ 2 Billion investment.

I would like to see a greater emphasis on road enhancements and augmented bus service and BRT solutions. As a resident of St. Louis Park I see this train as causing serious disruption in the flows of traffic going north and south.

I see this train as being little benefit to SLP and worse a detriment to the quality of life of our community. I think the mission of this train could be fulfilled in a number of more economical and better performing means.

## Comment 5:

**Name: Not Provided**

The current alignment I give a C+. A lot of comprises but solid potential with station T.O.D.

# METROPOLITAN COUNCIL/HENNEPIN COUNTY/HCCRA

## 8/27/15 SWLRT Public Hearing

If you switch from Kenilworth to Nicollet or Hennepin/Greenway you get A+ Uptown needs to be connected! Maybe streetcar in Greenway connected west Lake to Blue Line would be sufficient

### Comment 6:

**Name: Not Provided**

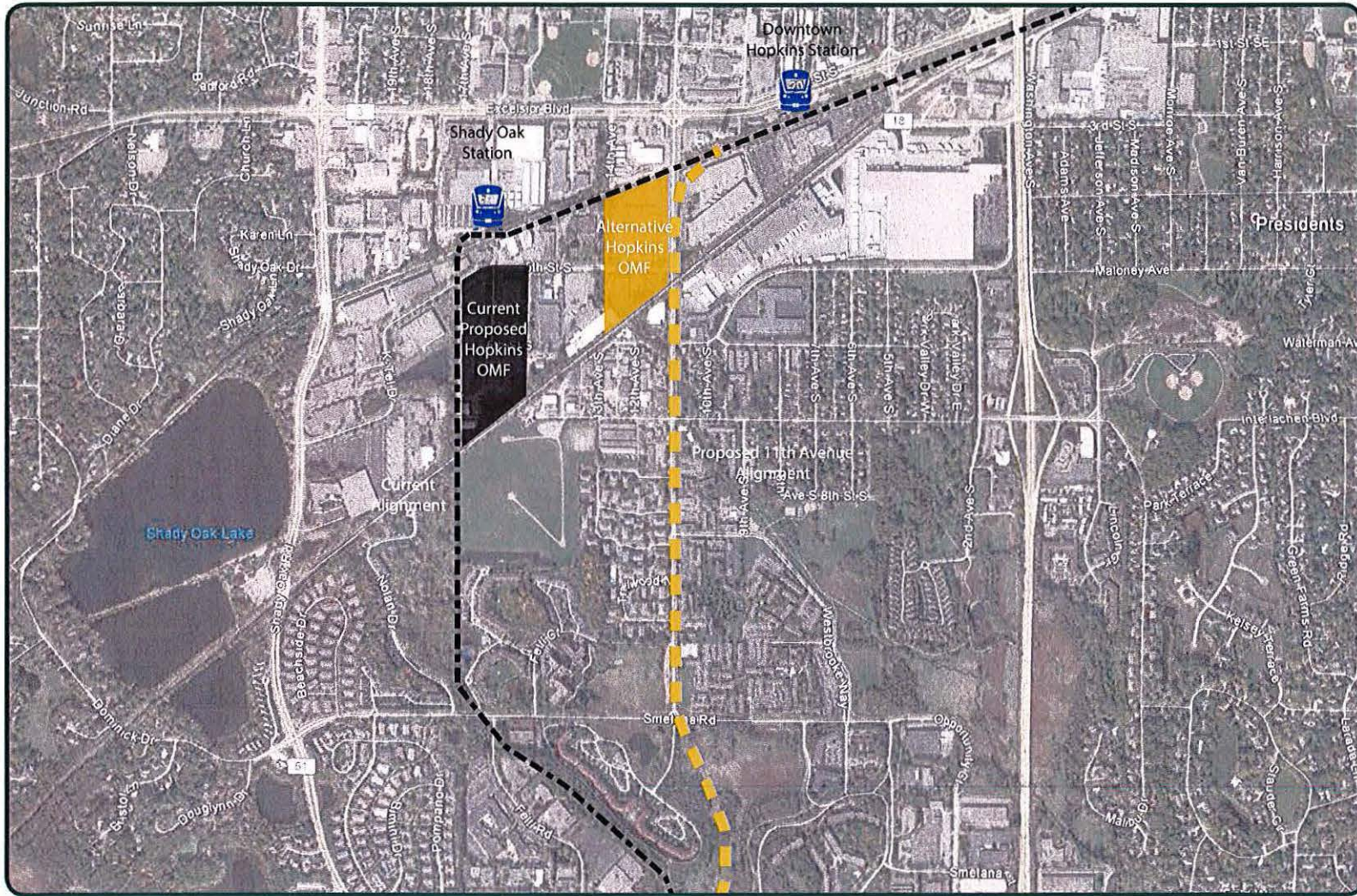
The revised SWLRT proposal provides lower ridership, with fewer necessary “amenities,” at a higher cost and with greater real & potential harm to neighborhoods and parks, lake, recreation & commuter trails than the earlier version. Ridership estimates are now projected for 2040 & extremely unreliable & optimistic. Costs will certainly rise markedly. The cost to effectiveness and [harms] is not justifiable and worse than previously. Please reconsider the alignment or if insistent on alignment then fully mitigate [harms] through Kenilworth corridor by placing a deep tunnel under channel & a shallow tunnel at least to 21<sup>st</sup> & preferably to Penn. Please also review “fault line” created in bike path due to construction just east of Target Field. Similar “settling” near Grain Tower apartments would be serious & potentially calamitous

### Comment 7:

**Name: Not Provided**

I have concerns with co-location of freight & LRT. I also have environmental concerns about the LRT going through the chain of lakes, this is a terrible idea. I think the LRT could feasibly go along 394 up to Highway 55 and then into Downtown.

Two birds, on stone; then the future Blue Line and green line could split along 394. No pedestrians crossing tracks, wheather that is a tunnel or bridge. Solar panels to offset energy use. Trees will be cut down but need to be replaced 10 fold, perhaps a percentage could be edible fruit bearing trees to help sustain neighborhoods near the stations and native prairie plants along the tracks with regular maintenance, to avoid invasive species taking over. I do not support the current proposed route.



