Southwest Transitway DEIS Comments

Comments Received during the November 13, 2012 Public Hearing
SOUTHWEST TRANSITWAY

DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (DEIS)

OPEN HOUSE/PUBLIC HEARING

PUBLIC TESTIMONY

NOVEMBER 13, 2012

REPORTED BY:  AMY KRISTINA LIZOTTE
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APPEARANCES

PETER McLAUGHLIN, Hennepin County Commissioner and Chair of Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority (HCCRA)

GAIL DORFMAN, Hennepin County Commissioner

JAN CALLISON, Hennepin County Commissioner

INDEX

TESTIMONY:

BARRY SCHADE................................       4
TIM HAYES...................................       6
BOB SALMEN..................................       7
DUANE PETERSON..............................      10
ART HIGINBOTHAM.............................      12
SCOTT BARRIBALL.............................      14

(Index continued on next page.)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Index continued.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CRAIG WESTGATE........................................ 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RYAN EDSTROM................................................. 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PETER RICKMEYER.................................................. 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JOSHUA HOUDEK.................................................. 22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TODD KLINGEL................................................... 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RANDY PETERSON.................................................. 26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JEANETTE COLBY.................................................. 26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RUSS ADAMS....................................................... 28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MARK STENSRUD.................................................... 31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MALIK HOLT......................................................... 32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JOHN HARTWIG...................................................... 36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JACK LEVY......................................................... 38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KATHLEEN MURPHY.................................................. 40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VICKIE MOORE....................................................... 41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MARC BALLBACH..................................................... 42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROLF ERICKSON..................................................... 43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(Opening statements off the record.)

THE COMMISSIONER: I have a list of people who have signed up, and the first person on the list is Barry Schade. Welcome.

BARRY SCHADE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My name is Barry Schade. I live at 256 Sheridan Avenue South. And I'm here as a representative for the Bryn Mawr Neighborhood Association. We wanted to show up today and let you know that the Bryn Mawr Neighborhood Association supports the DEIS review of the locally preferred alternative, and we support the finding that it is the environmentally preferred alternative. And that would include, especially in our interest, the Penn station and the relocation of the freight rail out of the Kenilworth corridor.

We're not particularly naive in ignoring there are some potentially negative impacts on Bryn Mawr, for example, the possible loss of connectivity in the neighborhood, as we have yet another possibly divisive thing like 394 that split the neighborhood years ago. And also we're aware of the possible loss of our easy unconventional access to the biking and walking trails by walking across the railroad tracks and going directly onto the trails.

However, we think that these negative
impacts are significantly offset by benefits that come from the project. And there are five things I would like to highlight.

First of all, the station itself would give us better access and connectivity to the light rail and to the regional transportation system. That, of course, is paramount. Secondly, the station at Penn would give us access to trails that we could otherwise lose by construction of the light rail and the construction of fences along the light rail.

Thirdly, we think the station at Penn would offer developmental potential, as was identified in the Capstone report that was prepared for the neighborhood by the Humphrey School of Public Affairs. And we see that beyond the neighborhood that the station also offers an opportunity for the near north side to connect with the light rail system and also -- would also provide an important gateway to the parks and trails in Minneapolis.

Of course, there are couple of minor things we might want to grumble about and probably will submit those in writing, but we mainly wanted to show up today and express our strong support for the DEIS document and its environmental evaluation and to thank you for the opportunity to appear before
you today.

THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much.

Next is Tim Hayes. After that it will be Bob Salmen, just to get yourself ready.

TIM HAYES: Thank you, Chairman. My name is Tim Hayes. And I'm with LBP Mechanical, 315 Royalston Avenue. The impact study shows a lack of understanding of the current conditions of the business operations on Royalston Avenue. We're going to be negatively impacted by the alignment of the platform and on the routing of the rail line. These businesses require unfettered access from Royalston, and this will be impacted by the current layout.

The long-term effects of the businesses on these sites need to be a priority as we go forward with this study. The DEIS anticipates land use changes with no plan for the implementation. The proposed LRT could have the impact of dislocating or relocating the businesses, and this needs to be developed.

While the environmental impact study acknowledges land use change is projected in the future, the existing businesses finding new locations, there's no plan as to how this will
happen and when. The mitigation must be identified to ensure that the existing businesses will be able to continue to operate.

We depend on street parking, and this will be eliminated with the current proposed routing. Further study of the traffic patterns and identification of measures to ensure that these businesses will continue to operate and have access need to be a priority during the preliminary engineering study. The proposed location of the Royalston station should also be reevaluated. The proposed location will severely impact the Royalston area businesses.

The businesses on Royalston Avenue are primarily industrial in nature and employ over 200 people currently. And there's nothing in the study that acknowledges these businesses or the contribution to the local economy. Thank you.

THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much. Next is Bob Salmen, and then Duane Peterson after that.

