TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

The following is the TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS, taken before Julie A. Brooks, Notary Public, Registered Professional Reporter, at Minneapolis Central Library, 300 Nicollet Mall, Minneapolis, Minnesota, commencing at 6:00 p.m., Thursday, August 27, 2015.
Appearances:

Metropolitan Council:

Adam Duininck
Lona Schreiber
Jennifer Munt
Gail Dorfman
Katie Rodriguez
Steve Elkins
Edward Reynoso
Steve Chavez

Hennepin County:

Peter McLaughlin
Linda Higgins
Marion Greene
Jan Callison
Gary Cunningham
PROCEEDINGS

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

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MR. MCLAUGHLIN: I'm Peter McLaughlin. I'm chair of the Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority. I'm joined here by two of my colleagues, Jan Callison and Linda Higgins.

We're pleased to be here today for another step in the process moving forward on a major transportation investment, Southwest LRT.

I think, I'm encouraged by the turnout and encouraged by the ongoing support and enthusiasm. We appreciate all of your work over the last couple months to get us where we are today.

MR. DUININCK: Just a few housekeeping things here, if you'd like to sign up and speak tonight, please make sure you are signed up on a sign-in sheet that has been brought up to me. Right now, we have one filled, and I'm sure there will be another one or more that will be filled as we go on.

There are other ways to comment. You can comment by written form or online. So I think there's a way. It is certainly out in the information
area. There's a way to do it that way. You can make comments to us tonight, and the comments will be open for awhile. I think it will be until September 4th --

September 11th.

Tonight is going to be your opportunity to provide input to Hennepin County, the Railroad Authority, and the Metropolitan Council. We won't be responding to what you say to us tonight. We're here just to listen and take comments. It is being recorded and everything for the record.

Speakers will have up to three minutes to make their statements. Please start by stating your name and address for the record. If you are representing a group, state the group's name, as well.

We'll be keeping time. We are not, obviously, going to be too strict. But out of respect for everyone's time that is participating, try to keep it as close to three minutes as possible.

Let's see here, I think processwise, as we start calling names, I'll call the person's name who is speaking and the next person, so they can have their thoughts prepared and move forward.

We recognize Commissioner Marion Greene is about to join us --

MS. GREENE: Thank you.
MR. DUININCK: -- from Saint Louis Park.

I think I'll turn it over to Craig to walk-through the presentation. We're all going to go sit down in the audience.

MR. LAMOTHE: Thank you, Chair Duininck.

Councilmembers, Commissioners, good afternoon.

I've got a brief presentation just to talk a little bit about tonight's process, what we have on the docket, as well as to go through the preliminary design plans, revised preliminary design plans, that really pivot off of what folks may have seen in the preliminary design plans a year ago.

So we just completed the first portion of our program tonight. We had a lot of good conversations outside of this room with many folks. We had an hour-long open house. We will have open houses at each -- most of the upcoming public hearings at the city and county level.

Then we are now starting the second portion of our program, which is really the public hearing. I'll have this brief presentation, and then open it up to public comment, as the chair mentioned.

So the purpose of today's hearing is to really provide stakeholders an opportunity to comment
to the Metropolitan Council, Hennepin County, Hennepin County Railroad Authority on the revised preliminary design plans.

The Southwest LRT, as proposed, is a 14.5-mile project. It is an extension of the Green Line. It has an assortment of 32 bridges along the corridor. It has two LRT tunnels, as well as some pedestrian tunnels, as well. It has over seven lineal miles of retaining walls. It has 15 new stations, with one deferred station to be built at a future date, down in Eden Prairie. And we have the expectation that it will be carrying approximately 34,000 daily rides in 2040.

So a little bit about the changes that you'll see in the revised preliminary design plans, as compared to a year ago. We have one less station. There was the deletion of the Mitchell Station, which had been formerly the end of the line, and its associated park-and-ride.

As mentioned on the previous slide, we have one station that has been deferred for construction at a future time, in Eden Prairie, the Town Center Station. Along with that, is the deferment of the park-and-ride that would serve that future station.
We've also converted two parking ramps
to parking lots and decreased the spaces, that would be
at Beltline, in Saint Louis Park, and at Blake Station,
in Hopkins.

We have decreased park-and-ride stations
at three other stations, the Downtown Hopkins Station,
which is a ramp. And the Opus Golden Triangle station
will have certain slots. The Southwest Station, the
new western terminus for the line, the park-and-ride
remains unchanged from the previous preliminary design
plans. We've increased the spaces at the Louisiana and
Shady Oaks station, utilizing land that we need for
other aspects of the project, building out additional
capacity there.

But all in all, compared to the
preliminary design plans from a year ago, we've got
approximately 2500 park-and-ride spaces, which is
approximately a reduction of 1300 park-and-ride spaces.

Some of the other changes you'll see in
the revised preliminary design plans are associated
with the operation and maintenance facility in Hopkins
where we reduced the storage barn down to a capacity of
30 light-rail vehicles.

We've also made changes to the station
platform location, as well as the track associated with
the station for the Shady Oak Station, also, in
Hopkins, near Minnetonka.

We've also made changes to the
operational facility itself, in terms of how it is laid
out, the internal track configuration. In all, these
different changes have allowed us to save full property
acquisitions and relocations as a result of those
changes.

So we went through here recently over
the course of the summer and late spring. We ended up
with a revised project scope that reduces project costs
by $250 million, most of which was contained in the
previous two slides. The new project is able to retain
15 to 17 stations, with that 16th station to be built
in the future.

We are able to retain 94 percent of the
ridership of the original project, as well as 90
percent of the corridor length, and very importantly,
access to 96 percent of the jobs in the corridor, as
well as being able to connect to a major existing piece
of infrastructure that we have for the transit system,
which is the Southwest Station Transit Hub, which today
is a major bus facility down in the southwest portion
of the metro.

Being able to make that connection to
that station, to be able to provide opportunities to
bridge that last mile connection to employment that may
be in Chanhassen or other locations.

So a little bit about what you are going
to see in the next several slides. And I'm not going
to go through all the details. Essentially, these were
what we spoke to many folks about out in the hallway
preceding the public hearing, these are the revised
preliminary design plans.

You'll see changes compared to the
previous set of preliminary design plans that really
fall into one of two categories. Just the pure
advancement of the design of this project, we moved
from where we were last summer to where we are this
summer. As a result, we made design changes. We've
also had to make changes associated with reducing scope
by $250 million. The changes you'll see on these plans
fall into one of those two buckets.

Overall, throughout the corridor, what
you'll see, compared to what we had last year, is we
didn't have the location of the track and power
substations and some of the other communications
equipment needed to operate the LRT. Those have since
been cited, just as a function of advancing the design
forward.
You also have more definition on these plans, as to partial acquisition, full acquisition, and more importantly, temporary construction easements that are needed to buildout the project.

You'll also see more detail associated with the bridges, particularly the locations of the piers that are holding up the bridges.

Specifically, on this sheet, this is showing now an end of the line at Southwest Station with no change, as noted before, of the parking structure of approximately 450-space expansion from what is there today.

Moving west to east, on this new sheet, what you'll see here is really the bridge structure over Prairie Center Drive. We made adjustments to the alignment, profile, and bridge length for this bridge, just as a matter of design.

Moving farther to the east, what you have here is the deferment of the Town Center Station. So the track still goes through here, but we made several changes, which includes deferment of the station. Underneath the ground, we are building out the infrastructure needed for that future station.