**Proposed 11th Avenue LRT Alignment**



- **More accessible for Hopkins residents**
- **Shorter, faster, more direct route**
- **New opportunities for Transit-Oriented Development**
- **Costs less**
- **\$50,000,000 saving**

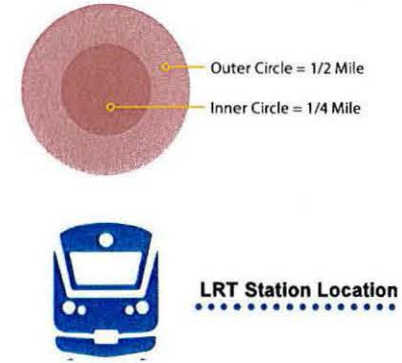
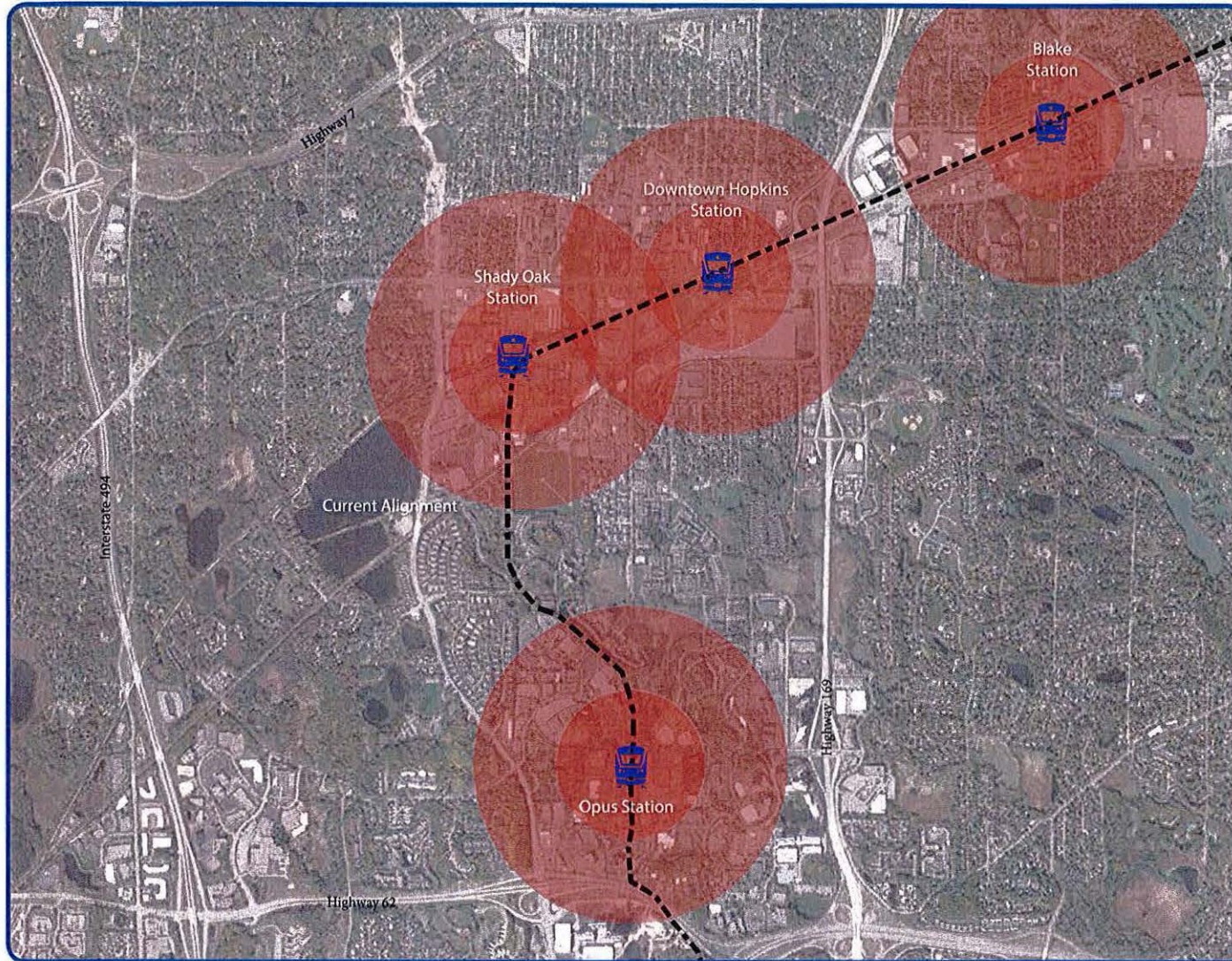
North Date: 8/28/2015



Proposed 11th Avenue Alignment  
 11th Ave SW LRT Corridor Concept  
 Hopkins, MN

Graphic is Conceptual: For Discussion Purposes Only

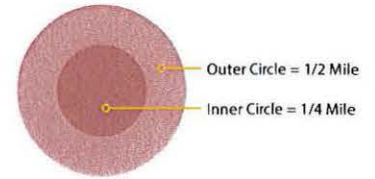
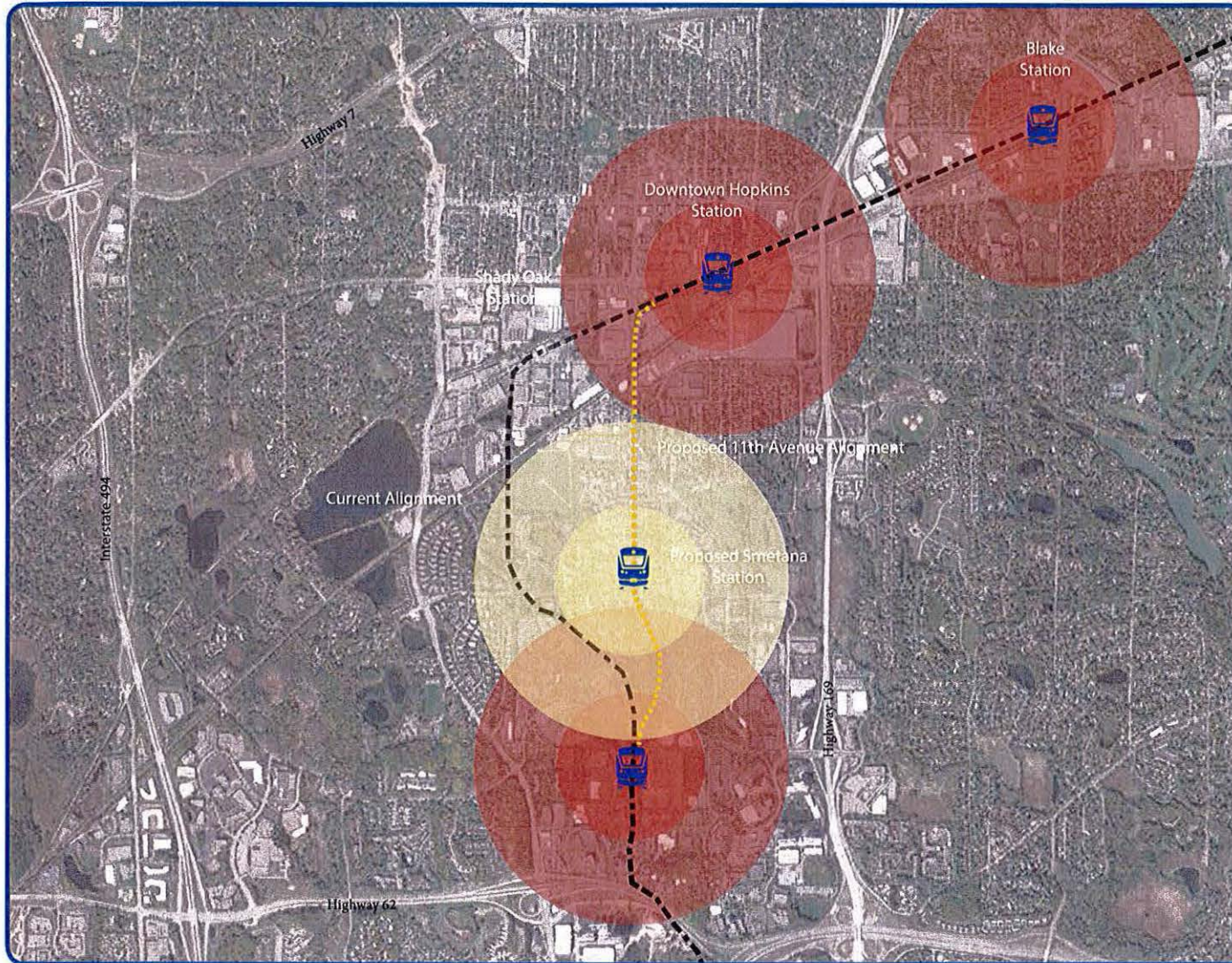