BOB SALMEN: Thank you. Appreciate it. I will first second pretty much everything that Tim had stated. I have the two properties that are just to the west of him, 501 Royalston and 415 Royalston.
My name, just to reiterate, is Bob Salmen, and my address is 501 Royalston Avenue. I am a -- we manage, lease, and own the two industrial properties at that location. They are multi-tenant. And we feel that we would be negatively impacted for the following reasons.

First of all, it will be a logistical nightmare. Because, as Tim stated, heavy truck traffic is in and out of our property on a daily basis. That will be severely restricted both during the construction period and post construction with the rail and inactivity. So that's devastating to some of our tenants who need the access, accessibility, and the circulation that currently is in the location, which will be blocked from Royalston Avenue.

There's also some discussion that Royalston Avenue may be converted to a route that goes along Border Avenue. And I just want to comment that if that does happen, that affects us probably even more negatively for pretty much the same reasons. But that would totally eliminate all of our truck access and traffic access, which is all through the west side of our property -- or properties.

Secondly, the construction disruption will
have a negative impact on our businesses. And our businesses are three- to five-year tenancies. And instead of a company coming into a construction zone for that period, they will probably either eliminate it or our revenues and revenues of those businesses would be anticipated to be very restricted. Whether or not that's the case, time will tell.

Taking the central corridor into account, it would probably align more with our fears that there's going to be a disruption that will negatively impact the businesses that are in there, or in our case, the businesses that we cannot bring into the property because of that.

The light rail itself for the type of businesses that we operate in that neighborhood is probably going to have little impact, even though there are 200, probably 250 soon, employees. Most of them drive cars, and for the near future most of those users probably will continue to. So even though there are many benefits to the light rail, the impact in the ridership to this particular area on Royalston is probably very limited.

THE COMMISSIONER: Your three minutes is up, if you could wrap up.

BOB SALMEN: One last thing, another
big concern that we have is the station being put in in front of Stark Electronics on this street will then require either an underground project or an over-the-bridge project to get the train from that station to the interchange itself. And we have seen nothing to show us what that's going to be like. So we're very nervous that we're going to get cut off from downtown by a large either concrete structure or bridge-type structure. So thank you very much for your time.

THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much.

Duane Peterson is next, and then Art Higinbotham.

Welcome, Mr. Peterson.

DUANE PETERSON: Yes. My name is Duane Peterson. The address is 401 Royalston Avenue North, Minneapolis, Minnesota. The organization would be Stark Electronics, which is our business. I'm going to talk about the access of -- the impact is going to have on the Royalston Avenue with our business. The LPA has a negative impact on access to the businesses along Royalston Avenue.

The businesses along Royalston Avenue are industrial in nature and require unfettered access to the conduct of their businesses. Further study of the traffic patterns and identification of
measures to ensure these businesses continue to have access should be prioritized during the primary engineering, the engineering being done now.

The businesses on Royalston Avenue are industrial and require direct and frequent access with cars, trucks, and semis. We have employees going in and out. The site contains only one access on Royalston Avenue. And the priority of the early P and E should be identifying alternate access to these businesses.

Further study of Border Avenue route as an alternative to Royalston is necessary to see if there is an alternative that has less impact on the Royalston businesses. If Holden Street is closed, the train alignment as it exists, the rail trench on its way to the Royalston station, the loss of this connection must be migrated by the project opening Border Avenue through one block through a private property through Glenwood Avenue. It is critical to maintain or improve vehicle circulation in this area for existing businesses, future development, traffic circulation, and pedestrian access.

If the Holden Avenue becomes a dead end, turnaround capability will be required provided that the public right of way and not on private property.
Alignment along Royalston Avenue right of way centered west side and east side should be evaluated looking at affects of adjacent businesses way to keeping two-way traffic circulation.

The proposal located at Royalston station should be reevaluated. The proposal location will certainly negatively impact the Royalston Avenue businesses.

The LPA will have a negative impact of businesses along Royalston Avenue. Again, I think I already said this, they're mostly industrial, but it's going to be over 200 and some jobs going to be impacted. If we have to move, these jobs could be done, gone. It should be a priority to study the impact of the LPA on these businesses with the planned development to ensure that jobs are preserved within the city of Minneapolis. That's all I have to say.

THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much.

DUANE PETERSON: Thank you.

THE COMMISSIONER: Art Higinbotham, and then Scott Barriball. Mr. Higinbotham, welcome.

ART HIGINBOTHAM: Good afternoon. Art Higinbotham, 3431 St. Louis Avenue, Minneapolis.

I'm going to wear the cap of the representative for
the West Lake Street station on the Southwest LRT, and my comments will be directed to section 8.0 of the DEIS, the financial analysis.

