Southwest Transitway DEIS Comments

Comments Received from the General Public

Part 5 of 5
December 29, 2012

Hennepin County
Housing, Community Works & Transit
701 Fourth Avenue South, Suite 400
Minneapolis, MN 55415
swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us

Dear Project Manager,

Introduction
This is a comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement ("DEIS") for the Southwest Transitway (LRT) project ("LRT Project"). As residential property owners of 2553 Washburn Ave. S., in the Cedar Isles Dean Neighborhood, we are personally and directly impacted by the LRT Project as our property is located between the proposed 21st Street and West Lake Street Stations immediately adjacent to Kenilworth Trail and the Kenilworth Corridor Bridge.

While there are many issues of importance related to the LRT Project, this comment letter will focus on specific themes related to the proposed 21st Street and West Lake Street stations and the area between these stations, as follows:

1. Re-Location of Freight Trains: We support the re-location of freight trains to accommodate light rail, and do not support the co-location alternative:

2. Environmental Effects: The DEIS is flawed in its analysis of noise and vibration implications and does not address light and electromagnetic concerns with regard to the location of the 21st Street and West Lake Street Stations and the area between these stations:

3. Social Effects: The DEIS is flawed in its conclusion that the operation of LRT along Segment A is not anticipated to adversely affect community cohesion.

Discussion:
1. Re-Location of Freight Trains:
The DEIS concluded (in the final paragraph of Chapter 11, pg. 11-11, 11.2.5) that the co-location of light rail and freight trains do not meet the project’s purpose and need and is not a practicable alternative. As a result, co-location is not recommended as the environmentally preferred alternative. As impacted residential property owners, we agree completely with the conclusion that co-location is not a viable option.
A decision, however, to co-locate the freight and light rail would have material and detrimental effects on our property as it is not clear whether our property would need to be acquired to complete the project.

2. Environmental Effects (Noise, Vibration, Visual, and Electromagnetic Interference): As impacted residential property owners, we are significantly concerned about the environmental impacts of the LRT project due to the high number of trains that will travel by our property daily. The increase from a few freight trains per day to hundreds of LRT trains per day will drastically and severely impact our and our neighbors exposure to noise and vibration.

As to noise, our property is located in an area that is considered to have a "severe impact", and as a result, significant mitigation will be required. However, the impact of noise level and noise incident frequency has not been properly assessed in the DEIS. As a result, further study needs to be done.

Moreover, the DEIS incorrectly classifies Segment A property as Category 3 land use. However, in FTS’s land use categories for Transit Noise Impact Criteria, Category 3 is most commonly associated with institutional land uses. In contrast, Category 1 is for tracts of land where quiet is an essential element on the intended purpose. The property in our neighborhood is aligned with Category 1 use – it is quiet, serene, and park-like. As a result, noise impacts should be re-evaluated under the standards set for Category 1 land uses.

As to vibration, while the DEIS (page 4-118, 4.8.6. Mitigation) provides that detailed vibration analysis will be conducted during the Final EIS, we urge that the range of frequencies and vibration incident frequency be taken into consideration.

The DEIS does not examine or discuss the impacts of LRT train light, corridor light, or the impact on presently dark areas of neighborhoods like ours. More analysis is necessary to determine the impacts and mitigation required.

In addition, the DEIS does not discuss potential health hazards related to electromagnetic interference for those people that live in close proximity (40 feet or less) to exposed overhead wires. Such information should be provided to the public and such hazards must be mitigated/avoided.

3. Social Effects Related to Segment A: The DEIS is flawed in its conclusion of the social effects related to Segment A. On page 3-58, the DEIS states that the implementation of LRT along the proposed Segment A “is not anticipated to adversely affect community cohesion because Segment A is currently bisected by a freight rail line and adding LRT service does not alter the existing barrier.” This is unsubstantiated and incorrect, as currently, freight trains pass through infrequently, between 4-8 times per day, and the tracks are easily crossed. For
example, there is an informal pathway immediately adjacent to our property that passes over the freight tracks and connects Washburn Ave. to Kenilworth trail, Kenwood Isles neighborhood and the Kenilworth Channel Bridge. High-speed high-frequency trains would absolutely eliminate the informal pathways, and would therefore create a barrier between CIDNA, the Kenilworth Trail and the Kenwood Isles neighborhood.