**Current Alignment Summary: Gap**

- \$74 million estimated cost (2013 dollars) for line between Shady Oak and OPUS
- Length of track from Shady Oak Station to OPUS Station - 11,501 feet
- Bridge will span 3,250 feet with a height of 23 1/2 feet over wetland west of the landfill
- Potential adverse impacts to wetlands and landfill
- Shady Oak Station
  - Only 853 people within 0.5 miles
  - 10-minute walk-shed does not include a majority of the 853 people
  - 10-minute walk-shed overlaps with Downtown Hopkins Station
- Opus Station
  - Only 1,131 people within 1/2 mile radius
  - No rental units within 1/4 mile radius

North  Date: 8/28/2015



**LRT Station Location**  
 .....  
 The proposed Smetana Station is centered in the light yellow circles.

**Proposed Alignment Summary:  
 Improved Hopkins Coverage**  
 .....

- Estimated \$24 Million
- Length of track from 11th to OPUS Station - 9,298 feet
  - Reduction of rail line and cost for 2,200 feet
  - Substantial savings in rail and bridge costs
- Reduced rider time
- 11th Avenue Station: Increased Ridership
  - 6,000 people within 1/2 mile radius
  - Large resident population within 1/4 mile walk-shed
  - Numerous transit reliant users within walk-shed
  - Adjacent to St. Theresa's Senior Housing
- Connections to existing bus routes

North  Date: 8/28/2015



Mixed Use / Affordable Housing



TOD Development



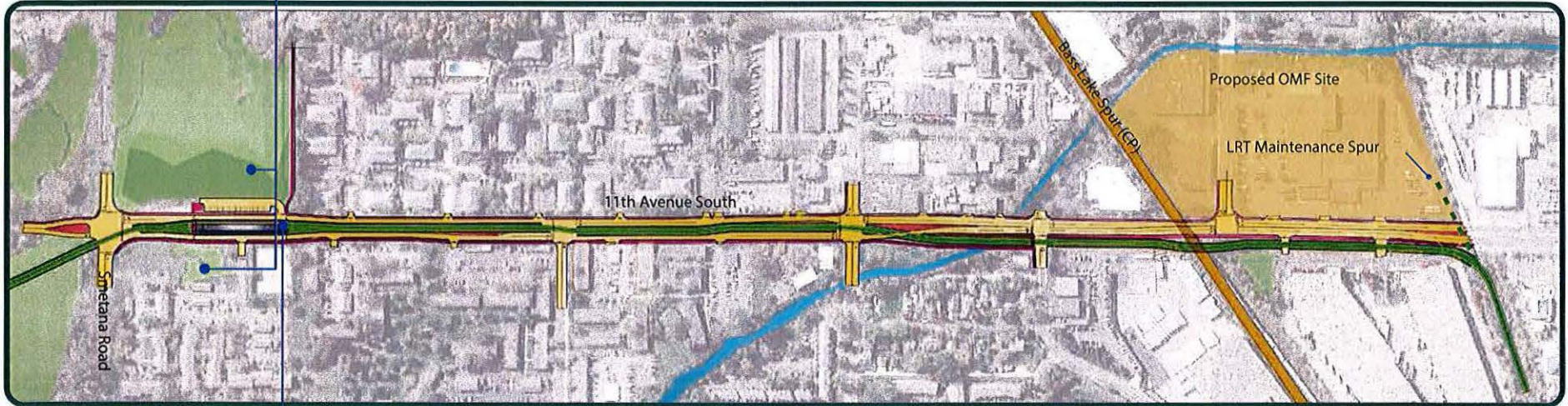
TOD Development



Possible Streetscape Enhancements



TOD Development



Landscape Style Station



Center Platform Allows for Development Offsite



TOD Development



Potential for Public Art



TOD Development



North



Date: 8/28/2015



Robert M. Brockway

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] [REDACTED]  
Minneapolis, MN 55416  
[REDACTED]

I represent the 142 home owners at the Calhoun Isles high rise and town homes. The planned tunnel for the SWLRT will be just three feet from our foundations. Though our opinions vary as to the acceptance of the SWLRT, we all feel strongly about the following:

- (1) No damage to Calhoun-Isles homes will be incurred during the construction process, and
- (2) That there will be no negative effects to Calhoun-Isles homes from the operation and maintenance of the SWLRT line once it is in operation.

Our communication with the engineering group at the Met Council has been excellent, however the same can't be said for the Council as a whole. Based on the experience of a nearby neighborhood with a sewer project as well as that of the U of M and NPR, the Council seems to have little sympathy for anyone or anything other than their own bottom line.

We would want assurances that, if there were such negative effects on our homes, we would be fully compensated without the need of legal action. We feel strongly that this should be a proviso to any acceptance of the SWLRT by the City of Minneapolis.

A concern for our safety is the fact that TC & W often parks their ethanol and probably future oil trains in our corridor, sometimes as long as 16 hours, waiting to be allowed to travel onto the main BNSF tracks. If one of those tank cars has just a small vapor leak, with the closely adjacent LRT and its overhead sparking, the results would be horrific. Has the city investigated any other nationwide locations with similar situations ?

# NEWS RELEASE: Transit advocate bobagain releases “modified 3C” SWLRT alternative; Eden Prairie & Minnetonka cut; starts at Shady Oak; follows Greenway to Uptown & I-35W; elevated above Freeway to Convention Center; links to Green Line at Target Field



**Note:** An attached .pdf News Release version includes graphics.

**Disclosure:** bobagain is a registered Lobbyist, representing “*We the People*”, an informal association, and has announced a campaign to win a Pulitzer Prize for investigative reporting, covering the unfolding “SWLRT disaster”; bobagain has launched a Crowd Funded video series, and is also launching a for-profit business to offer better transit solutions.