In that section there's a table which shows the expenditure for trackage and guide of $218,000,000. That number was based on advanced conceptual engineering. When I addressed the question of what advanced conceptual engineering means, Mark Fuhrman, who is the project director, replied, 1 percent of the engineering costs. In other words, it's a guess.

The problem is that if any of you have seen the video, a virtual ride from Eden Prairie to Target Field, and Target Field is not really the destination most of these riders are going to be going to, it includes an overpass at 494, an overpass at Highway 212, an overpass at the crosstown, a 3,000 foot bridge over the Minnehaha Creek water shed in Minnetonka, a grade separation at Highway 169, grade separation at Cedar Lake Parkway, grade separation at the Burlington Northern tracks downtown, and over North 7th Street.

It seems incredible that all this can be done for $218,000,000. Secondly, around the West Lake Street station there's no provision for
improved access to the proposed West Lake Street station. The arteries West Lake Street and Excelsior Boulevard already carry 39,000 vehicles per day. And a recent study has shown that they are at saturation today. If we bring in more commuters to that station, either coming in from Uptown or from Linden Hills or Edina, we're going to have virtual traffic jams on the railroads.

Furthermore, there is very little parking access. There is a deficiency of spaces today for the two major business centers, Calhoun Commons and Calhoun Village. And there is no funds in the proposal to rectify those shortages. Thank you very much for you time.

THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much.

Scott Barriball, and Craig Westgate on deck.

Mr. Barriball, welcome.

SCOTT BARRIBALL: Yes, thank you.

Hello, my name is Scott Barriball. I am at 200 East Lyndale Avenue, which is commonly known as the Farmers Market Annex. I've been at that site for 28 years. I've made over a half-million dollars of improvements. I just recently completed a $250,000 renovation in the back, which I now call the urban garden. I was rezoned from an I zone to a C2 about
a year ago. We've been working closely with the Minnesota Twins. And we're developing our facility now for weddings, tailgating, charitable operations, and corporate events.

The Farmers Market Annex is a mix of small farmers, food vendors, and individual entrepreneurs. We have almost 150 small businesses. I employ 15 full- and part-time people. The building that I own and occupy has two tenants; the Sunrise Early Learning Center, which is a minority owned and operated day care; and the Wrecker Services, which rents 10,000 square feet and has been a tenant of mine for the past 28 years.

Currently the plan calls for their storage area to be taken. So I am poised I guess to lose my long-time tenant which generates over $60,000 of rent a year. I understand from some of the things that I've heard and looking at the plan that my new urban garden area may need to be cut into. Wouldn't be a great deal for me. My business and the Minneapolis farmers market across the street is totally dependent on access and parking, without that we're pretty much out of business.

I'm really concerned about the construction, the staging of the equipment, the parking, and the
congestion I feel will hurt my business. The good side of it is we're only open Saturday and Sunday from May 1 until the end of October. So if there can be some thought put into maybe, you know, lightening that up on the weekends so we could operate as free from the construction process as possible.

I also have heard rumblings that the Royalston may turn into the border argument. I don't know where that's coming from. But that would be a catastrophic effect on both the farmers market and my business. There is just simply no way we can lose that parking. And the construction, the two year, two and a half year process, it would just absolutely ruin a lot of people's businesses.

That's all I have to say. Thank you very much.

THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you for your time, sir. Craig Westgate, and on deck Ryan Edstrom. Mr. Westgate, welcome.

CRAIG WESTGATE: Thank you. Craig Westgate. My address is 3523 St. Paul Avenue in Minneapolis. But tonight I'm speaking as the chairman of CIDNA. I'm here on behalf of CIDNA. Our transportation committee has done a wonderful job of preparing a written response for the December
11 deadline. With that said, we have many concerns. I'm just going to point out a couple.

The first one we believe is the noise. The -- we believe that the impact of the noise level and noise incident frequency has not been properly assessed and will have a major impact on the peace and tranquility for the residents and the users of the Kenilworth corridor and users of the Grand Rounds National Scenic Highway. The flyover bridge at Cedar Lake Parkway is just unacceptable. To quote an area resident, it's something that Mussolini would be proud of.

We believe that this is -- we believe that this is the reason that we have in place the Shoreland Overlay District restrictions, so that developers, both private and public, cannot just build what they want. Not only is the bridge too tall, it does not fit in with the neighborhood. It is a monstrosity.

We believe that we need a grade separation at Cedar Lake Parkway. With trains every three minutes, that intersection is simply and cannot handle the cars and trains at the street level. We believe that some sort of a better solution of grade separation of LRT underpass, whether it be a tunnel,
cut and cover, we believe that the noise and the visibility issue should not be overlooked going forward. Thank you very much.

THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much. Ryan Edstrom, and Peter Rickmeyer is next.