We also have an extension of Eden Road in the previous design plans to support access to that
station. Here, in the interim, prior to having a full station, we've got an access road, essentially, a private access road to get out to the track and power substation. That's what you'll see running parallel to the alignment.

We've also made several changes with the existing reconstruction of the Eden Road, where we've made changes to where signals are located and also with the roadway as well.

Moving on to the crossing of Valley View Road. There was a shift here, where we had an S-curve bridge that crossed over. Now we have more of a straight bridge. This is able to save 40 seconds of travel time. That was just as a function of moving the design forward.

Moving on to the Golden Triangle-area station. Some of the changes you'll see here is we made adjustments to the park-and-ride, reduced the spaces, as noted before. We also ended up shifting how the alignment of the platform ran, got rid of a curve that was represented over on the right-hand side of this screen that used to exist. Now we have a straight approach into and out of the station.

Moving on into the City West Station, on this sheet here, one of the key features is that we've
made adjustments to the retaining walls that surround
the park-and-ride at the station that will serve the
Optimum Health campus that is currently under
construction. That is really the primary change here.

Moving from Eden Prairie into
Minnetonka, this is one of two LRT tunnels. This
tunnel goes underneath Highway 62. This tunnel was
shortened as we advanced the design forward.

Some of the other changes we made, at
the actual Opus Station, we relocated where the buses
were previously located. We eliminated, for cost
savings, two pedestrian tunnels that went underneath
the roadway system, some of the major changes. We also
made adjustments and shrank the footprint of the
park-and-ride serving this station.

Moving on farther to the east, as we
leave the Opus Station, we then embark upon a large
bridge heading into the Shady Oak Station area. We
made some adjustments to the bridge as well. And,
probably, the most key feature change from last time,
we are bringing the two roadways you'll see just to the
right of center on this street -- the roadways come
over the top of LRT. Before, LRT ran at grade across
those two roadways.

Over to this location, you are seeing
the operation and maintenance facility. I already mentioned many of the changes here. I'll point out, we were able to save this full property acquisition. This business will now be able to stay based on the design changes we made at the operation maintenance facility.

One of the other key features here is we moved the platform, and we also realigned the roadway differently. The park-and-ride has been laid out off of Excelsior Boulevard in a much different way. There used to be roundabouts built into the extension of 17th Avenue. Working with the City and others, we've eliminated those roundabouts and re-layed out the park-and-ride and opened up opportunities for future development on either side of the park-and-ride fronting that street that we will be building.

It gives you just a better profile of the park-and-ride and the future opportunity for development in this area here, as well as over here. Moving on to the Downtown Hopkins Station, there really haven't been any modifications in this area.

Moving on to the bridge over Excelsior Boulevard, there also have been very little changes here, some slight modifications to the bridge, but nothing substantial.
Moving on to the Blake Station in Hopkins, this is a change through the cost reduction scope change exercise that we went through. This is one of the locations that used to have a parking ramp. The parking ramp has been eliminated and replaced with a much smaller surface lot. By doing so, we were able to save two full property acquisitions right in this area that would have been necessary for the footprint of that parking ramp.

Moving on to the crossing of Minnehaha Creek, as we transition from Hopkins into Saint Louis Park, there really have been no changes in this segment of the corridor.

Moving on to the Louisiana Station, probably the key change here is this is one of the locations where we added additional parking compared to what we had before. That is really down in this area here.

We were needing to acquire these properties here in order to provide the freight rail connection that we are severing up in this area. These were previously designated as remnant parcels, and now we are utilizing them for additional parking to be able to compensate for some of the other parking reductions made at some of the other stations.
Moving on to the Wooddale Station area, this is another area that really has not seen much modification as it relates to the design over the last year.

Same goes for the crossing of Highway 100. This has been pretty stable from a design statement, no real changes here.

Moving on to the Beltline Station, this is at the other location that used to have a parking ramp at this location and, even prior to that, a larger surface parking lot. As a result of the exercise over the course of the summer to reduce costs and change the scope, we've reduced this down to a much smaller service park-and-ride. And then, as a result of that, we have changed the configuration of access to the station and the park-and-ride and bus circulation as a result.

Moving on into Minneapolis, to the Westlake Station area, there really haven't been any major changes in this location over the course of the last year.

Moving on into the Kenilworth Corridor, crossing Cedar Lake Parkway underneath, the real significant change of note here is the crossing of the Kenilworth Channel, where our previous design plans
last summer showed two bridges here, we now have three. We used to have a bridge that had LRT and trail on it together as a single bridge. We've now separated the trail from the LRT bridge and are able to reduce the bridge deck thickness, as well as reduce the number of piers that would be in the channel itself.

Moving on to the 21st Street Station, there really haven't been any major modifications at this location over the last course of the year.

Moving farther east to the Penn Station, the most significant change of note is there was previously a trail bridge that crossed over freight and LRT at this location replacing an existing at-grade trail crossing of freight that exists today. We now have that existing crossing and are now extending it farther across the LRT tracks at grade.

In order to make that a safe design, we have also made a change to where the platform used to be located. It was located in this area here. We, basically, pivoted it over off of the skyway connection to the bluffs. Those are really the major changes in this area.

Moving on to the Van White Station area, this is another area that really hasn't seen any major design modifications over the course of the last year.
Then, finally, moving into the connection of this project into the existing Green Line at Royalton Station and, ultimately, Target Field, there really haven't been any major design modifications at this location, either, over the course of the last year.

Moving on real briefly, we're here tonight to fulfill the municipal consent process, which is called for in Minnesota statute 473.3994, which really speaks to local jurisdiction, review, and approval of the physical design components of the preliminary design plans, which I just went through a moment ago. I'll talk a little bit more about the physical design components here on the following slide. The lowest local jurisdictional review and approval really is the five cities through which the alignment travels, as well as the County.

Specifically, what's covered under municipal consent, the physical design components are really the LRT track and location, station location and layout, the roadway features, the turn lanes, lane widths, traffic signals, the location of sidewalks and pedestrian crossings, the operation and maintenance facility, which is in Hopkins, as well as the freight track location and system elements, which are really
the track and power substations, primarily, and the single bungalows that are on the preliminary design plan.

A little bit about the schedule for the municipal consent process. It really kicked off here a few weeks ago on July 23rd with the release of the municipal consent plans or the preliminary design plans that I just went through.

We are here tonight, on August 27th, not quite the midpoint of the process, for the joint public hearing.

Ultimately, following tonight, there will be public hearings held by each of the five cities, as well as actions by the five cities and the county, all to be completed before or on October 11.

Here's what the schedule looks like. Some of this is confirmed. Some of it is still tentative at this point in time. This is the understanding of the schedule going forward after tonight. The week of the 14th, we have public hearings and city council actions on the preliminary design plan. And then the following week, we have additional council actions, public hearings by some of the cities, as well as action by the county board and, ultimately, the City of Minneapolis as well.
So it was mentioned by Chair Duininck earlier, we are accepting public comments until 4:00 p.m. on September 11th associated with this public hearing. Again, there will be public hearings at each of the five cities as well in the coming weeks. Public comments can be submitted as verbal testimony and written comments at today's hearing, as well as through the project's website, via U.S. Mail to the project office, as well as by phone, e-mail, and fax to the project office as well.

A little bit about the next steps.

After we get through the municipal consent process in late September, early October, we'll be continuing to advance the design for the stations, the streetscape, as well as starting to focus on advancing the design of the utility relocation, public and private, as well as other design features, as well, including the LRT track, the roadway, the operation and maintenance facility, bridges, tunnels, system and freight features, as well.

We anticipate completing 60 percent of the design plan in the late September, early October time frame, which is a major milestone for the design process.

