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Metropolitan Council)
Municipal Consent Public Meeting)
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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.

1 Appearances:

2

Metropolitan Council:

3

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

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Hennepin County:

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Peter McLaughlin
Linda Higgins
Marion Greene
Jan Callison
Gary Cunningham

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1 PROCEEDINGS

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

4 ***

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

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

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

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

23 There are other ways to comment. You
24 can comment by written form or online. So I think
25 there's a way. It is certainly out in the information

1 area. There's a way to do it that way. You can make
2 comments to us tonight, and the comments will be open
3 for awhile. I think it will be until September 4th --
4 September 11th.

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

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

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

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

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

25 MS. GREENE: Thank you.

1 MR. DUININCK: -- from Saint Louis Park.

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

5 MR. LAMOTHE: Thank you, Chair Duininck.
6 Councilmembers, Commissioners, good
7 afternoon.

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

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

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

24 So the purpose of today's hearing is to
25 really provide stakeholders an opportunity to comment

1 to the Metropolitan Council, Hennepin County, Hennepin
2 County Railroad Authority on the revised preliminary
3 design plans.

4 The Southwest LRT, as proposed, is a
5 14.5-mile project. It is an extension of the Green
6 Line. It has an assortment of 32 bridges along the
7 corridor. It has two LRT tunnels, as well as some
8 pedestrian tunnels, as well. It has over seven lineal
9 miles of retaining walls. It has 15 new stations, with
10 one deferred station to be built at a future date, down
11 in Eden Prairie. And we have the expectation that it
12 will be carrying approximately 34,000 daily rides in
13 2040.

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

20 As mentioned on the previous slide, we
21 have one station that has been deferred for
22 construction at a future time, in Eden Prairie, the
23 Town Center Station. Along with that, is the deferment
24 of the park-and-ride that would serve that future
25 station.

1 We've also converted two parking ramps
2 to parking lots and decreased the spaces, that would be
3 at Beltline, in Saint Louis Park, and at Blake Station,
4 in Hopkins.

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

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

19 Some of the other changes you'll see in
20 the revised preliminary design plans are associated
21 with the operation and maintenance facility in Hopkins
22 where we reduced the storage barn down to a capacity of
23 30 light-rail vehicles.

24 We've also made changes to the station
25 platform location, as well as the track associated with

1 the station for the Shady Oak Station, also, in
2 Hopkins, near Minnetonka.

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

9 So we went through here recently over
10 the course of the summer and late spring. We ended up
11 with a revised project scope that reduces project costs
12 by \$250 million, most of which was contained in the
13 previous two slides. The new project is able to retain
14 15 to 17 stations, with that 16th station to be built
15 in the future.

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

25 Being able to make that connection to

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

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

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

19 Overall, throughout the corridor, what
20 you'll see, compared to what we had last year, is we
21 didn't have the location of the track and power
22 substations and some of the other communications
23 equipment needed to operate the LRT. Those have since
24 been cited, just as a function of advancing the design
25 forward.

1 You also have more definition on these
2 plans, as to partial acquisition, full acquisition, and
3 more importantly, temporary construction easements that
4 are needed to buildout the project.

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

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

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

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

24 We also have an extension of Eden Road
25 in the previous design plans to support access to that

1 station. Here, in the interim, prior to having a full
2 station, we've got an access road, essentially, a
3 private access road to get out to the track and power
4 substation. That's what you'll see running parallel to
5 the alignment.

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

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

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

24 Moving on into the City West Station, on
25 this sheet here, one of the key features is that we've

1 made adjustments to the retaining walls that surround
2 the park-and-ride at the station that will serve the
3 Optimum Health campus that is currently under
4 construction. That is really the primary change here.

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

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

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

25 Over to this location, you are seeing

1 the operation and maintenance facility. I already
2 mentioned many of the changes here. I'll point out, we
3 were able to save this full property acquisition. This
4 business will now be able to stay based on the design
5 changes we made at the operation maintenance facility.

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

16 It gives you just a better profile of
17 the park-and-ride and the future opportunity for
18 development in this area here, as well as over here.