Contact: Bob “Again” Carney Jr (bobagain): [bobagaincarneyjr@gmail.com](mailto:bobagaincarneyjr@gmail.com); cell phone: (612) 812-4867

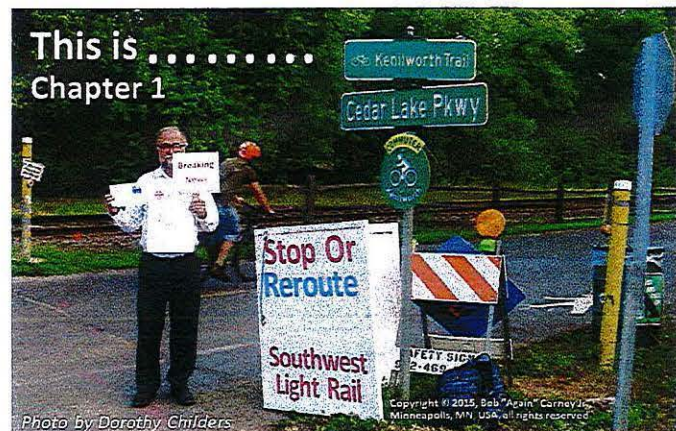
Visit: [www.bobagain.com](http://www.bobagain.com)

Minneapolis 8/27/15 – Transit advocate, registered lobbyist for “We the People” (informal association), entrepreneur and “candidate-journalist” Bob “Again” Carney Jr (“bobagain”) has released a detailed “modified 3C” SWLRT alternative plan. The 31 page plan, about 11,800 words, is available as a .pdf download at [www.bobagain.com](http://www.bobagain.com); it is too big to include as an e-mailed News Release attachment.

The “modified 3C” plan starts at Shady Oak station in Hopkins; all Eden Prairie and Minnetonka stations are

cut, but their service area would be reached by bus-based extensions. Rather than going through the environmentally sensitive Kenilworth park environment, “modified 3C” follows the Greenway to Uptown.

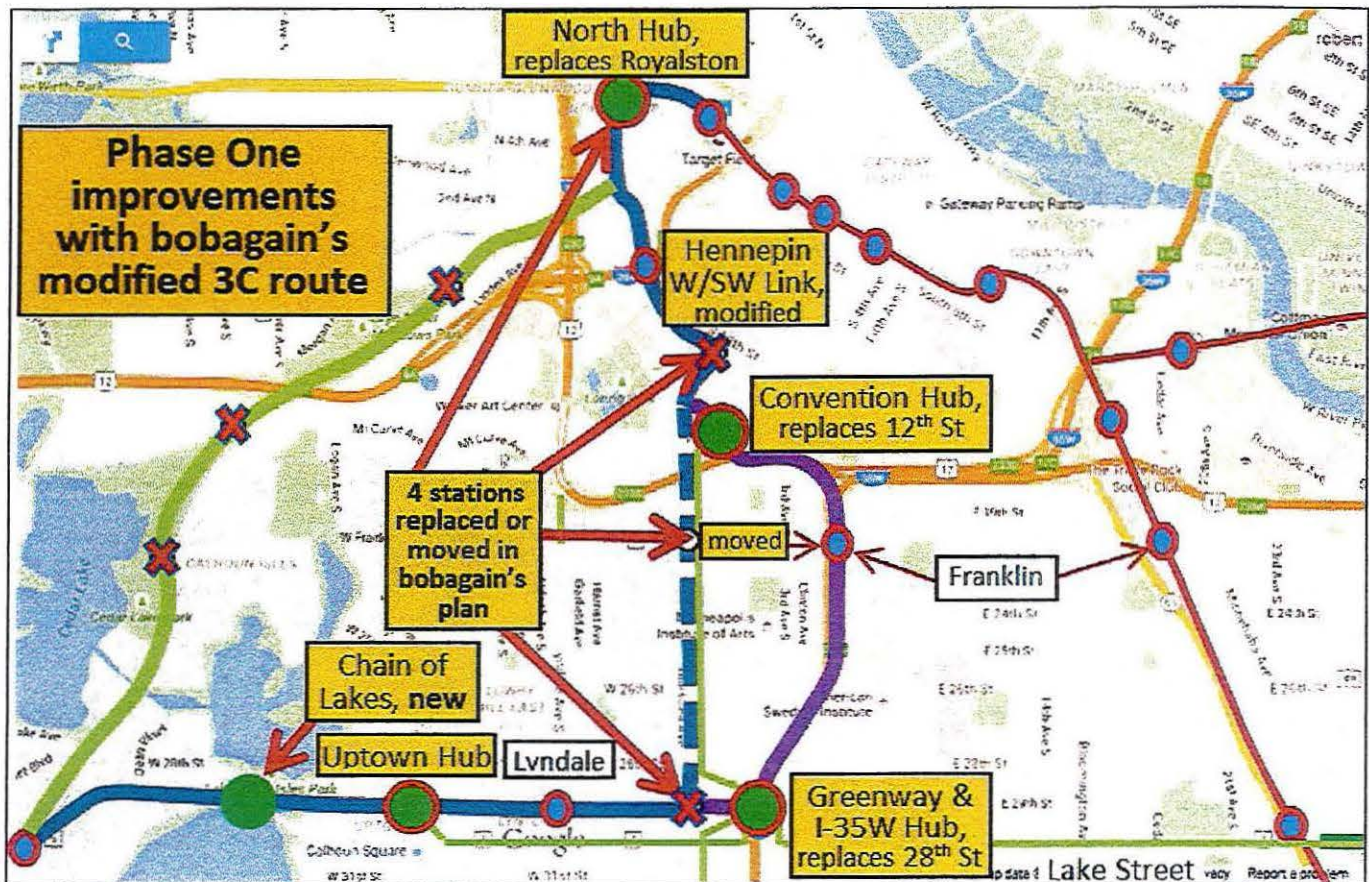
A map on page 2 shows the current route, the 3C alternative route, and bobagain’s “modified 3C” route (download .pdf version of this news release for graphics). At Nicollet, the 3C route heads north to Downtown in a tunnel; as shown by a dashed line. The “modified 3C” route would continue a little further East to a Greenway & I-35W Hub. The LRT would then be elevated above the Freeway corridor, and would stop at a Franklin Station (moved from Nicollet) before reaching a new Convention Hub, which would replace the “3C 12<sup>th</sup> Street Station.



The screen shot above is from Chapter 1 of bobagain’s new Crowd Funded Video Series

The Convention Hub and/or the Hennepin W/SW Link Station would link to an extensive existing network of about 700 commuter buses. Hundreds of additional Reverse Commute routes would be scheduled, using Commuter buses that are already running today, but that are not scheduled for Reverse Commute runs.