RYAN EDSTROM: Good evening. My name is Ryan Edstrom. Thanks for the opportunity to speak tonight. My address is 2824 Yosemite Avenue, St. Louis Park, Minnesota. I'm representing myself. I think I could probably speak for others in my neighborhood. Just to kind of give you an idea where we live, we are at Highway 100 and Minnetonka Boulevard. Just west of that area near what would be called the LRT 3A LPA option, the freight rail reroute, within two blocks of that freight rail reroute.

I came tonight to speak specifically to goal number four of the DEIS, which is preserve and protect the quality of life in the study area and region. And specifically I wanted to speak to noise, safety, air quality, and property value.

Let's start with noise. With the freight rail reroute there’s a planned ramp that would be running along Highway 7 that would get the trains across Highway 7 and through our neighborhood. And
for those trains to get up that new proposed ramp, they would have to be running full throttle. I don't know if that has been studied in this environmental impact study. So that would definitely affect the residents in that area.

Further with noise, the trains are going to be bigger. So currently there's two trains running there every day, about ten cars each empty. With a full train, a full coal train or an ethanol train, the noise would be significantly more. The trains are just heavier and longer.

Moving on to safety. With the increase in trains, I think there's just an inherent risk of something bad happening in that area, not just because there's added trains, but because of the configuration of the track in that area. There's up to three blind corners in that neighborhood. So the engineers would not be able to see through those corners, making that particular route a lot more dangerous than the LRT 3A coal location route.

And then air quality, this kind of goes along with the noise. If those trains are rumbling up that grade at full throttle, there's definitely going to be a lot more diesel smoke, and I think that goes against preserving the quality and
protecting the quality of life that's in this study area.

And the last thing here I think is property value. I've heard that freight rail reroutes cause property value impacts from 3 to 12 percent. And there's about 200 houses in our neighborhood that would directly impact. I think I can probably close with that. Thank you for your time tonight.

THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Is there a second list? That would be good. Next speaker is Peter Rickmeyer, and then Joshua Houdek is next. Thank you. Welcome to the committee.

PETER RICKMEYER: Thank you. Peter Rickmeyer, 2118 - 25th Avenue North, Minneapolis. First, the Bryn Mawr neighborhood is a well-respected neighborhood organization within the city of Minneapolis. And I'm aware that the Royalston businesses, I would encourage both groups to get together to work out alternative roads to get in and out. There are two more public hearings, so that would give you enough time to discuss possibly corrections to this plan and give more thought to it to see if something could be worked out. And Bryn Mawr, please work with the farmers market people, too, even though they're way out of your district.
I'm here specifically to talk about what the last gentleman was talking about, specifically about noise, environmental impact, and above all, the purpose of it. I believe the purpose of light rail is to reduce the carbon monoxide, dioxide in -- to and from the suburbs, from Eden Prairie into downtown Minneapolis.

I believe, first of all, to attack the noise problems with the rails and the bells at the intersections, I believe three layers. The first layer would be bushes, which would decrease the amount of rail noise. The second layer would be medium trees. And the third layer would be tall trees.

What that would do is that would, first of all, reduce the amount of noise three blocks away from where the light rail is. The second thing that it would do is that it would provide oxygen, so the area from Minneapolis to Eden Prairie would actually improve its air quality, which I think is what we all want.

The third impact would be specifically around intersections with the trains. I've taken my time and I've gone up to 38th and Hiawatha, gone about three, four blocks away, and I could hear the
bells, and I talked to some people over there. And you can hear it. And I believe by putting some bushes, that would just naturally absorb the sounds of the bells, that would relieve a lot of the complaints or concerns about the excess noise.

I can only stress to you that we have been dealing with global warming. And I believe that with the bushes, mid-sized trees, and large trees that would give off a lot of shade in the 20-mile light rail. And that would go a long ways into reducing the global warming, at least in the downtown Minneapolis to the Eden Prairie area.

Thank you.

THE COMMISSIONER: Your time is up.

Thank you very much for your comments. Joshua Houdek, and then Todd Klingel is next. Welcome, sir.

JOSH HOUDEK: Thank you, Chair. My name is Joshua Houdek. I'm with the Sierra Club, Northstar Chapter, in Minnesota. Our address is 2327 East Franklin Avenue. I wanted to start off with saying that the 30,000 members of the Sierra Club in Minnesota do support a greener, cleaner transportation choice in the southwest metro. And I believe that it's a critical link for a 21st century
transit system. We believe that this is a smart investment in the region, like Chairman McLaughlin said earlier.

This project will serve over 200,000 jobs. There are problems with the route, the preferred route that is, but -- and it's not perfect, but the region needs to move beyond oil if we are going to remain competitive in the future.

The station area planning, I wanted to bring that up, because it's very, very important that good sustainable TOD transit-oriented development happens around these stations that we are planning, not just large park and rides, but good, multiuse, sustainable, compact development. So we want to stress that be continued to keep an eye on that and maximize the amount of density that we can provide around the station areas.

