

Southwest Transitway DEIS Comments

Comments Received from the General Public

Part 1 of 5



10/12/2012 12:25 PM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us

cc

bcc

Subject Against LTR

Sirs;

I don't want the extra noise and congestion that LTR will bring to St Louis Park. We are already punished with airplane noise that we can do nothing about. The horns and crossing bells are just more ways to make it miserable to live here. I think the congestion at Wooddale and Hi. 7 is bad enough with the poorly designed bridge ramps. Having more parking there would be a mess.

Thanks You,
John Caton



"Katie O. Wenigmann"

10/12/2012 03:34 PM

To "swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us"
<swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>

cc

bcc

Subject DEIS Comment - Wooddale Ave Intersection Safety

Dear Hennepin County,

I would like to submit comments in response to the SOUTHWEST TRANSITWAY DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT. As a civil engineer and a resident of St. Louis Park, I support the Southwest Corridor light rail in my neighborhood. However, I am concerned about the safety of motorists and pedestrians at the Wooddale Ave intersection, which is planned to be at-grade. I see the construction of the light rail as an opportunity to improve safety for pedestrians and motorists.

I suggest further analyzing this area, especially conducting traffic counts in the summer, when pedestrians and cyclists most heavily use the Southwest Trail. Appendix H shows that traffic counts were originally completed in February/March of 2010 when few pedestrians use the area. A detailed evaluation of this area is necessary for motorist, pedestrian and train safety, possibly requiring additional signals at the Highway 7/Wooddale Ave interchange.

My other concerns about the Wooddale Ave intersection include:

- Many motorists do not yield to pedestrians on the Southwest Trail. I could see this becoming a larger problem as traffic backs up behind the light rail and motorists become more impatient. Pedestrians will be able to safely cross Wooddale Ave when the train signal is operating, but I am concerned about the next 1 to 4 minutes after the train passes and motorists are backed up.
- The number of roads and turning possibilities on Wooddale Avenue between 36th Street and Hamilton Street is too many; many motorists are confused to whether they are in the correct lane to turn onto Highway 7, the frontage road, 36th Street or 35th Street. This confusion may cause motorists not to pay attention to the Southwest Trail crossing of Wooddale Ave.
- The angle of the Wooddale Ave and Highway 7 interchange makes it difficult for motorists exiting Highway 7 to see traffic on Wooddale Ave.
- During peak hours, I observe many motorists exiting Highway 100 North at the 36th Street exit, turning left onto 36th Street, turning right onto Wooddale Ave, and then left onto Highway 7 West. An improvement to the Highway 100 and Highway 7 interchange (increasing the green interval for traffic exiting Highway 100 North) could reduce traffic taking this alternate route.

Thank you for your consideration.

Katherine Wenigmann

Katie O. Wenigmann, PE



Eric Anondson

10/12/2012 04:17 PM

To "swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us"
<swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>

cc

bcc

Subject Re: Southwest Transitway Draft Environmental Impact
Statement Available for Review & Comment

The link to the draft blocks view of it. I would love to read it but I need to be able to see it first!
Eric

On Oct 12, 2012, at 3:55 PM, "Southwest Transitway" <swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us> wrote:

If you're having trouble viewing this email, you may see it online.

Share this:

Southwest Transitway DEIS Available

The Southwest Transitway Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) is now available for your review and comment. The DEIS documents the potential social and environmental impacts of the Southwest Transitway project and discusses the purpose and need for the project, the alternatives considered, the impacts of those alternatives, and the agencies and people consulted.

Where can I read the DEIS?

The DEIS and supporting technical memoranda and appendices are available on southwesttransitway.org. Hard copies have been placed in city halls and libraries along the corridor. [Click here](#) for a list of locations.

How do I comment on the DEIS?

Comments must be submitted by Tuesday, December 11 and may be submitted:

By Email: swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us

By Mail:

Hennepin County Housing, Community Works & Transit
Attn: Southwest Transitway
701 Fourth Avenue South, Suite 400
Minneapolis, MN 55415

Or at a Public Hearing:

Tuesday, November 13

4:00 – 5:00 pm Open House; 4:30 pm Public Hearing
Hennepin County Government Center
300 South Sixth Street A-2400
Minneapolis, MN 55487

Wednesday, November 14

5:00 – 6:00 pm Open House; 6:00 pm Public Hearing
St. Louis Park City Hall
5005 Minnetonka Boulevard
St. Louis Park, MN 55416

Thursday, November 29

5:00 – 6:00 pm Open House; 6:00 pm Public Hearing

Eden Prairie City Hall
8080 Mitchell Road
Eden Prairie, MN 55344
For more information please visit www.southwesttransitway.org

701 Fourth Avenue South, Suite 400 | Minneapolis, MN 55415

www.southwesttransitway.org

701 Fourth Avenue South, Suite 400 | Minneapolis, MN 55415 US

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manage your preferences | **opt out** using **TrueRemove®**.

Got this as a forward? **Sign up** to receive our future emails.



10/13/2012 10:19 AM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us

cc

bcc

Subject All this for the yuppy Eden Prairie

Sirs:

I read in the paper today how the over all good out weighs the citizen. Bull Shit! It should be a vote that asks permission to create all this noise and congestion in our neighborhoods. You say that then it wouldn't get done FINE! We're the ones who have to put up with this crap. We should have a say in what happens in our lives! St Louis Park has been everyone unimportant neighbor who won't say anything if you dump something in their back yard. Others want to run freight trains within 50' of the doors to our high school. Real Smart! All incoming planes from every direction but east have to line up for the runway right over St Louis Park Wonderful... Now some pencil pushing ass who doesn't have to put up with any of this stuff says "Go ahead, they won't mind" because that the good of the people out weigh the rights of others. Wonderful capitalistic world.

John Caton



Lee Colby

10/13/2012 04:39 PM

To "swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us"
<swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>

cc

bcc

Subject null

I would like to read the DEIS for the Southwest corridor light rail. I am almost 80 years old and will not go downtown at rush hour. I'm not a fool. When will the DEIS be available on the internet??

Lee Colby



10/13/2012 10:44 PM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us.

cc

bcc

Subject Comments on SW Corridor EIS

1. The EIS assumes that SW Metro express route 690 will continue running in competition with the LRT. This is a fundamentally bad decision. It robs the LRT of up to 2000 daily riders, and burdens the region with the cost of running duplicative commuter services. LRT travel time between Eden Prairie and downtown is competitive and could be made more so (see 2. and 3.).

2. The alignment between Southwest Station and Hopkins is unnecessarily curved and slow. There are 20 low speed curves:

10 mph	5 curves
15 mph	2
20 mph	6
25 mph	4
30 mph	3
Total	20

This does not count the 25 mph speed restrictions entering the stations. All this slow operation will increase operating cost by requiring more trains. It will make the LRT less competitive with the automobile. There are two obvious solutions:

- a. Straighten the curves as much as possible, including those station approaches.
- b. Increase superelevation. Follow the practice of SEPTA's Route 100 Norristown High Speed Line, the former Philadelphia & Western. It featured 8 inches of superelevation and routinely operated at 70-80 mph through its 5 degree curves.

3. To achieve a shorter running time, increase the speed limit to 65 mph, as DART does in Dallas. 55 mph is arbitrarily slow, given the large amount of tangent track east of Hopkins. Also eliminate the Penn Avenue station. Unless there is major development next to it (which appears very unlikely), it will generate almost no ridership.

4. The Royalston station should be relocated. Ideally, it should be on the east-west alignment along 6th Ave. N. as close to 7th Street as possible. This will create a joint station and transfer point with the Bottineau Corridor. More important in the near term, it will provide a convenient transfer connection with bus routes 5, 19 and 22. Bus transfers will be the majority of riders at this station and it should be located accordingly.

5. For both the LRT and freight railroad, implement the FRA-approved quiet zone measures, so train horns won't be needed.

Aaron Isaacs



Jeffrey Simon

10/15/2012 09:51 AM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us

cc

bcc

Subject Oppose light rail SW LRT

In comparison to roads and buses, light rail in our area is a loser.

- It will always be subsidized, as the true cost per ride has been shown to be over \$8 (the Hiawatha line cost is \$6.42 when capital costs are included)
- It will not create jobs, any more than the Hiawatha line has.
- It will not appreciably lower traffic congestion.
- Buses are already in place, and not working to capacity.
- It is not flexible, as buses are.
- 75% of Eden Prairie residents live within 30 minutes of work, and do not need rail.
- It appears to be yet another program intended to simply increase the size of government.

Jeffrey Simon



Ilya Velikson

10/17/2012 02:57 PM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us

cc

bcc

Subject Question on LPA

To whom it may concern:

Has Locally Preferred Alternative route choice been finalized? If not, then when is the deadline?

Will there be any public statements or press releases with the status/timeline updates?

Thank you,

-- Ilya Velikson

Dear Met Council:

COMMENT #17

We in Eden Prairie (families & small businesses) are excited about Light Rail coming to Eden Prairie!

Keep up the good work!



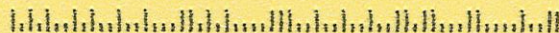
MINNEAPOLIS MN 554

16 OCT 2012 PM 3 L



SW Corridor Transit Project
701 Fourth Ave S, #400
Minneapolis, MN 55415

5541581840





[To:](#)
Cc:
Bcc:
Subject:

To: <kerri.pearce.ruch@co.hennepin.mn.us>
From: Leila Brammer
Date: 10/19/2012 12:08PM
Subject:

Kerri,

Thanks so much for the information. My email question is below. Let me know if you need anything else. Enjoy your weekend, L.

I am considering purchasing . I am quite interested in the impact that light rail will have on that location. I have read the environmental report but was unable to determine which grouping of houses I was in (on the noise study, four areas on that section of the track are listed. I'm not sure which area is and what impacts will be on that location).

I would appreciate any information you can provide to help me assess the situation. I very much appreciate your help. Thanks so much, Leila

Leila Brammer
Professor
Communication Studies

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10/19/2012 01:23 PM

To <swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>

cc

bcc

Subject SW Transit Light Rail in EP

TO: SW Light Rail Project Committee

I would like to express my thoughts and concerns. The whole idea of a light rail is to make commuting easy and readily accessible for people to move about and not have the pollution or the congestion of driving a car. Great idea! I support it up to a certain point I feel it needs to end at **The Eden Prairie Town Center**.

Why? The SW Station Metro Transit Area were built on wetlands and have had many problems with the parking lot settling and shifting. I strongly feel the vibrations of a light rail running every 7 1/2 min. would create further problems.

Further I am **strongly against** it running from **SW Station to Mitchell Rd**. I live at the SW Station Condo's and this would greatly affect us. I know what I'm about to say is very boldbut I truly CANNOT believe they even considered this from the start. Anyone with 1/2 a brain or even a kindergarten kid could see that there is NO ROOM.....They actually thought they could just cram it in the tight space between Hwy. 5 & our condo's. TOTALLY ABSURD!!! IS THERE ANYONE OUT THERE THINKING?

There are so many reasons 1st and foremost these condo's were built on the wetlands the constant vibrations every 7 1/2 minutes could greatly compromise our condo buildings integrity and destroy them. There are 237 units at the SW Station Condo's with approximately 500 residents that live here. As homeowners this is of course extremely disturbing and disconcerting. **Also the close proximity, the light rail would run within a few feet of our buildings is a great invasion of our privacy let alone an eye sore, noise issues and a deflation of the value of our condo's property.**

It is my hope that all of you please take a serious look at this and consider this from our viewpoint.

Like I mentioned at the beginning I support the light rail running **only** to the point of the **Eden Prairie Town Center** but don't go beyond **OR** if it does it needs to go in **another direction**.

Thank you,
Barbara Fleet

**B FLEET**

From:
To: <swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>
Sent: Friday, October 19, 2012 1:22 PM
Subject: SW Transit Light Rail in EP

TO: SW Light Rail Project Committee

I would like to express my thoughts and concerns. The whole idea of a light rail is to make commuting easy and readily accessible for people to move about and not have the pollution or the congestion of driving a car. Great idea! I support it up to a certain point I feel it needs to end at **The Eden Prairie Town Center.**

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Thank you,
Barbara Fleet

*I have emailed you a copy of this letter
and now am sending you a letter.
All contact info is on the back side.*

*Thank you
Barbara Fleet*

10/19/2012

Southwest Transitway Project

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

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

[illegible]

MINNEAPOLIS MN 554

20 OCT 2012 PM 2 L



Hennepin County
Housing Community Works + Transit
ATT: Southwest Transitway
701 4th Ave S Suite 400
Mpls. MN 55415

5541531843





[To:](#)
[Cc:](#)
[Bcc:](#)
Subject: Fw: Southwest DEIS

From: Rodgers Adams
To: gail.dorfman@co.hennepin.mn.us
Date: 10/22/2012 11:20 AM
Subject: Southwest DEIS

Commissioner Dorfman,

I am an individual interested in the light rail plans partly because of a general interest in development projects and partly as editor of a newsletter for Lake Point condominiums, which would be served by the West Lake station. I have lightly skimmed parts of the the DEIS, and have two questions regarding the appropriate timing and vehicle for comments regarding points that don't seem to be directly addressed in the DEIS.

1) The DEIS is based on certain assumptions regarding what the various lines will be like. For example, it seems to assume that the preferred alternative includes having the light rail line bridged over Cedar Lake Av. Personally, I think that would be a visual monstrosity in a residential and parkland area. How do citizens become involved in a useful discussion about alternatives, such as leaving the at-grade crossing as is, or raising the elevation of Cedar Lake Av. a small amount and bridging over a lowered light rail line?

2) The DEIS seems to be focused on the direct traffic impact at individual crossings. But the West Lake station would have no new crossing issues. It might, however, have significant impact on streets in the area (including Chown Av., 32nd St., Excelsior Blvd., Market Plaza, and Lake St., especially if a park-and-ride facility is provided with the West Lake station. How do citizens become involved in useful discussions about making sure that the Southwest light rail project includes provisions to address the station's impact on nearby streets?

Rodge Adams
Editor, Lake Point Views



10/23/2012 08:56 PM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us

cc

bcc

Subject twest Trnsitway DEIS comment

October 23, 2012

Southwest Transitway comment: A letter that was sent to State House members in 2003.

House File No. 745 was to ban engineering studies on the line for three years.

May 22, 2003

rep.mike.beard@house.mn

Copies to: Reps. Peter Adolfson, Mark Buesgens, Mary Liz Holberg, Chris DeLaforest, Steve Sviggum, Karen Klinzing, Bruce Anderson, Peter Nelson, Connie Ruth, Doug Magnus, Eric Paulsen, Dan Severson, Phil Krinkie, Ron Erhardt, William Kuisle.

Representative Beard,

I was to the Hennepin County Rail Authority Open House for the Southwest LRT Study, at the Southwest Metro Transit Station at Eden Prairie. It was from 4 P. M. to 7 P. M., today.

It is about using either Light Rail Transit or Commuter Rail on this corridor. I got to talk with Katie Walker and Derik Crider, who are doing the study.

Even Mr. Crider didn't know that the Scott County Transit buses have regular scheduled runs to the Southwest Metro Station, and how people from Shakopee can get on the bus right here, to the station, and then go all the way to downtown Minneapolis. They could get on the train at the station. Depending on whether the line uses light rail or diesel, the ride would be either straight through, or just one stop to transfer.

Mr. Crider and I talked about House File No. 745, and your being a co-author. This would be against a service for your constituents. I told Mr. Crider that you must not have known about our Scott county buses going to the Southwest Metro Transit Station. There is a schedule for these buses, available from Scott county Transportation Services, at the Scott County Government Center: Phone: (952) 496-8341.

House File No. 745 is a bad bill for Shakopee people. Drivers are getting so aggressive, I want to get off the highways. All my trips to downtown Minneapolis or St. Paul or to the Capitol are now by bus. The train also does not have to share the highway with the cars. And, the bus driving on the shoulder has problems with drivers not yielding when merging. Please do all you can to help us out.

Sincerely,

Elmer Otto



10/24/2012 06:14 PM

To <swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>

cc

bcc

Subject Deis comment on SW LRT

I have read many parts of the DEIS. I live in a dense urban community at Calhoun Isles by Cedar lake Parkway and the Grand Rounds zip 55416. This line as proposed is to drive a train every 5 mins through a Park and within 40 ft. of many home dwellers windows. **At the present time we live in a quiet community.** This 90 ton train will raise the noise, vibration, EMR, privacy violation, natural habitat destruction, pollution way beyond anything experienced now. Studies that have been done for the DEIS for noise, vibration, EMR, privacy, pollution, habitat, park violations **are all very general and not related to many people's circumstances.** Building eyesore bridges as is proposed in dense urban areas creating noise at high levels is not good social policy. This is a disgrace and should not happen in this social age and smacks of totalitarianism. Regards
John Shorrock



10/24/2012 10:05 PM

To <swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>

cc

bcc

Subject Southwest Corridor Light Rail: BUILD IT !!!!!

When I worked in downtown Minneapolis until a few years ago, I regularly rode the Hiawatha Line light rail to and from work. With very few exceptions, the light rail trains run ON SCHEDULE, AS PLANNED for a **reasonably-priced fare**. Metro Transit has had excellent advertising promotions in the past that compare the bus/train fare to the TOTAL COST of driving a single-occupant car, and mass transit makes sense. With the extreme weather conditions in Minnesota (rain, snow, ice, blizzard white-out conditions), trains are extremely reliable and on-time. Commuters from as far as Eden Prairie would be able to commute into downtown Minneapolis and/or points along the proposed Southwest Corridor efficiently despite harsh weather conditions. Likewise workers, shoppers, and other riders will be able to ride to retail and commercial destinations from downtown Minneapolis to all points along this light rail route.

With the Hiawatha Light Rail Line, the Central Corridor Light Rail Line, the Northstar Commuter Rail Line, and all of the Metro Transit bus routes that feed riders into this Twin Cities rail network, the Southwest Corridor Light Rail Line joins an essential quadrant to this **complete transit network**. Future light rail and commuter rail lines will also feed into this transit network.

BUILD IT !!!!!

David Burd



Catherine M.
Walker/PW/Hennepin
10/25/2012 11:18 AM

To SWcorridor/Hennepin@Hennepin
cc
bcc
Subject Fw: Question about DEIS for Southwest Transitway

Katie Walker
Senior Administrative Manager
Southwest LRT Community Works Manager
Hennepin County
Housing, Community Works & Transit

NEW ADDRESS: 701 Building Fourth Avenue South – Suite 400 | Minneapolis, MN 55415
612.385-5655

----- Forwarded by Catherine M. Walker/PW/Hennepin on 10/25/2012 11:18 AM -----

From: "JAMES A BENSHOOF" <
To: <Katie.Walker@co.hennepin.mn.us>
Cc: "George Watson" ·
Date: 10/15/2012 09:52 AM
Subject: Question about DEIS for Southwest Transitway

Katie,

I have taken a quick look at the DEIS that was released this past Friday and have one question which pertains to our office building at 10417 Excelsior Blvd. in Hopkins. Attached is an enlargement of a portion of a sheet from Appendix F-Part 1: Conceptual Engineering Drawings. This drawing focuses on the extension of 8th Avenue south of Excelsior Blvd., where it crosses the LRT tracks. As you will note, the sole access for our office building property is on the west side of this southerly extension of 8th Avenue.

Referring to the attached drawing, my question is what is the meaning of the pink line in the middle of the 8th Avenue extension south of Excelsior Blvd.? If that pink line is intended to suggest a raised center island, I need to immediately indicate that the portion of the pink line across our driveway is a serious problem. Looking at the drawing, one obvious problem is that users of our property would have no legal means of exiting from the parking lot. Such users would have to turn south and trespass on the Hopkins Honda property in order to exit to Excelsior Blvd. Furthermore, such a restriction on exiting from our property would violate an easement agreement we executed with the City, which assures that users of our property will have direct access to Excelsior Blvd. for both ingress and egress purposes via the southerly extension of 8th Avenue.

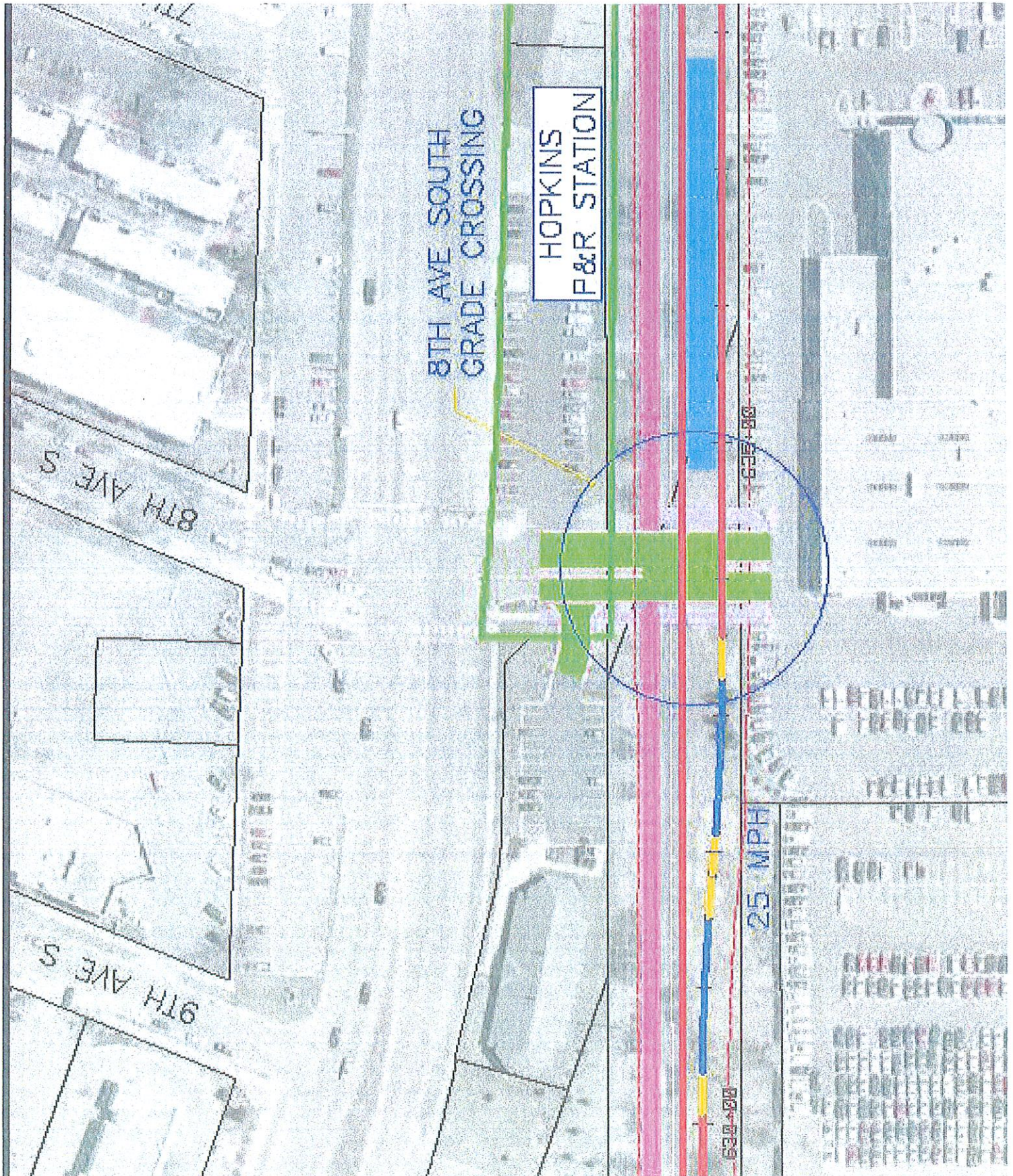
Please clarify the intention of the referenced pink line in the attached drawing. If this is meant to suggest a raised center island, please indicate how you intend to proceed to eliminate the raised island blocking our driveway. It seems that one option would be to begin the raised island on the south side of our driveway and utilize pavement striping from there north to Excelsior Blvd.

Please respond to this matter as soon as possible, so we can decide whether we need to raise this issue in formal comments regarding the DEIS.



Jim

LRT near Hopkins Station - DEIS
10-12.pdf





RE: Question about DEIS for Southwest Transitway

George Watson

Katie.Walker@co.hennepin.mn.us, JAMES A
BENSHOOF

10/25/2012 11:39 AM

Kersten Elverum,
"Adele.Hall@co.hennepin.mn.us"

Katie,

The question is access to As shown on the document it appears that it will be limited to right turns only by a median placed in 8th Avenue South. Can you confirm or deny that that is the intent shown on the drawing?

George Watson

George Watson, RLA
Landscape Architecture Group Manager

-----Original Message-----

From: Katie.Walker@co.hennepin.mn.us [mailto:Katie.Walker@co.hennepin.mn.us]
Sent: Thursday, October 25, 2012 11:33 AM
To: JAMES A BENSHOOF
Cc: George Watson; Kersten Elverum; SJStadler@hopkinsmn.com;
Adele.Hall@co.hennepin.mn.us
Subject: Re: Question about DEIS for Southwest Transitway

Thanks for your interest in the Southwest DEIS. I would encourage you to continue to review the Southwest Transitway DEIS and submit comments on the DEIS during the public comment period. As stated earlier comments received during the comment period, which extends through December 11, 2012, will be forwarded to the Met Council and FTA and will be addressed during Preliminary Engineering (PE) and the Final EIS.

In response to your technical question about the pink line, it refers to the reconstructed interim use bike trail that is currently housed within the HCRRRA right-of-way.

Katie Walker
Senior Administrative Manager
Southwest LRT Community Works Manager
Hennepin County
Housing, Community Works & Transit

NEW ADDRESS: 701 Building Fourth Avenue South - Suite 400 | Minneapolis, MN
55415
612.385-5655

From: "JAMES A BENSHOOF"
To: <Katie.Walker@co.hennepin.mn.us>
Cc: "George Watson"

"Kersten Elverum"

Date: 10/15/2012 09:52 AM

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Please respond to this matter as soon as possible, so we can decide whether we need to raise this issue in formal comments regarding the DEIS.

Jim (See attached file: LRT near Hopkins Station - DEIS 10-12.pdf)Disclaimer: Information in this message or an attachment may be government data and thereby subject to the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act, Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 13, may be subject to attorney-client or work product privilege, may be confidential, privileged, proprietary, or otherwise protected, and the unauthorized review, copying, retransmission, or other use or disclosure of the information is strictly prohibited. If you are not the intended recipient of this message, please immediately notify the sender of the transmission error and then promptly delete this message from your computer system.



RE: Question about DEIS for Southwest Transitway

George Watson to Katie.Walker@co.hennepin.mn.us

10/25/2012 12:16 PM

"Adele.Hall@co.hennepin.mn.us", JAMES A BENSHOOF, Kersten Elverum, "

Katie,

If you were referring to more clarification on my part as to the question at hand, please see the diagram attached. I believe it will make my concern clear!

George Watson

George Watson, RLA
Landscape Architecture Group Manager

-----Original Message-----

From: Katie.Walker@co.hennepin.mn.us [mailto:Katie.Walker@co.hennepin.mn.us]

Sent: Thursday, October 25, 2012 11:45 AM

To: George Watson

Cc: Adele.Hall@co.hennepin.mn.us; JAMES A BENSHOOF; Kersten Elverum;

Subject: RE: Question about DEIS for Southwest Transitway

I will ask HDR staff for a response to your question, but it may require more clarification. The trail is indicated in pink on the conceptual engineering drawings with the green indicating roadway reconstruction.

Katie Walker
Senior Administrative Manager
Southwest LRT Community Works Manager
Hennepin County
Housing, Community Works & Transit

NEW ADDRESS: 701 Building Fourth Avenue South - Suite 400 | Minneapolis, MN
55415
612.385-5655

From: George Watson <GWatson@wsbeng.com>

To: "Katie.Walker@co.hennepin.mn.us" <Katie.Walker@co.hennepin.mn.us>,
JAMES A BENSHOOF

Cc: Kersten Elverum

Date: 10/25/2012 11:39 AM

Subject: RE: Question about DEIS for Southwest Transitway

Katie,

The question is access to 10417 Excelsior Blvd. As shown on the document it appears that it will be limited to right turns only by a median placed in 8th Avenue South. Can you confirm or deny that that is the intent shown on the drawing?

George Watson

George Watson, RLA
Landscape Architecture Group Manager

-----Original Message-----

From: Katie.Walker@co.hennepin.mn.us [mailto:Katie.Walker@co.hennepin.mn.us]
Sent: Thursday, October 25, 2012 11:33 AM
To: JAMES A BENSHOOF
Cc: George Watson; Kersten Elverum;

Subject: Re: Question about DEIS for Southwest Transitway

Thanks for your interest in the Southwest DEIS. I would encourage you to continue to review the Southwest Transitway DEIS and submit comments on the DEIS during the public comment period. As stated earlier comments received during the comment period, which extends through December 11, 2012, will be forwarded to the Met Council and FTA and will be addressed during Preliminary Engineering (PE) and the Final EIS.

In response to your technical question about the pink line, it refers to the reconstructed interim use bike trail that is currently housed within the HCRRA right-of-way.

Katie Walker
Senior Administrative Manager
Southwest LRT Community Works Manager
Hennepin County
Housing, Community Works & Transit

NEW ADDRESS: 701 Building Fourth Avenue South - Suite 400 | Minneapolis, MN
55415
612.385-5655

From: "JAMES A BENSHOOF"
To: <Katie.Walker@co.hennepin.mn.us>
Cc: "George Watson" <
"Kersten Elverum"
Date: 10/15/2012 09:52 AM
Subject: Question about DEIS for Southwest Transitway

Katie,

I have taken a quick look at the DEIS that was released this past Friday and have one question which pertains to our office building at 10417 Excelsior Blvd. in Hopkins. Attached is an enlargement of a portion of a sheet from

Appendix F-Part 1: Conceptual Engineering Drawings. This drawing focuses on the extension of 8th Avenue south of Excelsior Blvd., where it crosses the LRT tracks. As you will note, the sole access for our office building property is on the west side of this southerly extension of 8th Avenue.

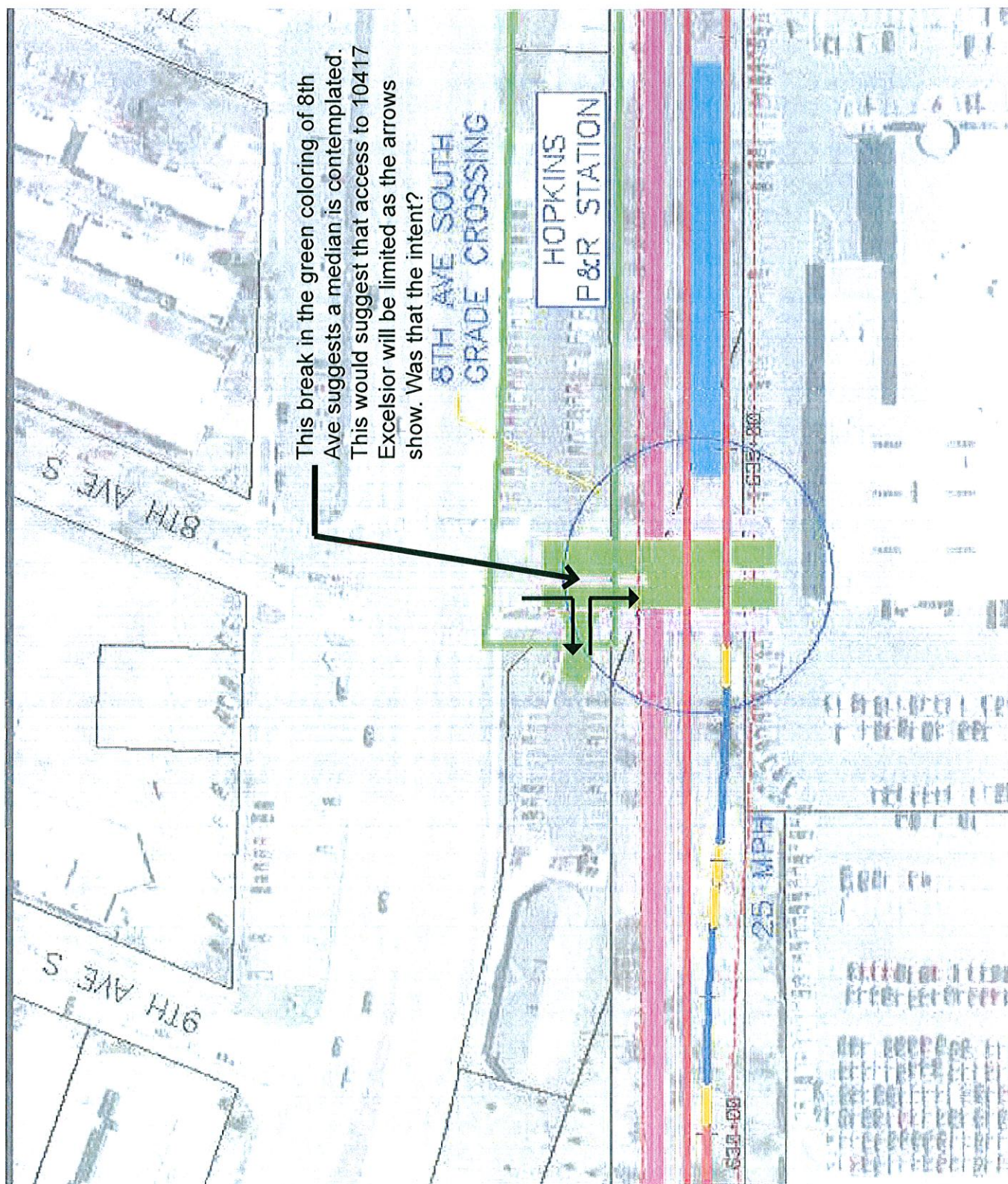
Referring to the attached drawing, my question is what is the meaning of the pink line in the middle of the 8th Avenue extension south of Excelsior Blvd.? If that pink line is intended to suggest a raised center island, I need to immediately indicate that the portion of the pink line across our driveway is a serious problem. Looking at the drawing, one obvious problem is that users of our property would have no legal means of exiting from the parking lot. Such users would have to turn south and trespass on the Hopkins Honda property in order to exit to Excelsior Blvd. Furthermore, such a restriction on exiting from our property would violate an easement agreement we executed with the City, which assures that users of our property will have direct access to Excelsior Blvd. for both ingress and egress purposes via the southerly extension of 8th Avenue.