19 Moving on to the Downtown Hopkins
20 Station, there really haven't been any modifications in
21 this area.

22 Moving on to the bridge over Excelsior
23 Boulevard, there also have been very little changes
24 here, some slight modifications to the bridge, but
25 nothing substantial.

1 Moving on to the Blake Station in
2 Hopkins, this is a change through the cost reduction
3 scope change exercise that we went through. This is
4 one of the locations that used to have a parking ramp.
5 The parking ramp has been eliminated and replaced with
6 a much smaller surface lot. By doing so, we were able
7 to save two full property acquisitions right in this
8 area that would have been necessary for the footprint
9 of that parking ramp.

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

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

19 We were needing to acquire these
20 properties here in order to provide the freight rail
21 connection that we are severing up in this area. These
22 were previously designated as remnant parcels, and now
23 we are utilizing them for additional parking to be able
24 to compensate for some of the other parking reductions
25 made at some of the other stations.

1 Moving on to the Wooddale Station area,
2 this is another area that really has not seen much
3 modification as it relates to the design over the last
4 year.

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

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

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

22 Moving on into the Kenilworth Corridor,
23 crossing Cedar Lake Parkway underneath, the real
24 significant change of note here is the crossing of the
25 Kenilworth Channel, where our previous design plans

1 last summer showed two bridges here, we now have three.
2 We used to have a bridge that had LRT and trail on it
3 together as a single bridge. We've now separated the
4 trail from the LRT bridge and are able to reduce the
5 bridge deck thickness, as well as reduce the number of
6 piers that would be in the channel itself.

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

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

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

23 Moving on to the Van White Station area,
24 this is another area that really hasn't seen any major
25 design modifications over the course of the last year.

1 Then, finally, moving into the
2 connection of this project into the existing Green Line
3 at Royalton Station and, ultimately, Target Field,
4 there really haven't been any major design
5 modifications at this location, either, over the course
6 of the last year.

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

18 Specifically, what's covered under
19 municipal consent, the physical design components are
20 really the LRT track and location, station location and
21 layout, the roadway features, the turn lanes, lane
22 widths, traffic signals, the location of sidewalks and
23 pedestrian crossings, the operation and maintenance
24 facility, which is in Hopkins, as well as the freight
25 track location and system elements, which are really

1 the track and power substations, primarily, and the
2 single bungalows that are on the preliminary design
3 plan.

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

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

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

16 Here's what the schedule looks like.
17 Some of this is confirmed. Some of it is still
18 tentative at this point in time. This is the
19 understanding of the schedule going forward after
20 tonight. The week of the 14th, we have public hearings
21 and city council actions on the preliminary design
22 plan. And then the following week, we have additional
23 council actions, public hearings by some of the cities,
24 as well as action by the county board and, ultimately,
25 the City of Minneapolis as well.

1 So it was mentioned by Chair Duininck
2 earlier, we are accepting public comments until 4:00
3 p.m. on September 11th associated with this public
4 hearing. Again, there will be public hearings at each
5 of the five cities as well in the coming weeks. Public
6 comments can be submitted as verbal testimony and
7 written comments at today's hearing, as well as through
8 the project's website, via U.S. Mail to the project
9 office, as well as by phone, e-mail, and fax to the
10 project office as well.

11 A little bit about the next steps.
12 After we get through the municipal consent process in
13 late September, early October, we'll be continuing to
14 advance the design for the stations, the streetscape,
15 as well as starting to focus on advancing the design of
16 the utility relocation, public and private, as well as
17 other design features, as well, including the LRT
18 track, the roadway, the operation and maintenance
19 facility, bridges, tunnels, system and freight
20 features, as well.

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

25 With that, I will turn it back over to

1 Chair Duininck and Chair McLaughlin.

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

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

7 Thank you, Craig, for that presentation.

8 And I'll do my best here to pronounce
9 the names and read the handwriting. I'll start by
10 reading off the first two speakers. The first will
11 speak right away, and the other is in waiting.

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

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

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

19 Good evening. As I stated, my name is
20 Lisa Moe, I'm CEO of Stuart Companies, and we own about
21 700 apartments that will be directly impacted by this
22 line.

