

# SOUTHWEST

Green Line LRT Extension



# Extending TRACKS

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## Project Undertaking Three Efforts Results expected in January for public feedback

New studies of freight rail options, water resources and landscaping are now underway in response to local concerns.

The Metropolitan Council tapped national engineering firm TranSystems to independently analyze freight rail relocation options and another national engineering firm, Burns & McDonnell, to independently evaluate potential impacts to water resources. Meanwhile, existing forces in the Southwest Project Office are conducting a landscape inventory.

Draft results of these three efforts are expected to be released in late January 2014 for public feedback. Final results will be presented to the public and to the project's advisory committees, and will be reviewed by the Metropolitan Council before it votes on the project scope and budget.

The project office worked closely with technical staff from Hennepin County, the cities of Minneapolis and St. Louis Park, as well as the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District and the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board in developing the scopes of work. The project office reviewed the proposals with city and county staff. The scopes of work



*Around half a million people use the Kenilworth Corridor trail every year.*

are relatively small in nature, but are specialized.

TranSystems ([www.transystems.com](http://www.transystems.com)) is a transportation consulting firm based in Kansas City, Mo. that focuses on aviation, maritime, freight rail, manufacturing & distribution and trucking.

"Relatively few firms had the qualifications to complete the freight rail relocation analysis while not being conflicted by working on previous relocation studies," said Jim Alexander, project director of design and engineering.

Also based in Kansas City (with a local office in Burnsville), Burns & McDonnell ([www.burnsmcd.com](http://www.burnsmcd.com)) is a full-service engineering, architecture, construction, environmental and consulting services firm.

"Burns and McDonnell is uniquely qualified to complete the water resources evaluation," said Alexander.

**In January, the Metropolitan Council will host community meetings focusing on the three efforts – see page 6. Read more about the three additional studies on the following pages.**

## Independent analysis of freight rail relocation alternatives will take a fresh look at previous studies and proposals

The freight rail relocation alternatives analysis will review existing studies and designs, assess viability of options considered and identify any new options.

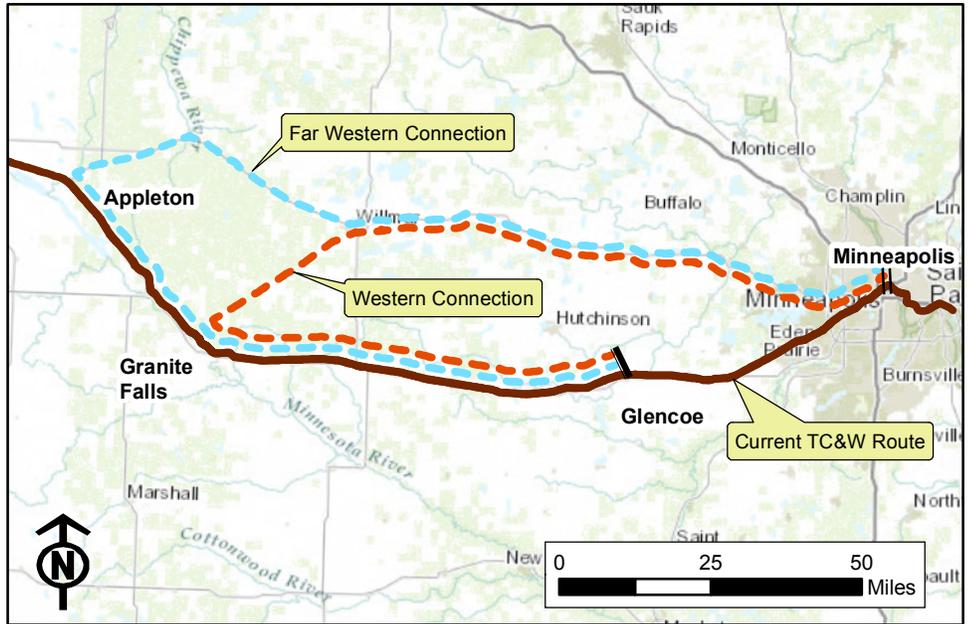
The work will be coordinated with Hennepin County and the cities of Minneapolis and St. Louis Park.