Please clarify the intention of the referenced pink line in the attached drawing. If this is meant to suggest a raised center island, please indicate how you intend to proceed to eliminate the raised island blocking our driveway. It seems that one option would be to begin the raised island on the south side of our driveway and utilize pavement striping from there north to Excelsior Blvd.

Please respond to this matter as soon as possible, so we can decide whether we need to raise this issue in formal comments regarding the DEIS.

Jim (See attached file: LRT near Hopkins Station - DEIS 10-12.pdf)Disclaimer: Information in this message or an attachment may be government data and thereby subject to the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act, Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 13, may be subject to attorney-client or work product privilege, may be confidential, privileged, proprietary, or otherwise protected, and the unauthorized review, copying, retransmission, or other use or disclosure of the information is strictly prohibited. If you are not the intended recipient of this message, please immediately notify the sender of the transmission error and then promptly delete this message from your computer system.

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Catherine M.
Walker/PW/Hennepin
10/25/2012 03:21 PM

To SWcorridor/Hennepin@Hennepin
cc
bcc
Subject Fw: SW corridor

Katie Walker
Senior Administrative Manager
Southwest LRT Community Works Manager
Hennepin County
Housing, Community Works & Transit

NEW ADDRESS: 701 Building Fourth Avenue South – Suite 400 | Minneapolis, MN 55415
612.385-5655

----- Forwarded by Catherine M. Walker/PW/Hennepin on 10/25/2012 03:21 PM -----

From: Becky Farber
To: "katie.walker@co.hennepin.mn.us" <katie.walker@co.hennepin.mn.us>
Date: 10/15/2012 03:36 PM
Subject: SW corridor

>
> Hello Katie
>
> Can you tell me what your organization's current position / thinking /
recommendation is for the intersection of cedar lake parkway with the SW
corridor alignment?
>
> At grade crossing of parkway and tracks as currently exists?
> Elevated track and at grade parkway?
> Below grade track / tunnel with at grade parkway?
> Other?
>
> What mitigative measures, if any, are being considered? Are there ANY
drawings available that illustrate one or all of the above options?

Also, are there any preliminary or detailed study results relative to noise
and vibration at the intersection of burnham road and cedar lake parkway both
during and after construction.

> I look forward to your response.
>
> Respectfully,
> Damon Farber.
>
>
>
> Sent from my iPad

Comment #
30A, 30B, 30C

SWcorridor/Hennepin
Sent by: Adele C
Hall/PW/Hennepin

To
cc
bcc
Subject Fw: SW corridor

01/16/2013 03:17 PM

From: Becky farber
To: "Ringold, Jennifer B." <JRingold@minneapolisparcs.org>
Cc: "Katie Walker (Katie.walker@co.hennepin.mn.us)" <Katie.walker@co.hennepin.mn.us>
Date: 10/19/2012 09:10 AM
Subject: SW corridor

Jennifer,

30C
Thanks for your response. I have emailed Katie the same questions and await her reply. I appreciate the transparency of the process on the part of all agencies and look forward to a resolution that reflects common sense, design and engineering parameters, concern for all the residents along the corridor, and environmental sensitivity.

Best,
Damon

>
>
> -----Original Message-----
> From: Becky Farber
> Sent: Saturday, October 13, 2012 10:24 AM
> To: Ringold, Jennifer B.
> Cc: Becky Farber
> Subject: Re: SW corridor
>

> Hi Jennier,
>
> Another quick question...

30B
>
> Since our home is at the corner of cedar like parkway and burnham
> road we know we will be impacted by design, environmental issues,
> construction and the built-out project.
>
> What is the mprb's assessment of the noise and vibration we might
> incur during and as a result of construction?
>
> Will you please respond AND forward my concerns to the county along
> with a cc to me so that I know with whom I should be corresponding
> at the county?
>
> Many thanks.
> Damon Farber
>
> Sent from my iPad
>
> On Oct 13, 2012, at 8:50 AM, Becky Farber
> wrote:
>

30A

>> Hello Jennifer,
>>
>> Can you tell me what the mprb's current position / thinking /
>> recommendation is for the intersection of cedar lake parkway with
>> the SW corridor alignment?
>>
>> At grade crossing of parkway and tracks as currently exists?
>> Elevated track and at grade parkway?
>> Below grade track / tunnel with at grade parkway?
>> Other?
>>
>> What mitigative measures, if any, are being considered? Are there
>> ANY drawings available that illustrate one or all of the above
>> options?
>>
>> I look forward to your response.
>>
>> Respectfully,
>> Damon Farber.
>>
>>
>>
>> Sent from my iPad



Brent Bovitz

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us, swlrt@metrotransit.org

cc

bcc

10/27/2012 10:14 AM

Subject SW LRT

As an avid skater and biker living in Southwest Eden Prairie, many of us use the trail system to get into the city. What are your plans for including a paved trail alongside the southwest LRT line like they do in Minneapolis along 55 from Lake street to the Dome? Will the LRT take over the Hopkins section of the trail or do you plan to include a paved trail along the whole 15 mile route?

Please strongly consider including a paved trail alongside the whole 15 mile route. The trail systems in the Twin Cities are what make our cities stand out above the rest. We hear it over and over again from out of state people. They say how lucky we are to have such a great trail system. I would hate for this project to cut off our access into the city.

Please respond with your current plans for a paved trail along the 15 mile route as I haven't seen anything written.

Thank you!

Brent Bovitz
Eden Prairie



Katherine McManus

10/27/2012 12:17 PM

To "swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us"
<swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>

cc

bcc

Subject Freight Reroute in St. Louis Park

I am writing to express my concerns over rerouting more freight trains through St. Louis Park in order to accommodate the Southwest Light Rail plan. I am strongly against this plan and wish to see an alternative developed. I have two students at the SLP High School who are walkers. Every day they cross those tracks to and from school and when going to the soccer fields for games and practices. There is not a proper crossing at this location which is the path students take, crossing right in front of the RR crossing, after cutting through McDonald's. Not only is this dangerous, as cars do not have to stop, but the addition of more trains that are longer, faster and possibly at risk for derailment given the curve that immediately preceeds this crossing is an accident waiting to happen...an accident that could take the life of one of our SLP students who may be rushing to class or just not paying attention, sipping on a coffee from the McCafe, chatting with friends, thinking they have their whole life in front of them...!

This reroute through The Park SHOULD NOT MOVE FORWARD! It should die BEFORE one of our students does!!

Thank you,

Katherine & Damian McManus

SWcorridor/Hennepin
Sent by: Adele C
Hall/PW/Hennepin

To
cc
bcc
Subject Fw: St.Louis Park MN&S Freight Train Relocation

01/16/2013 03:19 PM

From: Sengdara Vannavong Grue
Sent: Tuesday, October 23, 2012 10:17 PM
To: Haigh, Susan
Subject: St.Louis Park MN&S Freight Train Relocation

To: SUSAN HAIGH, CHAIR – Metropolitan Council

From:
Sengdara Grue,

Re: Southwest Light Rail and Railroad relocation

Date: 23-Oct 2012

The MET Council and Hennepin County have been planning to re-route freight rail traffic from the Minneapolis Kenilworth corridor to the St. Louis Park MN&S corridor to make way for Southwest Light Rail. The proposed re-route could put many St. Louis Park residents, businesses and school-children in harm's way.

The Draft Environment Impact Statement has been recently released. The statement does not support the collocation of the freight and light rail on the same Kenilworth corridor. Currently, the Kenilworth corridor houses freight traffic, zoned accordingly with safety mitigations. The statement reports that there would not be any safety issues with rerouting the freight train traffic thru the St. Louis Park MN&S corridor.

My family lives directly on the St. Louis Park MN&S corridor; our property line measure less than 75ft from the train tracks. Needless to say that relocation of the freight train will directly impact us. We have lived in our home for 10 years. Surprisingly, we have not been bothered by the proximity of the train tracks to our home, mainly because the train runs twice a day and number of cars is palatable (less than 20). The relocation of the freight train to the MN&S line will have substantial impact to our family; significant increase in the frequency of train runs and the number of cars will increase. I fear the impact will make it impossible to live in our home and this city.

I've deduced and convinced that the Draft Environment Impact Statement has become a social class battle between the working class families in St. Louis Park vs the 'high quality, high value homes' located along the Kenilworth corridor. We, the families and residents of St. Louis Park, do not have the funds to pay costly lawyers to fight this battle of wills, however, we value our homes and our city just as much as the Kenilworth neighborhood. The city of St. Louis Park and

residents are not opposed to Light Rail but we implore Hennepin County and the MET Council to invest in mitigations for the hundreds of families, many with children, along with businesses and schools along the corridor.

Respectfully,

Sengdara Grue
Concerned St. Louis Park Resident

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"Martin. Chervl"

10/31/2012 07:52 PM

To "swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us"
<swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>

cc

bcc

Subject FW: Response to the DEIS study in regard to the freight train re-route

October 31, 2012

To whom it may concern at Southwest Transitway:

I'd like to share my thoughts and reactions to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), that was recently released, regarding the Southwest Transitway Project. It was supposed to also look at the impacts of re-locating the freight rail, that now goes through the Kenilworth Corridor, to a spur line that goes through St. Louis Park neighborhoods, and alongside our St. Louis Park High School. I don't think that the DEIS accurately portrays the impact the re-route of the freight trains would have on our community, and our people in St. Louis Park.

Although I have not personally read the 1000 to 1500 page document, several of my friends at a neighborhood organization called "Safety in the Park" have read the document and gave over 50 of us residents, in a meeting on October 30, 2012, a summary of what they found in the DEIS. I am in **disbelief** how an official study like the DEIS could have left out so much pertinent information, real facts, on the real impact of the relocation of the freight rail on the residents of St. Louis Park, and, bias their report on why the freight cannot stay where it is in the Kenilworth corridor and be there along with the light rail line. It was as if it doesn't matter what our St. Louis Park residents' concerns are. They were totally ignored. There was also a lot of misinformation.

We residents of St. Louis Park have gone to many meetings in the past few years regarding the possible re-route of the freight trains, and tried to voice our concerns. We have been told at some scoping meetings for the SWLRT that we were not at the appropriate meeting to voice our concerns about the proposed re-route. We have been told that the re-route was not a "done deal," and yet, the Hennepin County Commissioners had apparently decided at least two years ago that it was a done deal, and have been stringing us St. Louis Park residents along, giving us hope that we would be listened to and our concerns were important. We were at meetings where we outlined the mitigations that we felt necessary in order for us to agree to a re-route, and none of these mitigations was mentioned in this study. We have even voiced our concerns about the re-route possibility to the County Commissioners, Mn Dot, The Metropolitan Council and the St. Louis Park City Council, and none of these concerns appeared in the DEIS. It is as though our St. Louis Park residents and our concerns don't even exist, and that it doesn't matter what we say or think, our thoughts and concerns were just swept under a rug.

There did not appear to be any facts for co-location, when keeping the freight trains in the Kenilworth corridor, would be a cheaper option, a safer option, and a better option for all people affected in both Mpls. and St. Louis Park. In fact, there was a comment in the DEIS, probably from a Mpls, resident, that said, that keeping the freight trains in Kenilworth would be "Ugly".

I'm sorry!!! But, when did "ugly" take precedence over "safety" of our people and the "savings" of millions of dollars, by leaving the trains where they are in Kenilworth corridor. Also, there used to be 14 railroad tracks running in Mpls in this same location years ago, a regular railroad yard.

In Chapter 3 of the DEIS on Social Effects of the Freight trains, the study outlined by category of what percent of residents, businesses, homeowners, etc. would be affected by the freight rail where it currently is, and the total came out to 45%. That meant that 45% of the Kenilworth Corridor route goes by areas where people live and work. If the freight was re-routed on the MN & S line, that total would mean that 78% of this route goes by areas where people live and work. Obviously, leaving the freight rail where it is would affect far fewer people, yet this DEIS study was biased toward the re-route. How is that logical?

In Chapter 4 of the DEIS study it refers to the noise and vibrations that would affect our St. Louis Park residents, and our high schoolers when at school, yet it uses the current train usage and speeds (2 trains per day with maybe 40 cars going at 10 MPH) versus the projected usage and speeds if the trains were re-routed, (which could be up to 8 trains a day with over 100 cars each, going 25 MPH) where steeper grades are designed to go over Hwy 7 and around the high school. How is this a logical and realistic comparison for noise and vibrations? The re-routed trains would be going up steep grades, wheels would be churning and squealing, and trains would have to be braking when going down the steep grades, and trains would be heavier with coal on them which means more noise. Also, if there is a difference in weight between the freight cars, the freight cars will wobble more back and forth, which, not only will be more noisy, but it will be more dangerous. It will be especially more dangerous with a 100 car freight train, going 25 miles per hour, that would encompass all four of the tight curves around Hwy 7 and the high school at the same time, and be within 50 feet of homes along the line. Along the re-route, we will have a great deal more noise and vibrations than this study indicates. How is this an accurate comparison in a very important DEIS study, when we citizens expect such a study to be an accurate and unbiased assessment of the situation?

Visibility will be a real problem going around these curves. With current trains on the MN & S tracks, it is difficult enough for the trains to stop within 200 feet if there were to be an emergency like high schoolers on the tracks or an accident. There would be no possibility of stopping the longer, faster freight trains if they would be re-routed to the MN & S tracks.

As far as mitigations for us residents in St. Louis Park, if there is a re-route, it appears that the only mitigation that we have been offered is a quiet zone around the high school, and yet in reality, with the long 25 MPH trains, and the curves in the tracks, and the lack of visibility, the train engineers are going to have to toot their horns for safety reasons. We were told this by someone who works with the railroads. The train engineers do not want a train death on their consciences, so they will toot their horns, even if it is a quiet zone. So this quiet zone will not exist.

This Chapter did not go very far back in years to look at possible train derailments. It went back only 5 years. If the study had gone back further, it would have found more train derailments. It did not mention the two derailments that the City of Mpls and St. Louis Park/Hopkins have had in the past two years. Again, there is "missing information" that should have been included in this DEIS study.

The DEIS study also left out what impact the re-route would have on the City of St. Louis Park. and the residents who live along the MN & S line, especially to their property values with

more trains, more noise and more chance of derailments. Who is going to compensate them for their lost value. Some of the homes are so close to the tracks that they should be bought up if there is a re-route.

Not only was there a lot of information left out of the DEIS, but there was a lot of misinformation and it said things that don't make sense, as already mentioned. **And it totally ignored the fact that the railroads have said that the Kenilworth corridor is a better option for their trains as it has a straighter route, no dangerous curves, and no steep grades to negotiate.** Our Hennepin County Commissioners have ignored this fact. This translates into greater safety for people/homes/schools etc. when the freight rail is in the Kenilworth Corridor. That would not be true if the train was re-routed to the MN & S tracks. Plus, it would be less noisy, have less vibrations, and the train engineers would have more visibility than if the train had to go around curves if it was re-routed.

This DEIS was a very biased study, and very deceptive. I can only imagine that this bias was introduced to the people who did the study by the Hennepin County Commissioners, who already have their minds made up that they want the freight trains out of the Kenilworth corridor and re-routed onto the MN & S spur line that was never designed for a freight rail line.

I certainly hope that there will be more study, a fair study, as to what the impact would be on the community of St. Louis Park before the decision is made as to whether the freight rail will be re-routed or stay where it is at in the Kenilworth corridor. I am not opposed to the Southwest light rail coming through, just to the re-route of freight trains. I just hope that our City Council continues to ask for the resolutions to be met that they have asked for in the past, before they give their blessings to a re-route. These Resolutions include the following:

- 1, 1996 resolutions 96-73 – Opposes any re-routing of freight trains in St. Louis Park. Signed by Gail Dorfman (now Hennepin County Commissioner) and yet Gail is pushing this re-route on the City of St. Louis Park.
- 2, 2001 resolution 01-120 – Opposes re-routing of freight in St. Louis Park, but points out that the city is willing to negotiate should the need arise.
3. 2010 resolution 10-070 Reinforced the 2001 resolution opposing a freight rail re-route.
4. 2010 resolution 10-071 – Reinforced the 2001 resolution asking for proof that no other viable option for freight exist. (Yet do-location does exist and is cheaper)
5. 11-058 – Opposes the re-routing of freight because the engineering study commissioned by St. Louis Park proved there is a viable alternative to the proposed re-route.

Sincerely,

Cheryl Martin, Birchwood neighborhood of St. Louis Park



Mike Pliner

11/01/2012 07:57 AM

To "swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us"
<swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>

cc

bcc

Subject Freight rail re-route in St Louis Park

To whom it may concern:

I have read your preferred option for the freight rail reroute and I have a few questions.

First, as a taxpayer, I would like to know if this is the most cost effective option. The available information shows that there are less costly alternatives to the approach that you are advocating. Under your proposed plan, the entire track and most bridges would have to be replaced in order to accommodate the increased traffic of the freight trains. Utilizing co-location will not involve these costs; the existing tracks that will be utilized for the LRT will require significant upgrades in order to be safe for the community and sufficient for needs of the traffic for the LRT.

Second, I would like to know if this is the safest option, considering the proximity of the MN S line to schools in St Louis Park. Can there be any assurances issued with regard to the safety of the most vulnerable elements of our community -- the children? Is it not the duty of our elected officials to make decisions that will improve the quality of life within the community? I fail to see how this change will in any way improve the quality of life for the residents or the students in this community.

I have viewed many of your council meetings with regard to this matter and have concerns with regard to the transparency of the process. There have been comments made as a matter of public record by your commissioner that 'there have been promises made with regard to the freight traffic going away from their current location'. I would like to know what the commissioner meant by her comments and to whom the promises were made and what exactly those promises were. If the commission is making decisions based on prior promises that have not been publicly disclosed as part of this process I do not see how the the studies you have compiled have any meaning whatsoever. It seems like this decision was made long before any of the studies began based on the commissioner's promises to an as yet unnamed party or parties. If this is actually the case then all of the processes up to this point have been a mere formality and a monumental waste of taxpayer money.

Signed,

A concerned citizen.



11/01/2012 04:54 PM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us

cc

bcc

Subject Light Rail and Freight Rail

I reviewed your website and route options for light trail transit.

I'm interested in knowing what will happen to current freight rail traffic given each option for light rail routes.

1. Will the light rail and freight rail coexist on tracks parallel to each other through Kenilworth?

2 Will freight rail freight rail patterns change such as divert freight traffic North through St. Louis Park via West Lake Street, St. Louis Park High School, Peter Hobart School to 394 then East to Mpls?

Thank you,
Mark Sawinski



sauro002@umn.edu
11/01/2012 09:05 PM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us
cc
bcc
Subject I support LRT

The bus works great for commuting, but it is not convenient in the middle of the day and not available at all if attending an evening or weekend event downtown. Light rail will get me to places where I don't want to drive and park. And as I get older, I will be more mobile with light rail and less dependent on my driving ability. In the short term it may be expensive, but in the long term LRT will save on pollution and wear and tear on the roads and ease up traffic congestion.

Nancy Sauro



11/04/2012 06:21 PM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us

cc

bcc

Subject We don't want LTR

Sirs;

We don't at least 6 major trains running 35' from the door of the high school! Duh!!!
I'm sick to hell of having some people, who don't live here or would be impacted by this
dumb move, telling us what will be. There will be accidents and it will be on your
shoulders.

John Caton



Karen Colt

11/04/2012 07:56 PM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us

cc

bcc

Subject Response to the SWLRT- Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)

November 4, 2012

Dear Sir or Madam:

My name is Karen Colt and I am a homeowner who lives in the Sunset Ridge Condominiums development located at

I am writing in response to the Southwest Light Rail Transit Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), which includes the proposed freight rail re-route in St. Louis Park to make way for the development of the SLRT. As a homeowner, I have two issues I would like to address concerning topics that are discussed in the DEIS: 1) noise/vibration; and 2) property values.

Noise/Vibration Discussed in the SLRT-DEIS at Chapter 1, Section 1.3.2.3

The DEIS is flawed in that it glosses over and does not address the real impacts that would result in re-routing the freight train traffic to make room for the light rail. The DEIS paints the picture that the increase in vibration will not be significant, which is misleading and incorrect. The DEIS offers the creation of "quiet zones" to end the majority of the noise issues. This solution is insufficient because: 1) Quiet zones do not limit locomotive noise, as multiple locomotives laboring with long trains will make more noise than the locomotives that currently use the MN&S; 2) Since there are currently no trains at night, even one additional night train means more noise and sleep disruption; 3) Despite the creation of a "quiet zone," the train wheels moving on the curves will squeal; 4) There are exceptions to complying with the "quiet zone," such as the driver of the train blowing the horn if there is a dangerous situation where others need to be alerted. In conclusion, just because you designate an area as a "quiet zone," it does not necessarily mean it will be less disruptive to the homeowners living near the railroad tracks.

Additionally, the DEIS only considers the immediate traffic increase from

the re-route -- it does NOT consider the additional traffic that will most likely occur in the future. Currently trains travel on the MN&S for approximately two hours a month. If the re-route occurs there will be a minimum of 6 hours and 39 minutes or a 232.5% increase in train related vibration will occur each a month. Currently, all vibration and its negative impacts occur five days a week during regular business hours. In the future, vibration will occur on weekends and nights as well as during business hours.

Not only will the duration of vibration increase, but also the amount of vibration will increase with longer, heavier trains.

Property Values

In Chapter 9 of the DEIS, which discusses the indirect impacts of the freight train re-route, there is no mention of how it will effect homeowners' property values. Why is that? This is a very big impact and it should be considered, especially since the cost of re-routes to residents has been documented in other instances. According to a 2001 article I read in the *Appraisal Journal*, the increase in freight rail traffic in an area will negatively affect properties 250' feet from the rail tracks by 5-7%. Since all of the properties along the MN&S are well within 250' feet, it is logical to assume that property values along the MN&S will drop more than 7% if the re-route occurs.

Even more disturbing than the fact that the decrease in property values is not addressed in the DEIS is the fact that it does not pose or attempt to answer two very important questions: 1) What happens to the tax base of St. Louis Park when the drop in value is realized?; and 2) How are property owners who lose value because of this government action going to be compensated for their loss? It is extremely unfair for the Hennepin County to ask any resident to pay a higher price for the benefits of light rail than others.

In closing, the DEIS contains some significant flaws concerning the proposed re-route. Re-building a lightly used spur line so it can become a main track for freight trains should either be abandoned altogether, or alternatively, the issues I mentioned in this letter need to be more thoroughly evaluated. As a taxpayer and a homeowner, I urge you to strongly consider the points that I have raised. I am all for the development of the light rail, but not when there is an alternative to keeping the freight train on the Kenilworth Corridor. The re-route of the freight train would be to the detriment of so many homeowners and it

would be unnecessary.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Karen M. Colt



Garv Rush

11/05/2012 12:40 PM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us

cc

bcc

Subject Southwest corridor

To Whom It May Concern: (Noise/vibration)

I am writing in response to the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) – Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) published in regard the SWLRT which includes the proposed freight rail re-route in St. Louis Park, Minnesota.

The current SWLRT-DEIS has significant flaws and the planned re-route idea either needs to be dropped completely or a great deal more study must be done. As this action is proposed and described in Chapter 1, Section 1.3.2.3 as rebuilding a little known, lightly used spur line into a main freight rail line, which will initially allow a 788% increase of rail car traffic. What the SWLRT-DEIS does not address, but should, are the real world impacts of this action on the affected area.

Besides my general concerns about the SWLRT-DEIS, the portion of the report dealing with Noise (3-93 and 94) and Vibration (4-117) causes me the greatest concern. The SWLRT-DEIS underestimates the effects of vibration for because it considers only the immediate traffic increase from the re-route and not additional traffic that is likely to occur. Currently trains travel on the MN&S for approximately two hours a month. If the re-route occurs there will be a minimum of 6 hours and 39 minutes or a 232.5% increase in train related vibration will occur each a month. Currently, all vibration and its negative impacts occur five days a week during regular business hours. In the future vibration will occur on weekends and nights as well as during business hours. Not only will the duration of vibration increase, but also the amount of vibration will increase with longer, heavier trains. The assumption stated in the SWLRT-DEIS that the increase in vibration is insignificant is incorrect. Listed below are reasons why the assumptions are incorrect:

We are also led to believe that creating a quiet zone will end all of the noise issues. This assumption is incorrect for the following reasons:

1. A quiet zone is not a sure thing.
 - a. Implementation could be denied by the school board because the building of a quiet zone will limit access to the Senior High School
 - b. Locomotive engineers are compelled to blow the horn if they perceive a dangerous situation. What kind of responsible person would drive a train through a series of blind crossings, past several schools without blowing the horn?
2. Quiet zones do not limit locomotive noise
 - a. Multiple locomotives will be necessary for pulling a fully loaded train up the .86% grade if the new interconnect.
 - b. Multiple locomotives laboring with long trains will make more noise than the locomotives that currently use the MN&S

3. Trains traveling west will need to use their breaks to maintain a slow speed going down grade and through curves
4. Train wheels on curves squeal; the tighter the curve the greater the squeal.
5. Bells on crossing arms in a quiet zone will ring the entire time a train is in the crossing.
6. Because there are currently no trains at night, even one night train means diminished livability.

None of the mitigation requested by the City of St. Louis Park on behalf of her residents is being considered. This mitigation is not frivolous; it is necessary to maintain the safety, livability and property values for the residents of St. Louis Park.

Name: Gary R.

Bush _____
—

To Whom It May Concern: (safety)

I am writing in response to the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) – Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) published in regard the SWLRT which includes the proposed freight rail re-route in St. Louis Park, Minnesota.

The current SWLRT-DEIS has significant flaws and the planned re-route idea either needs to be dropped completely or a great deal more study must be done. As this action is proposed and described in Chapter 1, Section 1.3.2.3 as rebuilding a little known, lightly used spur line into a main freight rail line, which will initially allow a 788% increase of rail car traffic. What the SWLRT-DEIS does not address, but should, are the real world impacts of this action on the affected area.

Besides my general concerns about the SWLRT-DEIS, the portion of the report dealing with Safety (3-132 and 133) causes me the greatest concern. Only a passing reference to safety and the proposed re-route is mentioned in the SWLRT-DEIS; however there are many features about the MN&S, which make it undesirable as a freight, rail main line. The reasons the MN&S is an unsafe main rail line include, but are not limited to the following:

- Multiple grade level crossings
- Proximity to St. Louis Park schools, homes and businesses – many are closer than the

length of a rail car

- Number of pedestrians who transverse crossing every day
- Permeable soil under MN&S
- Medical emergency response hindered when crossings are blocked – only one fire station has emergency medical response (page 80)
- Tight Curves. Derailments are more likely to occur on curves than on straight track
- Hazardous materials are being carried on the rail line without sufficient right of way.

None of the mitigation requested by the City of St. Louis Park on behalf of her residents is being considered. This mitigation is not frivolous; it is necessary to maintain the safety, livability and property values for the residents of St. Louis Park.

Name: Gary R.

Bush _____

To Whom It May Concern: (crossings)

I am writing in response to the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) – Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) published in regard the SWLRT which includes the proposed freight rail re-route in St. Louis Park, Minnesota.

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Besides my general concerns about the SWLRT-DEIS, the portion of the report dealing with freight rail trains blocking street crossings (6-38 and 39) causes me the greatest concern. In the SWLRT-DEIS we are told the blocked crossings will not cause significant travel or safety issues. To the consultant sitting miles away the increase may seem insignificant, but to residents who must travel the area and rely on quick responses from emergency vehicles the 580% increase in blocked crossing time is unacceptable.

A supposed benefit of the proposed re-route is explained in chapter 1, pages 11 and 12 of the SWLRT-DEIS. According to the document Twin City and Western (TCW) freight trains will regularly travel north of St. Louis Park into Golden Valley, Crystal and New Hope. When the trains travel north they will have to cross Cedar Lake Road; however, no data is given for the impact of this blocked crossing.

Issues about blocked crossings not dealt with in the SWLRT-DEIS include, but are not limited to the following:

- Effects of multiple blocked crossings on residents' ability to move freely about their neighborhood
- Amount of time it takes congestion to clear once a train has passed.
 - o Making turns from one street to another with backed up traffic
 - o Pedestrian safety as traffic clears
- Possibility that trains will be going slower than the "worst case scenario" in the EAW – Trains often stop at McDonald's for train crews to have a break. When they resume travel they will NOT be going 10 mph.
- Medical response times can be affected
 - o Narrow side streets will be blocked with waiting automobiles
 - o Only one fire station has medical response
- When train volumes increase what will be done to alleviate auto traffic congestion

None of the mitigation requested by the City of St. Louis Park on behalf of her residents is being considered. This mitigation is not frivolous; it is necessary to maintain the safety, livability and property values for the residents of St. Louis Park.

Name: Gary R.
Bush _____

To Whom It May Concern: (property values)

I am writing in response to the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) – Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) published in regard the SWLRT which includes the proposed freight rail re-route in St. Louis Park, Minnesota.

The current SWLRT-DEIS has significant flaws and the planned re-route idea either needs to be dropped completely or a great deal more study must be done. As this action is proposed and described in Chapter 1, Section 1.3.2.3 as rebuilding a little known, lightly used spur line into a main freight rail line, which will initially allow a 788% increase of rail cars traffic. What the SWLRT-DEIS does not address, but should, are the real world impacts of this action on the affected area.

Besides my general concerns about the SWLRT-DEIS, the portion of the report dealing with loss of property value in the re-route area should be in Chapter 9: Indirect Impacts, but it is not, and this causes me great concern. The SWLRT-DEIS does not mention the impact of re-routed freight trains from a main line freight corridor to a bridge line on property values of the re-route area. Freight rail re-routes are not exclusive to Minnesota and the cost of the re-routes to residents has been documented. For example, according to an article in a 2001 issue of The Appraisal Journal bringing additional freight rail traffic to an area will negatively affect properties 250' feet from the rail tracks by 5-7%. All of the properties along the MN&S are well within 250'. Based on this article one can conclude that property values along the MN&S will drop more than 7%. Two major questions arise that are not addressed in the SWLRT-DEIS. First, what happens to the tax base of St. Louis Park when the drop in value is realized? Second, how are property owners who lose value because of this government action going to be compensated for their loss? It is unreasonable for the Hennepin County to ask any resident to pay a higher price for the benefits of light rail than others.

Name: Gary R.
Bush _____

To Whom It May Concern: (safety at the high school)

I am writing in response to the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) – Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) published in regard the SWLRT which includes the proposed freight rail re-route in St. Louis Park, Minnesota.

The current SWLRT-DEIS has significant flaws and the planned re-route idea either needs to be dropped completely or a great deal more study must be done. As this action is proposed and described in Chapter 1, Section 1.3.2.3 as rebuilding a little known, lightly used spur line into a main freight rail line, which will initially allow 788% increase of rail car traffic. What the SWLRT-DEIS does not address, but should, are the real world impacts of this action on the affected area.

Besides my general concerns about the SWLRT-DEIS, the portion of the report dealing with freight rail noise and safety at the High School (Chapters 3, 4, and 9) causes me the greatest concern. The unique noise and safety issues associated with locating main line freight within 35 feet of the High School parking lot and 75 feet from the building are not adequately discussed. When the High School is mentioned the information is dismissive. At no point in the SWLRT – DEIS are the negative impacts the extra freight trains will have on the learning environment and safety of the students at St. Louis Park High School. Before the proposed re-route should even be considered the cost of sufficiently mitigating the impact to St. Louis Park High School need to be evaluated.