23 As Chair Duininck stated earlier, all
24 ideas and cost savings should be considered. That's
25 what I am here to present tonight.

1 The first slide or first piece of paper
2 you have there, so the current line with OMF, this is
3 the area between OPUS and Downtown Hopkins, to give you
4 some idea. It shows the current line with the
5 operation maintenance facility, the OMF, versus our
6 proposed route down 11th Avenue.

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

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

23 This line, as demonstrated earlier, is
24 the largest section of bridge, the 32 bridge, and goes
25 over wetlands. It will span -- it will be 23 and a

1 half feet in height and span over 32 feet in length.

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

5 If you would look to the third slide,
6 please. Our suggestion is 11th Avenue. The cost of
7 this route is 24 million. This is based on two
8 independent engineering firms that we hired, Westwood
9 and CEH. The amount of track is 20 percent less with
10 11th Avenue alignment, resulting in four main things.
11 One is decrease of cost of \$50 million, decreased time
12 for riders, increased access for 6,000 existing
13 residents who live in this area, and improved
14 connections to existing bus routes.

15 I'd ask that you look to the final
16 slide. This is a view of how the track would fit on
17 11th Avenue. 11th Avenue is an area in need of new
18 development and has potential COD opportunities that
19 are unlimited. 11th Avenue is a direct connection
20 between Opus Station to Downtown Hopkins. It avoids a
21 half a mile bridge. It maintains the track at grade,
22 which avoids the roller-coaster effect of the current
23 alignment and will result in substantial savings to the
24 line.

25 We simply ask the commission to direct

1 the project office to look at this route as a more
2 direct route. The \$50 million savings should cause the
3 project officers to look at this route.

4 I thank you for your consideration.

5 MR. DUININCK: Thank you very much.

6 Robert Brockway is up next, followed by Angela Erdvich.

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

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

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

22 Our communications with the engineering
23 group and the Met Council has been excellent. However,
24 the same cannot be said for the council as a whole.
25 Based on the experience of a nearby neighborhood with a

1 sewer project, as well as that of the U of M, the
2 council seems to have little sympathy for anyone or
3 anything, other than their own bottom line.

4 We would want assurance that, if there
5 were such negative effects on our homes, we would be
6 fully compensated, without the need of legal action.
7 We feel strongly that this should be a proviso in any
8 acceptance by Minneapolis of the project.

9 There is a concern of our safety, also.
10 The fact is that the TC&W often parks their ethanol
11 and, probably, future oil trains in our corridor,
12 sometimes as long as 16 hours waiting to be allowed to
13 travel onto the main BSNF track. If one of those tank
14 cars has just a very small vapor leak, with the close
15 adjacent LRT and its overhead sparking, the result
16 would be horrific. Has the City investigated any other
17 nationwide locations where this situation is similar?

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

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

1 Thanks.

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

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

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

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

23 I have a municipal consent document that
24 was signed by ten city council members and three city
25 councils were against. That was last August 29th,

1 2014. It is an interesting document. I hope you've
2 all had a chance to read it.

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

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

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

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

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

25 Some politicians -- they are not

1 engineers, I know -- but they have given the tunnel a
2 50 percent chance of actually going through. I feel
3 like it is really not going to happen.

4 So that is all I have to say. Thanks.

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

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

11 I passed out a news release sent out
12 today. I have an 11,700-word plan that is based on a
13 variation of the so-called 3C route. That would go
14 down the greenway to Nicollet. The three-c plan was to
15 tunnel under Nicollet. The only difference in the
16 route that I am talking about is that it would go to
17 I-35W, and a transit hub would link buses, including on
18 35W and also Nicollet and Lake.

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

23 My fundamental concern is that the
24 current plan, the current route is a disaster. And I
25 am willing to support an alternative that makes sense

1 from the point of view of transit. That's what I am
2 talking about here.

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

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

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

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

25 Here's what I am proposing as a possible

1 way out of this. Let's see if we can figure out a way
2 for the FTA to allow this program to stay in New Starts
3 and to reopen the scoping process and get it to Uptown
4 and out to I-35 and to the convention center. I
5 encourage you to take a look at that plan.