With that, I will turn it back over to
Chair Duininck and Chair McLaughlin.

MR. DUININCK: Thank you to everyone from our team that is here, and we'll go on in the coming weeks.

I think what we'll do now is jump right into testimony.

Thank you, Craig, for that presentation. And I'll do my best here to pronounce the names and read the handwriting. I'll start by reading off the first two speakers. The first will speak right away, and the other is in waiting.

The first person signed up is Lisa Moe. The next person Robert Brockway. Good evening.

MS. MOE: I have a pretty easy name to spell, as well.

For my presentation, my two minutes, you'll want to look at a map that you have that was given to you.

Good evening. As I stated, my name is Lisa Moe, I'm CEO of Stuart Companies, and we own about 700 apartments that will be directly impacted by this line.

As Chair Duininck stated earlier, all ideas and cost savings should be considered. That's what I am here to present tonight.
The first slide or first piece of paper you have there, so the current line with OMF, this is the area between OPUS and Downtown Hopkins, to give you some idea. It shows the current line with the operation maintenance facility, the OMF, versus our proposed route down 11th Avenue.

The alternative OMF was considered by the project office under the SCEIS review and had higher ranking based on the 13 criteria used to evaluate the site. The cost between the two locations is the same. The alternative location moves the OMF away from a landfill in Hopkins and reduces the potential for adverse environmental impact and also reduces noise impact in existing housing, homeownership and rental housing.

The second page, if you don't mind turning to that, this line depicts the current line for OPUS, Shady Oak, Downtown Hopkins, and the Blake Station. The cost of this line from Opus to Shady Oak Station is $74 million. This is based on 2013 numbers provided by the project office. I would imagine that this cost is conservative today.

This line, as demonstrated earlier, is the largest section of bridge, the 32 bridge, and goes over wetlands. It will span -- it will be 23 and a
half feet in height and span over 32 feet in length.

For the two stations that will connect Opus and Shady Oak, there's only 2,000 people living within half a mile walking distance on opening day.

If you would look to the third slide, please. Our suggestion is 11th Avenue. The cost of this route is 24 million. This is based on two independent engineering firms that we hired, Westwood and CEH. The amount of track is 20 percent less with 11th Avenue alignment, resulting in four main things. One is decrease of cost of $50 million, decreased time for riders, increased access for 6,000 existing residents who live in this area, and improved connections to existing bus routes.

I'd ask that you look to the final slide. This is a view of how the track would fit on 11th Avenue. 11th Avenue is an area in need of new development and has potential COD opportunities that are unlimited. 11th Avenue is a direct connection between Opus Station to Downtown Hopkins. It avoids a half a mile bridge. It maintains the track at grade, which avoids the roller-coaster effect of the current alignment and will result in substantial savings to the line.

We simply ask the commission to direct
the project office to look at this route as a more
direct route. The $50 million savings should cause the
project officers to look at this route.

I thank you for your consideration.

MR. DUININCK: Thank you very much.

Robert Brockway is up next, followed by Angela Erdvich.

MR. BROCKWAY: Good evening. My name is
Bob Brockway. I live in the Tower of Isles high-rise.
This is the proverbial pinch point, and it is used to
be a grain elevator.

I represent the 242 homeowners in the
Tower of Isle high-rise and townhomes.

The planned tunnel for the LRT will be
just 3 feet from our foundation. Though our opinions
vary as to the acceptance of the LRT, we all feel
strongly about two things. First, no damage to our
Tower of Isle homes will be incurred during the
construction process. And second, that there will be
no negative effects to the Tower of Isle homes from the
operation and maintenance of the LRT once it is in
operation.

Our communications with the engineering
group and the Met Council has been excellent. However,
the same cannot 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, the
council seems to have little sympathy for anyone or
anything, other than their own bottom line.

We would want assurance 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 in any
acceptance by Minneapolis of the project.

There is a concern of our safety, also.
The fact is that the 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 BSNF track. If one of those tank
cars has just a very small vapor leak, with the close
adjacent LRT and its overhead sparking, the result
would be horrific. Has the City investigated any other
nationwide locations where this situation is similar?

Viewing the display as just presented, I
have two observations. One is the large number of
curves in the plan. Curves on rail tracks mean
screech. You have to be concerned about that for the
residents.

The other thing I want to observe is
that you have one-third reduction in park-and-ride, and
this has got to influence the number of ridership.
Thanks.

MR. DUININCK: Thank you. Next is Angela Erdvich, followed by Bob Carney.

MS. ERDVICH: Hello. My name is Angela Erdvich. I am just representing myself as a concerned citizen who cares about the lakes.

I'm concerned about unforeseen consequences and environmental problems, especially around the tunnel as being created between Lake Calhoun and Cedar Lake. And your engineering staff has kindly reassured me about the waterproofing through the tunnel. But I still feel like, looking back in history, humans have a pretty good track record of screwing up the environment. I'm concerned of the kinds of things that I feel are too big of a risk.

When you look at the lakes, they are not that clean. You know, if you are looking from a birds-eye view, they are pretty, or on a house from one of the lakes, it might look really pretty. But when you are in there with a paddle or canoe, they are quite dirty compared to lakes in the country. And they are fragile.

I have a municipal consent document that was signed by ten city council members and three city councils were against. That was last August 29th,
2014. It is an interesting document. I hope you've all had a chance to read it.

There's 43 "whereas" statements prior to signing it, 43 different reasons why they shouldn't sign it, basically, and the reason the City felt like they had been undermined. There are statements such as "Whereas the routing system and station specific benefits for advancing equity and serving neighborhoods has been exaggerated."

"Whereas it was not designed around serving disadvantaged neighborhoods or serving neighborhoods."

"Whereas we were undermined by the selfish project staff," that kind of thing.

Obviously, Minneapolis had a lot of reasons that they were reticent to sign the municipal consent. And I strongly feel, if this tunnel -- if there's reasons that the tunnel is determined not to be environmental -- that it goes all the way back to the draft environmental impact statement.

I know Lisa Goodman has expressed concern that the tunnel be half dug and then they'll find some reason why it is not feasible, but it will still keep going at grade.

Some politicians -- they are not
engineers, I know -- but they have given the tunnel a
50 percent chance of actually going through. I feel
like it is really not going to happen.

So that is all I have to say. Thanks.

MR. DUININCK: Thank you. Next is Bob
Carney, followed by Amity Foster.

MR. CARNEY: Thank you. Hi. Bob
"Again" Carney, Junior, from Stadium Village, formally
known as the City of Minneapolis. We didn't plan it
that way. It just turned out that way.

I passed out a news release sent out
today. I have an 11,700-word plan that is based on a
variation of the so-called 3C route. That would go
down the greenway to Nicollet. The three-c plan was to
tunnel under Nicollet. The only difference in the
route that I am talking about is that it would go to
I-35W, and a transit hub would link buses, including on
35W and also Nicollet and Lake.

My first point is I'd like to encourage
you and ask you to read the thing. I am going to get
printed copies to everybody on the Hennepin County
board and everybody on the Met Council.

My fundamental concern is that the
current plan, the current route is a disaster. And I
am willing to support an alternative that makes sense
from the point of view of transit. That's what I am
talking about here.

Now, as you know, the legislature took
back $30 million. There's 15 million the legislature
has approved.

It seems to me the difference between
the supporters of this program right now and Wiley
Coyote in the Road Runner comics is that Wiley Coyote
realized that he went over the cliff. It seems you
people are in denial. There's no money for this
project. The certificates of participation are very
questionable legally. We have to find out whether the
FTA would even approve it. There's very serious
problems with this.