Activities will include:

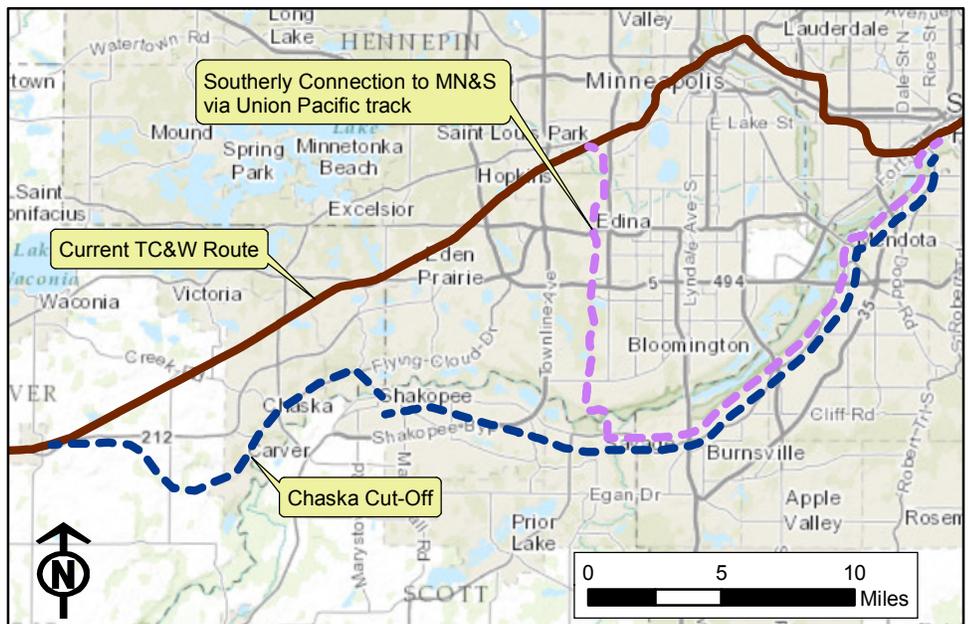
- Reviewing Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) freight rail relocation design and comments
- Reviewing previous freight rail relocation studies
- Reviewing Southwest LRT Project Office relocation designs
- Interviewing staff of freight railroads, cities and Hennepin County
- Identifying any new viable options
- Presenting results in late January to the Business Advisory Committee, Community Advisory Committee, Corridor Management Committee and the Metropolitan Council

Previous studies to be reviewed are:

- United Transportation Union memorandum (2013)
- Technical memorandums (Short Elliott Hendrickson, 2010 & 2011)
- Evaluation of Twin Cities & Western Railroad routing alternatives (Amfahr Consulting, 2010)
- Twin Cities & Western freight rail realignment study (Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority/TKDA, 2009)
- St. Louis Park railroad study (RLK Associates, 1999)