From 12<sup>th</sup> Street the “modified 3C” route would then rejoin and continue along the unmodified 3C route; remaining elevated past Hennepin. The Royalston Station is upgraded in the “modified 3C” plan to a North Hub; the LRT would then link to the Green Line at Target Field.



The “modified 3C” alternative will be presented today by bobagain at the Metropolitan Council, Hennepin County Board and Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority Municipal Consent hearing. The 6 PM hearing is at the Minneapolis Central Library, at 3<sup>rd</sup> and Hennepin in Downtown Minneapolis. An open house presenting the Metro Council’s current plan will be at 5 PM.

“It appears that the entire history of this project has been driven not by the goal of designing an optimal transit solution for the Twin Cities and Minnesota, but by conforming to the changing criteria and requirements associated with securing federal matching dollars for the project. My biggest concern is that the current plan is nothing short of a disaster in three major respects. First, it fails as a satisfactory solution to the challenge of what can and should be done to develop the best possible transit system from the point of view of serving “We

the People” generally, and transit users in particular. Second, it increases the danger that Minnesota’s budget for metro area transit will be insufficient to fund bus-based alternatives that could accomplish much more to address transit equity issues – building a system that can best meet the transit and housing needs of minorities and low income people. Third, there are extraordinary environmental risks associated with both tunneling through an area near our Chain of Lakes that is known to connect the lakes with both surface and subterranean flows of water, and with co-locating freight and a light rail tunnel,” bobagain said.

The Southwest Light Rail project has been plagued with repeated cost increases, and most recently with an evident, obvious loss of support for the project at the Legislature. The recent “lights on” Transportation bill cancelled two thirds of the total money the Legislature had appropriated for the project – an action advanced and promoted by bobagain’s lobbying activity. At the recent Special Session, Republican House Speaker Kurt Daubt told bobagain the Legislature would not make more money available for Southwest Light Rail in the 2016 session. Because the current financing plan calls for a total of \$165 million from the Legislature, but only about \$15 million has been appropriated, the project is currently about \$150 million short of local funds. The Metro Council is talking about using “Certificates of Participation” – a kind of bond financing – however the legality of this has been called into question by House Transportation Chair Tim Kelly, and others

“If we are going to build SWLRT all, we need a realistic budget, and a plan that does not go through Kenilworth. This will require reopening the scoping process. Due to the unique and unfortunate history of this project, we can and should work with the FTA on an Agreement to allow SWLRT to re-enter the scoping process while remaining in the New Starts program. I am not a member of the Lakes and Parks Alliance, and don’t speak for them, but I will offer this assessment: such a plan could be part of a negotiated settlement of the current Lakes and Parks Alliance lawsuit. If the process continues to a Final EIS and a Record of Decision, the FTA can and would also be sued at that point – so there is a basis and an incentive for the FTA to be part of settlement talks now,” bobagain concluded.

<end>

# Opinion Exchange

THE ISSUES OF THE DAY AT STARTRIBUNE.COM/OPINION

EDITORIAL COUNTERPOINT

## Southwest light-rail plans unrealistic

**Amid tight budget, it's clear state's transit challenge will not be solved next year.**

By BOB "AGAIN" CARNEY JR.

In two recent editorials this paper lamented the 2015 Legislature's failure to meet Minnesota's transportation challenges and celebrated the latest not-dead-yet Southwest light-rail plan, wrapped in shiny new duct tape ("Minnesota sputters in roads, transit race," July 6; "Civic sacrifice keeps Southwest on track," July 8).

Those editorials are unrealistic. Let's survey what the Legislature and Gov. Mark Dayton could agree to next year — and what is out of reach.

Fortunately our state transportation commissioner — self-described "old bus guy" Charlie Zelle — is respected and trusted by all.

Zelle told the House Transportation Committee in January that without reliable funding he could not

responsibly choose more expensive but also more cost-effective options. When a budget is too tight, only short-term band-aid solutions are possible. DFL Rep. Ron Erhardt — a former Republican Transportation Committee Chair — took Zelle's cue, proposing a constitutional amendment to permanently dedicate new funding. Expanded bonding authority could be included in that amendment.

Zelle's prudence, reliable management and realistic numbers are the foundation for the real lead story from this year's session: Dayton and House Republicans agree about the billions needed for a decade of adequate and effective spending on roads and bridges.

All things considered, this represents real progress — it's not a "giant step backward." Next year our Legislature and governor can, should and might agree to fund roads and bridges for one year, followed by a November constitutional vote to provide the decade of reliable funding Zelle insists on.

As a registered lobbyist for "We the People," I promoted the Legislature's decision to cancel an earlier \$90 mil-

lion Southwest LRT appropriation — repurposing those dollars for Metro Transit operations. That plan — the best available option as the session wound down — ensured that Metro Transit could avoid service or job cuts.

**Dayton, House Republicans agree: Billions are needed for decade of adequate spending on roads and bridges.**

At the special session House Speaker Kurt D. Ziegenfuss confirmed to me that with only \$15 million of state money now appropriated (\$150 million less than planned), there will be no more state Southwest LRT money in 2016.

This brings me to the bad news. Based on my lobbying work with dozens of legislators, it's clear that Minnesota's transit challenge simply cannot be solved next year.

The current transit sales tax system — now heavily favoring Hennepin County — is losing support from other counties. The Chamber of Commerce supported the new quarter-percent transit sales tax in 2008; today they oppose any increase. And that was before the most recent Southwest LRT planning disasters.

This paper's editorials implicitly acknowledged these transit obstacles — noting that when the DFL controlled both Houses and the governor's office, no transit sales tax increase was approved.

If light rail is to go forward at all, a new framework is needed, possibly including public-private partnership elements and light-rail tax districts.

Unfortunately, the Met Council is choosing to ignore our elected governor and Legislature. Their Southwest LRT finance plan now includes "Certificates of Participation" — backed by anticipated tax revenue — to be sold if (make that when) the Legislature doesn't provide more money next year.

Fortunately, we have alternatives.

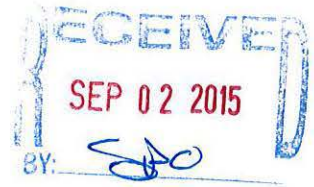
One Southwest LRT option could start in Hopkins (supplemented

beyond by buses), follow the Greenway (below grade) — surfacing at a giant Interstate 35W Transit Hub linking with I-35W MNPass bus service and the Lake Street and Nicollet lines — and then (elevated) follow the free-way corridor to Franklin, a Convention Station, and finally to Royalston and Target Field Stations.

Light rail can and should make all Minneapolis stadiums and arenas — and the nearby U of M — extensions of our convention facility. Convention visitors quickly could go to the heart of our amazing park system, to the airport and to the Mall of America. Special Blue Line trains could continue along the same track to the Convention Station when major conventions are here.