Conclusion:
As property owners that are directly impacted by the LRT Project, we respectfully request that you consider the above concerns related to the DEIS. We also urge you to consider all factors to assist in mitigation of short-term construction effects and long-term impacts related to noise, vibration, and visual effects of the LRT project between 21st Street and Lake Street. One possible solution could be a tunnel for the LRT to pass between the 21st Street and Lake Street Stations.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. If you have any questions, please contact Debra Berns at (612) 208-0378 or debra_j_berns@yahoo.com

Sincerely,

Debra Berns
Amy Lederer
Hennepin County
Housing, Community Works & Transit
ATTN: Southwest Transitway
701 Rozetta Avenue South, 400
Minneapolis, MN 55415
From: Joanne STRATE  
Sent: Monday, December 31, 2012 6:15 PM  
To: Wheeler, William (FTA)  
Subject: Southwest LRT  

TO: FTA  
DATE: 12/31/12  
RE: Southwest LRT, Region 5, Eden Prairie/Hopkins/Minnetonka/St. Louis Park/Mpls (2015 start)  

A couple of my neighbors want me to send you a response as it relates to the progression of the 3A line and the PROPOSED Smetana Crossing on the border of Hopkins & east Minnetonka....we are 3 of the 114 units which will be effected with severe nosie & vibration as cited by the DEIS study. I have already responded various times regarding this & other issues...see below. I feel it's all in vain and it's politics as usual. I plan to investigate the legal Minnetonka noise levels as well. With that information, I'll probably contact WCCO-TV's reality check so the Met Council & company can't hide the true facts of the matter. Just so happens I work at a TV station and have contacts in the industry. If this waste of tax payer dollars continue and the line remains as the recommended 3A, then we need a QUIET ZONE. Per page 4-88 of the study, Pompano Drive residents are Segment 3, category 2 and it's noted there are 114 severe impacted units. The Quiet Zone for the Smetana Crossing should be no train whistles and no post-mounted horns on the gates. To protect the citizens, we need only 4 quadrant gates with a median barrier. A train passing every 7:30 will be impossible to live with and no one can sit outside or open their windows, or sleep during 5a-1a. Would you want to live here?????? OUR PROPERTY VALUE WILL SUBSEQUENTLY DECREASE, NOT INCREASE AS SOME HAVE BLATANTLY LIED TO US. Don't know if we could even get a buyer for our units!!!  

Joanne Strate,  
Marion & David Wolf,  
Austin Miller & Kylie Otte,  

FYI...LRT is not the answer to transportation problems!  

Starving the rest of our transportation system in favor of a more expensive, less efficient and totally inflexible light-rail system is the epitome of politics trumping common sense! Using the Met Council’s 2010 report, the cost of a single ride on the Hiawatha line is $2.46. Riders pay only $.99 of this cost, leaving almost 60% subsidized by the public. But this isn’t the true cost. Add in the 30 year amortized costs of bonding and a single ride actually cost $6.42 which is an 85% subsidy! This equates to the public spending $15M PER YEAR. The Northstar line costs $13M, Central estimated @ $17M and SW is $12M. Improve bus service and rebuild critical highway infrastructure. The LRT mode of transportation has a negligible effect on traffic congestion! When you look at the costs, building more light rail lines like the SW LRT is nothing short of a money pit that will bankrupt our state. It’s time to cut our losses and stop this madness!  

Further issues...
I understand the SW LRT is in the early design and engineering stages now. I’m a resident of Beachside Two-II town home development in Minnetonka which has 5 Associations. It’s established & very large. I have been battling the Metropolitan Council, to no avail, to change the route from 3A to 1A as detailed in the following four very good reasons. It doesn’t have to be politics/lobbyists as usual to jam this decision down our throats to satisfy the “Opus World” of wishful thinking occupancy 25 years from now. They can have an adjacent station 4 blocks off Smetana. Perhaps my concerns & LOGIC will reach a receptive ear and common sense will rule the day!