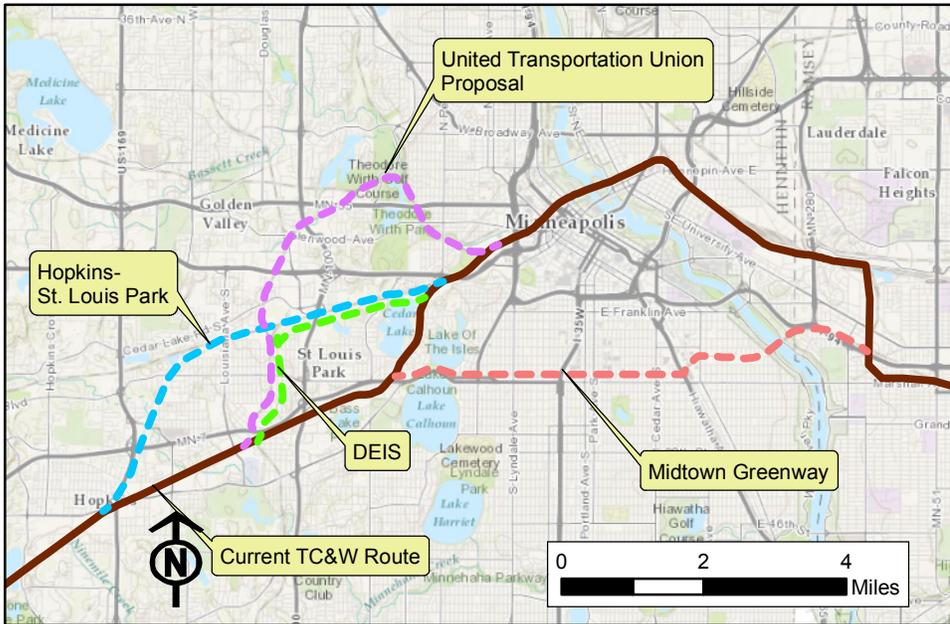


**Western Loops:** The Appleton/Benson Far Western and Granite Falls/Willmar Western alternatives.



**Southern Shifts:** The Chaska Cut-Off and the MN&S Southern Connection (via Union Pacific) alternatives.

## Freight rail relocation analysis (continued)



### Other Options:

The United Transportation Union alternative in Golden Valley and St. Louis Park.

The Midtown Greenway alternative in Minneapolis.

The Hopkins/St. Louis Park alternative near the Hwy. 169/Excelsior Blvd. intersection.

The DEIS route in St. Louis Park was studied and included as the preferred relocation option in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

## Water resources evaluation to look at potential impacts of LRT construction

The purpose of the water resources evaluation is to independently assess potential LRT construction impacts on water levels and quality within the Kenilworth Corridor.

Activities will be coordinated with the city of Minneapolis, Hennepin County, Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board and Minnehaha Creek Watershed District.

The evaluation will review all previous reports and documents. These are:

- Southwest LRT Project Office draft Basis of Design
- Project Office draft water monitoring plan for construction and ongoing operations
- Watershed District/Wenck Associates technical memo



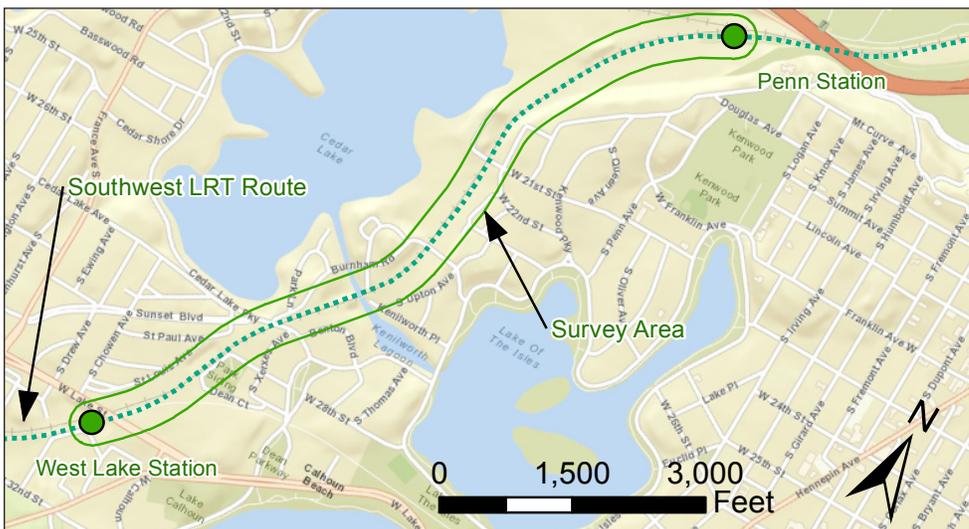
Left: As part of the water resources evaluation and ongoing ground water monitoring program, a technician inserts a ground water level indicator into one of the dozen piezometers placed in the Kenilworth Corridor.

## Landscaping/greenscaping inventory analysis will catalog vegetation, identify replanting opportunities

The purpose of the landscaping/greenscaping analysis is to identify existing trees and vegetation and identify re-vegetation opportunities with LRT construction in the Kenilworth Corridor.