And I just wanted to conclude with a quote -- or to quote President Obama's initiative, "We Can't Wait" to be riding this train by 2018, because the region does need to remain sustainable, and this is a great step towards that. Thank you.

THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much. Todd Klingel, and then Randy Peterson is after Mr. Klingel. Welcome.
TODD KLINGEL: I'm Todd Klingel. I'm president/CEO of the Minneapolis Regional Chamber of Commerce. We also oversee the Bloomington Chamber Commerce and the Northeast Minneapolis Chamber. Thanks for the opportunity to speak on the DEIS today.

As many of you already know, we're very strong supporters of transit, light rail transit, particularly in this line. We share in that support with St. Paul Area Chamber of Commerce, the TwinWest Chamber of Commerce, the Edina Chamber of Commerce, the Eden Prairie Chamber of Commerce. And we were pleased to see the DEIS that they understand like we do that, quote, "there's limited additional traffic capacity on existing streets and highways resulting in increased travel time delays and air pollution."

I thought it was interesting on Monday when so many of us were caught up in that traffic on the first snow of the season taking three times as long as normal to get to commute, but the trains were going right on time. And that kind of certainty is really helpful.

Additionally, the DEIS said that the benefits of Southwest LRT substantially outweigh the impacts. For us in the business community you
always need to weigh the capital investment plans against the impacts of those plans. They also said the transportation option studied that LRT has the greatest ability to address the needs of the region. We also know that it's the only alternative that the federal government will give us $650 million for, which we will be happy to use, and that the locally preferred alternative when the LRT 3A is the most cost effective per rider. That LPA fits with the land use and economic development plans of the communities along the line.

Certainly we understand from the ones we've heard earlier and the ones I'm sure you'll hear that there are issues along the line with St. Louis Park and moving the freight and some of the other issues, but we're confident that the county can work out the details with those and move ahead with the next finer level of planning.

We thank the FTA for the support of this line, the administration for green lighting the line, as one of only two in the country, and for the county for taking the lead role that you have in the regional rail authority. Thank you.

THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you, Mr. Klingel. Randy Peterson is next, and then
Jeanette Colby. Mr. Peterson, welcome.

RANDY PETERSON: Yeah, I am frustrated that Washington Avenue is closed to transportation. I just don't think you did a good plan. I should not use profanity, I understand that, but at the same token, I just -- without using profanity, I'm extremely frustrated that Washington Avenue is closed. Because -- and I think we -- I don't think we should go ahead with this now, because I think we should wait until we get -- until Washington Avenue around the university is open, and then have hearings again maybe after they were running say a year.

That's my opinion. You may not -- you may go ahead anyway, but I don't think you should -- I don't think you should do it now. There's also other concerns that should be addressed, and 60 days is not long enough. Thank you.

THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much. I think you expressed your opinion very well without profanity. Thank you for that. Jeanette Colby, and then Russ Adams.

JEANETTE COLBY: Thank you, Commissioner, for your time this afternoon. I'm Jeanette Colby. I live at 2218 Sheridan Avenue.
South. And I'm here on behalf of the Kenwood Isles Area Association. This -- the locally preferred alternative line will run a little more than a mile through our neighborhood. And we were pleased to see that the DEIS recognized some of the very grave impacts that it will have on our area, especially noise and visual impacts as well as safety.

This line I think has really stressed the transit-oriented development opportunities and other business development opportunities, which is fabulous. In our area we would like to stress the issue of preserving what we have. We have a beautiful, beautiful space in the Kenilworth trail area. We have three freight trains approximately that run through there a day, and will move to 260 trains going from 5 a.m. to 1 a.m.

So we are really looking forward to a very strong and creative approach to mitigation. We were a little disappointed to see there wasn't much mitigation talked about in the document. It was a huge document, very thorough in a lot of ways, but not a lot of mitigation proposals.

So what we would be focusing on is preserving our unique cultural and natural heritage, safeguarding the safety and enjoyment of park and
trail users, maintaining the quality of life of residents, and ensuring the tranquility and functionality of the station area proposed for 21st Street. We also join CIDNA in thinking that a bridge over Cedar Lake Parkway would be awful, and we'd like to see some other form of grade separation there. Thank you.

THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much. Russ Adams is next, and then Mark Stensrud. Mr. Adams, welcome.

RUSS ADAMS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have one handout for the commissioners, if that's possible. My name is Russ Adams. I'm the executive director of the Alliance for Metropolitan Stability. We're at 2525 East Franklin Avenue in Minneapolis. We first want to say that we support Southwest LRT and the 3A alignment and believe that that will provide significant social and economic opportunities for environmental justice communities along the corridor.

We believe it will do that by the extension of the regional transit system by increasing the access to job centers along Southwest LRT, by generating economic development opportunities, and by sustaining economic development opportunities for
communities like the Harrison neighborhood at the Van White station, with the full build out of the Bassett's Creek Valley Master Plan.