**ISSUE #1** - Route 1A would run on existing rail lines and would be far cheaper to the general public than 3A. Exact savings I’m sure have been calculated but not shared via the Met Council. Isn’t the Federal government trying to cut costs these days due to our ridiculous economy? Does the added cost really justify the 3A route?

**ISSUE #2** - The 3A route goes through Opus and crosses Smetana Rd on the way to downtown Hopkins. I live ONE block from this crossing! This is adjacent to residential zones, not empty lots or commercial property. People sleep here! Note: The average town home price is $200K+ and we’re not an eye-sore community! Trains running every 10:00 from 5a-1a with their vibration and warning bells is a definite “pollution” problem. Per the Met Council, it would be similar decibels to a blender …I’m sure if you’re deaf! And it’s supposed to increase home value. Where’s the logic in that? I don’t live next to a station and would only hear, see, and feel the effects of the continuous trains which would lower my value for such an intrusion ONE block away! I’m 100% sure you wouldn’t want to live here. Bad choice with zero disregard to surrounding upscale town homes and the rental apartments on the north side of Smetana!

**ISSUE #3** - Safety and congestion concerns are an issue. Smetana is a road with a long, steep grade. During the winter months if it’s snowing or icy, it’s difficult to navigate. Stopping abruptly at a crossing could be very dangerous. And lots of cars & semi’s use this road. I’m assuming some one did a traffic flow assessment to merit my observations. Therefore, I predict car accidents waiting to happen and possibly horrible fatalities which could be prevented. Who wants a death on their shoulders/conscience? Logic doesn’t prevail here. Note: There have been accident/deaths on the existing Hiawatha Line already without any of these concerns in play. The congestion would be another headache. Not so with route 1A!

**ISSUE #4** - As it relates to human life, St. Therese is an upscale senior high-rise east of the crossing. In the last two days alone, 4 ambulances have sped down Smetana in route to address medical issues. Now imagine waiting for the crossing arm & traffic to clear/subside when every minute counts! This could be your parent’s life in jeopardy! Get St. Therese’s input. AGAIN…BAD CHOICE OF CROSSING/ROUTE!

Put some thought into doing the right thing for all concerned. Share with other decision-makers too. Thank you for your time, understanding & anticipated cooperation. I look forward to a change in the route! (Obviously Gail Dorfman, Mark Fuhrman & company haven’t seen the light! Save gas & help traffic is their response!)

Also, by 2030 when this line is supposed to be at its peak for Opus, which currently has alot of vacancy, people will be working out of their homes. Not even commuting to work. Dah? The undesirables will be using the line for crime instead and the public will pay dearly for their opportunity to ride the rails. Even the Northstar line ridership is having problems already! What about the trees & wildlife effected? What about the St. Louis Park freight lines issues? I guess I could go on & on. Is anyone listening and thinking rationally? Or…politics as usual?

Feel free to give me some real comments and not a canned response.
IF NOTHING ELSE...A QUIET ZONE @ THE SMETANA CROSSING. I DON'T WANT TO MOVE!

Thank you for your anticipated understanding, compassion, and action,
Joanne
Draft Environmental Impact Statement Comment Form
Southwest Transitway Project

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Here in Eden Prairie, we would like to see more jobs, housing, and economic development.

Name: Walsome Elm

Thank you!
The biggest concern we have is not having

Jobs, not enough houses for low income families

and many more staff.

Thank you!
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**Major Subject**
That this low income wants to have is more public assistance so we can have better way of life.

Name: **UBAH ABDI**
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Immigrant Community Needs To Have
an opportunity to create business.

They also would like to have a low-income
housing in the southwest.

Name: Harriman, Mark

Thank you!
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Housing is our number one need here in the South West.

Name: [signature]

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We would like to see more apartment build in our city because we have a big housing issues.

Name: Zaynab M. Ali

Thank you!
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This project needs to address our community's problems such as lack of affordable housing, jobs and economic development.