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

11 I appreciate your time this evening.
12 Thank you.

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

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

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

25 At a previous hearing, a fellow

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

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

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

19 Thank you.

20 MR. DUININCK: Thank you very much.

21 Asad Aliweyd, and next is Sally Rousse.

22 MR. ALIWEYD: Good evening. My name is
23 Asad Aliweyd, with the New American Academy. The New
24 American Academy supports Southwest LRT projects fully
25 because we believe Southwest LRT will affect the

1 economy of the southwest area of the Twin Cities.

2 And the New American Academy has been
3 active working with the Southwest LRT project with
4 engaging with the immigrant community along the line in
5 decisions related to alignments, the station area
6 planning, and the problems of immigrant problems.

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

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

17 Using the market technology tool for the
18 Environment Protection Agency, Alliance for
19 Metropolitan Stability, and the New American Academy,
20 we found that, within a 3-mile square area, for Eden
21 Prairie town station, there are -- the people who live
22 in that area, 40 percent of them are minority. 42
23 percent of those households get \$50,000 or less. 65
24 percent are renters. 23 percent are under 17 years of
25 age. 10 percent are 65 years and older.

1 We get this survey from American
2 Community. We choose to look at a broader area than
3 the half mile station area circumference to include the
4 commercial areas, because of the density in the
5 suburban city.

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

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

20 Thank you.

21 MR. DUININCK: Thank you very much.
22 Next Sally Rouse, followed by Donna Azarian.

23 MS. ROUSSE: I'm Sally Rouse, from Bryn
24 Mawr. There are lots of reasons why I think this route
25 is really impossible to accept, specifically, that 1.5

1 miles through the Chain of Lakes for environmental
2 reasons and train-hazardous reasons, and I think,
3 racial inequity.

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

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

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

24 Gail Dorfman, I talked to you in 2002,
25 and you said this would never happen. You said this is

1 a ridiculous route, and here you sit. I don't know how
2 you sleep at night.

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

5 MS. AZARIAN: Hi. My name is Donna
6 Azarian. I'm here as a resident of Eden Prairie.

7 And since everything is still on the
8 table, I am asking that you give taxpayers a vote on
9 the SWLRT. The reason being, that by the SWLRT's own
10 admission, it will only serve less than 10 percent of
11 the people in the area it passes through.

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

18 Many riders on the Blue and Green line,
19 according to the Star-Tribune, are not paying their
20 fares. The annual operating losses for the Southwest
21 Light Rail will likely be more in the neighborhood of
22 \$30 million, instead of 20 million. And, eventually,
23 you are going to have to build turnstiles to allow
24 access onto the trains.

25 We don't have the population density for

1 the Southwest Light Rail to succeed along the route,
2 because, according to Urban Land Institute, the minimum
3 density to support the light rail is 14,720 people per
4 square mile. The population density along the
5 Southwest Light Rail route is only 5,600 people per
6 square mile, according to the Federal Transit
7 Administration.

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

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

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

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

24 MR. DUININCK: Next is Richard Adair,
25 followed by Butch Johnson.

1 MR. ADAIR: I would like to comment on
2 the planning process. So much has been said during
3 these many years of public hearings that sometimes it
4 is hard to separate fact from fiction, fact from
5 wishful thinking. Since I've been attending these
6 hearings from the start, I'll try to help.

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

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

23 Fact, another fact, the planning process
24 that I observed has been wide open and not pushed
25 toward any predetermined result. Many routing options

1 were presented at the earlier meetings, and many, many
2 stakeholders spoke. Many of those meetings went four
3 hours. They included suburban commuters who need a
4 ride downtown, transit-dependent people in North
5 Minneapolis, Uptown people who want to save space in
6 the greenway for a trolley, taxpayers who object to the
7 expensive route using a developed street. The 3A route
8 emerged because it is simply the best fit and the best
9 value. No secrecy, no conspiracy.