Now, there's also a lawsuit going on. I
do not represent Lakes & Parks Alliance. I am not a
member. But I do have opinions on it. I've followed
it very closely.

And the real concern that I see that the
Metropolitan Council has is that you are scared to
death that you will get kicked out of the New Starts
Program if you change. I understand that. If the
lawsuit goes further, and there's a record of decision,
then the FTA can be dragged into this.

Here's what I am proposing as a possible
way out of this. Let's see if we can figure out a way for the FTA to allow this program to stay in New Starts and to reopen the scoping process and get it to Uptown and out to I-35 and to the convention center. I encourage you to take a look at that plan.

Right now, this is totally unacceptable. I'll do everything I can to fight it, and I've been pretty successful so far getting the legislature to take that money back. Let's try to work together to make something work. That's what I'd like to do.

I appreciate your time this evening.

Thank you.

MR. DUININCK: Next is Amity Foster, followed by Asad Aliweyd.

MS. FOSTER: Greetings. My name is Amity Foster. I'm here with Isaiah, a faith-based organization of more than 100 churches working statewide for racial and economic justice. I am also a bus and train rider.

The Southwest Light Rail will be an important connection between Minneapolis and the southwest area, including providing connection to the north side. We are pleased that the 21st Street, Van White, and Penn Station are still part of the line.

At a previous hearing, a fellow
community member had called this line "the equity line." I think she was being sarcastic, but she does have a point. Our transit system is lacking in racial equity, and people of color are not served by it.

And I've heard that the stops along the north side don't really serve the north side. So that may or may not be true. Buses will need to connect there for real service.

But I take the 11, because I live in northeast, downtown every morning to catch the train to get to work. Expecting that you should be able to take the train directly to where you need to go is not an indication of racial equity in our transit system. We have to consider all of the options that people have access to and look at those smaller options, like better bus service or circulators on the north side, lower fares, as well as where trains go and who they are delivering people to and from.

Thank you.

MR. DUININCK: Thank you very much.

Asad Aliweyd, and next is Sally Rousse.

MR. ALIWEYD: Good evening. My name is Asad Aliweyd, with the New American Academy. The New American Academy supports Southwest LRT projects fully because we believe Southwest LRT will affect the
economy of the southwest area of the Twin Cities. And the New American Academy has been active working with the Southwest LRT project with engaging with the immigrant community along the line in decisions related to alignments, the station area planning, and the problems of immigrant problems.

Independent alignment, we support the independent alignment of the light rail alignment and LRT station, generally, from the intersection of Technology Drive and Mitchell Road to the intersection of Flying Cloud Drive and Valley View Road.

Yet, it was on July 8th, 2015, that the proposal was made at the Met Council for the Southwest LRT position to defer the Eden Prairie Town Center Station on opening day. This will delay the benefit of this public investment.

Using the market technology tool for the Environment Protection Agency, Alliance for Metropolitan Stability, and the New American Academy, we found that, within a 3-mile square area, for Eden Prairie town station, there are -- the people who live in that area, 40 percent of them are minority. 42 percent of those households get $50,000 or less. 65 percent are renters. 23 percent are under 17 years of age. 10 percent are 65 years and older.
We get this survey from American Community. We choose to look at a broader area than the half mile station area circumference to include the commercial areas, because of the density in the suburban city.

The New American Academy and Twin Cities lists, with the support of a corridor opportunity initiative funding by FTA, EPA and the communities, we devoted the Town Center area to look at what kind of development could be happening.

Town Center Station is the only station that really has affordable housing and working class kind of housing. If you look at other stations, you can't find that type of opportunity land to build any kind of housing in that area. So without the station at Eden Prairie Town Center, the opportunities to increase affordable housing and jobs for people of color will not be. So I encourage you to really look at funding in the future to build that station.

Thank you.

MR. DUININCK: Thank you very much.

Next Sally Rousse, followed by Donna Azarian.

MS. ROUSSE: I'm Sally Rousse, from Bryn Mawr. There are lots of reasons why I think this route is really impossible to accept, specifically, that 1.5
miles through the Chain of Lakes for environmental reasons and train-hazardous reasons, and I think, racial inequity.

The entire project is hard to wrap my head around without seeing the Bottineau Line fleshed out more. This particular route doesn't address anyone in the areas north of Bryn Mawr, north at all. The Penn Station, the Van White Station, and the Royalton Station are not north. Those are areas west of Minneapolis.

I think we need to really work hard to not obtain municipal consent on this. I think it was -- as you heard from the 43 "whereas" statements, the consent from Minneapolis was given not very readily, and for good reason.

I'm a little bit confused by some comments I read by you, Adam, about that this thing is not a done deal, it is not concrete, everything is still on the table. And you said, including going back to Saint Louis Park and rerouting freight. So I look forward to hearing you clarify that some more. I know you can't comment right now. That was in print. So that's a little weird.

Gail Dorfman, I talked to you in 2002, and you said this would never happen. You said this is
a ridiculous route, and here you sit. I don't know how
you sleep at night.

MR. DUININCK: Next is Donna Azarian and
then Richard Adair.

MS. AZARIAN: Hi. My name is Donna
Azarian. I'm here as a resident of Eden Prairie.
And since everything is still on the
table, I am asking that you give taxpayers a vote on
the SWLRT. The reason being, that by the SWLRT's own
admission, it will only serve less than 10 percent of
the people in the area it passes through.

Trains don't get people good paying
jobs. Education does. Regardless of the latest cost
cuts, the SWLRT will still cost more than a hundred
million dollars per mile. The estimated trip time from
Eden Prairie to Target Field is longer than the current
Southwest Transit bus service.

Many riders on the Blue and Green line,
according to the Star-Tribune, are not paying their
fares. The annual operating losses for the Southwest
Light Rail will likely be more in the neighborhood of
$30 million, instead of 20 million. And, eventually,
you are going to have to build turnstiles to allow
access onto the trains.

We don't have the population density for
the Southwest Light Rail to succeed along the route, because, according to Urban Land Institute, the minimum density to support the light rail is 14,720 people per square mile. The population density along the Southwest Light Rail route is only 5,600 people per square mile, according to the Federal Transit Administration.

According to "Car and Driver" magazine, light rail is the second deadliest form of transportation, behind motorcycles.

Too few people use light rails in other cities to have a significant impact on traffic or air quality. It would be cheaper to buy each potential light rail commuter their own Prius.

And 70.9 percent of light rail operating costs are footed by taxpayers nationally. And according to The Post Sustainability Institute, private funders of the U.N. Agenda 21 sustainable developments include Siemens, the very same company that is providing trains for the SWLRT.

For these reasons, I ask the Met Council to give taxpayers a vote on the Southwest Light Rail. Thank you.

MR. DUININCK: Next is Richard Adair, followed by Butch Johnson.
MR. ADAIR: I would like to comment on the planning process. So much has been said during these many years of public hearings that sometimes it is hard to separate fact from fiction, fact from wishful thinking. Since I've been attending these hearings from the start, I'll try to help.

An example, local bike trails have been spray-painted with the message, "Save the lakes, stop LRT." In fact, the engineers have determined that building a tunnel in Kenilworth will not affect the nearby lakes. I was at the presentation at Dunwoody where this was described in great detail, and I read their entire report. The reason is that the area's sandy soil can absorb large quantities of rainwater and snow melt.