Now, I know you'll hear from Harrison neighborhood in a moment, but I do want to touch on them a little bit. In our read of the DEIS we think it needs to recognize that Harrison neighborhood is an environmental justice community with significant interest and opportunity at that Van White station. The reason why it's significant is it's uniquely positioned between two major public transit investments. The map shows this with Southwest LRT to the south and the proposed Bottineau LRT line to the north. You will not find another neighborhood probably anywhere in the region that gets the kind of saturated coverage from transit stations within a quarter mile and half mile walking distance than Harrison. And it also has several stations nearby in the neighborhood as well as close by.

We think the DEIS and the Southwest Corridor planners should adopt the definition of equitable development that was endorsed by Corridors of Opportunity Policy Board on November 30, 2011. We will be submitting written comments. We'll include that definition in our comments. I'm not going to
read it now. But we think a common definition to work from would be useful for both engineers, as well as planners, community representatives, and public officials.

We also noticed that the Hennepin County Community Works uses a term catalytic transit-oriented development. And we want to point out that prioritized public -- there were two aspects to this, prioritized public investments that catalyze private investment and prioritized public investments that catalyze equitable development. We believe both are possible and necessary for the best outcomes on Southwest LRT.

I won't go into too much detail on the Harrison neighborhood catalytic TOD opportunity except to say that you do have land that is publicly owned, you have a committed developer, and you have a city that's committed to generating hundreds of new housing units on that site and thousands of new jobs. You also have a number of business owners, property owners that are interested in revitalizing Glenwood Avenue corridor, the old industrial area, and carrying that up in into North Minneapolis. I see that my time is up, Mr. Chair, so I'll leave it at that. Thank you so much.
THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much.

We look forward to getting your written comments as well. Mark Stensrud, and then Malik Holt.

MARK STENSRUD: Mark Stensrud. I live at 3145 Dean Court, which is the grain silos. And our representative from the CIDNA neighborhood, which I belong to, was here. But I'd just like to reiterate that, you know, I realize everybody -- you know, nobody wants anything in their back yard, but my back yard is Cedar Lake. And there's a, I don't know, a tranquility that during the day it can be a little noisy, but at night I can hear the frogs, I can hear the geese from the lake.

Plus our building is on what will be like a 90-degree turn that the light rail is going to take. Our building is so close to the tracks now, I mean, I think people could reach out and touch the light rail as it goes by. And now we're talking about 260 trains a day running right past my residence.

And I'd just like to say that I hope that all alternatives are being looked at to quiet this down. Because I know Dow Chemical makes a track system that they say will reduce the noise by 5 to 7 decibels. So I just hope we're not stuck in the same rut, we did this on Hiawatha, so now we're
going to do it here, without looking at the best alternatives.

I'm all for the light rail. I realize that our community needs that. But that doesn't mean we keep going along with blinders on, we did it this way here, now that's the way we're going to do it everywhere. Make sure we're looking at all the newest alternatives to keep my neighborhood -- it will never be the same after this, but I'd like to see the damage minimized. And that's all I was here to say. Thank you.

THE COMMISSIONER: Great. Thank you.
Are there other lists that have been compiled? No. All right. Mr. Holt, Malik Holt, welcome.
MALIK HOLT: Thank you, Mr. Chair, commissioners. I'm here with Harrison Neighborhood Association, which is located on 503 Irving Avenue in Minneapolis. Harrison neighborhood supports the 3A alignment of the Southwest light rail because it brings economic opportunities at the Van White Station and Bassett Creek. My comments will focus mainly on section A of the 3A locally preferred alternative.
Harrison Neighborhood Association, an environmental justice community, with people of
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<td>Since 2000, Harrison Neighborhood Association and in partnership with Bryn Mawr Neighborhood Association have been involved in the Bassett Creek Master Plan. The development will revitalize this environmental justice community, that is Harrison, and repair the decades of land use neglect and divestment at the Van White station.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>For more than a decade Harrison residents have recognized the opportunity for change, investment, and innovation in land use with Bassett Creek Valley. In its existing condition, Harrison right now is dominated by post industrial land use.</td>
</tr>
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<td>4</td>
<td>The following are concerns and comments that we're going to make now for the DEIS, and then we're going to make further in written comment and e-mail from our residents, possibly some of our business leaders. Including the master plan, putting those actual numbers and have those reflected in the DEIS, including the expected redevelopment outcomes of 3,000 housing units from Bassett Creek redevelopment plan, 2.5 million square feet of commercial and office retail, 40 acres of new and open green space, and 5,000 to 6,000 jobs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>The fulfillment of the Bassett Creek Master</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Plan will increase ridership and boost the success of the Southwest light rail. Currently there is an incomplete land use analysis that is in section 3.124, segment A. The actual 2008 February city of Minneapolis rezoning needs to be reflected within section 3.124, segment A, in the land use.