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

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

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

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

25 MR. JOHNSON: Butch Johnson, 5750 Shady

1 Oak Road. I'd like to say Hopkins, but it actually is
2 in Minnetonka.

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

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

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

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

21 MR. DUININCK: Russ Adams, followed by
22 Mary Pattock.

23 MR. ADAMS: Thank you, Mr. Chair and
24 panel members. My name is Russ Adams. I'm the
25 executive director for the of Alliance for Metropolitan

1 Stability. I also co-chair the Southwest Community
2 Advisory Committee.

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

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

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

22 I want to thank the Corridor Management
23 Committee, which some of you are members of, for
24 finding ways to do that. I think what you ended up
25 doing is you found a way to make the project and

1 maintain the project viable in local eyes, as well as
2 federal eyes, without harming the related development,
3 multimobile connections, and job opportunities that it
4 is expected to generate.

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

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

22 Finally, the communities of color and
23 leaders from those neighborhood organizations that I
24 work with have never called this "an equity train."
25 Instead, they've always pressed the case that it is a

1 project that could leverage economic benefits, as well
2 as social connectivity. I think that's really how we
3 should be looking at the project.

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

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

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

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

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

1 center to center.

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

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

19 We are also concerned about the
20 construction phase of the project. For two years,
21 trains carrying hazardous freight will run through a
22 construction zone with no crash walls at the edge of a
23 35-foot open trench. We know from conversations with
24 Minneapolis fire department chief, John Fruetel, as
25 well as TC&W president, Mark Wegner, that they are also

1 concerned about these construction issues.

2 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.

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

8 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.

12 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.

20 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.

1 Also, the environmental benefits,
2 projects like this, also provide, as you well know,
3 transit-oriented development and enables people to get
4 to where they need to go without relying on cars.

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

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

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

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

22 The BAC and Twin West view this project
23 as vital to the economic development and job
24 opportunities throughout the entire metropolitan
25 region, not just the southwest corridor. Our business

1 organizations understand that improving transit options
2 in the southwest metro region helps support 60- to
3 80,000 jobs that is the projected growth in this
4 corridor over the next two decades.

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

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

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

24 We believe the current project's budget
25 and scope, with major transfer stations at both ends

1 meet these goals.

2 At times, while this process was slowed
3 by the political realities of the presence with
4 projects of this magnitude, we chose to keep our focus
5 on the data and facts presented by various consultants.

6 Throughout this process, we have heard
7 from many people that oppose this project, saying it
8 has no economic benefit to our region. But in reality,
9 we know that there are many completed future
10 developments that are in planning stages for this
11 corridor.

12 A few examples that are completed or
13 currently under construction include development of
14 senior and market-rate housing at Wooddale Station, a
15 new large corporate campus at City Center, and a major
16 hospital expansion near the Louisiana Station.

17 Combined, these three newer developments along the
18 corridor provide housing and employ thousands of
19 people, even without Southwest LRT in service yet.

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

25 The Southwest LRT project will help us

1 grow jobs and improve transit for our entire metro
2 region so that we can stay competitive nationally with
3 other peer cities well into the future. Thank you.

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

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

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

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

25 So the light rail is going to cut down

1 on cars. It takes about 55 people, so that's how many
2 cars? So you take that off for each car. How many
3 cars are you taking off the freeway?

4 It is also a safety issue, too.

5 So I wasn't going to be up here that
6 long. I was running late, so I didn't plan a speech.

7 But I'm in support of the Green Line,
8 and I support you guys. Let's get it going. Thank
9 you.

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

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

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

24 Thank you.

25 MR. DUININCK: Martha Mason, followed by

1 George Puzak.

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

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

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

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

19 During the prior municipal consent
20 process, there was what the media called a compromise
21 deal on co-location, where the City and Met Council
22 developed a memorandum of understanding that agreed to
23 freight use restrictions that might limit the
24 detrimental changes in frequency and nature of freight
25 service in over what is called the freight rail

1 property, which has become public.