A much larger threat, in my opinion, to our beloved lakes is global warming. I don't see how anyone can conclude LRT won't affect it. 30,000 riders a day is 9 million rides a year. That's on weekdays. If you add in weekends, we'll get up to 11 million rides per year. That is an awful lot of automobile exhaust that doesn't go into the atmosphere.

Fact, another fact, the planning process that I observed has been wide open and not pushed toward any predetermined result. Many routing options
were presented at the earlier meetings, and many, many stakeholders spoke. Many of those meetings went four hours. They included suburban commuters who need a ride downtown, transit-dependent people in North Minneapolis, Uptown people who want to save space in the greenway for a trolley, taxpayers who object to the expensive route using a developed street. The 3A route emerged because it is simply the best fit and the best value. No secrecy, no conspiracy.

Fact, the Met Council has not engaged in bait-and-switch tactics regarding freight rail relocation. Local governments have very little power over railroads. Teddy Roosevelt fought this battle about a century ago and didn't get very far.

The Met Council hired a consultant, who concluded that freight relocation is feasible. Despite this, Twin Cities & Western has decided it wants to keep its current route.

Fact, the planning for this project is an example of how democracy works. Everyone has a say, but we don't all get what we want. And it is very important we respect the process.

MR. DUININCK: Thank you. Next is Butch Johnson, followed by Russ Adams.

MR. JOHNSON: Butch Johnson, 5750 Shady
Oak Road. I'd like to say Hopkins, but it actually is in Minnetonka.

I want to thank you, first of all, for all your hard work.

Second of all, I want to thank you for keeping the 17th Avenue extension. I think the potential development of Hopkins to Hopkins and, also, the alignment of K-Tel to 17th, which I think will eventually happen -- I understand it isn't there yet, but it is possible that it will come. I think those are -- you know, I was really worried we were going to lose that.

And, yes, there are other routes. There were other ideas along this whole process that I would have rather seen. But I just want to thank you. I think this is -- for you guys, it is a tough road.

And by the way, I'm a very big fan of circulators. I think those are very useful in Hopkins in getting that 6:15 around and about. Those ideas are terrific. Thank you.

MR. DUWINCK: Russ Adams, followed by Mary Pattock.

MR. ADAMS: Thank you, Mr. Chair and panel members. My name is Russ Adams. I'm the executive director for the of Alliance for Metropolitan...
Stability. I also co-chair the Southwest Community Advisory Committee.

I want to first thank the staff for the project for the work that they've done, under pretty trying circumstances, to come up with strategies for trimming hundreds of millions of dollars from the project budget. That was a pretty amazing effort, under duress.

I also want to thank the Corridor Management Committee for adopting an approach in looking at the budget, the table, that I work on with and the Southwest Equity Commitments Group had suggested, which was to not fully cut the budget all the way back to the original budget size that it was at the beginning of the year. Instead at 1.6 million, find creative ways to find cost savings but not cut the project to the point where we lose the value, the community and economic benefits of the project.

This was an approach that the Community Advisory Committee and, also, the Business Advisory Committee had also endorsed.

I want to thank the Corridor Management Committee, which some of you are members of, for finding ways to do that. I think what you ended up doing is you found a way to make the project and
maintain the project viable in local eyes, as well as federal eyes, without harming the related development, multimobile connections, and job opportunities that it is expected to generate.

Obviously, our first priority as we move forward is to find a way to backfill some of those budget cuts to the project that were made. I know there are a lot of creative ideas that the staff has. As we do that, it would be important to apply an equity lens, as we look at ways to restore a transit station in Eden Prairie and to create more connections for multimobile users.

As we look at those funding sources, for example, the regional coordination process, which could be a very logical source for some of those funds, we should also try to tie the awarding of those funds to commitments by the cities along the line, as well as Hennepin County, to make the corridor-wide affordable housing strategy a viable plan. It is something that I think would really be consistent and reinforce each other as we do that.

Finally, the communities of color and leaders from those neighborhood organizations that I work with have never called this "an equity train." Instead, they've always pressed the case that it is a
project that could leverage economic benefits, as well
as social connectivity. I think that's really how we
should be looking at the project.

It is a light rail line. They are
always controversial. But when done right, they can
have incredible opportunities. Thank you for your
time.

MR. DUININCK: Thank you. Mary Pattock,
followed by Bob Aderhold.

MS. PATTOCK: Good evening. Thank you
for your time. I'm here to represent LRT - Done Right,
which is an organization of several hundred people,
mostly from Minneapolis. We submitted an extensive,
comprehensive response to the SDEIS. I hope you have
all looked at it. There were probably thousands of
hours of community work that went into this document.
It was very comprehensive.

But today I will focus on one aspect of
those comments. And that is the serious issues
involved in co-locating LRT immediately adjacent to the
LRT train.

Most people don't realize that contrary
to industry guidelines, the proposed light rail will
would run shockingly close, as close as 15 feet away,
from the TC and Hennepin line, train to train, not
center to center.

The TC&W carries, as others have mentioned, explosive ethanol through residential and recreational areas of Minneapolis, over the channel that connects the environmentally-sensitive Chain of Lakes and Target Stadium. Increasingly, this freight line is used to carry trains of a hundred or more cars. Together, they carry millions of gallons of ethanol. These are bomb trains in our neighborhoods.

Locating LRT close to the freight line would drastically increase the risk of an explosion of an ethanol train and the consequences of derailment by either freight or LRT. We are, frankly, appalled at the idea of an ethanol bomb train immediately next to electric sparking electric wires. Given the derailments we've already seen and the 2010 derailment of the existing LRT train, it is hardly alarmist to raise this issue.

We are also concerned about the construction phase of the project. For two years, trains carrying hazardous freight will run through a construction zone with no crash walls at the edge of a 35-foot open trench. We know from conversations with Minneapolis fire department chief, John Fruetel, as well as TC&W president, Mark Wegner, that they are also
concerned about these construction issues.

   As citizens, we demand that the Met
3  Council be serious and not just pay token attention to
4  these issues, lest you find yourself responsible for a
5  horrible human tragedy. Thank you.

   MR. DUININCK: Thank you. Next is Bob
7  Aderhold, followed by Dan Duffy.

   MR. ADERHOLD: Good evening. I live in
9  Edina, and I've been commuting to downtown Minneapolis
10 for about a dozen years, in recent years through the
11 Kenilworth Corridor.

   I'm an advocate for stronger mobile
13 transportation options, including bicycle and walking
14 infrastructure. I'm happy to see the Southwest Light
15 Rail transit on track again. I strongly support the
16 latest changes to the project, to the project plan.
17 And I appreciate the hard work undertaken by the
18 Cities, as well as Hennepin County, and the project
19 office.

   I believe the corridor or Southwest
21 Light Rail is extremely important to our regional
22 economy. It adds to the growing rail and bus network
23 that connects us with employment and education centers.
24 It expands access to jobs, reduces the high cost of
25 transportation for many families.
Also, the environmental benefits, projects like this, also provide, as you well know, transit-oriented development and enables people to get to where they need to go without relying on cars.

Of course, it is expensive, but when you consider the enormous subsidies that go into traffic and parking, at the end of the day, I believe the benefits far exceed the cost.

There have been a lot of hearings. I've attended many of them. My hope is that we can move quickly ahead with this project. Thank you.

MR. DUININCK: Dan Duffy, followed by Harry Maddox.

MR. DUFFY: Good evening, Chair Duininck and commissioners. My name is Dan Duffy. I am coming to you tonight to speak on behalf of two organizations, the Twin West Chamber of Commerce and the Southwest LRT Business Advisory Committee, also known as the BAC. Combined, these two organizations represent over 700 businesses and tens of thousands of employees in the West Metro Region.