Let's send Southwest LRT back to the drawing board, and take an honest look at all our options — including bus-based alternatives. Let's not let a light-rail bureaucratic steamroller crush Minnesota's opportunity to fully fund our needed road and bridge work for the next decade.

Bob "Again" Carney Jr. is a transit advocate in Minneapolis.



Dear Mr Cigolo,

I recently read in the local paper about how the proposed southwest LRT project is re-initiating the municipal consent process. I doubt that my opinions would be factored into this process, but would like to express them anyway. From what I have read the proposed project has an estimated budget of around two billion dollars to create a static train line from Eden Prairie to Minneapolis. I believe that works out to about one hundred million dollars per mile for something that is not needed and will cost taxpayers millions more each year as the riders fees will not match the costs of running the trains. We already have buses. They use the existing infrastructure and routes can (and are) changed to accommodate changes in people's transit habits and patterns. The LRT is a significant waste of money time and energy. I think the whole project should be scrapped.

Sincerely,

Chris Jacobs

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Alex Abraham [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, September 11, 2015 11:42 AM  
**To:** swlrt  
**Subject:** RE: Comment on Southwest LRT design plans by Sept. 11

Dear Sir or Madam:

The current design plans regarding the selection of retaining walls does not meet industry standards. A reevaluation is required.

Mechanically Stabilized Earth (MSE) Walls with Precast Concrete Panels and Galvanized Steel Reinforcements were used by Metropolitan Council for the Blue Line (Minneapolis's Hiawatha Light Rail). More than 50,000 sq. ft. of MSE Walls with Precast Concrete Panels and Galvanized Steel Reinforcements was incorporated into the structures along Hiawatha Light Rail. These structures have performed very well for more than ten years.

Mechanically Stabilized Earth (MSE) Walls with Precast Concrete Panels and Galvanized Steel Reinforcements is approved by Minnesota DOT (MnDOT) for use in highway projects and is being used in several projects throughout Minnesota.

The first MSE wall using galvanized steel strips to support commuter rail was built in 1977 for Atlanta's West Rail Line. Since then, MSE wall using galvanized steel strips were used for commuter rail projects in the cities of Washington, Los Angeles, New York, Denver, Phoenix, Dallas, Cleveland, Portland, Seattle, San Diego, Boston, Minneapolis (Blue Line - Hiawatha LRT), San Jose, Sacramento, Miami, New Port News, Calgary, Edmonton, Vancouver BC, among others.

-  
Based on the excellent performance of the galvanized steel strips on the Blue Line (Hiawatha Light Rail Project), the current proposal by the designers of the Southwest LRT to exclude Mechanically Stabilized Earth (MSE) Walls with Precast Concrete Panels and Galvanized Steel Reinforcements for the Southwest LRT project is unacceptable and should be reevaluated.

Sincerely,

**Alexander Abraham**  
Regional Manager  
**The Reinforced Earth Company**  
1444 North Farnsworth Avenue, Suite 505  
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Phone: [REDACTED]  
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[www.reinforcedearth.com](http://www.reinforcedearth.com)



**REINFORCED eARTH**



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[REDACTED]

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, September 11, 2015 1:07 PM  
**To:** swlrt  
**Subject:** LRT in Eden Prairie

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to express my concern and resentment for the LRT entering into Eden Prairie. I am adamantly opposed to this antiquated, loud, obnoxious and intimidating mode of transportation that is being forced down our throats. Once again, money overrides what the people want. The elected officials along with the Met Council are going to go ahead and run this through, even though it is not desired by the majority. We can purchase many, many busses that will take care of the transportation needs for a very long time into the future. And it will not cost anywhere near the one and 3/4 billion dollars projected to complete this project.

I continue to grow more frustrated with the ineffectiveness of our elected officials and their inability to represent the wants and needs of those that have sent them to office. I would ask that if they cannot do what is right, than let us have a referendum and we will take care of business as it should be.

Most Sincerely,

Brant Hutchins  
[REDACTED]  
Eden Prairie, MN 55347

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Denetrick Powers, HNA [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, September 11, 2015 1:28 PM  
**To:** swlrt  
**Cc:** Shauen V. T. Pearce, HNA  
**Subject:** Municipal Consent Comment 2015

To whom it may concern,

On behalf of Harrison Neighborhood Association and Harrison neighborhood, we would like it to be known that we are in full support of the Southwest LRT project. Harrison residents have been strong and vocal advocates of the SWLRT project and its potential to reduce racial and economic inequities by connecting Northsiders to regional job centers and to support existing plans for redevelopment in Bassett Creek Valley surrounding the Van White Station Stop. Despite HNA's support there is deep concern regarding segmentation, linking of unrelated projects, and the fair distribution of benefits and burdens (including direct and indirect) associated with the project on Environmental Justice communities.

There are two primary reasons for support:

- 1.) The economic development opportunity created by the Van White Station Stop on City owned land and ability to catalyze redevelopment creating benefits for EJ community members in the forms of jobs, housing, expansion of green space, increase community connections and creation of place in a currently blighted area owned by the public.
  
- 2.) The added transit connection of Harrison and North Minneapolis residents to vital job centers along the Southwest Corridor. The top three industries Northside residents work (Health Care, Manufacturing, and Retail Trade) match the top three industries (Retail Trade, Manufacturing and Health Care) along the Southwest LRT, according to the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) 2006 data. Proactive and deliberate efforts are necessary to link EJ communities to job centers along the Southwest LRT Corridor because of the history of isolation from employment opportunities in Suburban areas.

Although we are in full support of the SWLRT project we would like it to be known that we insist on the following SWLRT equity commitments, which were previously submitted to the City of Minneapolis, Hennepin County and Metropolitan Council, to be implemented into project and city plans.

## **I. TRANSIT IMPROVEMENTS**

### **Plan and develop multi-modal transit connections to the Penn Ave and Van White Southwest Light Rail stations**

#### **1. A connection from Penn Ave BRT or enhanced bus service to the Penn Ave SWLRT Station**

**a) Direct Service:** The **Met Council** will commit to run high frequency bus connections with extended weekday and weekend service hours along Penn Ave. N. to the SW Penn Ave. station stop.

**b) Full analysis of bus connections and new routing to maximize access and connectivity of SW**

**LRT:** The **Southwest Project Office** will conduct a transit service plan that will analyze the existing bus systems and reconfigure to support the transit rider needs and uses in the SWLRT area, including connections for the SW Van White station and enhanced bus service for Glenwood Ave. A national model of community engagement for this process is the Trusted Advocate Program at **District Councils Collaborative of St. Paul and Minneapolis (DCC)** see <http://dcc-stpaul-mpls.org/content/transit-more-ride-trusted-advocate-project> This was a direct partnership between Metro Transit and DCC to execute the community engagement.

**c) Community Partnerships/Contracts for future transit service planning:** The Met Council commits to award community-based community engagement contracts to local community organizations to participate in two areas.