These activities will be coordinated with the city of Minneapolis, Hennepin County, Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board and Minnehaha Creek Watershed District. The activities to be undertaken are:

- Review previous studies
- Inventory trees, understory vegetation and ground cover and create a database of this information
- Identify re-vegetation opportunities
- Develop a public involvement plan and public charrette process to identify design principles that will serve as a framework for the process



Upper left: A certified tree inspector hired by the project office measures the diameter of a tree in the Kenilworth Corridor. Lower left: Map of the survey area. Right: Trees over six inches in diameter are tagged and mapped by survey crews.

## Community meetings scheduled for January 2014

The Metropolitan Council will host public community meetings on January 7 & 9, 2014 focused on studies now underway of freight rail, water resources and landscaping/greenscaping in the Kenilworth area of Minneapolis.

Draft results of these studies are expected in late January 2014, at which time there will be more opportunities for public involvement.

These meetings will provide opportunities to learn about the scopes of these studies, talk to project staff and discuss the study scopes with invited elected officials. Additional meetings will be scheduled later to comment on the draft reports.

Any individual who requires assistance to participate should contact Southwest LRT Community Outreach Coordinator Daren Nyquist, Daren.Nyquist@metrotransit.org or 612-373-3894 at least seven business days in advance of the scheduled open house.

### MEETING LOCATIONS & TIMES

**Tuesday, January 7, 2014 (5:00–7:30 P.M.)**

**Kenwood Community Center**

2101 Franklin Avenue West, Minneapolis

MAP: <http://goo.gl/maps/oguGh>

**Thursday, January 9, 2014 (5:00–7:30 P.M.)**

**St. Louis Park Recreation Center**

3700 Monterey Drive, St. Louis Park

MAP: <http://goo.gl/maps/waC5T>

### MEETING AGENDA

- 5:00 – 5:30** Open house (project staff on hand to answer questions)
- 5:30 – 7:30** Welcome and review of meeting purpose
- Overview: scopes of work for 3 studies
- Facilitator-led discussion
- Wrap-up/Next steps

## Stay connected with the Southwest LRT project

**The Southwest LRT Community Outreach Coordinators** are the first point of contact for members of the public, community organizations and corridor businesses. Pictured left to right are **Dan Pfeiffer** (Minnetonka, Hopkins & Edina), **Sophia Ginis** (St. Louis Park & Minneapolis) and **Daren Nyquist** (Eden Prairie).



To get in touch with the outreach coordinator for your area, visit the “Public Involvement” page of the project website at [www.swlrt.org](http://www.swlrt.org), email [swlrt@metrotransit.org](mailto:swlrt@metrotransit.org) or call 612-373-3800.

**The Southwest LRT website – [www.swlrt.org](http://www.swlrt.org)** – offers the latest news and information about the project. Find out about community events in your area, download maps and presentation materials, read news releases and connect with the project through our team of full-time outreach coordinators.



## About the project

The Southwest Light Rail Transit (LRT) project (Green Line Extension) will operate from downtown Minneapolis through the southwestern suburban cities of St. Louis Park, Hopkins, Minnetonka, and Eden Prairie, passing in close proximity to the city of Edina. The proposed alignment is primarily at-grade and includes 17 new stations and approximately 15.8 miles of double track.

The line will connect major activity centers in the region including downtown Minneapolis, the Opus/Golden Triangle employment area in Minnetonka and Eden Prairie, Methodist Hospital in St. Louis Park, the Eden Prairie Center Mall, and the Minneapolis Chain of Lakes. Ridership in 2030 is projected at 29,660 weekday passengers. The project will interline with Central Corridor LRT (Green Line) which will provide a one-seat ride to destinations such as the University of Minnesota, state Capitol and downtown St. Paul. It will be part of an integrated system of transitways, including connections to the METRO Blue Line, the Northstar Commuter Rail line, a variety of major bus routes along the alignment, and proposed future transitway and rail lines.

The Metropolitan Council will be the grantee of federal funds. The regional government agency is charged with building the line in partnership with the Minnesota Department of Transportation. The Southwest Corridor Management Committee, which includes commissioners from Hennepin County and the mayors of Minneapolis, St. Louis Park, Edina, Hopkins, Minnetonka, and Eden Prairie provides advice and oversight. Funding is provided by the Federal Transit Administration, Counties Transit Improvement Board (CTIB), state of Minnesota and Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority (HCRRA).

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