The BAC and Twin West view this project as vital to the economic development and job opportunities throughout the entire metropolitan region, not just the southwest corridor. Our business
organizations understand that improving transit options in the southwest metro region helps support 60- to 80,000 jobs that is the projected growth in this corridor over the next two decades.

LRT will help reduce commute times for employees traveling from the northeast and south regions of the metro, as well as give jobs and employers in the southwest the opportunity to reach out to potential employees from the greater metropolitan area.

As most of you know, Twin West has been an unwavering partner at the table throughout this process over a decade. Beginning with the lengthy and detailed studies of various modes of transit options for this corridor, followed by the comprehensive studies of alignment options, to where we are today with the current scope and budget reductions for the local funding requirements.

We understand the importance of finding cost effective solutions that will not sacrifice projected ridership, yet still maintain our high approval rating at the federal level and ranked as one of the next projects up.

We believe the current project's budget and scope, with major transfer stations at both ends
meet these goals.

At times, while this process was slowed by the political realities of the presence with projects of this magnitude, we chose to keep our focus on the data and facts presented by various consultants. Throughout this process, we have heard from many people that oppose this project, saying it has no economic benefit to our region. But in reality, we know that there are many completed future developments that are in planning stages for this corridor.

A few examples that are completed or currently under construction include development of senior and market-rate housing at Wooddale Station, a new large corporate campus at City Center, and a major hospital expansion near the Louisiana Station. Combined, these three newer developments along the corridor provide housing and employ thousands of people, even without Southwest LRT in service yet.

Therefore, in conclusion, on behalf of the organizations I represent, I ask that you continue to support this project by granting municipal consent and moving it forward to the next station in the design and approval process.

The Southwest LRT project will help us
grow jobs and improve transit for our entire metro
region so that we can stay competitive nationally with
other peer cities well into the future. Thank you.

MR. DUININCK: Thank you. Harry Maddox,
followed by Arlene Fried.

MR. MADDOX: Hello. My name is Harry
Maddox. I'm here for a few organizations, not just
one. I'm speaking on behalf of the people I've talked
to who are in favor for Southwest Green Line.

We would like to see more equity, so
basically, more connections based in North Minneapolis
and, also, a more broader look at bringing development
for the people that are already there in the
communities that it affects. So instead of rising
costs in North Minneapolis along the Glenwood and Bryn
Mawr neighborhood, look at some better options for the
people that already live in the neighborhood that it
doesn't affect.

But also, in response, I'm happy that
you are building a light rail line, and there should be
more. And if you are going to stay competitive with
the rest of the world, then it is only right that you
keep sources available, multimobile, bike and
transportation, mixing your highways.

So the light rail is going to cut down
on cars. It takes about 55 people, so that's how many cars? So you take that off for each car. How many cars are you taking off the freeway?

It is also a safety issue, too.

So I wasn't going to be up here that long. I was running late, so I didn't plan a speech. But I'm in support of the Green Line, and I support you guys. Let's get it going. Thank you.

MR. DUININCK: Thank you. Arlene Fried, followed by Martha Mason.

MS. FRIED: I am Arlene Fried, and I live in Bryn Mawr. I'm the co-founder of the Park Watch.

My concern is the safety for those using the trails and living near the trails, as well as those using light rail in the Kenilworth Corridor. I want to make the point that the freight cars carrying flammable liquids can leak flammable fumes and should not be located adjacent to light rail and light rail's electrical wires, because of the danger of an explosion. It is particularly dangerous in the Kenilworth area. Co-location should be banned.

Thank you.

MR. DUININCK: Martha Mason, followed by
George Puzak.

MS. MASON: Good evening. My name is Martha Mason.

Although, I find it surreal that we are contemplating consent for taking light rail to our iconic Chain of Lakes, I would, nonetheless, like to offer a comment.

There has been a lack of information about the physical design intent of the freight rail in terms of their expectations of growth in an expanding rail market. If there will be a potential increase in physical freight volume or frequency of rail traffic, then the City of Minneapolis needs to be prepared for increased environmental impact risks and viability.

This is especially relevant in terms of a basic physical design component, that is, the layout of the parallel rail operations in a shared right-of-way, otherwise known as co-location.

During the prior municipal consent process, there was what the media called a compromise deal on co-location, where the City and Met Council developed a memorandum of understanding that agreed to freight use restrictions that might limit the detrimental changes in frequency and nature of freight service in over what is called the freight rail.
property, which has become public.

However, it is not clear whether the Met Council has authority to restrict private freight rail in terms of interstate commerce. Statute 473.3999 speaks only of the light rail authority of that body.

Furthermore, this memorandum of compromise relieved the Met Council of risks and liability for freight or light rail. Since contractual relationships with railroads are governed by various federal and state laws, rules, and regulations, we need clarification from the board of surface transportation board on the agreement in place and who is responsible for investments in infrastructure to implement what Governor Dayton called a robust rail corridor risk management system.

Unless potential for increased freight rail traffic has been addressed in the current environmental impact statement, municipal consent should not go forward. The Bottineau affect predicts freight is not going to move. The best outcome suggests choosing an alternate LRT alignment.

Thank you very much.

MR. DUININCK: Thank you. Next is George Puzak, followed by Susu Jeffrey.

MR. PUZAK: Good evening. My name is
George Puzak. I live at 1780 Gerard Avenue South, Minneapolis. I am here speaking on my own behalf.

I have a transit dream. The Blue Line is expanded to the heart of North Minneapolis and becomes a true equity train. The Green Line is extended through the densest neighborhoods of South Minneapolis so people of all ages, backgrounds, and cultures can get those jobs in Eden Prairie and beyond.

In the future, there's a Purple Line that extends from Wayzata to White Bear Lake. And we truly have a robust light rail system.

I will never bet on this system becoming a reality, because I'm not a gambling man. But I do know enough about poker to know when someone has two aces in the hole. And when it comes to Southwest LRT, those aces are Hennepin County's failure to include freight rail in the 2009 scope report.

In fact, at the top of page of 18, it says freight rail is not included in the draft of the environmental impact statement, which is separate. It's at the top of page 18.

Second, freight rail is not included in the 2010 locally-preferred alternative vote. The national environmental policy requires scope to be the first step in identifying the
issues, alternatives, locations, and modes to be studied in the project. As I said, scope did not include freight. It was not included.

Contrary to law, the Met Council has limited the choice of reasonable alternatives in the alignment. Reducing costs, studying freight rail in the supplemental EIS, and repeating municipal consent are not sufficient remedies.

There are only two remedies. One, eliminate co-location of freight and LRT by relocating freight rail out of Kenilworth and build the plan approved in 2010, or reopen and include freight rail in the Southwest LRT's original scoping process. This remedy will allow government and citizens to study all reasonable alternatives for LRT alignment, while acknowledging freight rail routing, costs, and impact.

Thank you.

MR. DUININCK: Thank you. Susu Jeffrey, followed by Lynn Levine.

MS. JEFFREY: I'm Susu Jeffrey, from Bryn Mawr.

The Southwest Light Rail project has been corrupted by a preordained scoping process, which was really a political process, rather than working with the reality of the landscape. It is a
dysfunctional process. It shows contempt for
democratic principles. This is the way dictatorships
operate. And this is what Judge Tunheim has called a
bureaucratic steamroller.

And the next thing is that you hire
professionals and bait them with pay. And the experts
agree that they can build the virtual plans. They sit
in square offices and draw lines on pieces of paper and
say we can insert them into the land, because their pay
depends on agreeing with your plans.