Examples of concerns include but are not limited to the following:

- A plan for emergency evacuation of the school should evacuation be necessary when a train is passing
- How will the many classrooms affected by train noise be sound proofed
- How will the students who want to use the new rail bridge to cross Hwy. 7 on their way to school be kept off the bridge.
- How will the added vibration of longer, heavier and more frequent trains be mitigated to the investment the school makes in technology is not lost.
- How will the safety hazards of blind crossings, curves and hundreds of teenagers in close proximity be eliminated
- How will a derailment be prevented so our children's lives are not at risk

None of the mitigation requested by the City of St. Louis Park or the St. Louis Park School Board

on behalf of her residents is being considered. This mitigation is not frivolous; it is necessary to maintain the safety, livability and property values for the residents of St. Louis Park.

Name: Gary R.

Bush

To Whom It May Concern: (closing 29th street)

I am writing in response to the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) – Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) published in regard the SWLRT which includes the proposed freight rail re-route in St. Louis Park, Minnesota.

The current SWLRT-DEIS has significant flaws and the planned re-route idea either needs to be dropped completely or a great deal more study must be done. As this action is proposed and described in Chapter 1, Section 1.3.2.3 as rebuilding a little known, lightly-used spur line into a main freight rail line, which will initially allow a 788% increase of rail car traffic. What the SWLRT-DEIS does not address, but should, are the real-world impacts of this action on the affected area.

Besides my general concerns about the SWLRT-DEIS, the portion of the report dealing with the closing of the 29th street crossings (Chapter 3/p. 135) causes me the greatest concern. Residents from the Birchwood neighborhood requested on behalf of the Birchwood neighborhood that the grade crossing at 29th Street stay open. According to page 135 of the DEIS the 29th street crossing is being closed as a mitigation measure. However, the closing of the crossing will not benefit the neighborhood; it will, in fact, jeopardize residents because it will make emergency vehicle access difficult-if not impossible-during winter months due to narrowed streets.

None of the mitigation requested by the City of St. Louis Park on behalf of her residents is being considered. This mitigation is not frivolous; it is necessary to maintain the safety, livability and property values for the residents of St. Louis Park.

Name: __Gary R. Bush

To Whom It May Concern: (DEIS is not Objective)

I am writing in response to the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) – Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) published in regard the SWLRT which includes the proposed freight rail re-route in St. Louis Park, Minnesota.

The current SWLRT-DEIS has significant flaws and the planned re-route idea either needs to be dropped completely or a great deal more study must be done. As this action is proposed and described in Chapter 1, Section 1.3.2.3 as rebuilding a little known, lightly used spur line into a main freight rail line, which will initially allow a 788% increase of rail car traffic. What the SWLRT-DEIS does not address, but should, are the real world impacts of this action on the affected area.

Riddled with phantom assumptions, unsubstantiated assertions, and inexplicable omissions, the DEIS is not a serious attempt to consider the effect of the proposed re-route.

Chapter 1 of the DEIS states that without the re-route the TC&W's only options for moving its freight will be to access the MN&S tracks by use of the notorious switching wye in St. Louis Park, or to transfer cargo from railcars to highway trucks. The unstated assumption behind this statement is that the current route used by the TC&W will be severed. Presenting the either/or assumption for the switching wye or highway trucks creates the illusion of a *fait accompli*, when in fact the TC&W's current route through the Kenilworth corridor is a viable alternative.

Unsubstantiated assertions include the depiction in the DEIS that the historical character of the Kenilworth corridor (Chapter 3, page 58) would be compromised by its continued use for freight train traffic. The Kenilworth corridor was the home to not just railroad tracks, but an entire railroad yard for over one hundred years, beginning long before the current homes in the area were built.

Inexplicably omitted from the DEIS is how the re-route would be funded (Chapters 5 and 8). The re-route must be considered as part of the SWLRT and even without mitigation construction of the interconnect and upgrading the tracks on the MN&S to handle the heavier traffic is estimated to cost \$125,000,000, money that was not originally included in the projected cost of the SWLRT, but the projected budget for the SWLRT has not been adjusted to recognize the

added expense. Also, missing from the cost estimates are the costs for maintaining the interconnect structure after it is built.

None of the mitigation requested by the City of St. Louis Park on behalf of her residents is being considered. This mitigation is not frivolous; it is necessary to maintain the safety, livability and property values for the residents of St. Louis Park.

Name: Gary R.

Bush _____

To whom it may concern: (The process to choose the Locally preferred Alternative was flawed)

I am writing in response to the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) – Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) published in regard the SWLRT which includes the proposed freight rail re-route in St. Louis Park, Minnesota.

The current SWLRT-DEIS has significant flaws and the planned re-route idea either needs to be dropped completely or a great deal more study must be done.

Besides my general concerns about the SWLRT-DEIS, I am particularly concerned with Chapter 12 (Public and Agency Coordination and Comments). NEPA 1500.2(d) states that the leading agency must “encourage and facilitate public involvement in decisions which affect the quality of the human environment.” This regulation was clearly ignored in regards to the potential freight rail re-route issue. Hennepin County did not “encourage and facilitate” public involvement concerning this issue. In fact, Hennepin County refused attempts for public comments and concerns regarding the freight rail issue at all of the outreach meetings listed in table 12.1-1 and all of the community events listed in table 12.1-2. Public comments regarding the freight issue were denied at the 2008 Oct 7, 14, and 23 scoping meetings and the comment period that followed as listed in section 12.1.3.1. Public comments regarding the freight issue were refused at the 2010 May 18, 18 and 20 open houses. Most importantly, public comments regarding the freight issue were denied during the entire LPA section process. This included all of public hearings listed in section 12.1.4.1. In summary, all public comments regarding the freight rail issue were denied at all of SWLRT’s major milestones leading up to the DEIS. Worse, the public was not made aware of the significant environmental impacts caused by SWLRT and the potential freight re-route because the freight issue was not discussed at any of the SWLRT

meetings leading up to the DEIS. The only opportunity the public was given by Hennepin County to discuss the freight rail re-route was at the PMT meetings discussed in section 12.1.5. However, any discussion of possible alternatives to the re-route (co-location) or the freight re-route's connection with SWLRT was strictly forbidden at these PMT meetings. Lastly, the DEIS fails to mention the 2011 April 17 and 28 freight re-route listening sessions that were held by the city of St. Louis Park. Hundreds of St. Louis Park residents voiced their opposition to the freight re-route. Because those opposed to the re-route have been denied comment during the entire SWLRT planning process leading up to the DEIS, the freight rail issue needs to be dropped or significant more work needs to be done on the alternative studies and public outreach.

Thank You,

To Whom It May Concern: Noise and vibration

I am writing in response to the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) – Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) which includes the proposed freight rail re-route in St. Louis Park, Minnesota.

The proposed action of re-routing freight is described in Chapter 1, Section 1.3.2.3. The MN&S Spur tracks are a lightly used spur line within a high density urban, residential setting and directly adjacent to the St Louis Park Senior High. The current freight occurs five days a week, Monday-Friday, during normal business hours. The proposed action of re-routing freight would introduce mainline traffic and the community, residents, and students will be exposed to longer, heavier trains during weekends, evenings, and nighttime. In detail, the re-route will allow a 250% increase in trains and a 650% increase of rail cars traffic. The increase of freight exposure will directly and negatively impact the community health and cohesion of the neighbors adjacent to the tracks. In addition, there will be negative impacts to the school system and educational quality within St Louis Park, including the decreased safety of students at the High School.

Besides my general concerns about the freight rail re-route, the section of the SWLRT DEIS that describes the noise and vibration has flawed methods and conclusions. The vibration and the noise measurements were done with current MN&S traffic. It is important to note that the

re-routed freight will be longer, more frequent, and include more locomotives per train.

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Vibration, Chapter 4.8.4: The conclusion that vibration will have no insignificant impacts is incorrect. Vibration impacts will be longer in time and the total amount will increase with the heavier freight and additional locomotives.

Noise, Chapter 4.7.5:

Quiet zones: The DEIS fails to describe the real world issues with the quiet zone. The SLP Senior High is both bookended by two blind curves and has athletic facilities on both sides of the tracks. The operating rail company, TC&W, has stated in a public document that it has safety concerns with a quiet zone due to the proximity of the tracks to schools, residents, and businesses. It will be impossible to design a quiet zone that will be both safe for the area while maintaining access for the adjacent Senior High school and local businesses. The quiet zone is listed as mitigation for noise impacts but it is a mitigation that is not supported by the neighborhoods, school board, or the operating rail companies.

A quiet zone will not eliminate all noise impacts and the assessment fails to measure other sources:

- a. the rail to wheel curve squeal from the tight interconnect curve
- b. the additional noise of the locomotives as it throttles up both the southern interconnect ramp and grade change at the northern connection,
- c. trains traveling west will need to use their brakes to maintain a slow speed going down grade and through curves
- d. diminished livability from the introduction of night freight traffic
- e. the amount of time exposed to the noise impacts of the stationary crossing bells will increase significantly due to increase in train numbers.

The re-routing of freight will negatively impact the safety, livability, and community cohesion of residents, students, and communities. The SWLRT DEIS does not adequately describe the impacts and as such, the freight reroute should not be given any further consideration as a option.

Name: Gary R.

Bush

Send Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) – Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) responses to:

Hennepin County Housing, Community Works and Transit
Attn: Southwest Transit way
701 Fourth Ave. S., Suite 400,
Minneapolis, MN 55415

Or:

swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us

For more DEIS information go to: www.southwesttransitway.org



11/05/2012 01:15 PM

Please respond to

To "swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us"
<swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>

cc

bcc

Subject SWLRT comments - CO-LOCATE FREIGHT & SWLRT IS
ONLY SOLUTION!

We're all anxious to have SWLRT but it's INSANE to re-route Kenilworth freight traffic through St. Louis Park. It will make the City unliveable and very dangerous and noisy. There is no amount of mitigation that will change this. Do it right (and safely) or don't do it at all!

Thanks

Diane Dowd

To Whom It May Concern: (Noise/vibration)

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The current SWLRT-DEIS has significant flaws and the planned re-route idea either needs to be dropped completely or a great deal more study must be done. As this action is proposed and described in Chapter 1, Section 1.3.2.3 as rebuilding a little known, lightly used spur line into a main freight rail line, which will initially allow a 788% increase of rail car traffic. What the SWLRT-DEIS does not address, but should, are the real world impacts of this action on the affected area.

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None of the mitigation requested by the City of St. Louis Park on behalf of her residents is being considered. This mitigation is not frivolous; it is necessary to maintain the safety, livability and property values for the residents of St. Louis Park.

Name: Jane Grudt

To Whom It May Concern: (safety)

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Name: Jane Grudt

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Name: Jane Grudt

To Whom It May Concern: (property values)

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To Whom It May Concern: (safety at the high school)

I am writing in response to the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) – Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) published in regard the SWLRT which includes the proposed freight rail re-route in St. Louis Park, Minnesota.

The current SWLRT-DEIS has significant flaws and the planned re-route idea either needs to be dropped completely or a great deal more study must be done. As this action is proposed and described in Chapter 1, Section 1.3.2.3 as rebuilding a little known, lightly used spur line into a main freight rail line, which will initially allow 788% increase of rail car traffic. What the SWLRT-DEIS does not address, but should, are the real world impacts of this action on the affected area.

Besides my general concerns about the SWLRT-DEIS, the portion of the report dealing with freight rail noise and safety at the High School (Chapters 3, 4, and 9) causes me the greatest concern. The unique noise and safety issues associated with locating main line freight within 35 feet of the High School parking lot and 75 feet from the building are not adequately discussed. When the High School is mentioned the information is dismissive. At no point in the SWLRT –DEIS are the negative impacts the extra freight trains will have on the learning environment and safety of the students at St. Louis Park High School. Before the proposed re-route should even be considered the cost of sufficiently mitigating the impact to St. Louis Park High School need to be evaluated. Examples of concerns include but are not limited to the following:

- A plan for emergency evacuation of the school should evacuation be necessary when a train is passing
- How will the many classrooms affected by train noise be sound proofed
- How will the students who want to use the new rail bridge to cross Hwy. 7 on their way to school be kept off the bridge.
- How will the added vibration of longer, heavier and more frequent trains be mitigated to the investment the school makes in technology is not lost.
- How will the safety hazards of blind crossings, curves and hundreds of teenagers in close proximity be eliminated
- How will a derailment be prevented so our children's lives are not at risk

None of the mitigation requested by the City of St. Louis Park or the St. Louis Park School Board on behalf of her residents is being considered. This mitigation is not frivolous; it is necessary to maintain the safety, livability and property values for the residents of St. Louis Park.

Name: Jane Grudt

To Whom It May Concern: (closing 29th street)

I am writing in response to the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) – Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) published in regard the SWLRT which includes the proposed freight rail re-route in St. Louis Park, Minnesota.

The current SWLRT-DEIS has significant flaws and the planned re-route idea either needs to be dropped completely or a great deal more study must be done. As this action is proposed and described in Chapter 1, Section 1.3.2.3 as rebuilding a little known, lightly-used spur line into a main freight rail line, which will initially allow a 788% increase of rail car traffic. What the SWLRT-DEIS does not address, but should, are the real-world impacts of this action on the affected area.

Besides my general concerns about the SWLRT-DEIS, the portion of the report dealing with the closing of the 29th street crossings (Chapter 3/p. 135) causes me the greatest concern. Residents from the Birchwood neighborhood requested on behalf of the Birchwood neighborhood that the grade crossing at 29th Street stay open. According to page 135 of the DEIS the 29th street crossing is being closed as a mitigation measure. However, the closing of the crossing will not benefit the neighborhood; it will, in fact, jeopardize residents because it will make emergency vehicle access difficult—if not impossible—during winter months due to narrowed streets.

None of the mitigation requested by the City of St. Louis Park on behalf of her residents is being considered. This mitigation is not frivolous; it is necessary to maintain the safety, livability and property values for the residents of St. Louis Park.

Name: Jane Grudt

To Whom It May Concern: (DEIS is not Objective)

I am writing in response to the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) - Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) published in regard the SWLRT which includes the proposed freight rail re-route in St. Louis Park, Minnesota.

The current SWLRT-DEIS has significant flaws and the planned re-route idea either needs to be dropped completely or a great deal more study must be done. As this action is proposed and described in Chapter 1, Section 1.3.2.3 as rebuilding a little known, lightly used spur line into a main freight rail line, which will initially allow a 788% increase of rail car traffic. What the SWLRT-DEIS does not address, but should, are the real world impacts of this action on the affected area.

Riddled with phantom assumptions, unsubstantiated assertions, and inexplicable omissions, the DEIS is not a serious attempt to consider the effect of the proposed re-route.

Chapter 1 of the DEIS states that without the re-route the TC&W's only options for moving its freight will be to access the MN&S tracks by use of the notorious switching wye in St. Louis Park, or to transfer cargo from railcars to highway trucks. The unstated assumption behind this statement is that the current route used by the TC&W will be severed. Presenting the either/or assumption for the switching wye or highway trucks creates the illusion of a fait accompli, when in fact the TC&W's current route through the Kenilworth corridor is a viable alternative.

Unsubstantiated assertions include the depiction in the DEIS that the historical character of the Kenilworth corridor (Chapter 3, page 58) would be compromised by its continued use for freight train traffic. The Kenilworth corridor was the home to not just railroad tracks, but an entire railroad yard for over one hundred years, beginning long before the current homes in the area were built.

Inexplicably omitted from the DEIS is how the re-route would be funded (Chapters 5 and 8). The re-route must be considered as part of the SWLRT and even without mitigation construction of the interconnect and upgrading the tracks on the MN&S to handle the heavier traffic is estimated to cost \$125,000,000, money that was not originally included in the projected cost of the SWLRT, but the projected budget for the SWLRT has not been adjusted to recognize the added expense. Also, missing from the cost estimates are the costs for maintaining the interconnect structure after it is built.

None of the mitigation requested by the City of St. Louis Park on behalf of her residents is being considered. This mitigation is not frivolous; it is necessary to maintain the safety, livability and property values for the residents of St. Louis Park.

Name: Jane Grudt

To whom it may concern: (The process to choose the Locally preferred Alternative was flawed)

I am writing in response to the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) – Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) published in regard the SWLRT which includes the proposed freight rail re-route in St. Louis Park, Minnesota.

The current SWLRT-DEIS has significant flaws and the planned re-route idea either needs to be dropped completely or a great deal more study must be done.

Besides my general concerns about the SWLRT-DEIS, I am particularly concerned with Chapter 12 (Public and Agency Coordination and Comments). NEPA 1500.2(d) states that the leading agency must “encourage and facilitate public involvement in decisions which affect the quality of the human environment.” This regulation was clearly ignored in regards to the potential freight rail re-route issue. Hennepin County did not “encourage and facilitate” public involvement concerning this issue. In fact, Hennepin County refused attempts for public comments and concerns regarding the freight rail issue at all of the outreach meetings listed in table 12.1-1 and all of the community events listed in table 12.1-2. Public comments regarding the freight issue were denied at the 2008 Oct 7, 14, and 23 scoping meetings and the comment period that followed as listed in section 12.1.3.1. Public comments regarding the freight issue were refused at the 2010 May 18, 18 and 20 open houses. Most importantly, public comments regarding the freight issue were denied during the entire LPA section process. This included all of public hearings listed in section 12.1.4.1. In summary, all public comments regarding the freight rail issue were denied at all of SWLRT’s major milestones leading up to the DEIS. Worse, the public was not made aware of the significant environmental impacts caused by SWLRT and the potential freight re-route because the freight issue was not discussed at any of the SWLRT meetings leading up to the DEIS. The only opportunity the public was given by Hennepin County to discuss the freight rail re-route was at the PMT meetings discussed in section 12.1.5.

However, any discussion of possible alternatives to the re-route (co-location) or the freight re-route’s connection with SWLRT was strictly forbidden at these PMT meetings. Lastly, the DEIS fails to mention the 2011 April 17 and 28 freight re-route listening sessions that were held by the city of St. Louis Park. Hundreds of St. Louis Park residents voiced their opposition to the freight re-route. Because those opposed to the re-route have been denied comment during the entire SWLRT planning process leading up to the DEIS, the freight rail issue needs to be dropped or significant more work needs to be done on the alternative studies and public outreach.

Thank You,

Name: Jane Grudt

To Whom It May Concern: Noise and vibration

I am writing in response to the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) – Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) which includes the proposed freight rail re-route in St. Louis Park, Minnesota.

The proposed action of re-routing freight is described in Chapter 1, Section 1.3.2.3. The MN&S Spur tracks are a lightly used spur line within a high density urban, residential setting and directly adjacent to the St Louis Park Senior High. The current freight occurs five days a week, Monday- Friday, during normal business hours. The proposed action of re-routing freight would introduce mainline traffic and the community, residents, and students will be exposed to longer, heavier trains during weekends, evenings, and nighttime. In detail, the re-route will allow a 250% increase in trains and a 650% increase of rail cars traffic. The increase of freight exposure will directly and negatively impact the community health and cohesion of the neighbors adjacent to the tracks. In addition, there will be negative impacts to the school system and educational quality within St Louis Park, including the decreased safety of students at the High School.

Besides my general concerns about the freight rail re-route, the section of the SWLRT DEIS that describes the noise and vibration has flawed methods and conclusions. The vibration and the noise measurements were done with current MN&S traffic. It is important to note that the re-routed freight will be longer, more frequent, and include more locomotives per train.

Vibration, Chapter 4.8.4: The conclusion that vibration will have no insignificant impacts is incorrect. Vibration impacts will be longer in time and the total amount will increase with the heavier freight and additional locomotives.

Noise, Chapter 4.7.5:

Quiet zones: The DEIS fails to describe the real world issues with the quiet zone. The SLP Senior High is both bookended by two blind curves and has athletic facilities on both sides of the tracks. The operating rail company, TC&W, has stated in a public document that it has safety concerns with a quiet zone due to the proximity of the tracks to schools, residents, and businesses. It will be impossible to design a quiet zone that will be both safe for the area while maintaining access for the adjacent Senior High school and local businesses. The quiet zone is listed as mitigation for noise impacts but it is a mitigation that is not supported by the neighborhoods, school board, or the operating rail companies.

A quiet zone will not eliminate all noise impacts and the assessment fails to measure other sources:

- a. the rail to wheel curve squeal from the tight interconnect curve
- b. the additional noise of the locomotives as it throttles up both the southern interconnect ramp and grade change at the northern connection,
- c. trains traveling west will need to use their brakes to maintain a slow speed going down grade and through curves
- d. diminished livability from the introduction of night freight traffic
- e. the amount of time exposed to the noise impacts of the stationary crossing bells will increase significantly due to increase in train numbers.

The re-routing of freight will negatively impact the safety, livability, and community cohesion of residents, students, and communities. The SWLRT DEIS does not adequately describe the impacts and as such, the freight reroute should not be given any further consideration as a option.

Name: Jane Grudt



Tony Kellera

11/06/2012 10:40 AM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us

cc

bcc

Subject Express trains?

Are there plans to have express trains running from Southwest Station to Downtown Mpls? If not, what are the proposed travel times between SS and Mpls?



Mary Gaines

11/07/2012 04:55 PM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us

cc

bcc

Subject comment - please read

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in response to the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) - Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) published in regard the SWLRT which includes the proposed freight rail re-route in St. Louis Park, Minnesota.

The current SWLRT-DEIS has significant flaws and the planned re-route idea either needs to be dropped completely or a great deal more study must be done. As this action is proposed and described in Chapter 1, Section 1.3.2.3 as rebuilding a little known, lightly used spur line into a main freight rail line, which will initially allow a 788% increase of rail car traffic. What the SWLRT-DEIS does not address, but should, are the real world impacts of this action on the affected area.

Besides my general concerns about the SWLRT-DEIS, the portion of the report dealing with Safety (3-132 and 133) causes me the greatest concern. Only a passing reference to safety and the proposed re-route is mentioned in the SWLRT-DEIS; however there are many features about the MN&S, which make it undesirable as a freight, rail main line. The reasons the MN&S is an unsafe main rail line include, but are not limited to the following:

- Multiple grade level crossings
- Proximity to St. Louis Park schools, homes and businesses - many are closer than the length of a rail car
- Number of pedestrians who transverse crossing every day
- Permeable soil under MN&S
- Medical emergency response hindered when crossings are blocked - only one fire station has emergency medical response (page 80)
- Tight Curves. Derailments are more likely to occur on curves than on straight track
- Hazardous materials are being carried on the rail line without sufficient right of way.

None of the mitigation requested by the City of St. Louis Park on behalf of her residents is being considered. This mitigation is not frivolous; it is necessary to maintain the safety, livability and property values for the residents of St. Louis Park.

Mary Beth Gaines



Bill James
11/07/2012 05:09 PM

To Gail Dorfman <gail.dorfman@co.hennepin.mn.us>, Katie Walker <swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>
cc Susan Haigh <Susan.Haigh@metc.state.mn.us>, Jan Callison <jan.callison@co.hennepin.mn.us>
bcc

Subject Fwd: [Safety in the Park!] Protest the freight re-route through St. Louis...

History:  This message has been forwarded.

Looks like we are going to have a nice little show next week in St. Louis Park....

Bill James III

In any moment of decision, the best thing you can do is the right thing,
the next best thing is the wrong thing, and the worst thing you can do is nothing.

Theodore Roosevelt

From: _____
Subject: [Safety in the Park!] Protest the freight re-route through St. Louis...
Date: November 7, 2012 3:47:37 PM CST
To: Safety in the Park!
Reply-To: Reply to Comment <

Karen Smith posted in Safety in the Park!

Karen Smith

Protest the freight re-route through St. Louis Park!!! Several residents are organizing a protest at the St. Louis Park City Hall on Nov 14th from 5:30 to 6pm. As you may know, Hennepin County is hosting an open house for the SWLRT DEIS at SLP City Hall during this time. A public forum will follow (6pm-7pm) The public forum is a great opportunity for individuals to voice concerns about the proposed re-route through SLP. Since we all need to be there for the open forum, why not have a protest beforehand? The protest will take place on the sidewalks in front of City Hall (facing Minnetonka). Bull horns are prohibited, but participants are encouraged to make signs. Although the Safety In the Park facebook page is a great place to discuss the protest, I want to make sure everyone knows that this protest is being

organized by concerned residents and anyone who has concerns about the proposed re-route is welcome. Our goal is to have a minimum of 100 people at the protest. Several media outlets have been contacted and have committed to being there with cameras. An RSVP is clearly not necessary but a headcount will be helpful for planning purposes. Please email [\[redacted\]](#) to let us know you are coming. There is also a "protest the freight reroute in SLP" facebook event that you can forward to your friends.

[View Post on Facebook](#) · [Edit Email Settings](#) · [Reply to this email to add a comment.](#)



To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in response to the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) - Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) published in regard the SWLRT which includes the proposed freight rail re-route in St. Louis Park, Minnesota.

The current SWLRT-DEIS has significant flaws and the planned re-route idea either needs to be dropped completely or a great deal more study must be done. As this action is proposed and described in Chapter 1, Section 1.3.2.3 as rebuilding a little known, lightly used spur line into a main freight rail line, which will initially allow a 788% increase of rail cars traffic. What the SWLRT-DEIS does not address, but should, are the real world impacts of this action on the affected area.

Besides my general concerns about the SWLRT-DEIS, the portion of the report dealing with loss of property value in the re-route area should be in Chapter 9: Indirect Impacts, but it is not, and this causes me great concern. The SWLRT-DEIS does not mention the impact of re-routed freight trains from a main line freight corridor to a bridge line on property values of the re-route area. Freight rail re-routes are not exclusive to Minnesota and the cost of the re-routes to residents has been documented. For example, according to an article in a 2001 issue of The Appraisal Journal bringing additional freight rail traffic to an area will negatively affect properties 250' feet from the rail tracks by 5-7%. All of the properties along the MN&S are well within 250'. Based on this article one can conclude that property values along the MN&S will drop more than 7%. Two major questions arise that are not addressed in the SWLRT-DEIS. First, what happens to the tax base of St. Louis Park when the drop in value is realized? Second, how are property owners who lose value because of this government action going to be compensated for their loss? It is unreasonable for the Hennepin County to ask any resident to pay a higher price for the benefits of light rail than others.

Ervin Ostendorf
Name: *Ervin Ostendorf*



Ms Marian Ostendorf

MINNEAPOLIS MN 553

05 NOV 2012 PM 7 L



Lemmerlin County
Housing, Community Works & Transit
ATTN: SOUTH WEST TRANSIT WAY
701-4th Avenue S. Suite 400
Minneapolis, MN 55445

5541531843





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Hennepin County
Housing, Community Works & Transit
ATTN: Southwest Transitway
701 Fourth Avenue South, Suite 400
Minneapolis, MN 55415

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To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in response to the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) - Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) published in regard the SWLRT which includes the proposed freight rail re-route in St. Louis Park, Minnesota.

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Besides my general concerns about the SWLRT-DEIS, the portion of the report dealing with freight rail trains blocking street crossings (6-38 and 39) causes me the greatest concern. In the SWLRT-DEIS we are told the blocked crossings will not cause significant travel or safety issues. To the consultant sitting miles away the increase may seem insignificant, but to residents who must travel the area and rely on quick responses from emergency vehicles the 580% increase in blocked crossing time is unacceptable.

A supposed benefit of the proposed re-route is explained in chapter 1, pages 11 and 12 of the SWLRT-DEIS. According to the document Twin City and Western (TCW) freight trains will regularly travel north of St. Louis Park into Golden Valley, Crystal and New Hope. When the trains travel north they will have to cross Cedar Lake Road; however, no data is given for the impact of this blocked crossing.

Issues about blocked crossings not dealt with in the SWLRT-DEIS include, but are not limited to the following:

- Effects of multiple blocked crossings on residents' ability to move freely about their neighborhood
- Amount of time it takes congestion to clear once a train has passed.
 - Making turns from one street to another with backed up traffic
 - Pedestrian safety as traffic clears
- Possibility that trains will be going slower than the "worst case scenario" in the EAW - Trains often stop at McDonald's for train crews to have a break. When they resume travel they will NOT be going 10 mph.
- Medical response times can be affected
 - Narrow side streets will be blocked with waiting automobiles
 - Only one fire station has medical response
- When train volumes increase what will be done to alleviate auto traffic congestion

None of the mitigation requested by the City of St. Louis Park on behalf of her residents is being considered. This mitigation is not frivolous; it is necessary to maintain the safety, livability and property values for the residents of St. Louis Park.

Name: Mel Martinson Lane Martinson



Mel Or Jane Martinson

MINNEAPOLIS MN 553

05 NOV 2012 PM 5 L



HEAVEN PIN COUNTRY
HOUSING, Community Work + Transit
ATTN: SOUTHWEST TRANSITWAY
1701 4TH Ave So. Suite 400
Mpls, MN. 55415

55415184300





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Hennepin County
Housing, Community Works & Transit
ATTN: Southwest Transitway
701 Fourth Avenue South, Suite 400
Minneapolis, MN 55415

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To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in response to the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) – Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) published in regard the SWLRT which includes the proposed freight rail re-route in St. Louis Park, Minnesota.

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Unsubstantiated assertions include the depiction in the DEIS that the historical character of the Kenilworth corridor (Chapter 3, page 58) would be compromised by its continued use for freight train traffic. The Kenilworth corridor was the home to not just railroad tracks, but an entire railroad yard for over one hundred years, beginning long before the current homes in the area were built.

Inexplicably omitted from the DEIS is how the re-route would be funded (Chapters 5 and 8). The re-route must be considered as part of the SWLRT and even without mitigation construction of the interconnect and upgrading the tracks on the MN&S to handle the heavier traffic is estimated to cost \$125,000,000, money that was not originally included in the projected cost of the SWLRT, but the projected budget for the SWLRT has not been adjusted to recognize the added expense. Also, missing from the cost estimates are the costs for maintaining the interconnect structure after it is built.

None of the mitigation requested by the City of St. Louis Park on behalf of her residents is being considered. This mitigation is not frivolous; it is necessary to maintain the safety, livability and property values for the residents of St. Louis Park.

Name: William J. Donlon SR. Carol F. Donlon



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Hennepin County
Housing, Community Works & Transit
ATTN: Southwest Transitway
701 Fourth Avenue South, Suite 400
Minneapolis, MN 55415

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William Danton

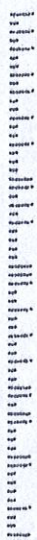
MINNEAPOLIS MN 553

07 NOV 2012 PM 7 L



Stearns County
Shuam, Community Parks & Rec
Attn: DeeDee Parsons
701 South Ave. S. Suite 400
Minneapolis, MN 55416

55415184330





Marc Ballbach

11/08/2012 01:31 PM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us

cc

bcc

Subject Introduction

I am glad to see that there are some public meetings coming up this month and wanted to submit some comments/concerns in writing in the event that I can't attend in person.

I live in the Glen Lake area of Minnetonka on Excelsior Blvd and I bike commute downtown to Capella University where I am an IT consultant. I have ridden my car into work 3 time this year. I take the bus when the weather is bad and have only done so once since April - the rest was biking.

So, I am pretty passionate and excited about the SW Corridor. First off, I would love to help out in the planning in any way that might make sense. In particular, I want to make sure the needs of bikers are met during and certainly after the construction phases. My experience with these trails is quite good as, starting in Hopkins on Shady Oak Rd, I bike the exact proposed route of the SW corridor daily.

At this point, my main concern is having a good plan in place to accommodate for pedestrians, bikers, cars, trucks and trains at the intersection of Excelsior and Jackson Avenue N/Milwaukee Street (in front of the new Cargill buildings. This is already a nasty intersection to bike through and I am concerned that adding light rail to that mix, if not done well, could make it even worse.

I am also interested in the bike and transit infrastructure west of the Shady Oak station (on Excelsior Blvd and on the existing trails that are not paved at that point).

As I mentioned, I am very excited about all of this and would love the opportunity to participate going forward.

Marc Ballbach



Leilani Bloomquist

11/08/2012 04:36 PM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us

cc

bcc

Subject Train behind Sunset Ridge Condos - Opposed to this addition

Hi There,

I wanted to write about the proposed train addition behind Sunset Ridge Condo's in St Louis Park. I'm against adding a train to this area - I don't want any additional noise or traffic, nor do I want to see my taxes hiked another \$1000K per year. Our taxes are already very high and we have fantastic bus routes and a bus stop right in front of our association. I'm 100% AGAINST this addition to our neighborhood.