- i. **Coordinated transit service planning** with the Met Council for the SWLRT, Penn Avenue BRT, Bottineau LRT, Fremont/Girard Avenue and West Broadway Avenue corridors.
- ii. **Coordinated land use planning** with city, county and Met Council for SWLRT, Penn Avenue BRT, Bottineau LRT, Emerson/Fremont Avenue and West Broadway Avenue corridors. Including (but not limited to):
  - A focus on sensible density principles
  - **Review and re-commitment to the Basset Creek Valley Master Plan,** which has called for a relocation of the impound lot and does not include placement of a rail storage facility in the region. Alternative locations for the impound lot and rail storage facility are possible and need to be adopted.

**2. Create favorable conditions for future transit connections to the SWLRT, including a Northside circulator, other proposed BRT lines, streetcars, and regional rail.**

**a) Adoption of Regional Street Car Policy:** The **Met Council** will recognize the cities of **Minneapolis** and **St. Paul** Street Car analysis and commits to adopting a regional street car policy.

**b) Adoption of Nicolet/Central Street Car project into the TPP:** The **Met Council** commits to providing a Locally Preferred Alternatives recommendation for the **Nicolet/Central** Street Car project and will work to have this line adopted into the TPP by the end of 2014, subject to the approval of the TAB.

**c) Move Street Car and Enhanced Bus service forward:** the **Met Council** commits to providing a Locally Preferred Alternatives recommendation for the **Midtown Greenway** Street Car/single rail car corridor and will move the **West Broadway** Street Car project forward, pending a favorable review that Street Cars are a viable option for that corridor by the current study. The Council also commits to funding enhanced bus service for **Lake Street** and **Franklin Avenue** once the SW line begins operations in order to form better links between the Green and Blue lines.

**d) 21<sup>st</sup> Street Station:** The **Met Council** commits to including a **21<sup>st</sup> Street station** along the SWLRT corridor as a critical connection point for buses from Franklin Avenue serving south Minneapolis - in particular the Phillips Community and Whittier neighborhood.

Community members want a commitment to east-west bus connectivity to access the SW line to enhance connections to the population base of south Minneapolis.

**e) North Minneapolis Bus Circulator concept:** The **Met Council** commits to study and make recommendations on the viability of operating a new bus circulator route for the Northside of Minneapolis. The circulator would provide access to origins and destinations within the neighborhoods of North Minneapolis as well as connecting them to the regional transit system and

all of the economic, social, and environmental opportunities the region affords.<sup>i</sup>

### **3. Prioritize bicycle and pedestrian access**

**a)** Minneapolis, Hennepin County and Met Council commit to incorporate bicycle and pedestrian planning into the coordinated transit service and land use planning efforts as listed in **Item I. 1. c)** [page 2 of this document]

- Incorporate Complete Street policy principles and practices when making transit investments
- Incorporate plans for protected bikeways for the northside when making transit investment and planning decisions

**b)** Support innovative opportunities to connect transit investments to healthy outcomes.

### **Invest in North Side transit infrastructure and amenities**

#### **4. Heated bus shelters, Transfer Stations and other improvements**

**a) Met Council** commits to add **at least 24 heated bus shelters** (full C-style standard Metro Transit shelter) along routes **5, 7 9, 14, 19, 22, and 30** by 2015.

**b) Met Council** commits to add **security cameras** and **emergency call boxes** at strategic locations along routes **5, 7 9, 14, 19, 22, and 30**.

**c) Met Council** commits to adopt **snow removal management practices** at shelters in north Minneapolis with higher ridership

**d) Met Council** commitment to work with northside community-based partner groups to study and identify sites for constructing **at least two north Minneapolis Transfer Stations** for bus and rail transit riders.

#### **Lower bus fares**

**a) Met Council** commits to **at least a 25 cent drop in regular route fares** in urbanized portions of the region. Metro Transit will apply an equity lens, and uphold FTA Environmental Justice principles, when evaluating fare increases and decreases.

**b) Longer transfer times: Met Council** commits to extending the time period allowed for transferring from one vehicle to another after initial payment by one hour – from 2 1/2 hours to **3 1/2 hours** (this has been a consistent request among transit riders).

#### **5. Lower wait times**

**a) Service Frequency: Met Council** agrees to study the feasibility of higher frequency service with extended hours and higher frequency service on weekends. A model for defining what this could look like would be how higher frequency is defined in the Central Corridor service plan.

## **II. REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

### **Prioritize Van White Station development**

**1. City and County collaboration are needed to maximize the development potential already planned for by the community**

**a) Van White Station Prioritization:** The **City of Minneapolis** commits to prioritizing funding development at the Van White station along the SWLRT and commits to working closely with the **Bryn Mawr** and **Harrison neighborhood associations** to achieve the vision of the **Bassett Creek Valley (BCV) Master Plan** for a mixed-use, mixed-income development including affordable rental and homeownership options. Use **SW project contingency funds** to support station area infrastructure and address bike/ped connectivity needs.

**b) No Land Transfer at Van White Station:** The **City of Minneapolis** commits to not transfer the land surrounding the SW Van White station area (**Linden Yard West and East**) for the use of commuter train storage.

**c) No Train Storage at Van White Station:** As a core commitment to Environmental Justice principles and racial equity outcomes, **MnDOT** agrees not to pursue a diesel train storage yard at the SW Van White station area (**Linden Yards East**).

**d) Removal of city Impound Lot:** The **City of Minneapolis** commits to the *dismantling, clean up and reclamation* of the city impound lot to residential and park/recreation standards consistent with prior commitments of city comprehensive planning documents and the 4 stages of redevelopment in the BCV Master Plan. Relocation and/or alternative to the impound lot should be developed and considered in an effort to equitably disperse benefits and risks of city design and needs. Secure funding from state, regional and **SW project contingency fund** sources.

**e) Develop community agreed upon design guidelines for Van White station development. f) Invest in energy efficient development.**

## **2. Maintain and Expand affordable housing base**

**a) Housing Choices:** The **City of Minneapolis**, **Hennepin County** and the **Met Council** commit to working with local neighborhood associations, private and community nonprofit housing developers such as Urban Homeworks and the City of Lakes Community Land Trust to fund the maintenance and preservation of a rich balance of housing choices that are affordable for current and future residents and workers within and near the transitway corridors. It is important that there are goals around developing mixed-income communities in order to secure equitable share of resources and opportunities for whole community development. Affordability definitions should be calibrated to median income levels for the city of Minneapolis (lower percentages than regional median income levels to better reflect on-the-ground conditions).

**b)** The **City of Minneapolis** commits to a strategy of preventing involuntary displacement of low-wealth communities from transitway corridors.

## **3. Promote and engage with Glenwood Ave. “West Market Business District” to catalyze growth through more of North Minneapolis**

**a)** The **City of Minneapolis** commits to working with local neighborhood associations and business owners to coordinate station area planning and land use planning that anticipates multiple transitway investments. The **West Market Business District** and **Van White Memorial Blvd.** should serve as demonstration projects for this purpose. The city of Minneapolis commits to honoring previous commitments to neighborhoods and communities (i.e., Bassett Creek Valley Master Plan commitments).