Harrison also has serious concerns about the station area plan. We sent a letter on February 28 to Hennepin County, and Harrison is still requesting that station area design without commuter rail layover needs to be met. And we need that question answered.

The final document clearly advocates the siting of rail storage at Van White station. The final document misrepresents the formal Minneapolis City Council position on the sale of Linden Yards at Van White station. The city directed city staff to explore joint strategies at Linden Yards East and report back to city council. The Van White plan illustrates the misleading for policymakers representing a platform plan that could accommodate development and rail storage below. And this is misleading because the key feasibility work has not been completed and does not include the environmental assessment of siting passenger rail
storage and the maintenance facility.

My last comment -- and then I also have a handout for you that shows a 1935 map of racialized [sic] -- racialized planning map the City of Minneapolis did of our area. And then also MCEA, which is the -- that is the current condition of our area the way it looks today in terms of neighborhoods.

My last comment, Harrison neighborhood does not support locating the operation maintenance facility, this is located in section 3.152, it does not support it at Linden Yards. Four potential locations for operation and maintenance have been identified. Harrison does support the consultants recommendations on appendix H, page 53, of the operation maintenance facility site evaluation, we support Eden Prairie 1, Eden Prairie 2, Eden Prairie scenario 3, and the Minneapolis scenario 4, not Linden Yards.

THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much.

MALIK HOLT: Thank you.

THE COMMISSIONER: So far we have no one else who signed up ahead of time, but we would be happy to take testimony from anybody who would like to testify. We'll start with this gentleman in
the front row. And then we'll go over here. And then I saw a hand in the back. So I saw three so far. We'll go until people are finished. Please introduce yourself for the tape.

JOHN HARTWIG: My name is John Hartwig. I live at 3228 Humboldt Avenue South in Minneapolis. I would like to hand out some information to the commissioners.

Approximately 200 years ago the federal and the state governments got together and built the Erie Canal. By the time the Erie Canal was completed, the Erie Canal was already outmoded, the reason being that the railroads came in and took all the money from the Erie Canal. So in effect, the Erie Canal even to this day is nothing but a boondoggle.

What we have here again is another boondoggle, and it's called light rail. We aren't going to need 20 lanes of New Jersey turnpike or 100 billion high speed rail lines to save us from gridlock. Is that really where things are headed. The Internet is drastically reducing the importance of distance in human affairs. E-mail has rendered the local post office nearly obsolete. Hundreds of thousands of Americans are already telecommuting,
and many have launched web-based businesses from their home. People who used to make three trips a week to the mall do more of their shopping today online.

The challenge isn't to move more meat. I'm quoting here from this article I gave you. When they say meat they mean people. The challenge is to move more information. The light rail is already outmoded. If this was 1900, maybe you could do it. But it's nothing more than a reconfigured street car.

Here again quoting from here, business parties and social organizations need to take full advantage of the extraordinary efficiencies that the Internet provide. The rush hour rituals of the 20th century really aren't destined to continue until the end of time. Telecommunication, flex time, and mini-commutes to satellite offices will change the way we work.

More or less that's what I have to say on this except for one more thing. I used to live in the Kenwood neighborhood, not too far from 21st and Uptown. And I remember when I came in '50, '51 many of the St. Louis freight workers for about five years previously and up until about 1950, the
freight workers were obviously working on the tracks. And every so often they forgot to remember where they were. And I remember one instance some railroad worker was sitting on the tracks and a train came by. And he ended up losing both his legs. We went and looked at the stretcher. It was full of blood. And obviously that individual didn't survive.

And I think this is what you're going to have, the same thing again. You're talking about 200 trains going by during the day or 150 or whatever. First of all, I'm old enough to remember when we had street cars. One street car for whatever reason gets stopped, and you're going to have street cars all the way back one mile, two miles. So in effect, it's an inefficient system.

THE COMMISSIONER: If you could wrap up, sir.

JOHN HARTWIG: Sure. What we need -- we're 87 years away from the 22nd century, and what we need to do is go forward not backward. Thank you for your time.

THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much. I saw a hand over here, sir.

JACK LEVY: Thank you, Commissioner.
My name is Jack Levy. I'm on the board of the Kenwood Isles Association, but I'm here to represent myself. Jeanette has already talked about our issues on behalf of the association and the community.

What -- so I live on 21st Street between Kenwood Parkway and the station. And one of the things that alarms me is the noise that the light rail will generate, either through the rails themselves or through the bell or the sounds that they will be sounding as they approach the station.

I was disappointed to see a complete lack of mitigation with regard to how that noise was going to be mitigated. And it wasn't left as, we're not going to address that, but rather we're going to address that later while we're doing the engineering. And I got the sense that it would be too late by that time. So I would like to see some kind of a response on what happens to this pristine quiet community when the train comes and the bells go off and noise impacts the community and changes the character of the entire neighborhood. Thank you for your time.

THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much.
think, yes. Welcome.

KATHLEEN MURPHY: Good afternoon.

Kathleen Murphy with Transit for Livable Communities. And I'm at 6601 5th Avenue in Richfield. And I've been a long-time transit rider, because I do not drive. And so I support, along with the Transit for Livable Communities, the opportunity for the Southwest Corridor to have this light rail system.

I am hearing from a lot of people that there are things that need to be concerned about. And I totally agree with all of that myself. But my concern, along with TLC, is that the future of our light rail system is now and not to put a halt on this because of reconstruction or whatever is happening here with the freight rail is going to intervene with everything.

We have to come to an understanding that in our time of our economic situations that this will help people in the southwest communities to be able to prosper and to grow. And I totally am concerned with making the right choices for people to get back to work and for people to have better options with their transit system. So I hope for the best for all of this. Thank you.
THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much.

Vickie Moore. Welcome.

VICKIE MOORE: Thank you for your time.

I live a 2032 Second Avenue North, the Harrison neighborhood. I'm a member of the Harrison Neighborhood Association. I want to really make sure everyone really understands we strongly support the Southwest LRT, the 3A alignment, and in particular we strongly support the Van White station.

We do see this as a catalyst for development. We are a neighborhood that not only welcomes development, we welcome city housing. That's something you don't often hear.

I also want to point out that our unemployment rate is well over 20 percent. Summit Academy is currently training people who can fill the jobs that are going to be available along the line. That's important to us, not just important to the Harrison neighborhood, but to our neighbors to the north.

Hennepin has done a good job with community and citizen involvement. I know there's a lot of really good consultants coming into town to educate people on the council and the county. I would hope
that the county would open those sessions up to communities so that we can educate ourselves as this process moves forward.

And I think one last thing I want to say is I can't cite the section in the DEIS, but it would be nice to see the 2010 census data included in there, not the old census data. Thank you.


MARC BALLBACH: Sure. My name is Marc Ballbach. I live at 5503 Wingwood Court, Minnetonka.

THE COMMISSIONER: What's your last name?

MARC BALLBACH: Ballbach, B-A-L-L-B-A-C-H. I'm a year-round bike commuter. And I want to strongly encourage you all to take into account the communication needs and overall needs during construction of the bike commuter community. I go pretty much along the rail starting at the Shady Oaks station, and then I work downtown here.

My experience this summer with some of the Cedar Lake repaving was that there was poor communication. And I would love if you guys could
work with us. And I should also say that I'm really
excited about this light rail line, especially if I
get a flat tire along the way I can jump on a train.
So I'm very much watching this carefully and real
excited. Certainly after construction I'm excited
to see a good bike infrastructure in the wake of
construction as well. And I'll be following that
closely.

During if you could focus on some of the
social networking communication methods to alert us
when we need to detour, that would be great.

THE COMMISSIONER: Anyone else? Yes,
sir. Come on up.

ROLF ERICKSON: 14520 - 12th Avenue
North in Plymouth. And I'm just concerned that
we're taking money from a federal government that's
wallowing in debt to build 19th Century
transportation systems. That's my basic concern. I
know I'm a person that does not use mass transit at
all. There's very little near me. And if I were to
go somewhere like the Mall of America it might take
me three or four hours, so I understand I'm biased
in that respect. But I do believe it's wrong to
keep breaking the government. Thank you.

THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much.
REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

STATE OF MINNESOTA   )
 ) ss.
COUNTY OF HENNEPIN  )

I hereby certify that I reported the Southwest Transitway DEIS Open House/Public Hearing on November 13, 2012

WITNESS MY HAND AND SEAL THIS 19th day of November, 2011.

Amy Kristina Lizotte
Notary Public, Hennepin County, Minnesota
Draft Environmental Impact Statement Comment Form
Southwest Transitway Project

Federal and state environmental rules require that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) be prepared for the proposed Southwest Transitway project. The EIS process includes the preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), which must be made available for public review and comment.

The DEIS discusses: (1) the purpose and need for the project; (2) the alternatives considered; (3) the impacts of these alternatives; and (4) the agencies and persons consulted.

Comments on the DEIS will be accepted through December 11, 2012. All comments must be received by that date. Please include a return mailing address with all comments.

Public hearings on the DEIS will be held in November 2012. To learn more about the hearings, please visit www.southwesttransitway.org

I live in Heritage Park and the Van White Stop is important to me. My concern is to ensure that residents in surrounding neighborhoods have more than adequate access to Van White Station via clear walking paths in all seasons. By bus, shuttles on former midK8 bike trails and Baker car lines and parking, plus but not limited to 700 zip lines.

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Thank you!
Hennepin County
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