Thank you,
Leilani Bloomquist

November 9, 2013
Hennepin County Housing, Community Works and Transit
Attn: Southwest Transit way
701 Fourth Ave. S., Suite 400,
Minneapolis, MN 55415

To Whom It May Concern:

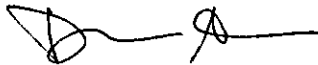
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Besides my general concerns about the SWLRT-DEIS, the portion of the report dealing with Safety (3-132 and 133) causes me the greatest concern. Only a passing reference to safety and the proposed re-route is mentioned in the SWLRT-DEIS; however there are many features about the MN&S, which make it undesirable as a freight, rail main line. The reasons the MN&S is an unsafe main rail line include, but are not limited to the following:

- Multiple grade level crossings
- Proximity to St. Louis Park schools, homes and businesses – many are closer than the length of a rail car
- Number of pedestrians who transverse crossing every day
- Permeable soil under MN&S
- Medical emergency response hindered when crossings are blocked – only one fire station has emergency medical response (page 80)
- Tight Curves. Derailments are more likely to occur on curves than on straight track
- Hazardous materials are being carried on the rail line without sufficient right of way.

None of the mitigation requested by the City of St. Louis Park on behalf of her residents is being considered. This mitigation is not frivolous; it is necessary to maintain the safety, livability and property values for the residents of St. Louis Park.



David Gaines

USA FIRST-CLASS FOREVER



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NOV 9 2017
BX:



55415184300



November 9, 2013
 Hennepin County Housing, Community Works and Transit
 Attn: Southwest Transit way
 701 Fourth Ave. S., Suite 400,
 Minneapolis, MN 55415

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in response to the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) – Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) published in regard the SWLRT which includes the proposed freight rail re-route in St. Louis Park, Minnesota.

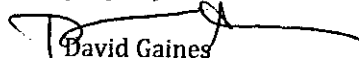
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Besides my general concerns about the SWLRT-DEIS, the portion of the report dealing with Noise (3-93 and 94) and Vibration (4-117) causes me the greatest concern. The SWLRT-DEIS underestimates the effects of vibration for because it considers only the immediate traffic increase from the re-route and not additional traffic that is likely to occur. Currently trains travel on the MN&S for approximately two hours a month. If the re-route occurs there will be a minimum of 6 hours and 39 minutes or a 232.5% increase in train related vibration will occur each a month. Currently, all vibration and its negative impacts occur five days a week during regular business hours. In the future vibration will occur on weekends and nights as well as during business hours. Not only will the duration of vibration increase, but also the amount of vibration will increase with longer, heavier trains. The assumption stated in the SWLRT-DEIS that the increase in vibration is insignificant is incorrect. Listed below are reasons why the assumptions are incorrect:

We are also led to believe that creating a quiet zone will end all of the noise issues. This assumption is incorrect for the following reasons:

1. A quiet zone is not a sure thing.
 - a. Implementation could be denied by the school board because the building of a quiet zone will limit access to the Senior High School
 - b. Locomotive engineers are compelled to blow the horn if they perceive a dangerous situation. What kind of responsible person would drive a train through a series of blind crossings, past several schools without blowing the horn?
2. Quiet zones do not limit locomotive noise
 - a. Multiple locomotives will be necessary for pulling a fully loaded train up the .86% grade if the new interconnect.
 - b. Multiple locomotives laboring with long trains will make more noise than the locomotives that currently use the MN&S
3. Trains traveling west will need to use their breaks to maintain a slow speed going down grade and through curves
4. Train wheels on curves squeal; the tighter the curve the greater the squeal.
5. Bells on crossing arms in a quiet zone will ring the entire time a train is in the crossing.
6. Because there are currently no trains at night, even one night train means diminished livability.

None of the mitigation requested by the City of St. Louis Park on behalf of her residents is being considered. This mitigation is not frivolous; it is necessary to maintain the safety, livability and property values for the residents of St. Louis Park.


 David Gaines

MINNEAPOLIS MN 553

08 NOV 2012 PM 7 L



Hempin City Housing Community West Transit
Atn: Southwest Transitway
701 Fursten Ave S. Suite 400
Minneapolis MN 55415

5541531843



November 9, 2013
Hennepin County Housing, Community Works and Transit
Attn: Southwest Transit way
701 Fourth Ave. S., Suite 400,
Minneapolis, MN 55415

To Whom It May Concern:

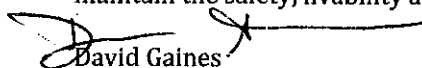
I am writing in response to the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) – Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) published in regard the SWLRT which includes the proposed freight rail re-route in St. Louis Park, Minnesota.

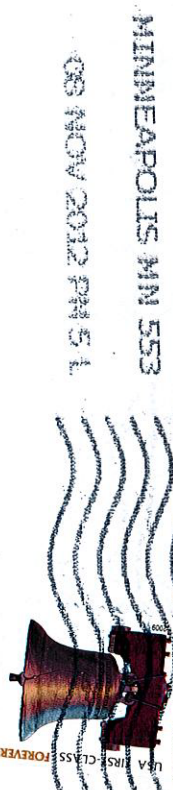
The current SWLRT-DEIS has significant flaws and the planned re-route idea either needs to be dropped completely or a great deal more study must be done. As this action is proposed and described in Chapter 1, Section 1.3.2.3 as rebuilding a little known, lightly used spur line into a main freight rail line, which will initially allow 788% increase of rail car traffic. What the SWLRT-DEIS does not address, but should, are the real world impacts of this action on the affected area.

Besides my general concerns about the SWLRT-DEIS, the portion of the report dealing with freight rail noise and safety at the High School (Chapters 3, 4, and 9) causes me the greatest concern. The unique noise and safety issues associated with locating main line freight within 35 feet of the High School parking lot and 75 feet from the building are not adequately discussed. When the High School is mentioned the information is dismissive. At no point in the SWLRT –DEIS are the negative impacts the extra freight trains will have on the learning environment and safety of the students at St. Louis Park High School. Before the proposed re-route should even be considered the cost of sufficiently mitigating the impact to St. Louis Park High School need to be evaluated. Examples of concerns include but are not limited to the following:

- A plan for emergency evacuation of the school should evacuation be necessary when a train is passing
- How will the many classrooms affected by train noise be sound proofed
- How will the students who want to use the new rail bridge to cross Hwy. 7 on their way to school be kept off the bridge.
- How will the added vibration of longer, heavier and more frequent trains be mitigated to the investment the school makes in technology is not lost.
- How will the safety hazards of blind crossings, curves and hundreds of teenagers in close proximity be eliminated
- How will a derailment be prevented so our children's lives are not at risk

None of the mitigation requested by the City of St. Louis Park or the St. Louis Park School Board on behalf of her residents is being considered. This mitigation is not frivolous; it is necessary to maintain the safety, livability and property values for the residents of St. Louis Park.


David Gaines



MINNEAPOLIS MN 553
08 NOV 2012 PM 5 L



Hennepin County Housing Con. West Transit
attn: SW Transitway
701 Fourth Ave S, Suite 400
Minneapolis, MN 55415

55415184300





Judy Wells

11/10/2012 11:01 AM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us

cc

bcc

Subject Comment on the Southwest Transitway Draft Environmental Impact Statement

Hi,

Re: **SOUTHWEST TRANSITWAY DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

I am writing to you to express my concerns about the proposed freight train re-route through St Louis Park neighborhoods.

I live at _____ and often take the 17 metro transit bus to and from downtown. When I come home, I get out at the Minnetonka Blvd and Colorado Ave intersection, walk to Brunswick Ave, cross the railroad tracks at the bend in the track, and continue on down Brunswick Ave to my house.

The railroad tracks curve in this section, and it is impossible to see the oncoming train, although it can be heard. The street is blocked off to automotive traffic, but there is a lot of foot traffic across the train tracks at this intersection.

The railroad track in this area passes between Roxbury Park and Keystone Park in the area where I walk. I know people, including myself, walk up the hill and across the tracks to get from one park to another. Re-routing additional trains in this neighborhood is dangerous for those of us walking home, walking between the parks and enjoying our community.

I am in my 60s and usually do not have any trouble getting around, but during the winter before last when there was a lot of snow on the ground I was walking home from the bus stop one night and got to the railroad tracks on Brunswick between the bus stop and my home. The street is blocked off to cars, but pedestrians often go across the railroad tracks there near my house.

It had been snowing quite heavily. The snow had been plowed up off the street into the area by the tracks. The snow was so deep and soft that I got stuck up past my knees in the snow as I was attempting to cross the railroad tracks. I couldn't get free. I was stuck in between the tracks and thought I might be the poster child/lady for getting hit by an oncoming train in that section of the track.

After writhing about a bit, I finally was able to get my feet out of the snow and roll across the tracks and down to the other side. Thank goodness no train was coming by during this maneuver, or I could have been dead, not just embarrassed. Having fewer trains racing by could certainly save lives!

I wholeheartedly support light rail. But re-routing the freight trains so that more of them run very

close to houses/garages, the St Louis Park High School and our local parks is clearly not a good idea and it is not safe for residents.

Please work to explore all other possibilities before increasing train traffic in a part of our community that was clearly not designed for significant train use.

If it is not possible to stop the freight train re-route, then I recommend that we put some kind of sturdy tall barrier around the tracks in areas such as the intersection on Brunswick and around the neighborhood parks so that people would be physically prevented from getting on the tracks and getting into trouble. I often see young people, probably walking down from the high school, in this area near the tracks and the parks. I worry that increased train traffic will lead to accidents. We need to keep ourselves, our neighbors and our kids safe.

Thank you for your consideration.

Best regards,

Judy Wells



Brian Z

11/10/2012 05:41 PM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us

cc

bcc

Subject Citizen comment on SWLRT-DEIS in St. Louis Park, MN

11/10/12

To whom it may concern:

I am writing a response to the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) - Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) published in regard to the SWLRT which includes the proposed freight rail re-route in St. Louis Park, Minnesota.

The current SWLRT-DEIS has significant flaws and the planned re-route idea either needs to be dropped completely or a great deal more study must be done. As this action is proposed and described in Chapter 1, Section 1.3.2.3 as rebuilding a little known, lightly used spur line into a main freight rail line, which will initially allow a 788% increase of rail car traffic. What the SWLRT-DEIS does not address, but should, are the real-world impacts of this action on the affected area.

My main concerns about the SWLRT-DEIS are as follows:

- 1.) The MN&S spur rail line is clearly unsafe as a main rail line.
- 2.) The grade crossing at 29th Street must stay open.
- 3.) Co-location with SWLRT and the TC&W's current freight rail route through the Kennelworth corridor is a viable, superior and cheaper option to freight re-route along the MN&S.
- 4.) The freight re-route will result in a loss of property values along affected areas, particularly the Birchwood neighborhood.
- 5.) The re-route will block street crossings and impede the response of emergency vehicles.
- 6.) The re-route will cause dramatic noise and safety issues by the High School. The proposed "quiet zones" are not adequate mitigation to address this.
- 7.) The section of the SWLRT- DEIS that describes the noise and vibration study has flawed methods and conclusions.
- 8.) Hennepin County did not encourage and facilitate public involvement in decisions which affect the quality of the human environment concerning the re-route.

It is also important to note that none of the mitigation requested by the City of St. Louis Park on behalf of her residents is being considered. This mitigation is not frivolous; it is necessary to maintain the safety, livability and property values for the residents of St. Louis Park.

While I am personally pleased and grateful for the fact that the SWLRT- DEIS singles out my family's home as one of two that must be purchased, I am still outraged that this document does not afford the same treatment of the other citizens of St. Louis Park who will be badly affected by

this re-route. My wife (who has a disability) and others like her should not have their routes to Methodist Hospital and Park Nicollet Clinic impeded by unnecessary train traffic. My lovely daughter, and thousands of students like her should not have to endure a High School made unnecessarily dangerous and noisy by the re-route. The freight re-rout should be prevented. If it is forced on the community of St. Louis Park, at least 40 homes along the re-route should be purchased and the area be turned into a greenway/bike path which would actually be a boon to my city instead of blighting my neighborhood.

SWLRT is a great idea. The freight re-route is not, especially as it is dealt with in the SWLRT-DEIS. We can do better for St. Louis Park. Much better.

Sincerely,

Brian Zachek



Lynne Stobbe

11/10/2012 09:04 PM

To: swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us,
Jake Spano

cc

bcc

Subject: Responding to Southwest Light-rail Transit Re-Route through
St. Louis Park

To Whom It May Concern:

I am opposed to the freight rail re-route through St. Louis Park. When I first heard of this proposal I thought this was nuts. Why would anyone in their right minds propose high levels of freight traffic through a neighborhood where the homes (Postage Size Lots) are very close to the tracks? If a train de-railed it could potentially take out multiple homes and cause millions of dollars in damage. Why would Hennepin County, and the State want this re-route when they had just spent millions of dollars putting a bridge over Highway 7 at Wooddale, and then this re-route would make that areas traffic impossible?

And why would anyone think it is OK to propose this re-route right through the center of the St. Louis Park High School Campus - separating the school from the athletic fields - basically dividing the campus in half. This whole process is politics run amok! There is a reason Gail Dorfman is our ex major.

After what happened in the deadly train accident in Anoka in 2003, you would think that the State, Hennepin County, the Federal Government, and the Railroad companies would take the lessons of that accident, and apply it's concerns to this case.

In that accident four young people were killed in a train crossing (train/vehicle). The jury found the railroad 90% responsible for the accident, and the families were awarded millions.

By putting this proposed freight rail re-route through St. Louis Park, Hennepin County, the State, Federal Government, and the Railroad will be endangering the lives of our high school students, and all of the families that live too close to this route.

According to the Department of Transportation:

"94% of all railroad crossing accidents are caused by risky behavior." HELLO - do you know of any high school students that participate in risky behavior? Teenagers = Risky Behavior.

"It can take a train a full mile or more to brake - even after it hits something." That's nearly 18 football fields to stop. Do you think any teenager that is late to football practice or to school might try to dart in front of one of these trains to get to the athletic field or the school?

We who live near the high school routinely see the High School students duck under the railroad gates to run across the tracks to McDonald's. The students also daily cross these tracks in their cars to get to their student parking. With the proposed re-route, and longer trains this is more

risk to our students.

"Nearly half of all rail crashes occur when the train is traveling under 30mph. Approximately every two hours in the US a collision occurs between a train and either a vehicle or a pedestrian." That's 12 incidents a day, and Hennepin County, the State, Federal Government, and the Railroad thinks it's OK to increase this risk percentage by putting this train re-route through the middle of a high school campus. Very Risky - It will most likely cost lives.

We cannot have this re-route through St. Louis Park. NOTHING - not proposed walking paths, biking paths, or even future light rail - can ever replace kids in our lives. This proposed rail re-route will endanger way too many lives.

What I have not addressed here is the impact this will have on the home values in St. Louis Park, and our quality of life. Is the state prepared to spend millions to compensate us for our homes losing value, livability, and the general impact this will have on the quality of our lives? Is the State and the Railroad prepared to buy homes, sound proof, and replace window on many more homes to compensate us on the damage to our homes environmentally, physically, and financially?

Also lets not forget the total distrust the citizens of St. Louis Park have for Hennepin County Commissioner Gail Dorfman. We have all heard of your promises to the rich elite neighborhood of Minneapolis' affluent Kenwood neighborhood - this whole process has reminded me of crooked insider trading. **NO RAIL RE-ROUTE in ST. LOUIS PARK!!!!**

Lynne Stobbe

--
1



Jeffrey Mueller

11/11/2012 03:44 PM

To <swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>

cc

bcc

Subject Southwest LRT comment

To whom it may concern,

My name is Jeff Mueller and I'm a resident of St. Louis Park. I would like to make a few comments. I do not live on the railroad tracks, but I know that it will impact me in two ways. Firstly, I live at which is one street and a park away from the railroad tracks (essentially 2 streets if the park wasn't there). Currently, I hear the trains (which honestly I find quite quaint), but more importantly I also *feel* them. My house actually shakes whenever a train goes by even though I'm 2 streets away from the tracks. How is the commission going to remediate for damage to people's home (that will most likely occur) when there are a lot more trains passing by on a regular basis? I have a number of settling cracks in my home that I can't prove were caused by the trains, but an increase in the frequency of trains will surely cause more settling of my home (which shouldn't be settling at 70 years old). I don't have a problem with the current number of trains passing by, but I fear that an increase will be detrimental to the structure of my home. Secondly, I live by the high school where an increase in the number of trains passing through on a regular basis will not only be dangerous to the students, but will also cause big backups on Dakota. What is the commission planning on doing to remedy this situation?

I would like to firmly voice my opposition to an increase in trains in St. Louis Park. There is no reason that LRT can't reside next to the current train tracks and spare St. Louis Park residents damage to their homes, an increase in noise, and an increase in traffic. Thanks for listening.

Respectfully, Jeff Mueller

P.S. I am not anti-light rail. In fact I can't wait to be able to jump a train to easily travel downtown and beyond, but there is a better way than the proposed train increase through St. Louis Park.



SOUTHWEST
transitway

Fold here

MINNEAPOLIS MN 553

12 NOV 2012 PM 7 L

Gwen Jacobson



Liberty
FOREVER

Hennepin County

Housing, Community Works & Transit
ATTN: Southwest Transitway

701 Fourth Avenue South, Suite 400
Minneapolis, MN 55415



55415184300



Fold here

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in response to the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) – Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) published in regard the SWLRT which includes the proposed freight rail re-route in St. Louis Park, Minnesota.

The current SWLRT-DEIS has significant flaws and the planned re-route idea either needs to be dropped completely or a great deal more study must be done. As this action is proposed and described in Chapter 1, Section 1.3.2.3 as rebuilding a little known, lightly used spur line into a main freight rail line, which will initially allow a 788% increase of rail car traffic. What the SWLRT-DEIS does not address, but should, are the real world impacts of this action on the affected area.

Besides my general concerns about the SWLRT-DEIS, the portion of the report dealing with Safety (3-132 and 133) causes me the greatest concern. Only a passing reference to safety and the proposed re-route is mentioned in the SWLRT-DEIS; however there are many features about the MN&S, which make it undesirable as a freight, rail main line. The reasons the MN&S is an unsafe main rail line include, but are not limited to the following:

- Multiple grade level crossings
- Proximity to St. Louis Park schools, homes and businesses – many are closer than the length of a rail car
- Number of pedestrians who transverse crossing every day
- Permeable soil under MN&S
- Medical emergency response hindered when crossings are blocked – only one fire station has emergency medical response (page 80)
- Tight Curves. Derailments are more likely to occur on curves than on straight track
- Hazardous materials are being carried on the rail line without sufficient right of way.

None of the mitigation requested by the City of St. Louis Park on behalf of her residents is being considered. This mitigation is not frivolous; it is necessary to maintain the safety, livability and property values for the residents of St. Louis Park.

Name: Gwen Jacobson



11/13/2012 11:52 AM

To <swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>

cc

bcc

Subject Comment on the Proposed Freight Train Rerouting

To Whom It May Concern:

Please find attached my signed letter of comment on the proposed freight train rerouting to the MN&S line.

Thank you for your interest.

Sincerely,

Edith Nosow

Edith Nosow

Hennepin County Housing, Community Works and Transit
Attn: Southwest Transitway
701 Fourth Ave. So. Suite 400
Minneapolis, MN 55415

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to comment on the recently released Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Southwest Light Rail Transit project, which includes the rerouting of freight traffic to St. Louis Park. I have attended a community meeting organized by the non-partisan, non-profit group Safety in the Park and support their stance in favor of a co-location of the light rail and freight traffic instead of rerouting the freight traffic to the current MN&S line.

Chapter 3 deals with the social effects of the project. It states that freight rail relocation is the best option. However, the full impact on St. Louis Park and the attitudes of those impacted there are ignored. The study says that there would be no land use changes in the area of the freight relocation and deals in depth with social impacts in other areas but does not deal with the social, economic, or safety impacts on the area of the proposed freight rail relocation. Furthermore, the DEIS fails even to mention the likely impact on wildlife that currently inhabits the area between the park to the east of the MN&S line, the railway line itself, and the adjacent properties to the west; namely, deer, rabbits, and the occasional coyote.

As proposed and described in Chapter 1, Section 1.3.2.3, the action would involve rebuilding a little-known, lightly used spur line into a main freight rail line, which would initially allow a 788% increase of rail car traffic. The re-route would at least triple the number of daily operations. The number of cars and length of trains would increase many times. The composition of train cargo would change to include hazardous substances. The noise levels from the necessarily increased numbers of locomotives, squealing of the wheels, and use of horns, as well as vibrations from longer, faster, heavier trains would have a serious negative impact on the quality of life of those of us living, working, and attending school along the line, not only during the day but at night. Recently, when the line was being repaired at night, I was awakened by trains on more than one occasion. The occasional heavy vibrations during the day that startle me are tolerable. I would not wish any increase in noise or vibration, either in terms of my well-being and that of my neighbors or possible structural damage to our homes.

My property abuts the raised MN&S line. My garage is only about 30 feet from the MN&S line, down a steep embankment; and my house is only 100 feet away. The idea of having to live with a constant subconscious fear of a derailed train crushing me and my home, let alone the possible damage caused by hazardous freight, is intolerable. And, of course, the property values of those businesses and homes bordering the line in this heavily populated area would be bound to fall significantly. One does not wish to live in constant fear of losing one's life investment.

Edith Nosow

Page 2

I am also concerned about the other safety considerations. The portion of the report dealing with Safety (3-132 and 133) makes only passing reference to safety in connection with the proposed freight rerouting. Some of the safety issues involved with such a rerouting are the multiple grade-level crossings, the number of pedestrians crossing the tracks each day, and hindered medical emergency response when the crossings are blocked, the latter of which would occur far more with the proposed freight rerouting onto the MN&S line.

Considering also the increased cost of about \$123 million, a large portion of which would have to be borne by the taxpayers of Hennepin County, to effect the freight rerouting as opposed to a co-location, I would advocate that the DEIS and the entire plan for this project be reassessed. As currently proposed, the project would inflict profound and enduring damage to communities in both St. Louis Park and Minneapolis. As a member of the St. Louis Park community, I agree with the city's position that light rail would be an asset to the entire community, but not at the cost of the serious negative impact on the neighborhoods in St. Louis Park that would be inevitable should the freight lines be rerouted to the MN&S line.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Edith Nosow".

Edith Nosow



mike novak

11/14/2012 09:33 AM

To <swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>

cc

bcc

Subject Please choose Route 3c-1

I'm a frequent Light Rail rider and supporter. I'm originally from Fargo, and spent many years in Chicago. I've been in Minneapolis for 2 years, and can't fathom why there isn't more support for light rail expansion. It's so important to keep our city on the cutting edge, and stay competitive with other cities of similar size.

I believe that route 3c-1 is the best choice. It would serve the most people, and has the potential to take the most cars off the road.

The train has to be where people want to go, rather than where it's easiest to build. Take the route down the center of the city no matter how difficult or the cost. Future generations will thank us!

Sending the route down Nicollet, then heading west on Lake would serve the city's needs best. There is a high concentration of business, and people there.

The other routes don't seem to make a whole lot of sense to me.

Keep me informed about how I can influence the route to go this way.

Mike Novak

Minneapolis

Thomas P Cremons

Nov. 10, 2012

Hennepin County Housing, Community Works and Transit
Attn: Southwest Transitway
701 Fourth Ave. So. Suite 400
Minneapolis, MN 55415

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to comment on the recently released Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Southwest Light Rail Transit project which includes the rerouting of freight traffic in St. Louis Park. I believe that the study is seriously flawed, was based largely on political considerations, and ignores or minimizes the damages which will be caused to communities, both in St. Louis Park and in Minneapolis. My objections include the following.

Chapter 3 deals with the social effects of the project. It states that freight rail relocation is the best option. This conclusion was driven by political considerations and motivated by a need to appease affluent, politically well connected interests in Minneapolis and overcome their objections to the disruption that light rail operations would create in their neighborhoods. The full impact on St. Louis Park and the attitudes of those impacted there are ignored. The study says that there would be no land use changes in the area of the freight relocation and deals in depth with social impacts in other areas but does not deal with the social, economic, or safety impacts in the area of the proposed freight rail relocation.

The document says that LRT would not affect community cohesion in the Kenilworth corridor but does not take into consideration the difference in frequency between light rail and freight rail or the traffic and parking issues that will be created by light rail in this neighborhood. The section on the co-location alternative expresses concern for changes to the character of the neighborhood due to co-location but ignores the facts that this route has, historically been a wide rail corridor and rail yard and that the major disruption will be caused by the increased noise, frequency of operation, traffic problems and parking problems caused by the addition of light rail to the corridor, not by the existing level of freight operations.

The section on freight rail relocation (p.60) states that "Since the MN&S is an active freight rail corridor and the relocation of TC&W traffic to the MN&S would add only a small increase in freight rail traffic, significant impacts to community cohesion along the

MN&S would not be anticipated". This is a blatant distortion of the facts. The re-route would, at least, triple the number of daily operations. The number of cars and length of trains would increase many times. The composition of train cargo would change to include hazardous substances. Once the connections to the main rail lines are built, traffic along the MN&S could increase to levels not foreseen by the study and limited only by rail traffic patterns, the economy, and the needs of the railroads. The speed and weight of the trains and resulting noise and vibration would increase. Safety of children in the parks along the MN&S and the students in the schools along the MN&S would be reduced. The families living along the MN&S would see a decline in their quality of life, the safety of their homes and the liveability of their neighborhoods. In fact, community cohesion would be impacted in a very negative way.

The section on safety of the MN&S corridor (p.130) uses historical data to minimize the possibility or impacts of derailments, chemical spills, etc. but does not take into account the increased risk due to faster, longer, or more frequent trains, nor does it take into account changing compositions of the loads on these trains. Further, it fails to acknowledge that when the MN&S is connected to the main freight lines, the freight traffic may increase far beyond the levels currently anticipated.

Chapter 4 deals with the noise and vibration impacts on residences along the MN&S line and claims that there would be no impact on most of these residences. The studies used to support these conclusions are based on current operations. They do not take into account the increased weight or speed of the trains or the increased power required to pull these longer, faster, heavier trains. Nor do they deal with the expanded hours of operation. Many of these trains will be passing very close to residences in the middle of the night. I believe that this is indeed a significant impact. The only mitigation proposed is quiet zones at crossings and welded rail. Neither will address the noise or vibration of multiple diesel engines pulling heavy loads around corners and up hills or the squealing of train wheels. Train engineers are free to ignore the quiet zones if they feel that safety is compromised and the presence of several blind curves and multiple crossings will cause them to do so.

Chapter 5 deals with the economic impact of the project but fails to address the economic impact on families or businesses along the MN&S corridor which will see a decline in the value of their properties due to increased freight traffic. This is an area primarily of working class people and retirees, many of whom have already been harmed by the housing crisis and recession and can not afford any more economic setbacks. In addition, homes near the proposed LRT corridor in Minneapolis face a potential loss of value due to frequent LRT trains, parking issues, and increased traffic trying to access the LRT. These are real economic impacts.

Chapter 11 deals with the evaluation of alternatives. One justification for relocating freight rail is that retention of freight rail in the Kenilworth Corridor would divide neighborhoods while SWLRT would "bring the areas together." It is a stretch to see how LRT with its multiple tracks and frequent operations would not further divide the neighborhoods. The increased freight traffic will certainly divide neighborhoods in St.

Louis Park, but this is ignored. The document uses the rationale that co-location would require the removal of "over 60 units of primarily high quality, high income" housing as a reason to opt for freight relocation. It glosses over the fact that freight rail relocation will cost tens of millions in rail construction, far more than the cost of acquiring the 60 housing units. It does not account for the costs of any real mitigation along the MN&S tracks. It fails to account for the loss of quality of life and safety for hundreds of not quite so high income people in St. Louis Park. This smacks of economic chauvinism.

Chapter 12 is concerned with community involvement and input. When the proposed route was being selected and the prospect of freight rail relocation was raised, people who wanted to comment on or object to the freight relocation portion of the project were told that freight rail relocation was a separate issue and that they would not be allowed to comment on that issue. St. Louis Park representatives on the Project Management Teams were consistently ignored when they raised objections to freight relocation or asked for real mitigation. Resolutions of the St. Louis Park City Council have been ignored and elected city officials have been demeaned in meetings of Hennepin County commissioners. In fact, only some input was welcome.

I feel that for the above reasons and many more, the DEIS and the entire plan for this project need to be reassessed. Light rail, if done correctly and with consideration for the communities impacted, can be a very positive development. As currently proposed, the project will do profound and long lasting damage to communities in both St. Louis Park and Minneapolis.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Thomas P. Cremons", written in a cursive style.

Thomas P. Cremons

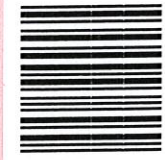


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PLACE STICKER AT TOP OF ENVELOPE TO THE RIGHT
OF THE RETURN ADDRESS. FOLD AT DOTTED LINE

Hennepin County Housing, Community Works and
Transit
Attn: Southwest Transitway
701 Fourth Ave. So. Suite 400
Minneapolis, MN 55415



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To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in response to the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) – Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) published in regard the SWLRT which includes the proposed freight rail re-route in St. Louis Park, Minnesota.

The current SWLRT-DEIS has significant flaws and the planned re-route idea either needs to be dropped completely or a great deal more study must be done. As this action is proposed and described in Chapter 1, Section 1.3.2.3 as rebuilding a little known, lightly used spur line into a main freight rail line, which will initially allow a 788% increase of rail car traffic. What the SWLRT-DEIS does not address, but should, are the real world impacts of this action on the affected area.

Besides my general concerns about the SWLRT-DEIS, the portion of the report dealing with freight rail trains blocking street crossings (6-38 and 39) causes me the greatest concern. In the SWLRT-DEIS we are told the blocked crossings will not cause significant travel or safety issues. To the consultant sitting miles away the increase may seem insignificant, but to residents who must travel the area and rely on quick responses from emergency vehicles the 580% increase in blocked crossing time is unacceptable.

A supposed benefit of the proposed re-route is explained in chapter 1, pages 11 and 12 of the SWLRT-DEIS. According to the document Twin City and Western (TCW) freight trains will regularly travel north of St. Louis Park into Golden Valley, Crystal and New Hope. When the trains travel north they will have to cross Cedar Lake Road; however, no data is given for the impact of this blocked crossing.

Issues about blocked crossings not dealt with in the SWLRT-DEIS include, but are not limited to the following:

- Effects of multiple blocked crossings on residents' ability to move freely about their neighborhood
- Amount of time it takes congestion to clear once a train has passed.
 - Making turns from one street to another with backed up traffic
 - Pedestrian safety as traffic clears
- Possibility that trains will be going slower than the "worst case scenario" in the EAW – Trains often stop at McDonald's for train crews to have a break. When they resume travel they will NOT be going 10 mph.
- Medical response times can be affected
 - Narrow side streets will be blocked with waiting automobiles
 - Only one fire station has medical response
- When train volumes increase what will be done to alleviate auto traffic congestion

None of the mitigation requested by the City of St. Louis Park on behalf of her residents is being considered. This mitigation is not frivolous; it is necessary to maintain the safety, livability and property values for the residents of St. Louis Park.

Name: BRIN HARLAN



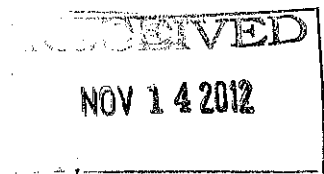
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HARLAN



Hennepin County
Housing, Community Works & Transit
ATTN: Southwest Transitway
701 Fourth Avenue South, Suite 400
Minneapolis, MN 55415



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To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in response to the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) – Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) published in regard the SWLRT which includes the proposed freight rail re-route in St. Louis Park, Minnesota.

The current SWLRT-DEIS has significant flaws and the planned re-route idea either needs to be dropped completely or a great deal more study must be done. As this action is proposed and described in Chapter 1, Section 1.3.2.3 as rebuilding a little known, lightly used spur line into a main freight rail line, which will initially allow 788% increase of rail car traffic. What the SWLRT-DEIS does not address, but should, are the real world impacts of this action on the affected area.

Besides my general concerns about the SWLRT-DEIS, the portion of the report dealing with freight rail noise and safety at the High School (Chapters 3, 4, and 9) causes me the greatest concern. The unique noise and safety issues associated with locating main line freight within 35 feet of the High School parking lot and 75 feet from the building are not adequately discussed. When the High School is mentioned the information is dismissive. At no point in the SWLRT –DEIS are the negative impacts the extra freight trains will have on the learning environment and safety of the students at St. Louis Park High School. Before the proposed re-route should even be considered the cost of sufficiently mitigating the impact to St. Louis Park High School need to be evaluated.