**b)** The **City of Minneapolis**, **Hennepin County** and the **Met Council** agree to coordinate efforts with local neighborhood associations and nonprofit community development organizations to plan for

new business development along northside commercial corridors, achieve TOD density goals, create entrepreneurial incubator programs and maximize local job/workforce programs.

### **III. REGIONAL EQUITY/HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT**

#### **1. Develop a system that connects job seekers with employment and entrepreneurial opportunities along corridor**

**a) A system should be developed to ensure people of color have opportunities to secure employment with Anchor Institutions and businesses in key growth sectors of the regional economy.**

Public officials and agencies need to recognize this leg of a broader rail system will connect segregated populations to employment centers (industrial parks, etc.) and training agencies throughout the system. Employers along the transit development should be engaged to understand their employee needs and this opportunity, both now and moving forward. Their projections along with job descriptions can be used to design a community based recruitment and training program for these jobs. Similar to construction, this program would create a pool of available workers to fill future employer needs.

Public agencies should use their leverage to bring employers to the table and to ensure those employers are hiring people of color. All anchor institutions along the transit line that receive public benefits or simply benefit from the transit development should have hiring goals for people of color as they hire new workers in the future.

Community based training organizations should be utilized in the effort to design such a program to recruit, identify, and if necessary train community workers to meet the needs of Anchor employers based on the similar successful effort of the Employment Assistance Firm being implemented as a part of the development of the Minnesota Multi-use Sports Facility (i.e. the Vikings Stadium.)

**b) Hennepin County and DEED commit to create framework to operationalize this program with Northside employment outreach and training groups such as Summit Academy OIC and the Urban League to design and fund a program such as the Employment Assistance Firm model (EAFs) to intentionally and successfully connect unemployed and underemployed Northside residents to jobs along the SW Corridor.**

Program design based on best practices:

- i. Assessment of employers' employee needs –current and projected.
- ii. A trusted intermediary to bridge employee connections to employers. (Hopefully, EAF under another name)
- iii. A means of recruitment
- iv. Training aligned with identified employer needs.
- v. Identifying regional development/employment opportunities in expanding industries.
- vi. Organize the proposed North Minneapolis Workforce Center's program and tenancy to be the anchor for this effort.

**Possible partners:** the county can look to their work with the **Northside Community Response Team (NCRT)** and **DEED** can work with its **North Minneapolis Workforce Center** Community Advisory Committee (CAC) & the other Community-Based Organizations that performed outreach. Another stakeholder partner that should be approached is the **Northside Funders Collaborative**. This program should also employ lessons learned from the successes and failures of the Central Corridor efforts on anchor institutions.

The partners should engage local and regional businesses committed to job training and local- source hiring in a coordinated effort with Penn Ave Community Works and other targeted development in North Minneapolis.

## **2. Exceed the required 32% minority/6% female construction hiring goal**

### **a) The Met Council agrees to increase Equitable Hiring Goals to 40% people of color and 10% women (above the required 32% people of color and 6% women).**

With the increased interest in creating employment opportunities for people of color, particularly those in North Minneapolis, and the availability of the premier construction employment training program in Hennepin County in North Minneapolis, the required hiring goals can and should be increased.

When compared to other areas in the region, North Minneapolis has a higher percentage of people of color and higher rates of poverty. Increased opportunities for employment have a significant opportunity to improve the economy of the neighborhoods.

The Met Council has set a precedent for increasing hiring goals when the development is in communities of color and high areas of poverty. On CCLRT construction, the Met Council set a hiring goal nearly 70% higher than the required goal. In this instance, the Met Council should set a goal equal to the percentage of people of color living in Minneapolis. This number is lower than the percentage of people of color in North Minneapolis and will still be lower than the percentage of people of color living in the city by the time construction begins, let alone when it ends.

### **b) The Met Council should contract with a Community Based Recruitment and Training Organization.**

Similar to the Employment Assistance Firm being utilized on the construction of the Multi- purpose Sports Facility in Downtown Minneapolis, the Met Council should contract with a community-based recruitment and training organization to organize this effort.

The overall purpose of this organization is to ensure that there is a pool of trained and skilled people of color and women available to work on this construction project. The organization will recruit both skilled workers and those needing training. For those needing training, the organization will provide the necessary training.

The organization needs to have strong community ties to be able to recruit people into the program. Training organizations must have experience working with communities of color and women. The organizations must also have relationships with organized labor to ensure that the workers and trainees have access to union employers.

This system is already underway on the new football stadium and should be used as a model.

### **c) There should be targeted zip code employment goals set for communities of color and areas high in poverty.**

On the construction of CCLRT, the Met Council identified zip codes with high percentages of people of color and high rates of poverty. Employers tracked the number of workers in these zip codes and publicly reported these numbers on a monthly basis.

Not only should this happen on this construction project, but there should be targets for the number of employees from these zip codes.

On previous construction projects, local government agencies have stated that federal regulations prohibit them from having local hiring goals when US Department of Transportation dollars are involved. There are ways around this, particularly with the involvement with the US Department of Housing and Urban Development.

HUD administers the Section 3 program, which is designed to create employment opportunities for low-income individuals living near HUD financed development. When HUD contributes to housing development along a transit line, Section 3 requirements could potentially be applied.

This would be of particular interest given the strong desire for benefits in North Minneapolis. The USDOT and HUD should be contacted in connection with this project to explore this opportunity.

**d) The Met Council will track the ethnicities of SWLRT construction workers and regularly report out to its EAF partners on these figures.**

**e) A goal of 20% DBE contracting will be pursued by the Met Council for SWLRT.**

**f) The governmental agencies coordinating the SWLRT project commit to finding opportunities to unbundle contracts for construction and professional projects to ensure that small, minority, and women owned businesses are included and able to prosper.**

Funding should be provided to offer technical assistance and support to these businesses as needed to ensure their success. The services that the Metropolitan Economic Development Association, (MEDA) provided to CCLRT could serve as a model for this assistance.

**g) Additionally, the governmental agencies coordinating on the SWLRT project, in partnership with major employers along the corridor, commit to adopt an equitable procurement system for goods and services from minority owned and other disadvantaged businesses.**

**h) The City of Minneapolis, Hennepin County and the Met Council commit to establish a \$50 million “capital fund” to support and promote entrepreneurs of color.**

This fund will be a flexible tool for helping train emerging entrepreneurs on the basics of starting a business, developing a business plan and lining up investors and capital. The fund will also be used to provide gap financing, low-interest loans and small capital improvement grants to “start ups” and existing businesses that wish to operate on or expand along transit-way corridors.

Harrison Neighborhood Association

Transit Development Fellow