Name: Hassam Hashi

Thank you!
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We need a lot of things from this project including housing, jobs and economic development

Name: Hussein Ibrahim
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1. More jobs for the young Somalis.
2. The city of Eden Prairie needs more low income houses.
3. More activities for the youth. I want my kids to work on the Southwest Transitway project.

Name: Edema Hilawe

Thank you!
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We need jobs, we need affordable housing

We need better paying jobs

Name: Morgan Ali

Thank you!
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Farn a high school student, and a senior
This year, I would like to see the SWIFT working sooner because it's a cheaper way for me to travel to my university, it is a safer and keep a lot of money to my family's pocket.

Name: NAIMO HOOSSH

Thank you!
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We need Housing. It is our problem here in Eden Prairie.

Name: Ame Mohamed

Thank you!
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Our Immigrant Community needs to have an affordable housing. This is a big challenge to us.

Name: Habiba Matan

Thank you!
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We need help on housing problems because we don't have enough low-income housing here in Edaprino.

Name: Maryam Ali

Thank you!
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We need affordable housing here in

Eden Prairie

Name: Alya S. Jal

Thank you!
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We would like to have affordable housing and economic development.

Here in often prairie.

Name: AMERICAN HAIS

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We need housing opportunity.

We need jobs that we could be able to support our families.

Name: Hanna Hanane

Thank you!
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I am a mother of 5 children and would like to have a job that I could support my family. The second important thing is to have affordable housing.

Name: Faithi Yusuf

Thank you!
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I need to have an access to affordable housing here in my City

Name: Radumo Bulof

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I am a single parent, I need an affordable transportation that would allow me to go to Minneapolis and Saint Paul without asking people to give me a ride.

Name: Hawa Ahmed

Thank you!
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(1) more low income homes in Eden Prairie, (2) kids to be more on the Southwest line, (3) want Somali business in Eden Prairie so we don't have to go all the way to Minneapolis, (4) jobs for Somali youth in Eden Prairie.

Name:
Address:
City/State/Zip: Eden Prairie, MN
Telephone: Email:

Thank you!
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I want more jobs for Somali youth & more Somali business in Eden Prairie
3. More low-income houses in Eden Prairie
4. Want Somali youth to work on the Southwest Transitway Project.

Name: Hassan Ali

Thank you!
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1) Jobs for Somali youth in Eden Prairie. Have Somali business people to be used for construction.
2) More low-income homes in Eden Prairie.
3) Somali Youth to get the opportunities for the Southwest Transitway Project.

Name: ________________________________
Address: ________________________________
City/State/Zip: Eden Prairie, MN
Telephone: ________________________________ Email: ________________________________

Thank you!
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- Create jobs for all the Eden Prairie residents, especially the under-privileged individuals, especially the immigrants.

[Signature]

Name: [Name]

Thank you!
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Southwest Transitway Project

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Name: Abdiwali Mahamed

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Sam Hussein Ibrahim, and would like to see more jobs, housing opportunity for the low-income community.

Name: Hussein Ibrahim

Thank you!
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More affordable housing, jobs, and business development
for immigrants & low-income community in the Southwest Area of the Twin Cities.

Name: Israaah Mohamed

Thank you!
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I would like affordable housing, economic development, and accessible public transportation in the southwest area.

Name: Shamu-din Hashi

Thank you!
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I would like to see more low-income housing, economic development, and more frequent public transportation.

Name: Kaylee F. Adam

Thank you!
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I would like affordable housing, economic development, and jobs in this area.

Immigrants don't have enough housing availability here.

Name: Dea Farah

Thank you!
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We don't have affordable housing and economic development in Eden Prairie. Our community don't have an opportunity to have low-income housing.

Name: Franco Aweys

Thank you!
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I need economic help and housing to be part of the Southwest LRT project.

Name: Saynah Sivid

Telephone: ___________________________ Email: ___________________________

Thank you!
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I would love to have affordable housing in Eden Prairie and public transportation is a must.

Name: Liban A. Mohamed

Thank you!
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Affordable housing is our number one need here in the Eden Prairie and other Southwest areas of the Twin Cities.

Name: [Signature]

Thank you!
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1. I would like to see more housing availability for low income communities.