Examples of concerns include but are not limited to the following:

- A plan for emergency evacuation of the school should evacuation be necessary when a train is passing
- How will the many classrooms affected by train noise be sound proofed
- How will the students who want to use the new rail bridge to cross Hwy. 7 on their way to school be kept off the bridge.
- How will the added vibration of longer, heavier and more frequent trains be mitigated to the investment the school makes in technology is not lost.
- How will the safety hazards of blind crossings, curves and hundreds of teenagers in close proximity be eliminated
- How will a derailment be prevented so our children's lives are not at risk

None of the mitigation requested by the City of St. Louis Park or the St. Louis Park School Board on behalf of her residents is being considered. This mitigation is not frivolous; it is necessary to maintain the safety, livability and property values for the residents of St. Louis Park.

Name: ERIN HARLAN

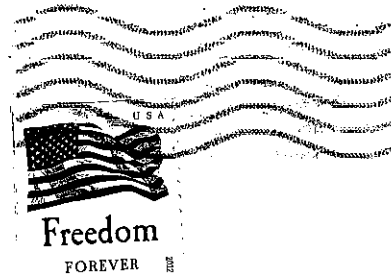


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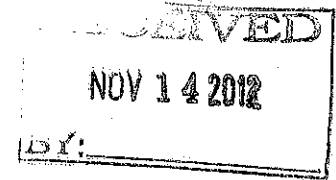
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Housing, Community Works & Transit

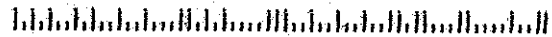
ATTN: Southwest Transitway

701 Fourth Avenue South, Suite 400

Minneapolis, MN 55415



55415164300



Fold here



Richard Adair

11/15/2012 09:35 AM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us

cc

bcc

Subject Penn Av station

Why build an expensive and geographically difficult station at Penn?

Simply put, the reward is greater than the price. The intersection of Penn Av and 394 is THE prime example of a place begging for high-density development along the entire Green Line. It's close to downtown, the perfect place for a kiss-and-ride drop off before the traffic nightmare caused by the 394 tunnel, has plenty of unused space, and it's beautiful.

Downtown Minneapolis was built on a flat plain next to St. Anthony Falls. It lacks the dramatic setting of Chicago, Duluth, or even St. Paul. The surrounding hills are covered with single-family houses, golf courses, and cemeteries—except this one. I invite you to pull off at the Penn exit and watch the glass towers of downtown fire up with color at sunset, serve as a backdrop for a rising full moon, or be enveloped by steam on a below-zero morning. It's a spectacular place that will inevitably attract high-density housing and restaurants—if there is a station nearby. Go for it!

Richard Adair



arthur higinbotham

11/15/2012 10:36 AM

To swcorridor <swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>

cc

bcc

Subject DEIS Commentary on SWLRT

Economic Justice, Section 10, fails to recognize that the 1A and 3A routes fail to provide direct transportation to the southwest suburbs for residents of the TMZ population districts in Uptown Minneapolis, without having to make a connection by bus or car to the W. Lake Street station on the already saturated Lake St./Excelsior Boulevard corridor. This same Section 10 touts these routes as providing reverse commuting opportunities for residents of North Minneapolis, failing to recognize that North Minneapolis residents would be much better served by the Bottineau line to take them to places of employment in Plymouth and Robbinsdale, which are much closer to their places of residence than Hopkins, Minnetonka or Eden Prairie.

Arthur E. Higinbotham



Sharon Lehrman

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us

cc Sue Sander

11/15/2012 11:26 AM

Please respond to
Sharon Lehrman

bcc

Subject statement about DEIS and the SLP freight reroute

Hello my name is Sharon Lehrman. I grew up in the Birchwood neighborhood of St Louis Park (SLP) in a home on 27th and Xenwood that my parents owned for almost 50 years. My husband and I are homeowners of 18 years in the same neighborhood at

There's a special bond and pride for those of us who grew up here in SLP. You may have seen the Nov. 6 article in the NY Times called Minnesota Mirror written by Pulitzer prize winner, author, and columnist Thomas Friedman. He came here to look at the election through the window of his hometown of St. Louis Park. Tommy is also an old family friend and we graduated together from SLP high school. He often talks about how growing up in SLP is the anchor and moral compass that keeps him grounded and "normal." AS A PERSON WHO GREW UP HERE, LIVED IN CA, and came back, I can say there really is something about MN nice.

I AM VERY WORRIED THAT THE REROUTING OF FREIGHT TRAINS IS CONSIDERED A DONE DEAL. In a Nov. 4 Star Tribune article our mayor Jeff Jacobs is quoted as saying opposing the freight reroute "is like being opposed to winter--you can oppose it but it's coming." And in a Nov. 13 Star Tribune article Commissioner Gail Dorfman is quoted as saying "I think this is a win-win for St. Louis Park in all respects, as long as we adequately mitigate for the freight rail." I just don't see how THIS IS A WIN WIN FOR SLP and that's why I'm sending this email. THIS WILL COST taxpayers at least \$123M more than co-location in the Kenilworth corridor not including any additional cost of mitigation. Why has full mitigation been omitted from the DEIS plan for the reroute?

But the most IMPORTANT ISSUE for me IS THAT THE REROUTE it is a disaster waiting to happen. This really comes down to the safety of our residents.

I am asking those of you who will have the power to make this decision, how will you feel when the first SLP high school student is killed and the first car is hit on Library Lane because those extra long trains don't have time to stop and the first derailment spills railcars into the backyards of those homes along the tracks because there's not an adequate safety buffer? Will you be there to console those parents, those families, and those residents? Will you be able to sleep at night knowing you made this



harrybaxter
11/16/2012 01:03 PM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us
cc
bcc
Subject Routes through St. Louis Park

I was present at the meeting in SLP on November 14th and have never in my life heard so much NIMBY tarted up as cant on safety. What the Safety in the Park protest amounts to is that *of course* they are in favor of light rail as long as someone else, preferably the people who already have the noise and vibration, take all the additional inconvenience as well. Taking at face value data from a 13-year-old study which they themselves cite in their propaganda pamphlet, let me make one point. If you add an LRT train every 15 minutes to a 20-fold increase in freight traffic, there will be precious little of either neighborhood accessible without huge detours, because the traffic jams as the rail line crosses Wooddale will stretch from Target to Louisiana and make a mockery of the money already invested in the junction of Wooddale and Highway 7, as well as the proposed expenditures for the junction of Highway 7 and Louisiana. It's time those people took their fair share of the sacrifices for the "progress" which they so piously endorse.

SWcorridor/Hennepin
Sent by: Adele C
Hall/PW/Hennepin

To
cc
bcc
Subject Fw: maps for Glenwood Ave area

01/16/2013 03:20 PM

From: Peter Roos
To: "Kerri.Pearce.Ruch@co.hennepin.mn.us" <Kerri.Pearce.Ruch@co.hennepin.mn.us>
Date: 11/09/2012 04:52 PM
Subject: Re: maps for Glenwood Ave area

Thanks Kerri

I did see those and they are certainly helpful - We are also interested in seeing anything regarding the proposed construction of Border Avenue as a through street to Glenwood - realizing that has not probably been designed at this point...

We will attend the public hearing next week and speak briefly with more detailed written comments to follow before the December deadline.

Thanks again!

Sent from my iPhone
Peter L Roos
Roos and Associates

On Nov 9, 2012, at 4:14 PM, Kerri.Pearce.Ruch@co.hennepin.mn.us wrote:

Peter -

In response to your voicemail looking for more detailed maps of the proposed SW LRT line in the vicinity of Glenwood Ave, I would refer you to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) that is currently available for public comment. The DEIS is available on the Southwest Transitway website at www.southwesttransitway.org.

The section you are most likely to be interested in is Appendix F - Part 1 - Conceptual Engineering Drawings. Pages 60 and 61 of that section show the Locally Preferred Alternative alignment in the area around Glenwood Avenue. I hope that these maps meet your needs for more detailed information. I would remind you that they are very early engineering drawings and will be refined by the Met Council through the Preliminary Engineering and Final Design processes.

Thanks for your interest in the Southwest DEIS. I would also encourage you to continue to review the Southwest Transitway DEIS and submit comments on the DEIS during the public comment period. Comments received during the comment period, which extends through December 11, 2012, will be forwarded to the Met Council and FTA and will be addressed during Preliminary Engineering (PE) and the Final EIS.

Kerri Pearce Ruch

Principal Planning Analyst | Housing, Community Works and Transit
701 Fourth Avenue South - Suite 400 | Minneapolis, MN 55415 | MC L608
office: 612.348.3080 | **mobile:** 612.919.6056 | kerri.pearce.ruch@co.hennepin.mn.us

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Sara Hackenmueller

11/20/2012 11:16 AM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us

cc

bcc

Subject Comment on the Southwest Corridor

Thank you.

Sara K. Hackenmueller

To the Federal Transit Administration, the Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority and Metropolitan Council:

My name is Sara Hackenmueller and I live at the

, The property will directly be impacted by the light rail, if the line begins at Mitchell Road to extend to the Southwest Transit Station. Chapter 4: Environmental Effects, Page 4-88, ID: 3-A, Description: Segment 3 between Mitchell Station and Southwest Station, Land Use Category: 2, Severe Impacts Land (Units): 1 (91). The Draft Environmental Impact Study does not name Southwest Station Condominiums specifically, but there are 91 Units in one of the buildings of our complex, including my condo which faces Highway 5. Our property was built on a large expanse of wetlands that expanded at least one mile to the northeast and several miles to the southwest. It underwent extensive development to deal with the weak compressible organic soils. Studies and testing must be completed in order to maintain the integrity of the soil and all of the buildings on the property. I am very concerned about the proximity of the light rail to the property; we will face many issues with vibration and noise. Another concern is the increase of traffic that will occur on Technology Drive, especially with the property set between two of the largest stations on the Southwest Corridor route: Mitchell Station and Southwest Transit Station. I do utilize the Southwest Transit Station every day to get to work and I appreciate the goal to move Minnesota forward with alternative forms of public transportation. I thank you for this opportunity to express my concerns and I hope proper studies and testing will be completed on our property and any issues are successfully mitigated.

Sincerely,

Sara K. Hackenmueller

Sara K. Hackenmueller



Paula Evensen

11/20/2012 07:35 PM

To "swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us"
<swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us> Anne Mavity

cc:

bcc:

Subject: trains

To: Met Council, Federal Transit Authority, St Louis Park City Council,

I understand a speaker was booed at a meeting here in St Louis Park. Despicable. This is why those of us who disagree with Safety In The Park stay away from meetings.

I live at [redacted] have a RR track in front of my house going east and west and another track one half block away going north and south. Often times there are trains sitting on the east west track. They might sit there for days. One day this summer there was a train engine idling in front of my house for over FIVE HOURS. It started before I got up that morning and went on til lunch time. My whole house was rumbling for FIVE HOURS. I tried to holler and wave my arms to tell them to move but they didn't see me. The noise was making me insane and the diesel fumes were making me nauseous. The kids and I couldn't stay outside. I was about to call 911 to tell them to move the train when it finally left. If we have any power to influence the RR during this light rail process we must keep the trains moving right through!

We need to remove the switching wye so trains move through our fine city without stopping. [and starting and stopping and switching and stopping and starting...]

My home, with a track in front [actually 3 tracks in front] and another track one half block away, will have a Light Rail station one and one half blocks the other direction. This will give me light rail trains and whistles every 7 to 10 minutes. Don't tell me someone else will be affected by trains more than my neighbors and me. OK, except for the folks in the lounhouse that would need to be removed in Mpls. How the SITP people can recommend tearing down someone else's home so they won't get trains by their home confounds me.

Speaking of light rail stations, I believe the three stations near my home would be very unsafe if freight and light rail trains were running alongside each other. St Louis Park doesn't have many north south roads. Louisiana, Wooddale and Belt Line Blvd will each have a light rail station. Do we really want light rail, light rail passengers, freight rail, a trail, cars, school buses, fire engines and pedestrians competing at these intersections? Wow.

If the trains were to be rerouted, there would be a turn very near my home as well. We must be vigilant to ensure this turn is as safe and quiet as possible. The reroute would afford us the opportunity to use new technology to improve all tracks involved. We must

focus our attention on the necessary mitigations we can do to make the reroute safe near our High School, our roadways and our neighborhoods.

Thank you

Paula Evensen



"shorrock"

11/20/2012 08:41 PM

To <swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>

cc

bcc

Subject Noise levels quoted by the DEIS

I live at 40 ft from the track. The DEIS reports that ambient noise is 44dB. The LRT will raise this to 114dB due mainly to wheel squeal on the curve of the track. This level of noise is equivalent to a Rock band or a Steel Mill and is at human pain threshold. For trains passing at every 3 minutes this is not socially acceptable. An alternative to mitigate it like a covered trench should be investigated. Even a single bi directional track where trains can go at 50mph and not 25mph would be possible. Such an investigation should be done. Regards. John Shorrock.

John Shorrock



Comment #84

November 14, 2012

Hennepin County
Housing, Community Works & Transit
Attn: Southwest Transitway
704 4th Avenue S., Ste 400
Minneapolis, MN 55415

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in response to the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) – Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) published in regard the SWLRT which includes the proposed freight rail re-route in St. Louis Park, MN.

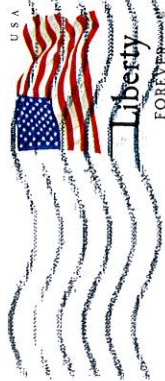
The DEIS impact study does not address all of the concerns of the residents of St. Louis Park, especially those residents that live directly by the tracks. The DEIS study indicated that there will be no impact to the homeowners. How can that be true? No reference was made for noise, vibrations, safety, loss of home value, quality of life, mitigation costs, etc. What are the benefits to St. Louis Park residents if the freight trains are re-routed here. As I see it, there are no practical benefits for the City of St. Louis Park or her residents. Have you looked down the road in 10 to 15 years and logically thought through what this will do to the community of St. Louis Park. Will St. Louis Park still be a quiet community to raise a family? Or, a community with loud, noisy freight trains passing through at 25 mph with no consideration for the homeowners. Just this past week, four disabled veterans in Midland, TX were killed and 17 seriously injured by a freight train during a parade to celebrate their service. What is the possibility that this incident could happen here in our city? Would a prospective buyer buy a home in St. Louis Park or send their children to a school with a number of freight trains going by daily. Did the County believe this re-route would be acceptable to the residents of St. Louis Park and we should just live with the noise, vibration, loss of home value, etc.?

None of the mitigation requested by the City of St. Louis Park, on behalf of her residents, is being considered. This mitigation is not frivolous; it is important to maintain the safety, livability and property values for the residents of St. Louis Park.

Thank you.

Eveline Haag

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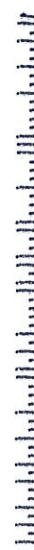
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BY:

Hennepin County
Housing, Community Works & Transit
Attn: Southwest Transitway
704 4th Avenue S., Ste 400
Minneapolis, MN 55415

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To Whom It May Concern:

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The current SWLRT-DEIS has significant flaws and the planned re-route idea either needs to be dropped completely or a great deal more study must be done. As this action is proposed and described in Chapter 1, Section 1.3.2.3 as rebuilding a little known, lightly used spur line into a main freight rail line, which will initially allow a 788% increase of rail cars traffic. What the SWLRT-DEIS does not address, but should, are the real world impacts of this action on the affected area.

Besides my general concerns about the SWLRT-DEIS, the portion of the report dealing with loss of property value in the re-route area should be in Chapter 9: Indirect Impacts, but it is not, and this causes me great concern. The SWLRT-DEIS does not mention the impact of re-routed freight trains from a main line freight corridor to a bridge line on property values of the re-route area. Freight rail re-routes are not exclusive to Minnesota and the cost of the re-routes to residents has been documented. For example, according to an article in a 2001 issue of The Appraisal Journal bringing additional freight rail traffic to an area will negatively affect properties 250' feet from the rail tracks by 5-7%. All of the properties along the MN&S are well within 250'. Based on this article one can conclude that property values along the MN&S will drop more than 7%. Two major questions arise that are not addressed in the SWLRT-DEIS. First, what happens to the tax base of St. Louis Park when the drop in value is realized? Second, how are property owners who lose value because of this government action going to be compensated for their loss? It is unreasonable for the Hennepin County to ask any resident to pay a higher price for the benefits of light rail than others.

Name: _____

Eric Melbye

SOUTHWEST
transitway

MINNEAPOLIS, MN 554
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melbale

Hennepin County
Housing, Community Works & Transit
ATTN: Southwest Transitway
701 Fourth Avenue South, Suite 400
Minneapolis, MN 55415

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Comment #86

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in response to the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) – Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) published in regard the SWLRT which includes the proposed freight rail re-route in St. Louis Park, Minnesota.

The current SWLRT-DEIS has significant flaws and the planned re-route idea either needs to be dropped completely or a great deal more study must be done. As this action is proposed and described in Chapter 1, Section 1.3.2.3 as rebuilding a little known, lightly used spur line into a main freight rail line, which will initially allow a 788% increase of rail car traffic. What the SWLRT-DEIS does not address, but should, are the real world impacts of this action on the affected area.

Riddled with phantom assumptions, unsubstantiated assertions, and inexplicable omissions, the DEIS is not a serious attempt to consider the effect of the proposed re-route.

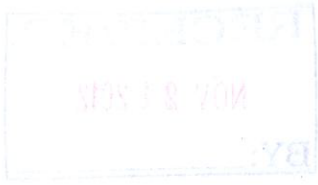
Chapter 1 of the DEIS states that without the re-route the TC&W's only options for moving its freight will be to access the MN&S tracks by use of the notorious switching wye in St. Louis Park, or to transfer cargo from railcars to highway trucks. The unstated assumption behind this statement is that the current route used by the TC&W will be severed. Presenting the either/or assumption for the switching wye or highway trucks creates the illusion of a fait accompli, when in fact the TC&W's current route through the Kenilworth corridor is a viable alternative.

Unsubstantiated assertions include the depiction in the DEIS that the historical character of the Kenilworth corridor (Chapter 3, page 58) would be compromised by its continued use for freight train traffic. The Kenilworth corridor was the home to not just railroad tracks, but an entire railroad yard for over one hundred years, beginning long before the current homes in the area were built.

Inexplicably omitted from the DEIS is how the re-route would be funded (Chapters 5 and 8). The re-route must be considered as part of the SWLRT and even without mitigation construction of the interconnect and upgrading the tracks on the MN&S to handle the heavier traffic is estimated to cost \$125,000,000, money that was not originally included in the projected cost of the SWLRT, but the projected budget for the SWLRT has not been adjusted to recognize the added expense. Also, missing from the cost estimates are the costs for maintaining the interconnect structure after it is built.

None of the mitigation requested by the City of St. Louis Park on behalf of her residents is being considered. This mitigation is not frivolous; it is necessary to maintain the safety, livability and property values for the residents of St. Louis Park.

Name: Eric Melbye



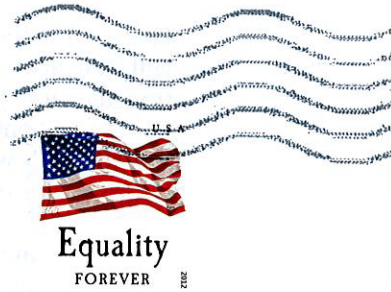
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melbye



Hennepin County

Housing, Community Works & Transit
ATTN: Southwest Transitway

701 Fourth Avenue South, Suite 400

Minneapolis, MN 55415

55415164300





comment #87

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in response to the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) - Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) published in regard the SWLRT which includes the proposed freight rail re-route in St. Louis Park, Minnesota.

The current SWLRT-DEIS has significant flaws and the planned re-route idea either needs to be dropped completely or a great deal more study must be done. As this action is proposed and described in Chapter 1, Section 1.3.2.3 as rebuilding a little known, lightly used spur line into a main freight rail line, which will initially allow 788% increase of rail car traffic. What the SWLRT-DEIS does not address, but should, are the real world impacts of this action on the affected area.

Besides my general concerns about the SWLRT-DEIS, the portion of the report dealing with freight rail noise and safety at the High School (Chapters 3, 4, and 9) causes me the greatest concern. The unique noise and safety issues associated with locating main line freight within 35 feet of the High School parking lot and 75 feet from the building are not adequately discussed. When the High School is mentioned the information is dismissive. At no point in the SWLRT -DEIS are the negative impacts the extra freight trains will have on the learning environment and safety of the students at St. Louis Park High School. Before the proposed re-route should even be considered the cost of sufficiently mitigating the impact to St. Louis Park High School need to be evaluated.

Examples of concerns include but are not limited to the following:

- A plan for emergency evacuation of the school should evacuation be necessary when a train is passing
- How will the many classrooms affected by train noise be sound proofed
- How will the students who want to use the new rail bridge to cross Hwy. 7 on their way to school be kept off the bridge.
- How will the added vibration of longer, heavier and more frequent trains be mitigated to the investment the school makes in technology is not lost.
- How will the safety hazards of blind crossings, curves and hundreds of teenagers in close proximity be eliminated
- How will a derailment be prevented so our children's lives are not at risk

None of the mitigation requested by the City of St. Louis Park or the St. Louis Park School Board on behalf of her residents is being considered. This mitigation is not frivolous; it is necessary to maintain the safety, livability and property values for the residents of St. Louis Park.

Name: _____

Susan Melbye

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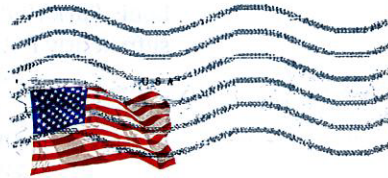


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Hennepin County

Housing, Community Works & Transit
ATTN: Southwest Transitway

701 Fourth Avenue South, Suite 400
Minneapolis, MN 55415

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To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in response to the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) - Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) published in regard the SWLRT which includes the proposed freight rail re-route in St. Louis Park, Minnesota.

The current SWLRT-DEIS has significant flaws and the planned re-route idea either needs to be dropped completely or a great deal more study must be done. As this action is proposed and described in Chapter 1, Section 1.3.2.3 as rebuilding a little known, lightly used spur line into a main freight rail line, which will initially allow a 788% increase of rail car traffic. What the SWLRT-DEIS does not address, but should, are the real world impacts of this action on the affected area.

Besides my general concerns about the SWLRT-DEIS, the portion of the report dealing with freight rail trains blocking street crossings (6-38 and 39) causes me the greatest concern. In the SWLRT-DEIS we are told the blocked crossings will not cause significant travel or safety issues. To the consultant sitting miles away the increase may seem insignificant, but to residents who must travel the area and rely on quick responses from emergency vehicles the 580% increase in blocked crossing time is unacceptable.

A supposed benefit of the proposed re-route is explained in chapter 1, pages 11 and 12 of the SWLRT-DEIS. According to the document Twin City and Western (TCW) freight trains will regularly travel north of St. Louis Park into Golden Valley, Crystal and New Hope. When the trains travel north they will have to cross Cedar Lake Road; however, no data is given for the impact of this blocked crossing.

Issues about blocked crossings not dealt with in the SWLRT-DEIS include, but are not limited to the following:

- Effects of multiple blocked crossings on residents' ability to move freely about their neighborhood
- Amount of time it takes congestion to clear once a train has passed.
 - Making turns from one street to another with backed up traffic
 - Pedestrian safety as traffic clears
- Possibility that trains will be going slower than the "worst case scenario" in the EAW - Trains often stop at McDonald's for train crews to have a break. When they resume travel they will NOT be going 10 mph.
- Medical response times can be affected
 - Narrow side streets will be blocked with waiting automobiles
 - Only one fire station has medical response
- When train volumes increase what will be done to alleviate auto traffic congestion

None of the mitigation requested by the City of St. Louis Park on behalf of her residents is being considered. This mitigation is not frivolous; it is necessary to maintain the safety, livability and property values for the residents of St. Louis Park.

Name: Sasan Melbore



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Hennepin County

Housing, Community Works & Transit

ATTN: Southwest Transitway

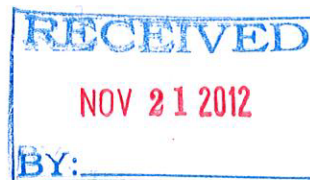
701 Fourth Avenue South, Suite 400

Minneapolis, MN 55415

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To whom it may concern:

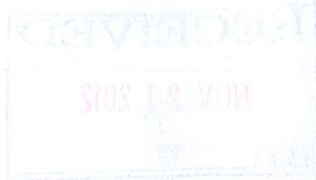
I am writing in response to the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) – Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) published in regard the SWLRT which includes the proposed freight rail re-route in St. Louis Park, Minnesota.

The current SWLRT-DEIS has significant flaws and the planned re-route idea either needs to be dropped completely or a great deal more study must be done.

Besides my general concerns about the SWLRT-DEIS, I am particularly concerned with Chapter 12 (Public and Agency Coordination and Comments). NEPA 1500.2(d) states that the leading agency must “encourage and facilitate public involvement in decisions which affect the quality of the human environment.” This regulation was clearly ignored in regards to the potential freight rail re-route issue. Hennepin County did not “encourage and facilitate” public involvement concerning this issue. In fact, Hennepin County refused attempts for public comments and concerns regarding the freight rail issue at all of the outreach meetings listed in table 12.1-1 and all of the community events listed in table 12.1-2. Public comments regarding the freight issue were denied at the 2008 Oct 7, 14, and 23 scoping meetings and the comment period that followed as listed in section 12.1.3.1. Public comments regarding the freight issue were refused at the 2010 May 18, 18 and 20 open houses. Most importantly, public comments regarding the freight issue were denied during the entire LPA section process. This included all of public hearings listed in section 12.1.4.1. In summary, all public comments regarding the freight rail issue were denied at all of SWLRT’s major milestones leading up to the DEIS. Worse, the public was not made aware of the significant environmental impacts caused by SWLRT and the potential freight re-route because the freight issue was not discussed at any of the SWLRT meetings leading up to the DEIS. The only opportunity the public was given by Hennepin County to discuss the freight rail re-route was at the PMT meetings discussed in section 12.1.5. However, any discussion of possible alternatives to the re-route (co-location) or the freight re-route’s connection with SWLRT was strictly forbidden at these PMT meetings. Lastly, the DEIS fails to mention the 2011 April 17 and 28 freight re-route listening sessions that were held by the city of St. Louis Park. Hundreds of St. Louis Park residents voiced their opposition to the freight re-route. Because those opposed to the re-route have been denied comment during the entire SWLRT planning process leading up to the DEIS, the freight rail issue needs to be dropped or significant more work needs to be done on the alternative studies and public outreach.

Thank You,

Name: Susan Melbye



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Malbye

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Hennepin County

Housing, Community Works & Transit

ATTN: Southwest Transitway

701 Fourth Avenue South, Suite 400

Minneapolis, MN 55415

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Draft Environmental Impact Statement Comment Form
Southwest Transitway Project

Comment #90

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

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

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

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

I approve of the DEIS for the Southwest LRT and the future construction of the line. SW LRT is another critical link in our LRT system. The anticipated success of the SW LRT can be predicted by the great utility of our first line, the Hiawatha. Two of the main assets of SW are 1) the potential for lessening car traffic and associated pollution due to commuting through the area and 2) increased development, both commercial and residential, stimulated by the line. Finally, speeding up the access to businesses and the trips for busy commuters would be a highly desired benefit for our economy and life in general.

Thank you,

Ben G. Zimmerman (member, Sierra Club)

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

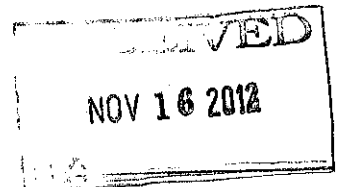
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Hennepin County
Housing, Community Works & Transit
ATTN: Southwest Transitway
701 Fourth Avenue South, Suite 400
Minneapolis, MN 55415



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IT PAUL MN 550

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To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in response to the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) – Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) published in regard the SWLRT which includes the proposed freight rail re-route in St. Louis Park, Minnesota.

The current SWLRT-DEIS has significant flaws and the planned re-route idea either needs to be dropped completely or a great deal more study must be done. As this action is proposed and described in Chapter 1, Section 1.3.2.3 as rebuilding a little known, lightly used spur line into a main freight rail line, which will initially allow a 788% increase of rail car traffic. What the SWLRT-DEIS does not address, but should, are the real world impacts of this action on the affected area.

Riddled with phantom assumptions, unsubstantiated assertions, and inexplicable omissions, the DEIS is not a serious attempt to consider the effect of the proposed re-route.

Chapter 1 of the DEIS states that without the re-route the TC&W's only options for moving its freight will be to access the MN&S tracks by use of the notorious switching wye in St. Louis Park, or to transfer cargo from railcars to highway trucks. The unstated assumption behind this statement is that the current route used by the TC&W will be severed. Presenting the either/or assumption for the switching wye or highway trucks creates the illusion of a fait accompli, when in fact the TC&W's current route through the Kenilworth corridor is a viable alternative.

Unsubstantiated assertions include the depiction in the DEIS that the historical character of the Kenilworth corridor (Chapter 3, page 58) would be compromised by its continued use for freight train traffic. The Kenilworth corridor was the home to not just railroad tracks, but an entire railroad yard for over one hundred years, beginning long before the current homes in the area were built.

Inexplicably omitted from the DEIS is how the re-route would be funded (Chapters 5 and 8). The re-route must be considered as part of the SWLRT and even without mitigation construction of the interconnect and upgrading the tracks on the MN&S to handle the heavier traffic is estimated to cost \$125,000,000, money that was not originally included in the projected cost of the SWLRT, but the projected budget for the SWLRT has not been adjusted to recognize the added expense. Also, missing from the cost estimates are the costs for maintaining the interconnect structure after it is built.

None of the mitigation requested by the City of St. Louis Park on behalf of her residents is being considered. This mitigation is not frivolous; it is necessary to maintain the safety, livability and property values for the residents of St. Louis Park.

Name: Erin Hazlak

Harbanel

MINNEAPOLIS MN 553

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BY:

Hennepin County
Holding, Community Works: Transit
Attn: Southwest Transitway
701 Fourth Ave S, Suite 400
Mpls. MN

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To whom it may concern:

I am writing in response to the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) – Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) published in regard the SWLRT which includes the proposed freight rail re-route in St. Louis Park, Minnesota.

The current SWLRT-DEIS has significant flaws and the planned re-route idea either needs to be dropped completely or a great deal more study must be done.

Besides my general concerns about the SWLRT-DEIS, I am particularly concerned with Chapter 12 (Public and Agency Coordination and Comments). NEPA 1500.2(d) states that the leading agency must "encourage and facilitate public involvement in decisions which affect the quality of the human environment." This regulation was clearly ignored in regards to the potential freight rail re-route issue. Hennepin County did not "encourage and facilitate" public involvement concerning this issue. In fact, Hennepin County refused attempts for public comments and concerns regarding the freight rail issue at all of the outreach meetings listed in table 12.1-1 and all of the community events listed in table 12.1-2. Public comments regarding the freight issue were denied at the 2008 Oct 7, 14, and 23 scoping meetings and the comment period that followed as listed in section 12.1.3.1. Public comments regarding the freight issue were refused at the 2010 May 18, 18 and 20 open houses. Most importantly, public comments regarding the freight issue were denied during the entire LPA section process. This included all of public hearings listed in section 12.1.4.1. In summary, all public comments regarding the freight rail issue were denied at all of SWLRT's major milestones leading up to the DEIS. Worse, the public was not made aware of the significant environmental impacts caused by SWLRT and the potential freight re-route because the freight issue was not discussed at any of the SWLRT meetings leading up to the DEIS. The only opportunity the public was given by Hennepin County to discuss the freight rail re-route was at the PMT meetings discussed in section 12.1.5. However, any discussion of possible alternatives to the re-route (co-location) or the freight re-route's connection with SWLRT was strictly forbidden at these PMT meetings. Lastly, the DEIS fails to mention the 2011 April 17 and 28 freight re-route listening sessions that were held by the city of St. Louis Park. Hundreds of St. Louis Park residents voiced their opposition to the freight re-route. Because those opposed to the re-route have been denied comment during the entire SWLRT planning process leading up to the DEIS, the freight rail issue needs to be dropped or significant more work needs to be done on the alternative studies and public outreach.

Thank You,

Name: Hand R. Mollarens



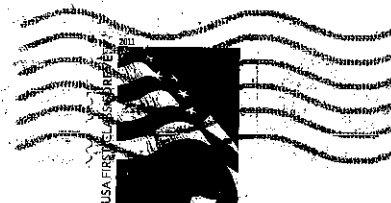
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Gene R. Mellgren

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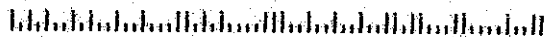
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Hennepin County
Housing, Community Works & Transit
ATTN: Southwest Transitway
701 Fourth Avenue South, Suite 400
Minneapolis, MN 55415

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Draft Environmental Impact Statement Comment Form

Southwest Transitway Project

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

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

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

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

I do not live in the southwest metro but I am a heavy public transportation user. I believe that building a robust public transportation system is vital for building a great city for the future and so I strongly support the Southwest Transitway Project. Building more transit options for Minnesotans promotes greater efficiencies of time, energy, and money in many ways. For example, someone who rides the LRT into downtown saves time because of its speed and straight in route, money because the ticket would be cheaper than the equivalent amount of gas, and save energy because they are not driving their own car. In addition to the efficiencies that benefit the rider, the person who still decides to drive a car also saves time, money, and energy because with one less car on the road means they will brake less which means they will get to where they are going faster, use less gas and so save money and energy. I support the Southwest Transitway and my preference is Build Alternative LRT 3A

Name: Thomas Carpenter

Thank you!