The proposed tunnel in an ancient
Mississippi riverbed is fantasy planning. You are
acting like climate change deniers. The tunnel between
Cedar Lake at the Isles of Lake Calhoun would be a half
mile long with solid steel sides driven down 55 feet,
and it would be 35 feet wide.

I've been to the meetings at the
Minnehaha Creek Watershed District, and we were told
again and again that the water, the ground water, will
"just flow around." Well, it won't.

LRT line designers arbitrarily picked a
spot for the Hiawatha LRT at 50th Street and Hiawatha
for a grip chamber, and it had been leaking water at
500 gallons a minute for months. Just flow around.

When the Hiawatha line was built, there
was a lawsuit, and it resulted in replanning, rescoping, and it still reduced the flow to Coldwater, which is the last natural spring in all of Hennepin County, by 46,000 gallons a day or 35 percent of the flow. Coldwater is the place of the first European American settlement. It is sacred to the Dakota people. And it has been desecrated.

When that inevitable court case came, Judge Franklin Knoll said -- and this is his quote -- "How could you professionals be so far off in their hydrology? What facts were not available to you? Your engineers, geologists, and other specialists all signed off on this design."

And MnDOT attorney Lisa Crumb said that MnDOT design standards were based on reasonable estimates. It is not good enough.

Interstate 394 westbound in Minneapolis is de-watered daily at two and a half million gallons. Drying up the soil renders the soil less able to reabsorb the storm water, which is problematic in our time of climate change with alternate megastorms and drought.

The Burns & McDonnell water study estimated that 24,000 gallons a day would be pulled out from around the tunnel.
The skyway for the -- I'm concluding.
The skyway for the so-called Penn Avenue station is a sort of burglary-rape trap because it is 99 steps down into the ancient wetlands.

The southwest LRT was never planned to move black northside residents or white Uptown residents. Instead, you are going to Hidden Beach, which is the nude beach, the place where the cops and the kids and the park board have fought and fought.

MR. DUININCK: Are you about finished?

MS. JEFFREY: I am about, yes.

The plan clearly threatens the famous Chain of Lakes in the city of lakes.

You have to wonder, then, what is the purpose of the Southwest LRT? And I guess, it is $800 million in free federal money, which is our tax money, with another 800 million from the area.

The leadership for this unfortunate project has been dominated by white, suburban people with tunnel vision.

MR. DUININCK: Can you please wrap up.

MS. JEFFREY: I believe it is time to rescope.

MR. DUININCK: Thank you.

MS. JEFFREY: Rescope is what we are
MR. DUININCK: Thank you. Next is Lynn Levine.

MS. LEVINE: Lynn Levine, Bryn Mawr. I represent a small group of very strong environmentalists --

MR. DUININCK: Before you start, the next person is Jack Sparrow.

MS. LEVINE: -- called CURED, Citizens Unwilling to Rush Environmental Decisions. It was formed in the first half of my public life, when I trusted people like people sitting on this stage, many of whom I have been talking to over and over again for the project.

When I got involved in the wetlands, we were assured that there would be no affect by putting 5,000 truckloads of fill into a wetland. Shortly after that, the wetland had a big ditch around it, which was illegal, but they had no choice. And we found out that, if the Watershed District had been given false information by the people proposing that, they cannot be held accountable. They cannot be sued because they were acting in good faith on the information they were given.

This false information is provided by
people who are hungry to do a certain project, possibly
to promote their name as a big founder of the City of
Minneapolis, possibly for money.

I think it should be a crime to sell our
water for profit and to promote businesses. I'm not
against businesses. I'm not against jobs. I'm not
against connecting North Minneapolis. But this is
going to do certain things, like put as low priority
getting the bus stations in North Minneapolis. So
we're not really doing this for North Minneapolis.
We're doing this for people in the suburbs who want to
get to their corporate jobs sooner.

For our city, I am not against rail
transit. I love the idea of transit. But when you
start to have the transit plan being money-driven, when
you can reduce it by $250 million and it is still very
expensive, then we know there's something wrong with
the process. Well, this is a process we've seen before
with the Minnehaha Park, et cetera.

I no longer swim in the lakes, because
when I began studying this information to present for
the Coldwater Spring, I found out how bad our lake
water is. That is absolutely not worth it. It really
is not. I mean, we were blessed to be a city of lakes.
And to trade our lakes so that we can have some big
project and make a whole bunch of money -- I don't think for a minute our environment is going to be protected by the studies by people who have a vested interest in it.

The subject of global warming came up. We have a tremendous amount of tree loss, which is just clearly, clearly not good for the earth. And I agree that transit is good for the earth, but not this one.

MR. DUININCK: Thank you. Next is Jack Sparrow, followed by Conrad Segal.

MR. SPARROW: My name is Captain Jack Sparrow. I'm a candidate for state senate in the Minneapolis District 62. I live at 3522 Bloomington Avenue South.

In a tape-recorded conversation, TC&W president Mark Wegner said that, by federal law, TC&W must transport any chemicals it is asked to transport. Where gas is formed, it is heavier than air. It was first used World War I as a chemical weapon. More recently, in Iraq and Syria, by government forces, as well as ISIS. In light of this, ethanol is the least of our problems.

Bob Carney's plan incorporates alignment with the transportation needs, rather than for the developers. Thank you.
MR. DUININCK: Thank you. Next is Conrad Segal, followed by David Ruebeck.

Conrad?

MR. RUEBECK: Hi. David Ruebeck, Minneapolis citizen and an advocate of transit.

I just want to register my disapproval with this plan. I think it is a waste of valuable transit dollars.

I also want to talk about your image problem. Metropolitan Council has a major image problem. It all revolves around co-location. As mentioned earlier by one of the advocate of the Green Line, the fact that the federal government has no power over freight rail has been known since the Roosevelt years. An executive order by the president cannot move a rail line.

I just learned that, maybe, six months ago in researching the project. I would hope that your lawyers would have known that some time ago. Or maybe they didn't, and that is a problem. If you knew about the inability to move the freight rail at the beginning of this project and went on to have meeting after meeting, decades, literally decades, of meetings about these lines and relocating and here is where the freight is going to go and here is where the LRT is
going to go, why weren't we told at the beginning
freight rail likely won't move at the first meeting of
the process. Let's figure that out at the beginning.

Okay. If you didn't know about it, I
can't decide which is worse. Did you not know that
freight rail does not have to move on executive order
of the president of the United States? Either you knew
and were disingenuous and misleading, or you didn't
know, and you were incompetent. That is your image
problem right there.

MR. DUININCK: Thanks. Lee Munnich,
followed by Andrew Leicester.

MR. MUNNICH: My name is Lee Munnich.
I'm a resident of Bryn Mawr in Minneapolis and live
near the proposed Penn Station.

First of all, I want to say I'm also a
member of the Citizens Advisory Committee and
appreciate the chance to work with Jennifer Munt and
co-chair on that process.

I also study transportation at the
Humphrey School and teach students about
transportation.

I want to speak in support of this
project and say a few words about my particular
perspectives. The Bryn Mawr Neighborhood Association,
of which I am a member, has supported this corridor over the years. And they have also particularly been in favor of Penn Station and Van White Station.

Penn Station, because of its link from Bryn Mawr to the -- Bryn Mawr residents, not only to the light rail itself, but also to the park systems. Since we don't have a good link currently, people illegally cross the railroad tracks to get to the park system in that section. So this bridge would provide us with that kind of linkage.

It also will provide an important linkage to jobs for Minneapolis residents in the southwest corridor, which are only accessible via car these days.