2. I would like to see economic development in this area of the Twin Cities.

Name: Ahmed Elahi

Thank you!
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I would like to see more affordable housing, economic development and accessible public transportation.

Name: Mohamed Ismail

Thank you!
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We need more jobs and business development here in Eden Prairie and Southwest.

Name: Faisal Hersi

Thank you!
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1. We need to have housing opportunity in Eden Prairie

2. We need to have economic development

3. We need an opportunity for jobs and livable wages for our community.

Thus, SWLRP project needs to understand these three things.

Name: Abraham Quirsi

Thank you!
Federal and State environmental laws require that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) be prepared for the proposed Southaven 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.

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Our Community Needs

1. Housing — Affordable / Low Income Housing

2. Jobs

3. Business Development

Name: [Signature]

Thank you!
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Fam a single mother with no car to drive, and my son needs to get to the University of MN, so I would like him to have a public transportation.

I would like to own a business, and would like to have a better living wage.

Name: Gamer Jiron

Thank you!
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I want more jobs for Somali's youth
More transportation for our kids
After school programs
More education for ESL kids

Name: S. Ahmed

Thank you!
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*I support the expansion of the Southwest Transitway project.*
*I we are requesting more business for minority communities.*
*I we need the development of more affordable housing.*

Name: Muhsin Omer

Thank you!
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Transportation
Jobs
Financial + US = Education Investment
-> Microfinance
Cultural Development:
-> African Cultural Awareness
-> Different Community Cultural Accumulating Performance

Name: MUSTAFA MOHAMMED

Thank you!
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I support SWLRT Project for only Three Things
1- Housing opportunities.
2- Access to Public Transportation
3- Economic development for under-represented People.

Name: Abdi Fatrah Salud

Thank you!
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Housing → give Immigrant a better affordable housing opportunity.

Economic development along the Southwest Transitway: That would benefit for all people.

Name: Fatimah Ahmed

Thank you!
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Housing, Transportation, Economic development would be essential. Success if SWLRT project wants to be a successful historic project.

Name: Amina Ali

Thank you!
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Housing → More housing opportunities
Transportation → Access to public
Jobs opportunities for many under employed
Immigrant youth

Name: Hassan Ali

Thank you!
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Three Things That We Support the SWLRT Project

- Housing
- Jobs
- Economic Development

Name: Fadumo Dada

Thank you!
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I am one of the immigrant people living in Edmon. I would like to see more low-income housing in Edmon because currently, we don't have that opportunity or it is very limited.

I do support the Draft 10% and the SWLRT Project.

Name: Sahra Cabdi Kedoo
I do support the light rail project to impact on housing, jobs and businesses for the Somali and other immigrant community.

Name: Faisal Mohamed Sabir
I am a father of 5 children and live in Eden Prairie. The problem that I have is the lack of affordable/low income housing.

I would like the SWLRT project to put their number 1 goal to build 4-bedroom apartments for the low-income people in the Southwest area.

Name: Daraa Muhammad

Thank you!
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Our community needs more jobs, more affordable housing, and more public transportation available.

Name: Ahmed Warsame

Thank you!
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Public hearings on the DEIS will be held in November 2012. To learn more about the hearings, please visit...

Our biggest problems are no low income houses, no energy jobs, and many problems.

Name: Ayan Ali
Address:
City/State/
Telephone:

Thank you!
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I'm mom who concerning my kid's future we need our kids to successful in school we need to have a purpose housing, jobs and support from the city and the other community.

Name: Maria A. igual

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Major Concern for our community are less lack of low income houses, no many jobs and help from the government our state.

Name: MESEIN MULUGETA

Thank you!
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We need more help for our Somali Community & more AP Pupuqe house, tuition for our kids, pupil taxi housing & and jobs

Name: Abdullahi Sheikh Ibrahim

Thank you!
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The concern of these community is that we need more opportunity of jobs, public transportation, education, and more help for our children.

Name: Samro Adams

Thank you!
We need better jobs, more high paying jobs, and more public housing projects for the under-developed communities in Eden Prairie.
I would like to see more high paying jobs created in the Southwest Metro Area. I would also like transportation advancement especially public transportation becoming more accessible among all the Eden Prairie residents. I would also like to see more public housing apartments built for the deserving residents.