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Thomas Carpenter

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Hennepin County

Housing, Community Works & Transit
ATTN: Southwest Transitway

701 Fourth Avenue South, Suite 400

Minneapolis, MN 55415

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55415184300

To whom it may concern: (The process to choose the Locally preferred Alternative was flawed)

I am writing in response to the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) – Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) published in regard the SWLRT which includes the proposed freight rail re-route in St. Louis Park, Minnesota.

The current SWLRT-DEIS has significant flaws and the planned re-route idea either needs to be dropped completely or a great deal more study must be done.

Besides my general concerns about the SWLRT-DEIS, I am particularly concerned with Chapter 12 (Public and Agency Coordination and Comments). NEPA 1500.2(d) states that the leading agency must "encourage and facilitate public involvement in decisions which affect the quality of the human environment." This regulation was clearly ignored in regards to the potential freight rail re-route issue. Hennepin County did not "encourage and facilitate" public involvement concerning this issue. In fact, Hennepin County refused attempts for public comments and concerns regarding the freight rail issue at all of the outreach meetings listed in table 12.1-1 and all of the community events listed in table 12.1-2. Public comments regarding the freight issue were denied at the 2008 Oct 7, 14, and 23 scoping meetings and the comment period that followed as listed in section 12.1.3.1. Public comments regarding the freight issue were refused at the 2010 May 18, 18 and 20 open houses. Most importantly, public comments regarding the freight issue were denied during the entire LPA section process. This included all of public hearings listed in section 12.1.4.1. In summary, all public comments regarding the freight rail issue were denied at all of SWLRT's major milestones leading up to the DEIS. Worse, the public was not made aware of the significant environmental impacts caused by SWLRT and the potential freight re-route because the freight issue was not discussed at any of the SWLRT meetings leading up to the DEIS. The only opportunity the public was given by Hennepin County to discuss the freight rail re-route was at the PMT meetings discussed in section 12.1.5. However, any discussion of possible alternatives to the re-route (co-location) or the freight re-route's connection with SWLRT was strictly forbidden at these PMT meetings. Lastly, the DEIS fails to mention the 2011 April 17 and 28 freight re-route listening sessions that were held by the city of St. Louis Park. Hundreds of St. Louis Park residents voiced their opposition to the freight re-route. Because those opposed to the re-route have been denied comment during the entire SWLRT planning process leading up to the DEIS, the freight rail issue needs to be dropped or significant more work needs to be done on the alternative studies and public outreach.

Thank You,

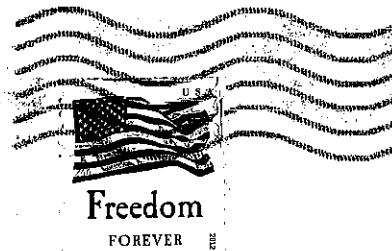
Name: Mike Held



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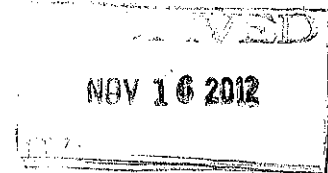
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Mike Held

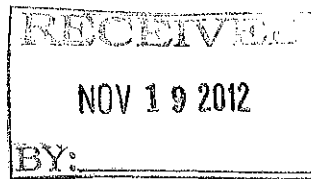
Hennepin County
Housing, Community Works & Transit
ATTN: Southwest Transitway
701 Fourth Avenue South, Suite 400
Minneapolis, MN 55415



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Comment #95

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in response to the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) - Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) published in regard the SWLRT which includes the proposed freight rail re-route in St. Louis Park, Minnesota.

The current SWLRT-DEIS has significant flaws and the planned re-route idea either needs to be dropped completely or a great deal more study must be done. As this action is proposed and described in Chapter 1, Section 1.3.2.3 as rebuilding a little known, lightly used spur line into a main freight rail line, which will initially allow a 788% increase of rail car traffic. What the SWLRT-DEIS does not address, but should, are the real world impacts of this action on the affected area.

Besides my general concerns about the SWLRT-DEIS, the portion of the report dealing with Safety (3-132 and 133) causes me the greatest concern. Only a passing reference to safety and the proposed re-route is mentioned in the SWLRT-DEIS; however there are many features about the MN&S, which make it undesirable as a freight, rail main line. The reasons the MN&S is an unsafe main rail line include, but are not limited to the following:

- Multiple grade level crossings
- Proximity to St. Louis Park schools, homes and businesses - many are closer than the length of a rail car
- Number of pedestrians who transverse crossing every day
- Permeable soil under MN&S
- Medical emergency response hindered when crossings are blocked - only one fire station has emergency medical response (page 80)
- Tight Curves. Derailments are more likely to occur on curves than on straight track
- Hazardous materials are being carried on the rail line without sufficient right of way.

None of the mitigation requested by the City of St. Louis Park on behalf of her residents is being considered. This mitigation is not frivolous; it is necessary to maintain the safety, livability and property values for the residents of St. Louis Park.

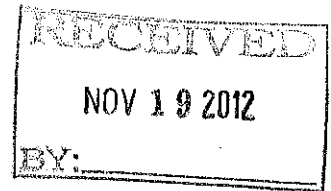
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Michael Dala



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To Whom It May Concern:

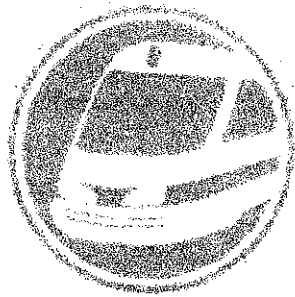
I am writing in response to the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) - Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) published in regard the SWLRT which includes the proposed freight rail re-route in St. Louis Park, Minnesota.

The current SWLRT-DEIS has significant flaws and the planned re-route idea either needs to be dropped completely or a great deal more study must be done. As this action is proposed and described in Chapter 1, Section 1.3.2.3 as rebuilding a little known, lightly used spur line into a main freight rail line, which will initially allow a 788% increase of rail cars traffic. What the SWLRT-DEIS does not address, but should, are the real world impacts of this action on the affected area.

Besides my general concerns about the SWLRT-DEIS, the portion of the report dealing with loss of property value in the re-route area should be in Chapter 9: Indirect Impacts, but it is not, and this causes me great concern. The SWLRT-DEIS does not mention the impact of re-routed freight trains from a main line freight corridor to a bridge line on property values of the re-route area. Freight rail re-routes are not exclusive to Minnesota and the cost of the re-routes to residents has been documented. For example, according to an article in a 2001 issue of The Appraisal Journal bringing additional freight rail traffic to an area will negatively affect properties 250' feet from the rail tracks by 5-7%. All of the properties along the MN&S are well with in 250'. Based on this article one can conclude that property values along the MN&S will drop more than 7%. Two major questions arise that are not addressed in the SWLRT-DEIS. First, what happens to the tax base of St. Louis Park when the drop in value is realized? Second, how are property owners who lose value because of this government action going to be compensated for their loss? It is unreasonable for the Hennepin County to ask any resident to pay a higher price for the benefits of light rail than others.

Name: Michael Dahl

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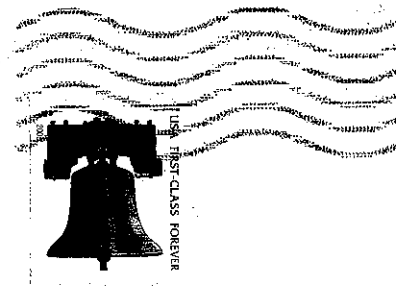


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Hennepin County

Housing, Community Works & Transit

ATTN: Southwest Transitway

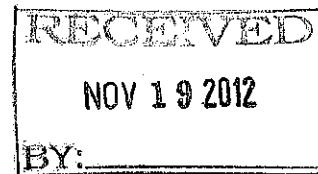
701 Fourth Avenue South, Suite 400

Minneapolis, MN 55415

55415184300



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Comment #97

To whom it may concern:

I am writing in response to the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) – Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) published in regard the SWLRT which includes the proposed freight rail re-route in St. Louis Park, Minnesota.

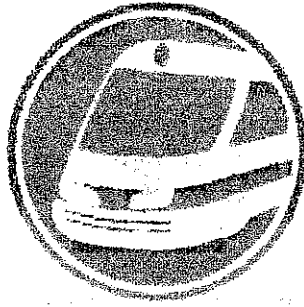
The current SWLRT-DEIS has significant flaws and the planned re-route idea either needs to be dropped completely or a great deal more study must be done.

Besides my general concerns about the SWLRT-DEIS, I am particularly concerned with Chapter 12 (Public and Agency Coordination and Comments). NEPA 1500.2(d) states that the leading agency must "encourage and facilitate public involvement in decisions which affect the quality of the human environment." This regulation was clearly ignored in regards to the potential freight rail re-route issue. Hennepin County did not "encourage and facilitate" public involvement concerning this issue. In fact, Hennepin County refused attempts for public comments and concerns regarding the freight rail issue at all of the outreach meetings listed in table 12.1-1 and all of the community events listed in table 12.1-2. Public comments regarding the freight issue were denied at the 2008 Oct 7, 14, and 23 scoping meetings and the comment period that followed as listed in section 12.1.3.1. Public comments regarding the freight issue were refused at the 2010 May 18, 18 and 20 open houses. Most importantly, public comments regarding the freight issue were denied during the entire LPA section process. This included all of public hearings listed in section 12.1.4.1. In summary, all public comments regarding the freight rail issue were denied at all of SWLRT's major milestones leading up to the DEIS. Worse, the public was not made aware of the significant environmental impacts caused by SWLRT and the potential freight re-route because the freight issue was not discussed at any of the SWLRT meetings leading up to the DEIS. The only opportunity the public was given by Hennepin County to discuss the freight rail re-route was at the PMT meetings discussed in section 12.1.5. However, any discussion of possible alternatives to the re-route (co-location) or the freight re-route's connection with SWLRT was strictly forbidden at these PMT meetings. Lastly, the DEIS fails to mention the 2011 April 17 and 28 freight re-route listening sessions that were held by the city of St. Louis Park. Hundreds of St. Louis Park residents voiced their opposition to the freight re-route. Because those opposed to the re-route have been denied comment during the entire SWLRT planning process leading up to the DEIS, the freight rail issue needs to be dropped or significant more work needs to be done on the alternative studies and public outreach.

Thank You,

Name: _____

MICHAEL



SOUTHWEST transitway

Fold here

Milo Daly

MINNEAPOLIS, MN 554

16 NOV 2012 PM 3 1



Hennepin County

Housing, Community Works & Transit
ATTN: Southwest Transitway

701 Fourth Avenue South, Suite 400

Minneapolis, MN 55415



RECEIVED
NOV 19 2012
BY: _____

Comment #98

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in response to the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) – Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) published in regard the SWLRT which includes the proposed freight rail re-route in St. Louis Park, Minnesota.

The current SWLRT-DEIS has significant flaws and the planned re-route idea either needs to be dropped completely or a great deal more study must be done. As this action is proposed and described in Chapter 1, Section 1.3.2.3 as rebuilding a little known, lightly used spur line into a main freight rail line, which will initially allow 788% increase of rail car traffic. What the SWLRT-DEIS does not address, but should, are the real world impacts of this action on the affected area.

Besides my general concerns about the SWLRT-DEIS, the portion of the report dealing with freight rail noise and safety at the High School (Chapters 3, 4, and 9) causes me the greatest concern. The unique noise and safety issues associated with locating main line freight within 35 feet of the High School parking lot and 75 feet from the building are not adequately discussed. When the High School is mentioned the information is dismissive. At no point in the SWLRT –DEIS are the negative impacts the extra freight trains will have on the learning environment and safety of the students at St. Louis Park High School. Before the proposed re-route should even be considered the cost of sufficiently mitigating the impact to St. Louis Park High School need to be evaluated.

Examples of concerns include but are not limited to the following:

- A plan for emergency evacuation of the school should evacuation be necessary when a train is passing
- How will the many classrooms affected by train noise be sound proofed
- How will the students who want to use the new rail bridge to cross Hwy. 7 on their way to school be kept off the bridge.
- How will the added vibration of longer, heavier and more frequent trains be mitigated to the investment the school makes in technology is not lost.
- How will the safety hazards of blind crossings, curves and hundreds of teenagers in close proximity be eliminated
- How will a derailment be prevented so our children's lives are not at risk

None of the mitigation requested by the City of St. Louis Park or the St. Louis Park School Board on behalf of her residents is being considered. This mitigation is not frivolous; it is necessary to maintain the safety, livability and property values for the residents of St. Louis Park.

Name: _____

Barbara Dahl

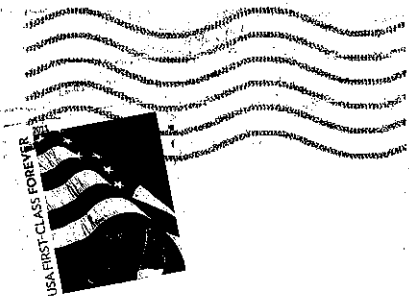


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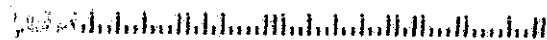
MINNEAPOLIS MN 553

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Hennepin County
Housing, Community Works & Transit
ATTN: Southwest Transitway
701 Fourth Avenue South, Suite 400
Minneapolis, MN 55415

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Minneapolis, MN 55415-1843
Hennepin County
Housing, Community Works & Transit
ATTN: Southwest Transitway
701 Fourth Avenue South, Suite 400
Minneapolis, MN 55415

Minneapolis, MN 55415-1843
Hennepin County
Housing, Community Works & Transit
ATTN: Southwest Transitway
701 Fourth Avenue South, Suite 400
Minneapolis, MN 55415

comment # 99

NOV 19 2012

B.1.

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in response to the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) – Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) published in regard the SWLRT which includes the proposed freight rail re-route in St. Louis Park, Minnesota.

The current SWLRT-DEIS has significant flaws and the planned re-route idea either needs to be dropped completely or a great deal more study must be done. As this action is proposed and described in Chapter 1, Section 1.3.2.3 as rebuilding a little known, lightly used spur line into a main freight rail line, which will initially allow a 788% increase of rail car traffic. What the SWLRT-DEIS does not address, but should, are the real world impacts of this action on the affected area.

Riddled with phantom assumptions, unsubstantiated assertions, and inexplicable omissions, the DEIS is not a serious attempt to consider the effect of the proposed re-route.

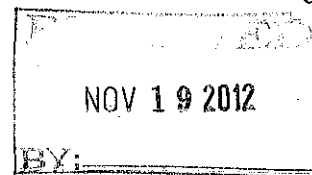
Chapter 1 of the DEIS states that without the re-route the TC&W's only options for moving its freight will be to access the MN&S tracks by use of the notorious switching wye in St. Louis Park, or to transfer cargo from railcars to highway trucks. The unstated assumption behind this statement is that the current route used by the TC&W will be severed. Presenting the either/or assumption for the switching wye or highway trucks creates the illusion of a fait accompli, when in fact the TC&W's current route through the Kenilworth corridor is a viable alternative.

Unsubstantiated assertions include the depiction in the DEIS that the historical character of the Kenilworth corridor (Chapter 3, page 58) would be compromised by its continued use for freight train traffic. The Kenilworth corridor was the home to not just railroad tracks, but an entire railroad yard for over one hundred years, beginning long before the current homes in the area were built.

Inexplicably omitted from the DEIS is how the re-route would be funded (Chapters 5 and 8). The re-route must be considered as part of the SWLRT and even without mitigation construction of the interconnect and upgrading the tracks on the MN&S to handle the heavier traffic is estimated to cost \$125,000,000, money that was not originally included in the projected cost of the SWLRT, but the projected budget for the SWLRT has not been adjusted to recognize the added expense. Also, missing from the cost estimates are the costs for maintaining the interconnect structure after it is built.

None of the mitigation requested by the City of St. Louis Park on behalf of her residents is being considered. This mitigation is not frivolous; it is necessary to maintain the safety, livability and property values for the residents of St. Louis Park.

Name: Barbara Dahl



To whom it may concern:

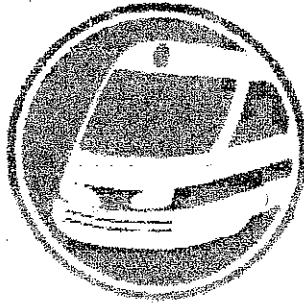
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Besides my general concerns about the SWLRT-DEIS, I am particularly concerned with Chapter 12 (Public and Agency Coordination and Comments). NEPA 1500.2(d) states that the leading agency must "encourage and facilitate public involvement in decisions which affect the quality of the human environment." This regulation was clearly ignored in regards to the potential freight rail re-route issue. Hennepin County did not "encourage and facilitate" public involvement concerning this issue. In fact, Hennepin County refused attempts for public comments and concerns regarding the freight rail issue at all of the outreach meetings listed in table 12.1-1 and all of the community events listed in table 12.1-2. Public comments regarding the freight issue were denied at the 2008 Oct 7, 14, and 23 scoping meetings and the comment period that followed as listed in section 12.1.3.1. Public comments regarding the freight issue were refused at the 2010 May 18, 18 and 20 open houses. Most importantly, public comments regarding the freight issue were denied during the entire LPA section process. This included all of public hearings listed in section 12.1.4.1. In summary, all public comments regarding the freight rail issue were denied at all of SWLRT's major milestones leading up to the DEIS. Worse, the public was not made aware of the significant environmental impacts caused by SWLRT and the potential freight re-route because the freight issue was not discussed at any of the SWLRT meetings leading up to the DEIS. The only opportunity the public was given by Hennepin County to discuss the freight rail re-route was at the PMT meetings discussed in section 12.1.5. However, any discussion of possible alternatives to the re-route (co-location) or the freight re-route's connection with SWLRT was strictly forbidden at these PMT meetings. Lastly, the DEIS fails to mention the 2011 April 17 and 28 freight re-route listening sessions that were held by the city of St. Louis Park. Hundreds of St. Louis Park residents voiced their opposition to the freight re-route. Because those opposed to the re-route have been denied comment during the entire SWLRT planning process leading up to the DEIS, the freight rail issue needs to be dropped or significant more work needs to be done on the alternative studies and public outreach.

Thank You,

Name: Barbara Daly



SOUTHWEST
transitway

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B Daly

MINNEAPOLIS IS MN 554

16 NOV 2012 PM 2 1



Hennepin County

Housing, Community Works & Transit
ATTN: Southwest Transitway

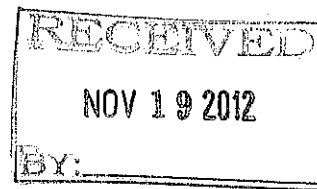
701 Fourth Avenue South, Suite 400

Minneapolis, MN 55415

55415184300



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To whom it may concern:

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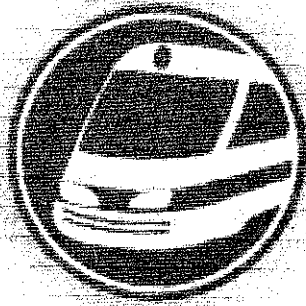
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Thank You,

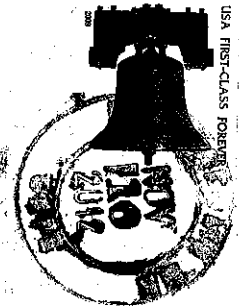
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BERT + Beverly SCHMITT



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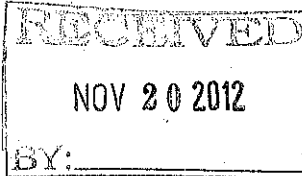
Hennepin County

Housing, Community Works & Transit
ATTN: Southwest Transitway

701 Fourth Avenue South, Suite 400

Minneapolis, MN 55415

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Comment #102

I am writing in response to the *Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLT) Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)*. I whole-heartedly support the SWLT but have grave concerns regarding the proposed freight rail re-route plan in St. Louis Park. In looking at the 1500+ page document, which is supposed represent an unbiased assessment of the environmental, social and economic impacts of this project, there are serious flaws glaringly evident from page one.

The data used to evaluate the proposed freight re-route does not include the studies conducted by the City of St. Louis Park or by Safety In the Park, all of which contraindicate the need to reroute freight traffic but rather show that **co-location of the SWLRT and freight traffic on the Kenilworth would be the CHEAPEST AND SAFEST ALTERNATIVE and LEAST DISRUPTIVE TO THE MOST RESIDENTS**. Many experts have shown that the study completed by Hennepin County and the Met Council was inaccurate (even getting the measurements of the right-of-ways on the current freight line – Kenilworth Corridor wrong!), clearly designed to support the proposed reroute. **The Kenilworth Corridor is designed to handle heavy freight traffic, has the room to do so in co-location with the SWLRT and is the PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE FOR THE RAILWAYS INVOLVED.** (The Kenilworth corridor was the home to not just railroad tracks, but an entire railroad yard for over one hundred years, beginning long before the current homes in the area were built.) **The MN&S line is a spur line, not meant to carry the types of heavy freight that is coming to this area in the future. It cannot carry mile long freight trains safely.**

The long-range planning indicates that **freight traffic along this corridor will increase in the next 10 years 788%**. Currently the MN&S line has an average of 28 cars per day. **The projections show that freight traffic will increase to 253 cars per day. These freight trains will be over one mile long. Many of these will be 120 car coal trains, which will take more than a mile to stop in an emergency.**

The proposed re-route of freight traffic from the Kenilworth Corridor (where the SWLRT will run) to the MN&S line in St. Louis Park makes no sense fiscally, environmentally, nor for the safety of those affected.

FISCAL CONCERNS

- Inexplicably omitted from the DEIS is how the re-route would be funded (Chapters 5 and 8). The re-route must be considered as part of the SWLRT and even without mitigation construction of the interconnect (**an over a mile long overpass**) and upgrading the tracks on the MN&S to handle the heavier traffic is **estimated to cost \$125,000,000 more than the co-location option**, money that was not originally included in the projected cost of the SWLRT, but the projected budget for the SWLRT has not been adjusted to recognize the added expense. Also, missing from the cost estimates are the costs for maintaining the interconnect structure after it is built. The railways have indicated that they are not responsible for building or maintaining these structures. So the question is, who will maintain these? **TAXPAYERS OF HENNEPIN COUNTY**
- The railways need to move their freight in the most efficient and timely fashion. The proposed re-route adds very long interconnect that, as proposed is at a 1% grade (well above the railroad's limit for cost-efficiency), plus the route through MN&S line has

several curves and closely space at-grade crossings which will slow all the trains down in order to maintain any semblance of safety.

- None of the mitigation requested by the City of St. Louis Park on behalf of the residents is being considered in the DEIS. This mitigation is not frivolous; it is necessary to maintain the safety, livability and property values for the residents of St. Louis Park. Mitigation measures are dismissed as not needed, therefore they are not in the budget. Any mitigation costs would fall on the city of St. Louis Park in order to keep its residents safe.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

The DEIS fails to measure other sources of **noise impacts** in its assessment:

- rail to wheel curve squeal from the tight interconnect curve
- the additional noise of the locomotives as it throttles up both the southern interconnect ramp and grade change at the northern connection,
- trains traveling west will need to use their brakes to maintain a slow speed going down grade and through curves
- diminished livability from the introduction of night freight traffic
- the amount of time exposed to the noise impacts of the stationary crossing bells will increase significantly due to increase in train numbers
- The livability of the area as pollutants of all types degrades the surrounding areas.

SAFETY CONCERNS

- There are five schools within a half-mile of the re-route (the St. Louis Park Senior High School building is within 75 feet of the tracks); *there are NO SCHOOLS along the co-location route.*
- Re-routed freight traffic will increase the speed limit from 10 MPH to 25 MPH; **freight trains will take at least a mile to stop in an emergency.**
- The reroute will increase freight traffic on the MN&S by 788%; trains will be longer and heavier than ever before.
- Re-routed, mile-long trains will simultaneously block six crossings several times a day; it will take trains 10 minutes or more to clear an intersection. **Given the curves and grades along the MN&S line, they will not be able to safely travel at 25 mph, which will increase the blocking of crossings to more than 20 minutes – 10 times per day.**
- There are four blind curves within a mile of each other. An expert of train accidents indicated that mile-long trains passing through these curves have a **high probability of derailment** due to the physics of all the parts moving in different directions.
- The safety of thousands of residents in St. Louis Park whose homes are within feet of tracks. The Kenilworth line passes through all areas at grade. The MN&S line in many areas, is high above the houses nearby, posing a serious threat.
- The crossings along the Kenilworth Corridor are all at-grade and are spaced a mile apart and there are no significant grades along the route.
- The safety of thousands of school children and staff at the St. Louis Park High school

which is within feet of the tracks. The tracks are between the high school and McDonald's and the athletic field, posing a serious threat to student safety, even with improved crossing arms. It is unreasonable to expect that there will not be pedestrian accidents in this area.

- The safety of residents, visitors, and emergency personnel who will need to cross these tracks at any one of numerous at-grade auto and pedestrian crossings.
- Quiet zones (the lone mitigation offered in the study): The DEIS fails to describe the real world issues with the quiet zone. The SLP Senior High is has two blind curves at the ends of its campus and has athletic facilities on both sides of the tracks. The operating rail company, TC&W, has stated in a public document that it has safety concerns with a quiet zone due to the proximity of the tracks to schools, residents, and businesses. It will be impossible to design a quiet zone that will be both safe for the area while maintaining access for the adjacent Senior High school and local businesses. The quiet zone is listed as mitigation for noise impacts but it is a mitigation that is not supported by the neighborhoods, school board, or the operating rail companies

I think you get the message. The proposed freight re-route in conjunction with the SWLRT is a very unwise plan. It is costly, unsafe, and **TOTALLY UNNECESSARY**. Please do not rubber stamp the DEIS and send it on its merry way, assuming that concerns of the citizens of St. Louis Park are minor or irrelevant. You can proceed with the SWLRT, just use the most feasible and sensible option, which is co-location of freight traffic along the Kenilworth Corridor.

Name: _____ Duane Googins

Duane Googins

11-9-2012

CERTIFIED MAIL™

Dana Goodins: Girl Scout



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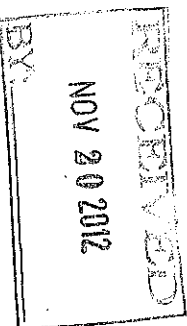


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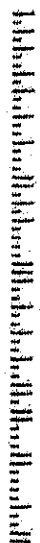
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Hennepin Co. Housing, Community Dev
and Transit
ATTN: Southeast Transit Day
701 Fourth Ave. S., Suite 400
Mpls, MN 55415

55415164300



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NOV 20 2012

Comment #103

BY:

I am writing in response to the *Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)*. I whole-heartedly support the SWLRT but have grave concerns regarding the proposed freight rail re-route plan in St. Louis Park. In looking at the 1500+ page document, which is supposed represent an unbiased assessment of the environmental, social and economic impacts of this project, there are serious flaws glaringly evident from page one.

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FISCAL CONCERNS

- Inexplicably omitted from the DEIS is how the re-route would be funded (Chapters 5 and 8). The re-route must be considered as part of the SWLRT and even without mitigation construction of the interconnect (**an over a mile long overpass**) and upgrading the tracks on the MN&S to handle the heavier traffic is **estimated to cost \$125,000,000 more than the co-location option**, money that was not originally included in the projected cost of the SWLRT, but the projected budget for the SWLRT has not been adjusted to recognize the added expense. Also, missing from the cost estimates are the costs for maintaining the interconnect structure after it is built. The railways have indicated that they are not responsible for building or maintaining these structures. So the question is, who will maintain these? **TAXPAYERS OF HENNEPIN COUNTY**
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several curves and closely space at-grade crossings which will slow all the trains down in order to maintain any semblance of safety.

- None of the mitigation requested by the City of St. Louis Park on behalf of the residents is being considered in the DEIS. This mitigation is not frivolous; it is necessary to maintain the safety, livability and property values for the residents of St. Louis Park. Mitigation measures are dismissed as not needed, therefore they are not in the budget. Any mitigation costs would fall on the city of St. Louis Park in order to keep its residents safe.

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- the amount of time exposed to the noise impacts of the stationary crossing bells will increase significantly due to increase in train numbers
- The livability of the area as pollutants of all types degrades the surrounding areas.

SAFETY CONCERNS

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- Re-routed freight traffic will increase the speed limit from 10 MPH to 25 MPH; **freight trains will take at least a mile to stop in an emergency.**
- The reroute will increase freight traffic on the MN&S by 788%; trains will be longer and heavier than ever before.
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- There are four blind curves within a mile of each other. An expert of train accidents indicated that mile-long trains passing through these curves have a **high probability of derailment** due to the physics of all the parts moving in different directions.
- The safety of thousands of residents in St. Louis Park whose homes are within feet of tracks. The Kenilworth line passes through all areas at grade. The MN&S line in many areas, is high above the houses nearby, posing a serious threat.
- The crossings along the Kenilworth Corridor are all at-grade and are spaced a mile apart and there are no significant grades along the route.
- The safety of thousands of school children and staff at the St. Louis Park High school

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- Quiet zones (the lone mitigation offered in the study): The DEIS fails to describe the real world issues with the quiet zone. The SLP Senior High has two blind curves at the ends of its campus and has athletic facilities on both sides of the tracks. The operating rail company, TC&W, has stated in a public document that it has safety concerns with a quiet zone due to the proximity of the tracks to schools, residents, and businesses. It will be impossible to design a quiet zone that will be both safe for the area while maintaining access for the adjacent Senior High school and local businesses. The quiet zone is listed as mitigation for noise impacts but it is a mitigation that is not supported by the neighborhoods, school board, or the operating rail companies

I think you get the message. The proposed freight re-route in conjunction with the SWLRT is a very unwise plan. It is costly, unsafe, and **TOTALLY UNNECESSARY**. Please do not rubber stamp the DEIS and send it on its merry way, assuming that concerns of the citizens of St. Louis Park are minor or irrelevant. You can proceed with the SWLRT, just use the most feasible and sensible option, which is co-location of freight traffic along the Kenilworth Corridor.



Name: Gail Miller

CERTIFIED MAIL™

Diane Goodius: Girl Scout



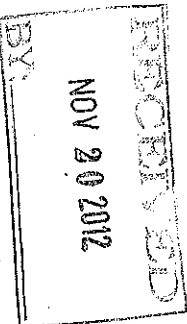
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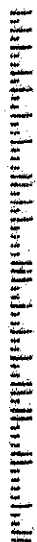
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Hennepin Co. Housing, Community Colls
and Transit
Attn: Southeast Transit
701 Fourth Ave S, Suite 400
Mpls, MN 55415

EE415184300





Joanna STRATE

11/24/2012 11:48 AM

To swcorridor <swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>

cc

bcc

Subject Southwest LRT

I live in Beachside Townhomes, which is 1 block from the proposed Smetana Crossing on line 3A. This crossing is on a steep hill which gets slippery during the winter. There will be many accidents accordingly. Also this crossing is doomed for the people who live in the senior home of St. Therese which is 1 block away. Ambulances speed up & down Smetana daily trying to save lives when minutes matter. Take brings me to DEIS study results where there will be 45 moderate noise impacts and 18 severe. The estimated number of impacted residential units is 196 moderate and **114 SEVERE!** I'll be in the severe category! It's bad enough that LRT is 85% subsidized by the taxpayers and this line will cost **\$12,000,000 YEARLY, but totally disregard lives and displace home owners is beyond my comprehension!** There are alternatives and AT THE VERY LEAST MAKE THIS CROSSING A QUIET ZONE! No train whistles, or post-mounted horns blaring every 10:00 from 5a-1a. Use 4 quadrant gates and a medium barrier only. Imagine you lived here and have some sense of responsibility and common sense!

STOP LRT - CHANGE THE LINE - SAVE LIVES - SAVE HOME OWNERSHIP/VALUES - CREATE A QUIET ZONE!

Joanna Strate

Category 2

There are a total of 46 Moderate Noise Impacts and 18 Severe Noise Impacts to Category 2 land uses in this segment. The estimated number of impacted residential units is 196 Moderate and 114 Severe. Some of the impacts are due to proximity of receptors to the alignment and high speeds of operation. Additional impacts are due to an anticipated at-grade crossing at Smetana Road. Light rail vehicles are anticipated to use both horns and bells at the Smetana Road at-grade crossing due to operating speeds higher than 45 mph.

Category 3

There are no noise impacts to Category 3 land uses in this segment. Table 4.7-5 shows the impacts by noise subsegment.