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

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

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

22 Thank you very much.

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

25 MR. PUZAK: Good evening. My name is

1 George Puzak. I live at 1780 Gerard Avenue South,
2 Minneapolis. I am here speaking on my own behalf.

3 I have a transit dream. The Blue Line
4 is expanded to the heart of North Minneapolis and
5 becomes a true equity train. The Green Line is
6 extended through the densest neighborhoods of South
7 Minneapolis so people of all ages, backgrounds, and
8 cultures can get those jobs in Eden Prairie and beyond.
9 In the future, there's a Purple Line that extends from
10 Wayzata to White Bear Lake. And we truly have a robust
11 light rail system.

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

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

22 Second, freight rail is not included in
23 the 2010 locally-preferred alternative vote.

24 The national environmental policy
25 requires scope to be the first step in identifying the

1 issues, alternatives, locations, and modes to be
2 studied in the project. As I said, scope did not
3 include freight. It was not included.

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

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

17 Thank you.

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

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

22 The Southwest Light Rail project has
23 been corrupted by a preordained scoping process, which
24 was really a political process, rather than working
25 with the reality of the landscape. It is a

1 dysfunctional process. It shows contempt for
2 democratic principles. This is the way dictatorships
3 operate. And this is what Judge Tunheim has called a
4 bureaucratic steamroller.

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

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

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

21 LRT line designers arbitrarily picked a
22 spot for the Hiawatha LRT at 50th Street and Hiawatha
23 for a grip chamber, and it had been leaking water at
24 500 gallons a minute for months. Just flow around.

25 When the Hiawatha line was built, there

1 was a lawsuit, and it resulted in replanning,
2 rescoping, and it still reduced the flow to Coldwater,
3 which is the last natural spring in all of Hennepin
4 County, by 46,000 gallons a day or 35 percent of the
5 flow. Coldwater is the place of the first European
6 American settlement. It is sacred to the Dakota
7 people. And it has been desecrated.

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

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

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

23 The Burns & McDonnell water study
24 estimated that 24,000 gallons a day would be pulled out
25 from around the tunnel.

1 The skyway for the -- I'm concluding.
2 The skyway for the so-called Penn Avenue station is a
3 sort of burglary-rape trap because it is 99 steps down
4 into the ancient wetlands.

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

10 MR. DUININCK: Are you about finished?

11 MS. JEFFREY: I am about, yes.

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

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

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

21 MR. DUININCK: Can you please wrap up.

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

24 MR. DUININCK: Thank you.

25 MS. JEFFREY: Rescope is what we are

1 calling for.

2 MR. DUININCK: Thank you. Next is Lynn
3 Levine.

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

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

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

15 When I got involved in the wetlands, we
16 were assured that there would be no affect by putting
17 5,000 truckloads of fill into a wetland. Shortly after
18 that, the wetland had a big ditch around it, which was
19 illegal, but they had no choice. And we found out
20 that, if the Watershed District had been given false
21 information by the people proposing that, they cannot
22 be held accountable. They cannot be sued because they
23 were acting in good faith on the information they were
24 given.

25 This false information is provided by

1 people who are hungry to do a certain project, possibly
2 to promote their name as a big founder of the City of
3 Minneapolis, possibly for money.

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

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

20 I no longer swim in the lakes, because
21 when I began studying this information to present for
22 the Coldwater Spring, I found out how bad our lake
23 water is. That is absolutely not worth it. It really
24 is not. I mean, we were blessed to be a city of lakes.
25 And to trade our lakes so that we can have some big

1 project and make a whole bunch of money -- I don't
2 think for a minute our environment is going to be
3 protected by the studies by people who have a vested
4 interest in it.

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

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

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

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

23 Bob Carney's plan incorporates alignment
24 with the transportation needs, rather than for the
25 developers. Thank you.

1 MR. DUININCK: Thank you. Next is
2 Conrad Segal, followed by David Ruebeck.

3 Conrad?

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

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

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

17 I just learned that, maybe, six months
18 ago in researching the project. I would hope that your
19 lawyers would have known that some time ago. Or maybe
20 they didn't, and that is a problem. If you knew about
21 the inability to move the freight rail at the beginning
22 of this project and went on to have meeting after
23 meeting, decades, literally decades, of meetings about
24 these lines and relocating and here is where the
25 freight is going to go and here is where the LRT is

1 going to go, why weren't we told at the beginning
2 freight rail likely won't move at the first meeting of
3 the process. Let's figure that out at the beginning.

