

January 7, 2014

Dear Community Members:

Thank you for attending tonight's community conversation about the Southwest Light Rail project. Your participation and input throughout this process has been invaluable.

My colleagues and I at the Metropolitan Council and on the Southwest Corridor Management Committee recognize that recent discussions about where to locate freight rail currently in the Kenilworth Corridor caused a great deal of concern in both St. Louis Park and Minneapolis. There is no easy way to fit a light rail line into developed communities and in this case, that task is further complicated by the challenge of accommodating a freight rail line.

We all wish we could roll back the clock 20 years and bring additional clarity to the agreements made around this project. The lack of clarity left some of you feeling that promises were made and broken, while others feel no promises were made beyond what has already been done. Regardless of which side of the issue you find yourself on, this has undoubtedly been a frustrating experience.

I deeply regret that this project continues to divide rather than unite some of the communities along the line. It is my hope that the two studies and tree inventory currently in progress will help settle long standing technical questions and bring about a conclusion to the question of where freight rail is best located. While neighbors might disagree about historical commitments made in the course of planning this project, I hope we can all agree that we must make decisions today based on current information. In the last 20 years, needs of both freight shippers and the transit-using public have changed and we must consider those adjustments in any decisions we make.

Tonight's meeting is about decision-makers, staff and technical experts listening to your questions and concerns, particularly around the issues of freight, water and landscaping. We've sorted through questions and comments received at past meetings and tried to answer the most frequent questions with boards displayed during the open house portion of the evening but know that there are likely still many outstanding questions and concerns. We also look forward to hearing your feedback and response to questions we've prepared to facilitate a deeper conversation tonight at your tables. The questions are designed to help us explore the issues and concerns that have been raised at previous meetings in greater detail. Thank you in advance for your participation in tonight's meeting.

Warmest regards,



Susan Haigh  
Chair  
Metropolitan Council

## How were these topics chosen for your community discussion?

In 2013, the Met Council held 10 open houses in Minneapolis and St. Louis Park and project staff attended 110+ community meetings and events drawing over 6,400 neighborhood, business and community residents.

Project staff compiled and analyzed all of the comments from the 2013 open houses held in Minneapolis and St. Louis Park. These community comments were analyzed by the Metropolitan Council staff, shared with Grassroots Solutions staff and together we identified concerns specifically related to the studies that are the focus of today's meeting as well as additional topics that seem to reflect significant community concern.

Grassroots Solutions also interviewed neighborhood and community leaders, elected officials and project staff to identify topics of most concern to Minneapolis and St. Louis Park residents to help frame the discussion at these town hall meetings. Key themes regarding concerns from each community are identified below:

<b>Minneapolis</b>	<b>St. Louis Park</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Surface and ground water impacts</li> <li>• Trail impacts/landscaping/greenscaping</li> <li>• Ridership/LRT alternative alignments</li> <li>• Tunnels</li> <li>• Freight Rail/Safety</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Freight rail safety               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Proximity to homes</li> <li>○ Proximity to schools</li> </ul> </li> <li>• At-grade crossings</li> <li>• Community cohesion</li> </ul>

Ten Minneapolis and St. Louis Park open houses were held in 2013 that drew more than 1,900 engaged participants:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Attendees Signed-in</b>	<b>Attendees Estimated</b>
<b>April 18</b>	St. Louis Park Station Planning Open House	St Louis Park Recreation Center	45	50
<b>May 2</b>	Minneapolis Station Planning Open House	Bryn Mawr Elementary School	115	125
<b>May 15</b>	St. Louis Park Operations and Maintenance Facility Open House	Southwest LRT Project Office	7	7
<b>June 13</b>	Freight Rail Open House	Benilde-St. Margaret's School	212	300
<b>June 17</b>	Minneapolis LRT Station Open House	Metro Transit's Fred T. Heywood Office Bldg.	58	75
<b>June 20</b>	St. Louis Park LRT Station Open House	Beth El Synagogue	20	40
<b>June 24</b>	Minneapolis LRT Station Open House	Kenwood Community Center	84	125
<b>July 17</b>	Minneapolis Freight Rail Open House/Community Meeting	Jones-Harrison Residence	203	325
<b>July 18</b>	St. Louis Park Freight Rail Open House/Community Meeting	St Louis Park High School	386	450
<b>October 10</b>	Minneapolis Community Open House	Kenwood Community Center	120	165
<b>Total Number of Attendees</b>			1,250	1,962