Table 4.7-5. Potential Noise Impacts in Segment 3 [LRT 3A (LPA), LRT 3C-1 (Nicollet Mall) and LRT 3C-2 (11th/12th Street)] Noise Subsegment		Land Use Category	Moderate Impacts Land (Units)	Severe Impacts Land (Units)
ID	Description			

3-A	Segment 3 between Mitchell Station and Southwest Station	1	-	-
2		2 (146)	1 (91)	
3		-	-	
3-B		Segment 3 between Southwest Station and Eden Prairie Town Center Station	No impacts predicted	
3-C		Segment 3 between Eden Prairie Town Center Station and Golden Triangle Station	No impacts predicted	
3-D		Segment 3 between Golden Triangle Station and City West Station	No impacts predicted	
3-E		Segment 3 between City West Station and Opus Station	No impacts predicted	
3-F	Segment 3 between Opus Station and Shady Oak Station	1	1 (1)	-
2		44 (50)	17 (23)	
3		-	-	
Segment 3 TOTAL		1	1 (1)	-
2		46 (196)	18 (114)	
3		-	-	



"RON COLTMAN"

11/24/2012 05:58 PM

To <swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>

cc

bcc

Subject: SOUTHWEST TRANSITWAY TRAFFIC IMPACT

Hi,

I wanted to make a comment regarding the queuing analysis done for the intersection of Cedar Lake Parkway and the Kenilworth corridor. I think it may have overlooked the fact that traffic already backs up, sometimes taking as long as ten or fifteen minutes to get through the intersection during the evening rush hour, just due to the bicycle traffic on the trail and the volume of vehicle traffic. I have waited in line as far back as the southwest corner of Cedar Lake.

Any additional freight or light rail traffic would cause backups *in addition* to the existing problems. It will most likely be backed up *every day* for extended periods of time, making it a nightmare for those who live here. There are no other options for accessing the homes in the Burnham Road neighborhood.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Ron Coltman



"Sue Basill"

11/25/2012 11:52 AM

To <swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>

cc

bcc

Subject Written comment for DEIS - SW LRT

Comments to DEIS – Southwest Transitway:
Respectfully Submitted November 25, 2012

The Southwest Light Rail Transit (SW LRT) line is being planned with three stations in St. Louis Park (SLP). This project will bring some of the most transformative and positive changes our community has ever seen - jobs, housing development, investment, environmental benefits, and connectivity with downtown Minneapolis/ St. Paul. In any event as a St. Louis Park resident who will be affected by more noise from the Southwest Transitway I am completely in favor of light rail no matter where the freight trains end up being routed.

Watching the discussion on light rail and freight traffic I felt compelled to comment. It is essential we move this project forward. I have found it very interesting that rarely are the benefits to St. Louis Park talked about if freight rail traffic that is already going through our city, still goes through our city, just on a different route. Thus, I have highlighted some of them below.

Re-routing the freight trains away from the tracks in SLP that would cross the SW LRT stations at Wooddale and Beltline, and moving them to the existing MN&S tracks in SLP, would have many benefits to the community, that are rarely heard, if done properly. I will touch on them and current concerns of existing freight rail traffic below.

Trains are most dangerous and loud when they stop, and then start again. Neighbors of five St. Louis Park neighborhoods currently know this first hand. This can last for several hours and is the highest and longest decibel reading for train noise. Also it is very dangerous as it gives children an opportunity to jump on slow moving trains and get up to the high school from the South. Keeping trains moving means that they clear our city quicker, and they don't create the noise and safety concerns that happen during stopping, blocking, switching and starting. The city of SLP has said for nearly fifteen years that removing the "wye" is a priority. The "wye" is the part of the tracks in St. Louis Park behind Cambridge Street where the train tracks are laid out in the shape of the letter "y". This is where freight trains coming in from the west stop, uncouple, re-couple, and repeat that process, sometimes for four hours or longer, until the entire train is put back together and heading out along the MN&S, the north/south track in St. Louis Park. This is all because there is no clean junction connecting the East/West tracks to the North/South tracks in St. Louis Park. In this SW LRT project, if trains are rerouted in St. Louis Park there is an opportunity to build a rail connection that will allow for a clean connection; however this must be conditioned upon removing the "wye" and the noisy blocking and switching from St. Louis Park forever. This type of change will improve the safety in the community and livability. Lastly it also removes four rail street crossings at Louisiana, Oxford, Brunswick, and Alabama. To note these five neighborhoods, who experience the worst kind of train noise today (stopping and starting for hours) will also be receiving new additional noises with SW LRT trains clanging through every 7-10 minutes. Rerouting the trains would at least give them some relief from the unnecessary traffic (inability for freight trains to go straight through based on current infrastructure) they experience today. It is noteworthy that if the wye is removed and a junction is built total freight train traffic time in the St. Louis Park will actually be decreased due to the efficiency of providing a straight through route.

Technology has improved the operations and infrastructure of railroads and if the re-route moves forward and is done prudently, one of the opportunities of improvements is new tracks that have fewer vibrations and noise. Without the re-route, it is unlikely that any improvements will be forthcoming anytime soon, meaning that the existing vibrations and noise, outdated crossings that are of concern to some businesses and neighbors will continue without being improved.

A re-route in St. Louis Park would eliminate freight traffic, traveling next to a heavily used LRT station, busy bike trail and next to dense multifamily housing and SLP neighborhoods. If freight traffic continues on the same route as

it does today it actually will continue to impact more households and people at Wooddale and Beltline neighborhoods, than if rerouted. This is especially true since switching, blocking, stopping and starting significantly increase the amount of time freight rail train traffic spend in our town.

Moreover, Wooddale and 36th is already seeing increased traffic congestion and livability concerns for the residents of the surrounding neighborhoods. The City of SLP's own consultant showed traffic modeling with freight trains at these intersections that puts cars queuing that backs up into Highway 7, not to mention into our neighborhoods. These neighbors will already have to deal with increased traffic going to the LRT station, more people, and more noise from the LRT train bells. Keeping freight traffic to this mix exacerbates an already difficult situation. Similarly, the bike crossing at Beltline Boulevard has seen far too many accidents and several fatalities, not to mention innumerable close calls. The volume of traffic by itself, added to a difficult mid-block crossing, creates safety issues at Beltline where the station will be located. If freight traffic is rerouted two more freight rail crossings can be removed at Wooddale and Beltline.

The city has two fire stations on opposite sides of towns, designed to ensure that no part of the city is ever cut off from first responders; however, current freight rail traffic cuts off first responders from Fire Station One at Wooddale, and emergency traffic going to Methodist at the wye where it crosses Louisiana. A reroute would eliminate this current issue at major crossings.

Lastly we want light rail to move forward as soon as possible, for the beautiful biking system to continue and for freight rail traffic going through St. Louis Park to get through the community as quickly and easily as possible, without excessive stop and start times. Straight through freight traffic on existing tracks is something we should all expect being in town that was named after the Rail Roads. Thus, if a reroute does become necessary understand if done correctly, with the right amount of mitigation, safety improvements, and removal of the wye and unneeded tracks, there are many benefits and fair balance for the entire St. Louis Park community.

I am much looking forward to riding the SW LRT. Please move forward as quickly as possible with this project.

Respectfully,

Sue Basill
St. Louis Park, MN

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in response to the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) – Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) which includes the proposed freight rail re-route in St. Louis Park, Minnesota.

The proposed action of re-routing freight is described in Chapter 1, Section 1.3.2.3. The MN&S Spur tracks are a lightly used spur line within a high density urban, residential setting and directly adjacent to the St Louis Park Senior High. The current freight occurs five days a week, Monday- Friday, during normal business hours. The proposed action of re-routing freight would introduce mainline traffic and the community, residents, and students will be exposed to longer, heavier trains during weekends, evenings, and nighttime. In fact, the re-route will allow a 788% increase in the number of rail car traffic in this area. The increase of freight exposure will directly and negatively impact community health, cohesion of the neighborhoods adjacent to the tracks and educational quality within St Louis Park Schools. In addition, there will be negative impacts to the community at large. These impacts include but are not limited to, increased noise and vibration, increase in diesel fumes from laboring locomotives, loss of mobility when multiple crossing are blocked simultaneously, decreased safety for home owners and students at the High School, decreased access to small businesses and a decrease in tax base caused by lower property values in the affected area.

I oppose the freight rail re-route as outlined in the SWLRT DEIS. I believe it will create an unsafe and unlivable situation for our school children, our local businesses, and our residents.

Thank you,

Name: Francis & Mary Schmit



Paul McCullough

11/26/2012 09:14 AM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us

cc Safety in the Park <safetyinthepark@gmail.com>

bcc

Subject SW Light Rail - proposed Re-route of freight trains.

I am opposed to the re-route of freight trains in St. Louis Park.

The plan to co locate both Freight and the SW light rail is the safest and most cost effective option.

I had the opportunity to review this issue including the excellent presentation by the Safety in the Park Group.

They are to be commended and I fully support their position. Please co- locate the Freight traffic and the light rail on the same line.

Paul m.

Paul McCullough



11/26/2012 09:54 AM

To <swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>

cc

bcc

Subject Reroute!

I am a resident of St. Louis Park. My family and I moved here 17 years ago for the schools and for the small town feel. This freight reroute will make school impossible for the kids in those classes. It noise and vibration is a horrible distraction. The tracks are so close to the school that it is inevitable that there will be accidents as kids in headphones cross from Munchies and McDonald's to school. The trains may interrupt getting to school and block emergency vehicles from accessing school in the event of an emergency.

I love the light rail, but I think collocation will be better. It's being done elsewhere. Also, look to what mayor Ryback said about the impact of air traffic to the middle class neighborhoods... There is a much higher impact to our middle class kids and families with the train reroute.

LISTEN TO US!

Joan Kuenzi



Megan Schaack

11/26/2012 10:43 AM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us

cc

bcc

Subject Why I strongly oppose the SWLRT DEIS

I am writing in response to the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) – Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) which includes the proposed freight rail re-route in St. Louis Park, Minnesota.

The proposed action of re-routing freight is described in Chapter 1, Section 1.3.2.3. The MN&S Spur tracks are a lightly used spur line within a high density urban, residential setting and directly adjacent to the St Louis Park Senior High. The current freight occurs five days a week, Monday- Friday, during normal business hours. The proposed action of re-routing freight would introduce mainline traffic and the community, residents, and students will be exposed to longer, heavier trains during weekends, evenings, and nighttime. In fact, the re-route will allow a 788% increase in the number of rail car traffic in this area. The increase of freight exposure will directly and negatively impact community health, cohesion of the neighborhoods adjacent to the tracks and educational quality within St Louis Park Schools. In addition, there will be negative impacts to the community at large. These impacts include but are not limited to, increased noise and vibration, increase in diesel fumes from laboring locomotives, loss of mobility with when multiple crossing are blocked simultaneously, decreased safety for home owners and students at the High School, decreased access to small businesses and a decrease in tax base caused by lower property values in the affected area. In addition the DEIS does not include a *mitigation plan* for St. Louis Park, which is necessary.

I **oppose** the freight rail re-route as outlined in the SWLRT DEIS. I believe it will create an unsafe and unlivable situation for our school children, our local businesses, and our residents. And as a taxpayer, I do not understand nor support the additional \$123 million dollar expenditure the re-route costs over and above co-location. Safety before bike trails.

Thank you,

Megan Schaack



"Nancy Ritzman"

11/26/2012 10:52 AM

To <swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>

cc <safetyinthepark@gmail.com>

bcc

Subject Freight Reroute in SLP - STOP

To the Hennepin County - Housing, Community Works & Transit Department

This is my first time writing. I am so much in agreement to stop the rerouting of the freight trains through St Louis Park. I am so against this that we are planning on moving from our SLP neighborhood of 21 years. The reason is the At Grade crossings. They are more numerous than shown in most examples. In the Brookside neighborhood (SW of Excelsior Blvd and Hwy 100), the tracks cross all the main traffic arteries out of our heavily populated neighborhoods, and so will make it too difficult to even access our area or get out of it once these trains start. Who said there is 1 mile between at grade crossings? That is an absolute lie. You are ruining the quality of life in St Louis Park – as well as the obvious safety reasons in our neighborhood and in others alongside the tracks – as well as those just trying to navigate the streets via cars.

Sincerely,

Nancy Ritzman



Fritz Vandover

11/26/2012 11:08 AM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us

cc

bcc

Subject Comments regarding Southwest Light Rail and MN&S
Freight rail re-route

To Whom it May Concern:

Please accept this e-mail as my comments about the proposed re-route of the MN&S in St. Louis Park as part of the proposed Southwest Light Rail project.

I should begin by stating two things about me and my wife. The first is that our home is not directly impacted by the proposed re-route of the freight rail. The home where my wife and I and our two children live, which we built in 2010, is just south of Excelsior Boulevard. That portion of the MN&S line is not slated to receive additional freight traffic in the event that the re-route takes place.

However, the east side of our home, which we built in 2010, is a mere 90 feet from the MN&S tracks. Fortunately, the approximately two trains a day that operate do so during the day when we are at work and our children are at school, so we largely forget that the trains even run. But that doesn't mean my wife and I are not sensitive to the potential for increased rail traffic in the future.

The second item I should mention is that we are not strangers to living among major transportation corridors. I grew up in St. Louis, Missouri approximately 500 feet from the BNSF double-track mainline (which carries very long coal trains moving at 25mph) and the eight-lane Interstate 44. Here is the intersection where my childhood home is and where my parents still live: <http://goo.gl/maps/xK5Zd>.

My wife and I also lived in South Minneapolis for 4 1/2 years, right under the path of planes using the north parallel runway and very close to Interstate 35W, as this map shows: <http://goo.gl/maps/XOOsU>. The sound of a plane landing or taking off was a constant backdrop in our daily lives.

So the sounds of major transportation infrastructure are not new to us. We understand that they are part of living in a metropolitan area.

With that information as a backdrop, here are my comments to support my position that the proposed freight rail re-route through St. Louis Park should not be implemented and that the Kenilworth Corridor should be utilized instead:

1. The Cost. Quite simply, the cost to build the infrastructure for the re-route is high. It will take, by some estimates, \$123 million additional dollars to build that infrastructure to raise the trains up the 30 feet to get them over the current tracks running along Highway 7 and make the

other track upgrades to accommodate the 25 mph speed increase.

That additional \$123 million does not include the cost of any mitigation measures in the event of the re-route. There must be mitigation if the re-route takes place. If no mitigation takes place, the negative impacts of the re-route will only be amplified, and they will take a toll on property values (and, thus, property taxes) along the route and the quality of life in the area.

Who will bear the additional costs of the infrastructure? The State of Minnesota? Will that cost be passed on to taxpayers in the county or the entire state? In a time of constant budgetary pressure, it is hardly appropriate to put additional cost pressure on taxpayers when a viable alternative - the Kenilworth Corridor - exists.

There is a secondary cost that no one is factoring, which is the additional fuel cost the railroads will need to pay in order to climb up to that new elevated track. They will pass that on to their customers. Furthermore, burning that fuel will create additional pollution in the area as well as the noise of locomotives straining to make the climb.

2. The Corridor. The current MN&S corridor is not appropriate for longer, faster trains. It was never a true railroad right of way. It is a railroad corridor that was cobbled together from existing vacant lots after the turn of the 20th Century (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MN%26S_Spur). This is why it is so narrow, why it has tight turns that are blind, why it and passes so close to some homes and businesses in the St. Louis Park area, and why there are so many at-grade crossings. It is, in short, a very poor corridor for carrying additional freight.

The Kenilworth Corridor, however, is a much better corridor for carrying freight rail in addition to the proposed SW Light Rail. It is wide, has longer sweeping turns, and has fewer grade crossings.

3. The viability of co-location. There have been suggestions by some proponents of the freight re-route that co-location will blunt the potential for residential housing and commercial development along the new Light Rail line, preventing the expansion of the tax base that would accompany that development. My response to that argument is, "show us the evidence."

The anecdotal evidence in St. Louis Park is that freight rail traffic on the TC&W tracks does not blunt real estate development at all. The TowerLight senior housing development (<http://www.towerlightsenior.com/>) is just finishing up at Wooddale and 36th Street in St. Louis Park, and it is only about 500 feet from the grade crossing at Wooddale Ave (<http://goo.gl/maps/KoHKN>). That grade crossing is quite loud when the locomotives blow their horns. Hoigaard Village is just east of that grade crossing at 36th and Highway 100 and is undergoing a massive expansion (<http://www.hoigaardvillage.com/proto/index.php>). Further down 36th street, the 36 Park luxury apartment building (<http://www.36park.com/>) is a 192 unit apartment building within earshot of the Wooddale and Beltline grade crossings (and whistles) as well as Highway 100.

The progress and apparent success of these developments do not seem to be hindered by the

presence of the very noisy TC&W trains, so how would co-location of light rail and freight rail within that corridor be any different? If anything, the addition of light rail to this corridor is going to further enhance the attractiveness of the location to developers and potential residents, especially if the freight rail noise can be mitigated.

In closing, I urge the Metropolitan Council and the other stakeholders to choose co-location of the freight rail and light rail in the Kenilworth Corridor. The finances make more sense, the characteristics of the corridors favor co-location in the Kenilworth Corridor, and the development of the area has shown that residents already tolerate freight noise.

Thank you, and please do not hesitate to reply if you need me to clarify any of my points.

Sincerely,
William Vandover



Matt Muyres

11/26/2012 05:48 PM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us

cc

bcc

Subject bike trail

BIKE TRAIL question....

On pg 49 of Appendix F of the DEIS...

AT the Woodale street crossing, the diagram shows the existing bike path from the current location being swtitched to just south of the new lrt line.

Why? And what is happening to the old trail then? (in pink)

Matt



11/26/2012 09:40 PM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us
cc safetyinthepark@gmail.com
bcc
Subject stop the reroute

My phone number was not included at the bottom when this was emailed a few minutes ago.

.....

To whom it may concern at Southwest Transitway:

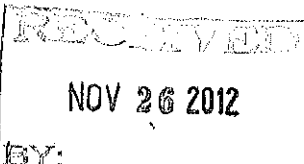
The time and energy it requires to derail a costly, dangerous, wrong initiative boggles the mind. A commercial venture seeks the legal right to damage our living conditions in all the ways that have spelled out countless times, and at an exorbitant cost to boot.

As has been stated countless times, it is a physically dangerous, environmentally unsafe, noisy, traffic-disrupting, property-value diminishing, and tax-decreasing idea. Whose ethics are even considering this absurd proposal?

Even with the right of eminent domain, residents' properties need to be purchased. However, in this case, a commercial venture proposes to simply have its way, free of responsibility.

Do the right thing.

Sincerely,
Ellen Lipschultz



Comment #117

I am writing in response to the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) which includes the proposed freight rail re-route in St. Louis Park, Minnesota.

The proposed action of re-routing freight is described in Chapter 1, Section 1.3.2.3. The MN&S Spur tracks are a lightly used spur line within a high density urban, residential setting and directly adjacent to the St Louis Park Senior High. The current freight occurs five days a week, Monday- Friday, during normal business hours. The proposed action of re-routing freight would introduce mainline traffic and the community, residents, and students will be exposed to longer, heavier trains during weekends, evenings, and nighttime. In detail, the re-route will allow a 788% increase of rail cars traffic. The increase of freight exposure will directly and negatively impact the community health and cohesion of the neighbors adjacent to the tracks. In addition, there will be negative impacts to the school system and educational quality within St Louis Park, including the decreased safety of students at the High School.

Besides my general concerns about the freight rail re-route, the section of the SWLRT DEIS that describes the noise and vibration has flawed methods and conclusions. The vibration and the noise measurements were done with current MN&S traffic. It is important to note that the re-routed freight will be longer, more frequent, and include more locomotives per train.

Vibration, Chapter 4.8.4: The conclusion that vibration will have no significant impacts is incorrect. Vibration impacts will be longer in time and the total amount will increase with the heavier freight and additional locomotives.

Noise, Chapter 4.7.5:

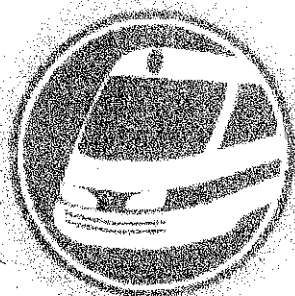
Quiet zones: The DEIS fails to describe the real world issues with the quiet zone. The SLP Senior High is both bookended by two blind curves and has athletic facilities on both sides of the tracks. The operating rail company, TC&W, has stated in a public document that it has safety concerns with a quiet zone due to the proximity of the tracks to schools, residents, and businesses. It will be impossible to design a quiet zone that will be both safe for the area while maintaining access for the adjacent Senior High school and local businesses. The quiet zone is listed as mitigation for noise impacts but it is a mitigation that is not supported by the neighborhoods, school board, or the operating rail companies.

A quiet zone will not eliminate all noise impacts and the assessment fails to measure other sources:

- a. the rail to wheel curve squeal from the tight interconnect curve
- b. the additional noise of the locomotives as it throttles up both the southern interconnect ramp and grade change at the northern connection,
- c. trains traveling west will need to use their brakes to maintain a slow speed going down grade and through curves
- d. diminished livability from the introduction of night freight traffic
- e. the amount of time exposed to the noise impacts of the stationary crossing bells will increase significantly due to increase in train numbers.

The re-routing of freight will negatively impact the safety, livability, and community cohesion of residents, students, and communities. The SWLRT DEIS does not adequately describe the impacts and as such, the freight reroute should not be given any further consideration as an option.

Name: Susan Melbue



SOUTHWEST
transitway

Fold here

melbye



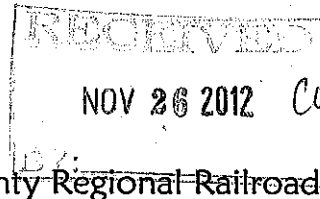
Hennepin County

Housing, Community Works & Transit
ATTN: Southwest Transitway

701 Fourth Avenue South, Suite 400

Minneapolis, MN 55415

Fold here



To the Federal Transit Administration, the Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority and Metropolitan Council:

My name is Sara Hackenmueller and I live at the

The

property will directly be impacted by the light rail, if the line begins at Mitchell Road to extend to the Southwest Transit Station. Chapter 4: Environmental Effects, Page 4-88, ID: 3-A, Description: Segment 3 between Mitchell Station and Southwest Station, Land Use Category: 2, Severe Impacts Land (Units): 1 (91). The Draft Environmental Impact Study does not name Southwest Station Condominiums specifically, but there are 91 Units in one of the buildings of our complex, including my condo which faces Highway 5. Our property was built on a large expanse of wetlands that expanded at least one mile to the northeast and several miles to the southwest. It underwent extensive development to deal with the weak compressible organic soils. Studies and testing must be completed in order to maintain the integrity of the soil and all of the buildings on the property. I am very concerned about the proximity of the light rail to the property; we will face many issues with vibration and noise. Another concern is the increase of traffic that will occur on Technology Drive, especially with the property set between two of the largest stations on the Southwest Corridor route: Mitchell Station and Southwest Transit Station. I do utilize the Southwest Transit Station every day to get to work and I appreciate the goal to move Minnesota forward with alternative forms of public transportation. I thank you for this opportunity to express my concerns and I hope proper studies and testing will be completed on our property and any issues are successfully mitigated.

Sincerely,

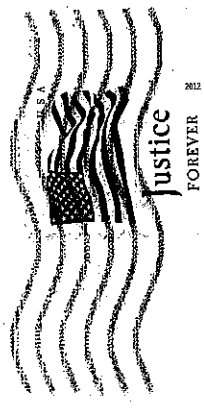
Sara K. Hackenmueller

Sara K. Hackenmueller

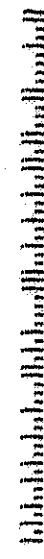
Hennepin County
Housing, Community Works & Transit
ATTN: Southwest Transitway
701 Fourth Avenue South, Suite 400
Minneapolis, MN 55415

MINNEAPOLIS MN 553

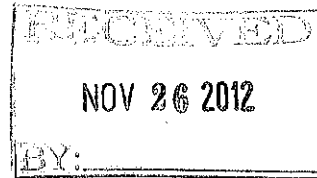
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55415184300



To whom it may concern:



Comment #119

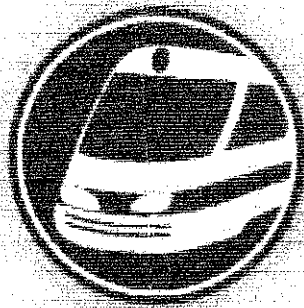
I am writing in response to the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) – Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) published in regard the SWLRT which includes the proposed freight rail re-route in St. Louis Park, Minnesota.

The current SWLRT-DEIS has significant flaws and the planned re-route idea either needs to be dropped completely or a great deal more study must be done.

Besides my general concerns about the SWLRT-DEIS, I am particularly concerned with Chapter 12 (Public and Agency Coordination and Comments). NEPA 1500.2(d) states that the leading agency must "encourage and facilitate public involvement in decisions which affect the quality of the human environment." This regulation was clearly ignored in regards to the potential freight rail re-route issue. Hennepin County did not "encourage and facilitate" public involvement concerning this issue. In fact, Hennepin County refused attempts for public comments and concerns regarding the freight rail issue at all of the outreach meetings listed in table 12.1-1 and all of the community events listed in table 12.1-2. Public comments regarding the freight issue were denied at the 2008 Oct 7, 14, and 23 scoping meetings and the comment period that followed as listed in section 12.1.3.1. Public comments regarding the freight issue were refused at the 2010 May 18, 18 and 20 open houses. Most importantly, public comments regarding the freight issue were denied during the entire LPA section process. This included all of public hearings listed in section 12.1.4.1. In summary, all public comments regarding the freight rail issue were denied at all of SWLRT's major milestones leading up to the DEIS. Worse, the public was not made aware of the significant environmental impacts caused by SWLRT and the potential freight re-route because the freight issue was not discussed at any of the SWLRT meetings leading up to the DEIS. The only opportunity the public was given by Hennepin County to discuss the freight rail re-route was at the PMT meetings discussed in section 12.1.5. However, any discussion of possible alternatives to the re-route (co-location) or the freight re-route's connection with SWLRT was strictly forbidden at these PMT meetings. Lastly, the DEIS fails to mention the 2011 April 17 and 28 freight re-route listening sessions that were held by the city of St. Louis Park. Hundreds of St. Louis Park residents voiced their opposition to the freight re-route. Because those opposed to the re-route have been denied comment during the entire SWLRT planning process leading up to the DEIS, the freight rail issue needs to be dropped or significant more work needs to be done on the alternative studies and public outreach.

Thank You,

Name: Michelle Schaan



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Scharr

MINNEAPOLIS MN 554

23 NOV 2012 PM 6 L

Equality
FOREVER

Hennepin County

Housing, Community Works & Transit
ATTN: Southwest Transitway

701 Fourth Avenue South, Suite 400

Minneapolis, MN 55415

55415184300

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Comment # 120
RESERVED
NOV 26 2012

To whom it may concern:

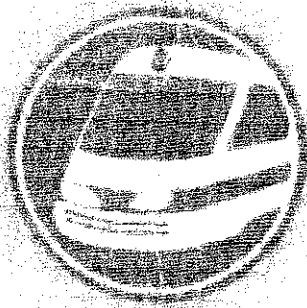
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The current SWLRT-DEIS has significant flaws and the planned re-route idea either needs to be dropped completely or a great deal more study must be done.

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Thank You,

Name: Brandon Schan



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Hennepin County

Housing, Community Works & Transit
ATTN: Southwest Transitway

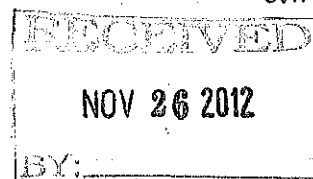
701 Fourth Avenue South, Suite 400

Minneapolis, MN 55415

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To whom it may concern:

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The current SWLRT-DEIS has significant flaws and the planned re-route idea either needs to be dropped completely or a great deal more study must be done.

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Thank You,

Name: ETHEL MELLGREN



SOUTHWEST
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Mrs. Ethel Melbren

MINNEAPOLIS MN 553

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Freedom
FOREVER

Hennepin County

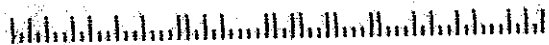
Housing, Community Works & Transit
ATTN: Southwest Transitway

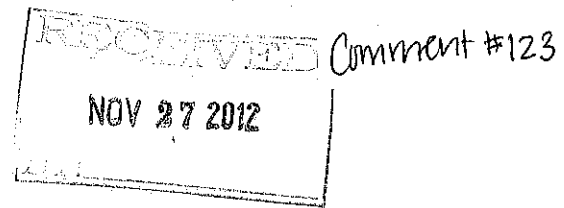
701 Fourth Avenue South, Suite 400

Minneapolis, MN 55415

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55415160093





To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in response to the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) – Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) which includes the proposed freight rail re-route in St. Louis Park, Minnesota.

The proposed action of re-routing freight is described in Chapter 1, Section 1.3.2.3. The MN&S Spur tracks are a lightly used spur line within a high density urban, residential setting and directly adjacent to the St Louis Park Senior High. The current freight occurs five days a week, Monday- Friday, during normal business hours. The proposed action of re-routing freight would introduce mainline traffic and the community, residents, and students will be exposed to longer, heavier trains during weekends, evenings, and nighttime. In fact, the re-route will allow a 788% increase in the number of rail car traffic in this area. The increase of freight exposure will directly and negatively impact community health, cohesion of the neighborhoods adjacent to the tracks and educational quality within St Louis Park Schools. In addition, there will be negative impacts to the community at large. These impacts include but are not limited to, increased noise and vibration, increase in diesel fumes from laboring locomotives, loss of mobility with when multiple crossing are blocked simultaneously, decreased safety for home owners and students at the High School, decreased access to small businesses and a decrease in tax base caused by lower property values in the affected area.

I oppose the freight rail re-route as outlined in the SWLRT DEIS. I believe it will create an unsafe and unlivable situation for our school children, our local businesses, and our residents.

Thank you,

Name: Muriel Barolaci

Handwritten text on the left side of the envelope, mostly illegible due to blurring and orientation. It appears to be a return address or a note.

Handwritten text in the upper left corner, possibly a date or a reference number.

MINNEAPOLIS MN 553

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Henriepier County - Housing Community Works & Transit
Attn: Southwest Transit Bay
701 Fourth Ave. S. Suite 400
Minneapolis, MN 55415

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RECEIVED
NOV 27 2012

Comment # 124

To whom it may concern: (The process to choose the Locally preferred Alternative was flawed)

I am writing in response to the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) – Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) published in regard the SWLRT which includes the proposed freight rail re-route in St. Louis Park, Minnesota.

The current SWLRT-DEIS has significant flaws and the planned re-route idea either needs to be dropped completely or a great deal more study must be done.

Besides my general concerns about the SWLRT-DEIS, I am particularly concerned with Chapter 12 (Public and Agency Coordination and Comments). NEPA 1500.2(d) states that the leading agency must “encourage and facilitate public involvement in decisions which affect the quality of the human environment.” This regulation was clearly ignored in regards to the potential freight rail re-route issue. Hennepin County did not “encourage and facilitate” public involvement concerning this issue. In fact, Hennepin County refused attempts for public comments and concerns regarding the freight rail issue at all of the outreach meetings listed in table 12.1-1 and all of the community events listed in table 12.1-2. Public comments regarding the freight issue were denied at the 2008 Oct 7, 14, and 23 scoping meetings and the comment period that followed as listed in section 12.1.3.1. Public comments regarding the freight issue were refused at the 2010 May 18, 18 and 20 open houses. Most importantly, public comments regarding the freight issue were denied during the entire LPA section process. This included all of public hearings listed in section 12.1.4.1. In summary, all public comments regarding the freight rail issue were denied at all of SWLRT’s major milestones leading up to the DEIS. Worse, the public was not made aware of the significant environmental impacts caused by SWLRT and the potential freight re-route because the freight issue was not discussed at any of the SWLRT meetings leading up to the DEIS. The only opportunity the public was given by Hennepin County to discuss the freight rail re-route was at the PMT meetings discussed in section 12.1.5. However, any discussion of possible alternatives to the re-route (co-location) or the freight re-route’s connection with SWLRT was strictly forbidden at these PMT meetings. Lastly, the DEIS fails to mention the 2011 April 17 and 28 freight re-route listening sessions that were held by the city of St. Louis Park. Hundreds of St. Louis Park residents voiced their opposition to the freight re-route. Because those opposed to the re-route have been denied comment during the entire SWLRT planning process leading up to the DEIS, the freight rail issue needs to be dropped or significant more work needs to be done on the alternative studies and public outreach.