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

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

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

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

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

23 I want to speak in support of this
24 project and say a few words about my particular
25 perspectives. The Bryn Mawr Neighborhood Association,

1 of which I am a member, has supported this corridor
2 over the years. And they have also particularly been
3 in favor of Penn Station and Van White Station.

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

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

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

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

1 doing that.

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

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

12 MR. DUININCK: Thank you. Andrew
13 Leicester.

14 And next is Barbara Lunde or Lunde.

15 MS. LUNDE: Is Andrew here?

16 MR. DUININCK: I don't think so.

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

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

24 I wish -- there seems to be a lot of
25 support for the Bottineau line. If you want to go

1 ahead with that to Eden Prairie, that might be a good
2 idea.

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

10 Thank you.

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

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

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

23 I want to just tell you that I have,
24 personally, several meetings per year, both in the
25 morning at 8:00 a.m. and in the evening at 6:00 or 7:00

1 p.m. in the west metro. When I try to get to those
2 meetings, I run into a barrier, and the barrier is a
3 tangle of highways and roads and stoplights and
4 intersections and on-ramps and off-ramps, and
5 beltlines. And at rush hour in the morning or evening,
6 it is almost impossible for me to efficiently get to
7 those meetings and still make it on time. I live in
8 Highland Park in Saint Paul.

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

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

21 I laud and applaud and thank and
22 appreciate all of the cities, all of those 141 cities
23 who have created walkable corners, walkable projects,
24 mixed-use projects, bicycle plans, bicycle lanes,
25 complete streets, pedestrian amenities, and facilities.

1 But I will say that those things mean much less than
2 they will mean when they are brought online. The way
3 they will be brought online is when we have a fast,
4 high-capacity metro-wide transit system, and the answer
5 to that is rail.

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

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

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

1 lines.

2 Thank you very much.

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

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

9 Transit for Livable Communities has over
10 8,000 members across the metro region. We believe in a
11 vision of more transit, better biking and walking. We
12 strongly support this project as currently designed.

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

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

23 This project is critical to our region's
24 future economy and environment. Millennials rank
25 transit among the top three most important features in

1 determining where to live, and employers increasing
2 look for transit in choosing where to locate.

3 Minneapolis has set important goals for
4 reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 30 percent by
5 2025. We know that transportation needs to be a part
6 of that plan. We know that Southwest Light Rail will
7 take more than 10,000 cars off the road each day.
8 That's with the projections, not with the experience
9 we've been seeing on the existing Green Line.

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

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

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

1 southwest suburbs.

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

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

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

21 Thank you.

22 MR. DUININCK: Thank you, Dave.

23 That is everyone that signed up to
24 speak. I don't know if anyone else signed up. I want
25 to thank everyone tonight for being here for the

1 hearing of the Metropolitan Council, Hennepin County,
2 and the Railroad Authority. Everyone's testimony
3 tonight will be submitted as part of the project
4 record.

5 Met Council will continue to accept
6 comments until 4:00 o'clock, Friday, September 11th,
7 2015. And please see our staff or the swlrt.org
8 website for more information about future city hearings
9 and your ability to provide comments in various ways.

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

12 (Whereupon, the TRANSCRIPT OF
13 PROCEEDINGS was concluded at 7:35 p.m.)

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1 STATE OF MINNESOTA)
COUNTY OF ANOKA)ss.
2 CERTIFICATE

3 BE IT KNOWN that I, Julie A. Brooks, took the
foregoing TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS;
4

5 That the foregoing TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS is a
true record of the testimony given by said witnesses;
6

7 That I am not related to any of the parties
hereto, nor an employee of them, nor interested in the
outcome of the action;
8

9 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
10 charged at the same rate for such copies;

11 WITNESS MY HAND AND SEAL this 4th day of September
2015.
12

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Julie Brooks, Notary Public, RPR

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