And, on Penn Avenue, if there's bus transit provided, it will be a good linkage from North Minneapolis to this station.

I, finally, want to indicate that I went to the workshop on the Kenilworth environmental process that has been going on in terms of landscape planning. I was very impressed with the plan for that corridor. In fact, my concern is that, perhaps, that would look so good that the rest of the -- we don't have funding to do that type of planning in the rest of the light rail line. I am hoping that we can explore ways of
doing that.

But I do think we need to think ahead about what this will be. And one of the things it will do is provide access to people from throughout the metropolitan area to that Kenilworth Corridor.

With the things that are being done to remove invasive species, put in new trees. There's a lot of really good plans for that area. So I am hoping we can look ahead to what this will be and some of the positive benefits that are going to come to all residents of the metro area. Thank you.

MR. DUININCK: Thank you. Andrew Leicester.

And next is Barbara Lunde or Lunde.

MS. LUNDE: Is Andrew here?

MR. DUININCK: I don't think so.

MS. LUNDE: I'm Barbara Lunde, representing myself, a resident of Minneapolis.

And I certainly request for a vote of the citizens for the light rail line. I live about a half block from the present freight rail, which worries me and would worry me even more if they build the tunnel for light rail.

I wish -- there seems to be a lot of support for the Bottineau line. If you want to go
ahead with that to Eden Prairie, that might be a good idea.

And the people -- there are a lot of what the locals call cow paths, where people move from the western side to the eastern side of the freight rail now. And with the light rail going in, that will disturb a lot of the paths that are presently used there. I think that should be taken into consideration.

Thank you.

MR. DUININCK: Thank you. Next is Mathews Hollinshead and then Dave Van Haltum. And that is all the names I have.

MR. HOLLINSHEAD: Good evening, members of the council and commissioners. I'm the conservation chair of the North Star Chapter, 12,000 members of the Sierra Club.

The National Sierra Club transportation policy references rail as the best way to achieve several objects, and so our chapter reflects that. We have supported Southwest Light Rail since its inception.

I want to just tell you that I have, personally, several meetings per year, both in the morning at 8:00 a.m. and in the evening at 6:00 or 7:00
p.m. in the west metro. When I try to get to those meetings, I run into a barrier, and the barrier is a tangle of highways and roads and stoplights and intersections and on-ramps and off-ramps, and beltlines. And at rush hour in the morning or evening, it is almost impossible for me to efficiently get to those meetings and still make it on time. I live in Highland Park in Saint Paul.

We, in the metro area, as you must know, have, I believe, 141 legally constituted cities. We have 22 legally constituted townships. We have 9 unincorporated communities, and we have 4 ghost towns, according to Wikipedia.

But from an economic standpoint and from an environmental standpoint, we have one city and one city only. And for decades, that has been called the metropolitan area of the Twin Cities, and that name is reflected in the council, in the name of the council. That is what we have economically. That is what we have environmentally.

I laud and applaud and thank and appreciate all of the cities, all of those 141 cities who have created walkable corners, walkable projects, mixed-use projects, bicycle plans, bicycle lanes, complete streets, pedestrian amenities, and facilities.
But I will say that those things mean much less than they will mean when they are brought online. The way they will be brought online is when we have a fast, high-capacity metro-wide transit system, and the answer to that is rail.

There are a lot of logical concerns with this alignment. I would suggest, as I have in the past -- I want to reference our previous testimony in all these previous meetings and incorporate that here. We do not change that testimony. But I would suggest that those who oppose this line are not sitting in a seat where they have to vote on the budget. They are not sitting in the seat where they have to vote on the project. They are not sitting in the seat where they are responsible for improving the air quality or water quality or any other regional objective. They have legitimate concerns, but they don't have the responsibility.

No other alignment will be easier. It will be no easier than this alignment. Any other alignment will have equal problems and obstacles. We don't plan this stuff well in the United States.

So I want to urge you to go forward with this project. I think you've done the diligence, and I think we need to get to a system from a couple of
Thank you very much.

MR. DUININCK: Thank you. Next is David Van Hattum. Right now, he is the last one I have signed up.

MR. VAN HATTUM: Good evening. My name is Dave Van Hattum. I am a Minneapolis resident and work for Transit for Livable Communities.

Transit for Livable Communities has over 8,000 members across the metro region. We believe in a vision of more transit, better biking and walking. We strongly support this project as currently designed.

Southwest LRT will expand access to jobs, reduce the high cost of transportation for many families, and lower traffic noise and emissions in our neighborhoods.

Light rail, in this alignment, is the best transportation alternative for the growing population in the southwest metro. In 30 years, Minneapolis will grow by 40,000 people and 68,000 jobs in Minneapolis alone. So we need a long-term strategy. Light rail and this alignment is the correct one.

This project is critical to our region's future economy and environment. Millennials rank transit among the top three most important features in
determining where to live, and employers increasing look for transit in choosing where to locate. Minneapolis has set important goals for reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 30 percent by 2025. We know that transportation needs to be a part of that plan. We know that Southwest Light Rail will take more than 10,000 cars off the road each day. That's with the projections, not with the experience we've been seeing on the existing Green Line.

Like others, we applaud all the cities along the corridor, Hennepin County, the Met Council, and the project office for coming up with a wise compromise solution and committing funds to keep this critical project moving forward.

Some will say this project is too suburban focused. Others will say it is too Minneapolis focused. Transit for Livable Communities believes it is the right regional investment.

Let me just touch on a couple of the benefits for Minneapolis and the suburbs. For Minneapolis, this allows our downtown to continue to grow as the region's economic hub. It is critical for our overall transportation system. The line also provides much needed reverse commute options from North Minneapolis to substantial job vacancies in the
southwest suburbs.

Benefits to southwest suburbs is getting the residents efficiently to jobs throughout the region, but also improving the options to their workplaces. I had the opportunity to spend a lot of time in many of those workplaces in previous jobs.

To conclude, I would just like to say, like others here tonight, I very much love and frequent Minneapolis parks and the Chain of Lakes. The LRT tunnel and the portion of the Kenilworth Corridor makes sense. This alignment will preserve the bike trail and will be engineered to prevent any water degradation.

We know that no alignment will serve everyone. That is why Transit for Livable Communities will continue to organize and advocate for our legislature to fund and expand its system of bus, rail, bicycling, and walking connections across the metro region and other across the state. It is time to move forward with the smart investment in Southwest Light Rail.

Thank you.

MR. DUININCK: Thank you, Dave.

That is everyone that signed up to speak. I don't know if anyone else signed up. I want to thank everyone tonight for being here for the
hearing of the Metropolitan Council, Hennepin County, and the Railroad Authority. Everyone's testimony tonight will be submitted as part of the project record.

Met Council will continue to accept comments until 4:00 o'clock, Friday, September 11th, 2015. And please see our staff or the swlrt.org website for more information about future city hearings and your ability to provide comments in various ways.

Thank you everybody for being here. We are finished with the meeting.

(Whereupon, the TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS was concluded at 7:35 p.m.)
STATE OF MINNESOTA )
COUNTY OF ANOKA )ss.

CERTIFICATE

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

That the foregoing TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS is a true record of the testimony given by said witnesses;

That I am not related to any of the parties hereto, nor an employee of them, nor interested in the outcome of the action;

That the cost of the original has been charged to the party who noticed the TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS, and that all parties who ordered copies have been charged at the same rate for such copies;

WITNESS MY HAND AND SEAL this 4th day of September 2015.

Julie Brooks, Notary Public, RPR