Name: Sufiyan, Mohamed

Address: ____________________________

City/State/Zip: _______________________

Telephone: __________________________ Email: __________________________

Thank you!
WE NEED More JOBS for the SOUTHWEST Metro Residents. More Transportation Public

Name: [Signature]
Address:
City/State/Zip:
Telephone: __________________________ Email: __________________________

Thank you!
we need more good paying jobs.
Many of our younger people are simply
desperate or don't have a good job because
their current one pays less.

Name: Ahmed Abubakar

Address: 
City/State/Zip
Telephone: 

Thank you!
We, the Southwest Metro residents, would like to see many changes occur in our society including the creation of more jobs and more public housing.
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We would like more houses, more public transportation and more jobs.

Name: Haddi Abdi AJ
Address: 
City/State/Zip: 
Telephone: 

Thank you!
Our concern for our community is very big. We need to have affordable houses, good jobs, and better transportation.

Name: Habiba Hamza
Address: 
City/State: 
Telephone: 

Thank you!
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We need, Housing, Economic Development

Name: Fatoomo Hassan
Address: ____________________________
City/State: ____________________________
Telephone: ____________________________

Thank you!
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Public hearings on the DEIS will be held in November 2012. To learn more about the hearings, please visit [PUBLIC HEARING INFORMATION SITE].

This Community is very in need of many things we want jobs, so we can make our living, and we need shops.

Name: Sabra Hussein

Address:

City/State:

Telephone

Thank you!
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Community is used for public transportation and public housing and many others.

Name: Fowsiga Warsame

Address: 

City/State/Zip: 

Telephone: 

Thank you!
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My mine issue and the community is secure jobs
Good houses and transportation.

Name: Ali Hussein
Address: 
City/State: 
Telephone: Email: 

Thank you!
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I would like to see affordable housing and economic development for immigrant community

Name: Ali Sheikh
Address: 
City/State/ 
Telephone: 

Thank you!
From: Richardson, Mary  
Sent: Wednesday, January 02, 2013 6:07 AM  
To: O’Connell, Sam; Jacobson, Nani; Steinborn, Melanie; 'katie.walker@co.hennepin.mn.us'  
Cc: Caufman, Robin  
Subject: FW: Public Comment for Southwest LRT

From: swlrt  
Sent: Tuesday, January 01, 2013 7:36 AM  
To: Richardson, Mary  
Subject: FW: Public Comment for Southwest LRT

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From: Todd Carlsen  
Sent: Tuesday, January 01, 2013 7:35:31 AM  
To: swlrt  
Subject: Public Comment for Southwest LRT  
Auto forwarded by a Rule

Dear LRT Representative,

I understand that the public is allowed to submit feedback regarding the Southwest LRT project. I have two related comments to submit:

1. If the Southwest LRT line were to ever expand westward or southwestward, it should follow Highway 212 so that many riders could easily and quickly access the line easily from the highway. The highway would feed the LRT line. That 212 route is wisely used by SW Transit buses, including a station along the highway in Chanhassen. Staying next to Highway 212 makes sense because that is where you would access the population of riders, on the highway, to sustain a westward LRT expansion. The highway was built to accommodate a future LRT line, I was told by a highway engineer, so expanding such a line would not requiring destroying valuable infrastructures.

2. The LRT line should never expand onto the Southwest Corridor biking and recreation train. That recreational trail is very valuable park and a regional treasure. There is some frustration that the LRT designers are not hearing how valuable it is to the citizens. It is a precious infrastructure development to the area and would be destroyed. Please hear what we are saying. You would be destroying something of great value, and that is a big cost. It also makes little sense to use the Southwest Corridor trail since not a large number of people could easily access a LRT line from that trail. The population is sparse along the trail west of Eden Prairie road and not easily accessible, and a LRT rail would not make sense on the Southwest Corridor. Instead, you definitely would want to run the LRT line along Highway 212 where many people from the highway could feed a LRT line. Run the line along Highway 212.
Kind regards,

Todd Carlsen