Thank You,

Name:

Roy & Linda Falness



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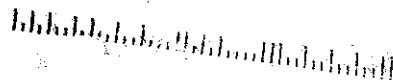
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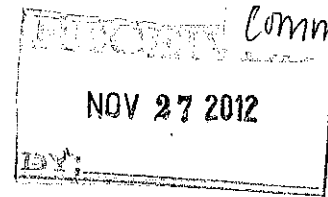


Hennepin County
Housing, Community Works & Transit
ATTN: Southwest Transitway
701 Fourth Avenue South, Suite 400
Minneapolis, MN 55415

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55415184300





Comment #125

To Whom It May Concern: (closing 29th street)

I am writing in response to the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) – Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) published in regard the SWLRT which includes the proposed freight rail re-route in St. Louis Park, Minnesota.

The current SWLRT-DEIS has significant flaws and the planned re-route idea either needs to be dropped completely or a great deal more study must be done. As this action is proposed and described in Chapter 1, Section 1.3.2.3 as rebuilding a little known, lightly-used spur line into a main freight rail line, which will initially allow a 788% increase of rail car traffic. What the SWLRT-DEIS does not address, but should, are the real-world impacts of this action on the affected area.

Besides my general concerns about the SWLRT-DEIS, the portion of the report dealing with the closing of the 29th street crossings (Chapter 3/p. 135) causes me the greatest concern. Residents from the Birchwood neighborhood requested on behalf of the Birchwood neighborhood that the grade crossing at 29th Street stay open. According to page 135 of the DEIS the 29th street crossing is being closed as a mitigation measure. However, the closing of the crossing will not benefit the neighborhood; it will, in fact, jeopardize residents because it will make emergency vehicle access difficult—if not impossible—during winter months due to narrowed streets.

None of the mitigation requested by the City of St. Louis Park on behalf of her residents is being considered. This mitigation is not frivolous; it is necessary to maintain the safety, livability and property values for the residents of St. Louis Park.

Name:

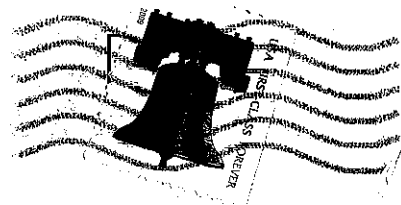
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Hennepin County

Housing, Community Works & Transit

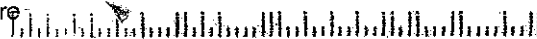
ATTN: Southwest Transitway

701 Fourth Avenue South, Suite 400

Minneapolis, MN 55415

55415184300

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"Bertulli Karen"

11/27/2012 12:27 PM

To "swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us"
<swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>

cc

bcc

Subject Resident comment letter - SWLRT DEIS

Attached please find a comment letter regarding the above mentioned topic.

Sincerely-

Karen Bertulli,
SLP Resident

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in response to the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) – Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) which includes the proposed freight rail re-route in St. Louis Park, Minnesota. I am a St. Louis Park resident and am extremely concerned about the proposed re-route. While I support the SWLRT, I am vehemently opposed to the re-route as currently proposed and am writing to express my concerns. I request that no action be taken until reasonable alternatives are studied and considered.

The proposed action of re-routing freight is described in Chapter 1, Section 1.3.2.3 of the DEIS. The MN&S Spur tracks are a lightly used spur line within a high density urban, residential setting and directly adjacent to the St Louis Park Senior High. The current freight occurs five days a week, Monday- Friday, during normal business hours. The proposed action of re-routing freight would introduce mainline traffic and the community, residents, and students will be exposed to longer, heavier trains during weekends, evenings, and nighttime. In fact, the re-route will allow a 788% increase in the number of rail car traffic in this area. The increase of freight exposure will directly and negatively impact community health, cohesion of the neighborhoods adjacent to the tracks and educational quality within St Louis Park Schools. In addition, there will be negative impacts to the community at large. These impacts include, but are not limited to: increased noise and vibration; increase in diesel fumes from laboring locomotives; loss of mobility when multiple crossing are blocked simultaneously; decreased safety for home owners and students at the High School both due to railway proximity and due to blocked crossings (how current proximity is allowable, and an increase in traffic is even being entertained is beyond comprehension – the potential for derailment near a school is entirely unacceptable); decreased access to small businesses; and a decrease in tax base caused by lower property values in the affected area.

I oppose the freight rail re-route as outlined in the SWLRT DEIS. I believe it will create an unsafe and unlivable situation for our school children, our local businesses, and our residents. St. Louis Park is a wonderful community and a great place to live – please keep it that way.

Thank you,

Name: Karen Bertolli



Damon Farher

To "swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us"
<swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>

cc

11/27/2012 04:12 PM

bcc

Subject Southwest Corridor LRT DEIS Comments

1. Page 3-34, Segment A (see Exhibit 1) stipulates that under the co-location Option(LRT 3A-1) three homes on Burnham Road will be taken ("permanently used"). According the DEIS (Chapter 3, page 3-34, Segment A) those homes are" the first three single family homes north of Cedar Lake Parkway along Burnham Road". As many as 57 town homes north of the West Lake Station are also slated for removal. In addition there will be "disturbance" to parkland on the east side of Cedar Lake to accommodate a realigned Burnham Road where it intersects with Cedar Lake Parkway. I questioned this at the November 13, 2012 open house/public hearing and both the Hennepin County and its engineering representative stated that it was an error that three homes on Burnham Road were to be taken. Rather two homes on Burnham Road (2650 and 2542) and one home on Park Lane (42) were the single family homes being considered for removal under the co-location scenario.

There is no text describing any taking of private property on Burnham Road or Park Lane under Option LRT 3A, which assumes that the freight train would be moved to St Louis Park. Page 11-3 of the DEIS indicates 4 properties, including .81 acres of Cedar Lake Park (I assume that this is the area by the beach north of Cedar Lake Parkway and west of Burnham Road), potentially being "used" permanently along with the historic channel. In that same table under the LRT 3A Option it appears that only one property and the historic channel are to be "used" permanently. Is that one property 2650 Burnham Road or is it the Cedar Lake Park? Neither the project engineer nor Hennepin County Community Works and Transit can confirm the addresses in either option. This needs to be clarified. Which properties are being alluded to in the DEIS for Options LRT 3A-1 and LRT 3A?

2. In October of this year I sent a note to the MPRB and to SW Transit/ Hennepin County Community Works asking for detailed information regarding design options for how the intersection of Cedar Lake Parkway with the Kenilworth Trail might be handled (See Exhibit 3). I also asked for more definitive data on noise and vibration testing specific to that crossing. I was referred to the DEIS which it seems to me does not adequately address these aspects in enough detail to allow for reasonable conclusions. I appreciate that the Final EIS will be less general and have a more detailed scope with greater insight into site specific issues and adverse impacts of the LRT upon affected properties neighborhoods. The Hiawatha LRT corridor can prove a substantive, quantifiable example of what we along the Southwest LRT corridor might expect. As such, any references that addressed real construction and real resultant influences related to social, environmental and transportation impacts along the Hiawatha LRT corridor will be especially helpful for the layman to better understand and anticipate the impacts that will result from both construction and implementation along the SW Kenilworth LRT Corridor.

Quantitatively what is the current noise/decibel level at the intersection of Burnham Road with Cedar Lake Parkway? I assume that decibel readings were taken before, during, and after construction of the Hiawatha Line. For the purpose of comparison what was the noise level - prior to and following completion - inside and outside structures 100 ft and 150 ft from the center line of the Hiawatha LRT at East 32nd and East 53 Streets. Along Hiawatha berms, landscaping (noise cannot be mitigated by plantings) walls and a combination of the two were used. However, that is not possible at crossings. So again, it seems reasonable to ask for real, empirical, historical data to be provided that illustrates noise levels along the

Hiawatha corridor at key intersections. Also there are two elevated bridges, one at East 28th and a second that crosses Hiawatha at Crosstown Hwy 62. Will you please provide the same before and after data for those two locations in case an LRT overpass is the final design solution at the Cedar Lake Parkway crossing?

3. Vibration both during the construction process and after project completion may have serious ramifications on nearby properties. I am obviously concerned about potential structural impacts and cracking to my home at 2650 Burnham Road which is at the corner of Cedar Lake Parkway and Burnham Road, during construction and following project completion. I respectfully request that you provide vibration readings/documentation for all the same locations identified above to ascertain if vibration, along with noise, might be shown from a quantifiable, historical perspective.

4. According to a 4/20/2010 technical memo by HDR Engineers, the LRT train will cross Cedar Lake Parkway every 3.75 minutes under the LRT 3A option. Will you please confirm this? Page 4-8 of the DEIS notes that there will be 198 trips between 7 am and 10 pm, 60 LRT trips between 10 pm and 7 am, 48 LRT trips between 6 am and 9 am and another 48 trips between 3 pm and 6:30 pm for a total of 354 trips per day, with speeds ranging from 20 to 50 miles per hour. Will you please confirm the gates will be down no longer than 30 seconds for each of the 354 trips? What is the design speed of the LRT if it is at grade where it crosses Cedar Lake Parkway? What is the speed if the LRT is elevated above Cedar Lake Parkway. Will you confirm that the bells at crossings will occur no longer than 5 seconds for each of the 354 crossings and will the train horn blast in addition? Please provide answers to each of these questions if the co-location Option(LRT3A1) is selected.

5. Traffic counts for Cedar Lake Parkway and Burnham Road were taken on February 16, 2010, and Chapter 6 notes that vehicular circulation was modeled based upon those counts, and that due to "low pedestrian counts" it was determined that pedestrians were not to be modeled. Would this same conclusion have been reached had the counts been taken almost at any time during the spring, summer or fall seasons when there is increased vehicular flow and much higher pedestrian traffic and bicycle movement along both Cedar Lake Parkway and the Kenilworth Bike Trail – both of which support a significant volume of pedestrians and bicyclists who use these two avenues for recreation and commuting? Have counts been taken that are not illustrated in the Draft EIS that might support a reassessment of the value and importance of the pedestrian and bicyclist.

6. From a safety standpoint there can be no question that an at-grade crossing is the least desirable solution. We regularly observe bikers and pedestrians being hurt, hear screeching tires as motorists slow down and/or speed up, are subjected to bikers' obscenities being hurled at motorists who fail to yield or observe traffic signs. An at grade crossing is unsafe as my wife can allude to after having been sent to the hospital for stitches after a major fall at the intersection of Cedar Lake Parkway with the railroad tracks. If there is a flyover bridge (see Exhibit 2) to accommodate the LRT tracks above Cedar Lake Parkway I am concerned about the impact to wildlife, visual and aesthetic character, materials selection, and resultant noise, and would urge that if that is the design solution selected the engineers be sensitive to and incorporate an historic recall and reference to other bridges in the Cedar, Isles, Dean neighborhoods that are integral to the Historic Grand Rounds and Parkway System. Also, a very significant concern beyond those identified above and in the DEIS is the visual impact of a band of light emanating from the LRT train windows from dusk to dawn as we look out our windows. Light trespass is a very real environmental impact that has not been addressed in the DEIS and it should be. Wouldn't you agree?

I would prefer to have serious consideration given to a tunnel Option for the LRT rather than a bridge or at-grade crossing at Cedar Lake Parkway. New, updated and modified economic

data has just been added to the DEIS. I saw no dollars assigned to a tunnel / LRT underpass solution. It's possible I missed it? Is it available? I recognize that it is more expensive, including the need for to work outside the current ROW, but it is technically possible. After all there are many tunnels around the world that go under rivers and oceans so while hydrology and hydrostatic pressure are a serious consideration, it can be engineered and overcome. Please comment.

Recently the MPRB, its consultant and the citizen advisory committee (CAC) proposed a middle ground solution where the LRT tracks begin to recede into a trench from a point north of the West Lake Street station to a point south the 21 Street Station. The historic Cedar Lake Parkway would arch over the recessed tracks from east of Cedar Lake Park and the Beach to meet grade on the east side of the proposed LRT trough. There are, to be sure, still pedestrian/ bike/auto and LRT conflicts where the tracks, Cedar Lake Parkway, Kenilworth Bike Trail and walking paths converge, but such a solution which would keep the LRT "low" and the Parkway with its more pedestrian aspects "higher" seems like a reasonable compromise that could, with some creative engineering and design, allow all properties to remain, address many traffic and safety concerns, and respond to myriad environmental issues within a fiscally responsible approach. This is the creative type of thinking, conceptualization and approach we would endorse.

Respectfully submitted,

Damon and Becky Farher

and St. Louis Park have focused substantial planning efforts for future development surrounding the corridor, particularly around the proposed station areas.

Segment A

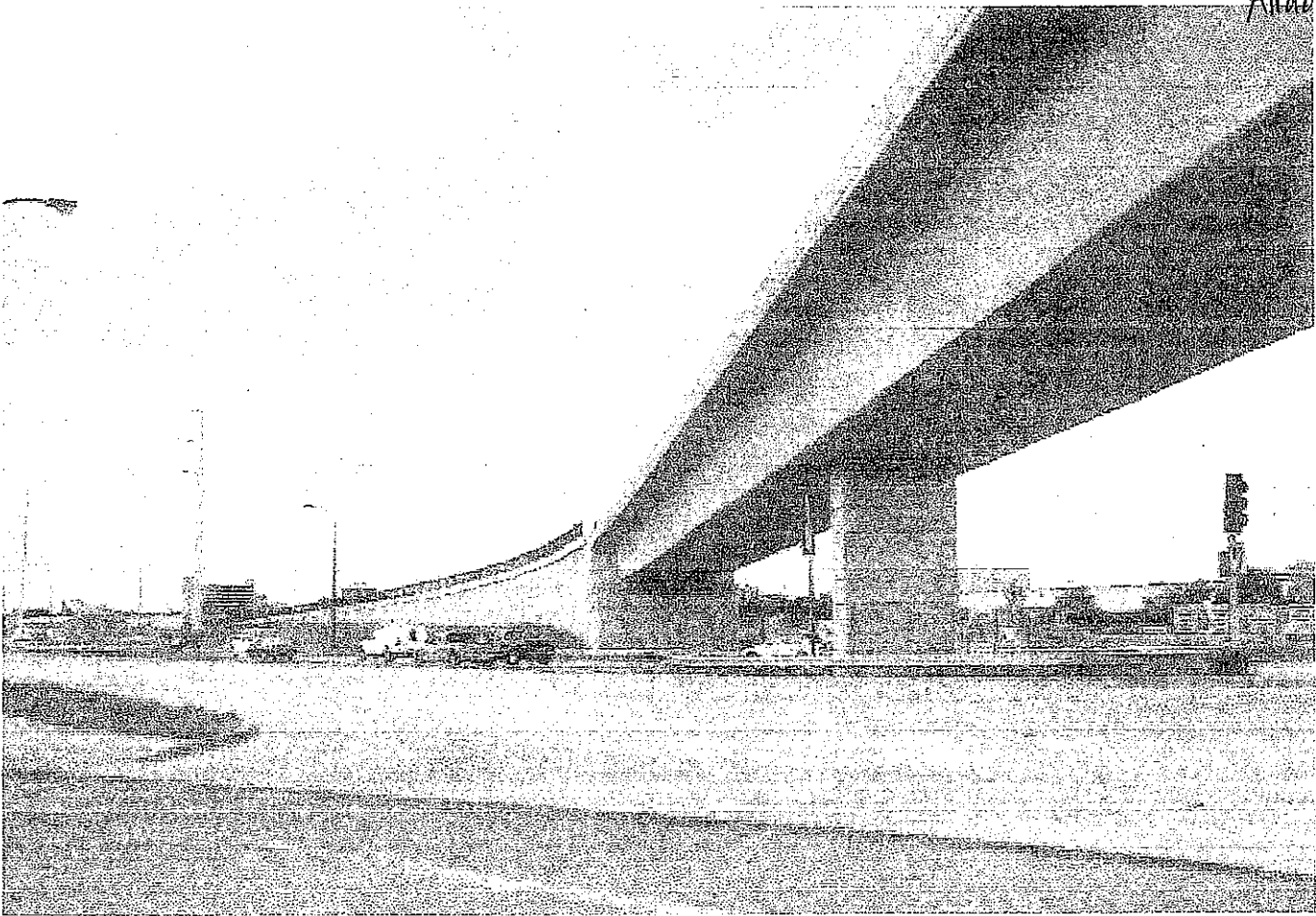
In Minneapolis, land use changes are anticipated along each of the planning segments. Residential land uses surrounding the Segment A alignment are mainly low-to medium-density, single-family detached housing near Cedar Lake and Lake of the Isles. Closer to downtown Minneapolis, land uses change to areas of undeveloped or underutilized land and industrial or industrial-commercial uses closest to the downtown core. The land uses closest to downtown are reflective of the industrial development patterns at the turn of the 20th Century. Implementation of LRT service and stations along the Segment A alignment would likely result in some land use changes surrounding the stations, particularly north of the lakes where tracts of undeveloped land are being considered for development. Implementation of LRT 3A-1 (co-location alternative) in the Kenilworth Corridor could influence a number of land use changes in the area. In order to achieve adequate ROW for placement of the three facilities, up to 57 townhomes would be removed in the area north of the West Lake Station on the west side of the corridor and 3 single-family houses would be removed north of Cedar Lark Parkway along Burnham Road. Additionally, there would be disturbance to Minneapolis Park Board properties on the east side of Cedar Lake in order to create adequate clearance.

Segments C-1 and C-2

In contrast to Segment A, Segment C-1 and Segment C-2 of the LRT 3C-1 (Nicollet Mall) and LRT 3C-2 (11th/12th Street) Build Alternatives would operate through densely populated areas of Minneapolis. Recent development activities along the Midtown Corridor, coupled with the extensive planning efforts of the City of Minneapolis supporting higher population and employment densities suggest that the Uptown and Midtown regions of Minneapolis will continue to be major growth centers of the city. Developers in the Minneapolis region continue to show interest in the Midtown region, and are interested in creating transit- and pedestrian-oriented mixed-use developments.

Freight Rail Relocation

In St. Louis Park one business (industrial use) would be relocated to accommodate new track (elevated track and associated retaining walls) on the south end of the Freight Rail Relocation Segment (MN&S Section) but the area would remain industrial in character. The design of the direct northerly connection from the CP Bass Lake Spur to the CP MN&S Spur was developed to minimize ROW impacts in this area, and hence provide optimal developable land. Land use is not anticipated to change along the primarily residential areas of the north-south section, because improvements are within the existing rail corridor. The proposed track leading into the BNSF Wayzata Subdivision on the north end of the Freight Rail Relocation segment would be constructed on unused rail ROW. While the track would be constructed within that existing ROW, the use of that land would change from inactive to active railroad use. Along the BNSF Section of the Freight Rail Relocation segment, planned improvements are within the existing rail ROW (north side), and no changes in land use are anticipated as a result of the changes to the BNSF Wayzata Subdivision.



Cedar Lake Parkway is a contributing element of the National Register eligible Grand Rounds Historic District. Constructed elements of the project, including the proposed bridge and the guideway, would have a substantial impact on this historic landscape. This issue will be addressed during Section 106 consultation.

The impact of replacing an existing bridge over the channel that connects Cedar Lake and Kenilworth Lagoon could be substantial because of sensitive receptors traveling in the lagoon. The existing bridge and the Kenilworth Lagoon and Channel are historic, located in the eligible Grand Rounds Historic District. The existing bridges are non-contributing elements of the historic district, and are not eligible individually for the National Register. Therefore, the removal of one or both of the bridges would not constitute an adverse visual effect. However, the bridge design, bank treatment, and aesthetics for the new facility and the potential replacement or modification of the existing pedestrian bridge would have a substantial effect on this historic landscape. This issue will be addressed during Section 106 consultation.

A BNSF flyover bridge proposed in the conceptual engineering plans would not have impacts on any sensitive receptors.

The segment travels under Burnham Road Bridge. The segment is located next to an existing freight rail corridor and no visual impacts on the bridge are anticipated.

Visual impacts to sensitive receptors located on the west side of the segment north of I-394 at Bryn Mawr Meadows Park would generally not be substantial because of mature vegetation buffers and an existing freight rail corridor.

Original Message-----

From: Adele.Hall@co.hennepin.mn.us [mailto:Adele.Hall@co.hennepin.mn.us] On Behalf Of SWcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us

Sent: Friday, November 09, 2012 9:46 AM

To:

Cc: Katie.Walker@co.hennepin.mn.us

Subject: Re: Fw: SW corridor

Mr. Farber,

Thanks for your interest in the Southwest DEIS. I encourage you to review the Southwest Transitway DEIS and submit comments on the DEIS during the public comment period, which extends through December 11, 2012. Comments will be forwarded to the Met Council and Federal Transit Administration and will be addressed during the upcoming Preliminary Engineering (PE) and the Final EIS phases.

To address your questions regarding Cedar Lake Parkway, please visit Appendix H Part 1 pages 336-346, which contains a detailed traffic analysis of the intersection you reference. Chapter 3 page 116 shows an example of the structure type that could be used in this location.

I suggest reviewing Chapter 4 sections 7 and 8 regarding noise and vibration. These sections present an analysis of noise and vibration in the area near your residence, and will reference Appendix H, which has additional detail and data.

Thank you,
Adele

Adele Hall

Senior Transit Planner | Hennepin County Department of Housing, Community Works & Transit
701 Fourth Avenue South – Suite 400 | Minneapolis, MN 55415 | MC L608 Office 612.543.1094 |
Mobile 612.250.2004 | adele.hall@co.hennepin.mn.us

cc:Catherine M. Walker/PW/Hennepin
10/25/2012 03:21 PM

To SWcorridor/Hennepin@Hennepin
Senior Administrative Manager
Southwest LRT Community Works Manager
Hennepin County Housing, Community Works & Transit

NEW ADDRESS: 701 Building Fourth Avenue South – Suite 400 | Minneapolis, MN 55415
612.385-5655

Forwarded by Catherine M. Walker/PW/Hennepin on 10/25/2012 03:21 PM -----

From: Damon and Becky Farber

To: "katie.walker@co.hennepin.mn.us" <katie.walker@co.hennepin.mn.us>

Date: 10/15/2012 03:36 PM

Subject: SW corridor

Hello Katie

Can you tell me what your organization's current position / thinking / recommendation is for the intersection of cedar lake parkway with the SW corridor alignment?

1. At grade crossing of parkway and tracks as currently exists?
2. Elevated track and at grade parkway?
3. Below grade track / tunnel with at grade parkway?
4. Other?

What mitigateive measures, if any, are being considered? Are there ANY drawings available that illustrate one or all of the above options?

Also, are there any preliminary or detailed study results relative to noise and vibration at the intersection of Burnham road and cedar lake parkway both during and after construction.

I look forward to your response.

Respectfully,
Damon Farber

(locally referred to as the Kenilworth Corridor), and a short segment of the BNSF-owned Wayzata Subdivision from downtown Minneapolis to the MN&S Subdivision in St. Louis Park (see Figure 2.3-2).

According to data obtained from the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and the MN&S Freight Rail Report (HCRRA, 3/2012), the number of trains currently operating in the study area is as follows:

- MN&S Spur - CP currently operates one local assignment (round trip) daily with a light tonnage train (10 to 30 car trains) on the MN&S Spur to serve local industries
- BNSF Wayzata Subdivision - 8 to 20 trains run per day including TC&W.
- CP Bass Lake Spur and HCRRA Cedar Lake Junction TC&W operations include:
 - One freight train (round trip) with two to four locomotives and 50 cars operating six days per week.
 - One freight train (round trip) with two to four locomotives and 20 cars operating three to four days per week.
 - A unit ethanol train with two locomotives and 80 cars operating once every two weeks.
 - A unit coal train with four locomotives and 120 cars, operating once every two weeks in one direction only.

2-20

Table 2.3-2. MN&S Spur Existing vs. Future Freight Rail Trains

Number of Trains under Existing Conditions	Number of Trains under Proposed Conditions
1 round trip (2 trains) daily with a light tonnage train (10 to 30 car trains)	1 round trip (2 trains) daily with a light tonnage train (10 to 30 car trains)
	1 round trip (2 trains) with 2 to 4 locomotives and 50 cars operating 6 days per week
	1 round trip (2 trains) with 2 to 4 locomotives and 20 cars operating 3 to 4 days per week
	1 ethanol train with 2 locomotives and 80 cars operating once every 2 weeks
	1 coal train with 4 locomotives and 120 cars, operating once every 2 weeks in one direction only

2-27

4.7.3.4 Project Noise Levels

Future project-related noise levels are determined through calculation procedures in the FTA guidance manual. The manual includes general noise emission levels for the noise sources proposed for this project. Measured noise emission levels of similar or identical noise sources are more accurate than the general noise emission levels because they represent project-specific conditions. The project team measured airborne noise from the Hiawatha LRT as the basis for the sound exposure levels used in the analysis. Reference sound exposure levels (SEL) for Southwest Transitway noise sources were determined using field measurements on the Hiawatha line and FTA guidance.

Table 4.7-2 summarizes the sound exposure levels used in Southwest Transitway detailed noise analysis.

Table 4.7-2. Sound Exposure Levels used in the Noise Analysis

Noise Source	Sound Exposure Level (SEL), dBA	Notes
Light Rail Vehicle Pass-by on embedded track	84	This value is based on measurements of light rail vehicle pass-bys on the Hiawatha line. The site included at-grade, embedded track.
Light Rail Vehicle Pass-by on ballast track	81	This value is based on measurements of light rail vehicle pass-bys on the Hiawatha line. The site included at-grade, ballast track.
Stationary Crossing Signal	106	This value is based on measurements of stationary crossing signals on the Hiawatha line.
Light Rail Vehicle Audible Warning Signal (bells)	88	This value is based on measurements of bell operation during light rail vehicle pass-bys on the Hiawatha line.
Light Rail Vehicle Warning Horns	99	This value is based on measurements of high-horn operation during light rail vehicle pass-bys on the Hiawatha line.
Light Rail Vehicle Curve Squeal	114	This value is based on measurements of curve squeal by light rail vehicle pass-bys on the Hiawatha line.

Airborne noise impacts were determined using Detailed Noise Assessment methods from the FTA (May 2006) guidance document. The following operational assumptions were incorporated into the assessment.

- 198 LRT trips during the day (7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.).
- 60 LRT trips during the night (10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m.).
- 16 trips during each peak hour of operation (6:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m., 3:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.).
- Three articulating cars per transit train.
- Speeds range from 20 to 50 miles per hour (mph), and vary in different segments of the project corridor.
- Light Rail Vehicle bells are used for five seconds as vehicles approach grade crossings, crosswalks and station platforms.

Table 4.8-5. OMF Vibration Screening Results

OMF Site	Number of Potential Vibration Impacts			Total Number of Potential Vibration Impacts
	Category 1	Category 2	Category 3	
Eden Prairie 1	0	0	1	1
Eden Prairie 2	0	0	1	1
Eden Prairie 3	0	0	0	0
Minneapolis 4	0	1	0	1

The Minneapolis 4 OMF site has the potential to cause vibration impacts at one adjacent Category 2 residential land use. The vibration screening analysis identified one Category 3 land use (an office building) within the screening area for Eden Prairie 2. The potentially affected office building was not otherwise assessed for vibration from the transit line operation due to its distance from the proposed alignment. For the Eden Prairie 1 site, one Category 3 land use (a church) was identified within the screening area. This church was not otherwise assessed for vibration from the transit line operation due to its distance from the proposed alignment. No vibration-sensitive sites were identified within the screening distance for the Eden Prairie 3 OMF site.

4.8.4 MN&S Freight Rail Relocation

Under build alternatives LRT 1A, LRT 3A (LPA), LRT 3C-1 (Nicollet Mall) and LRT 3C-2 (11th/12th Street) TC&W freight activity, which currently follows portions of the Segment 4 and Segment A alignments would be relocated. TC&W freight rail operations currently operating in the Kenilworth Corridor in St. Louis Park and Minneapolis would be relocated to the CP MN&S Spur and BNSF Wayzata Subdivision in St. Louis Park. The MN&S Freight Rail Report included an assessment of the vibration impacts associated with the freight relocation. Refer to Appendix H for the complete vibration assessment of the MN&S freight rail relocation project.

Future vibration levels associated with the MN&S freight rail relocation were assessed in accordance with FTA methodology. The potential vibration impacts of the MN&S freight rail relocation are primarily related to the increased speeds in the corridor. The assessment started with the reference vibration curve for locomotives and assumed an increase in speed from 10 to 25 mph, and also assumed the improvement from jointed rail to continuously welded rail will lower vibration levels by 5 VdB. The results of the vibration analysis indicate that locomotive vibration levels of 80 VdB (the impact criterion for infrequent events) would be experienced up to 40 feet from the tracks and that rail car vibration levels of 75 VdB (the impact criterion for occasional events) would also be experienced up to 40 feet from the tracks. There is only one building, an apartment above a business at the southern end of the corridor on Library Lane, which is located within 40 feet of the tracks.

4.8.5 Short-Term Construction Effects

Construction activities that may induce noticeable vibration may include blasting, pile driving, concrete demolition, jackhammers, and the use of heavy tracked vehicles such as bulldozers and earth movers. The most serious of these would be blasting and pile driving. While it is anticipated that some pile driving may occur, the likeliness of any blasting is low. The Final EIS will identify which site specific locations



"Munt, Jennifer"
<Jennifer.Munt@metc.state.mn.us>

11/27/2012 10:43 PM

To "

cc "swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us"
<swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>

bcc

Subject FW: SWLRT

Dr. Goldsmith,

Thanks for sharing your statement about the Southwest LRT DEIS. To ensure that your comments are documented in the public record, I have copied Hennepin County. The Metropolitan Council will responded to comments in the Final Environmental Impact Statement. Our decision about freight location will be made in early 2014.

If you'd like to testify in person, one public hearing remains. It's this Thursday, Nov. 29 at 6 p.m. at Eden Prairie City Hall, 8080 Mitchell Road. I will be there to listen.

Jennifer Munt
Metropolitan Council member
District 3

From: Steven Goldsmith
Sent: Sunday, November 18, 2012 8:11 PM
To: Munt, Jennifer
Subject: SWLRT

Jennifer, I have written several times to the press and elsewhere over the past few years about the SWLRT. I live in Kenwood but my own property would not be directly affected by this project, unlike that of others who are heavily involved. However, I believe that Route 3a if implemented as planned will be a disaster for parts of SLP and Minneapolis. The DEIS totally sugarcoats the problems. Jeannette Colby suggested I share the attached piece with you, which I will submit as a personal response. There are many technical avenues on which this can and should be blocked, but the big picture is in the end the most important, and one which I don't feel the community has grasped. And our leaders don't care. So the final EIS is critical. The bottom line is that the 'environmental impact' of the route as currently planned would be to destroy the environment between Lake and Penn as it is now, or at least to irrevocably alter it much for the worse, forever. The attached piece goes into more detail.

Thanks. I hope you are sympathetic to trying to get this done RIGHT if it has to be done!

SRG

--

Steven R. Goldsmith, M.D.

Response to the DEIS

The language used throughout the DEIS as it characterizes the impact of the proposed route for the SWLRT as it passes from Lake St to Penn Ave is very typical of this type of document. Repeatedly it cites 'visual impact', 'noise' and 'vibration' as likely negatives to surrounding properties and park users. While of course technically accurate, such dry, clinical language utterly fails to capture what the true 'environmental impact' of this route would be. Currently the area between Lake St and Penn Ave is a largely quiet residential area filled with homes ranging from the modest to the very high end, combined with a lovely, pastoral strip of parkland running along the east border of Cedar Lake after passing across the Kenilworth Bridge. In the midst of this urban oasis of green runs a critical segment of the Cedar Lake Bike Trail, used by hundreds of commuters and recreational bikers every day for much of the year.

This area has grown up for decades in relative harmony with the remnants of a once busier freight corridor. The current handful of slow diesel trains a day poses little real disturbance to the area since the total time in which train noise and vibration are present is less than an hour a day. This would all change radically if the SWLRT route is implemented as currently planned, either at grade, or worse, at grade with an enormous "fly-over" bridge through part of the area. The implementation of this route as currently envisioned would irrevocably shatter the entire character of this urban greenspace. That is the true "environmental impact" of this plan, and the language in the DEIS simply does not reflect the consequences of what would occur.

The infrastructure for an electrically powered LRT would permanently deface the entire corridor. This is not an industrial area, or one near a major highway or commuter route (like the Hiawatha and Central Corridor LRTs) where such defacement is less intrusive. This is as noted largely greenspace encompassing both a neighborhood and a park. Installing the infrastructure for LRT would permanently ruin the overall aesthetic of the corridor as it now exists. This is not a subjective matter – anyone should be able to visualize how the area would look with electrical overhead lines, support towers, safety barriers etc superimposed on what is there now. Mentioning this obvious and substantial harm should be very much within the purview of an environmental impact statement, but the sanitized language in the current document does not even attempt to capture this first and basic problem with the proposed route.

Running many dozens of trains each day from dawn to midnight through this corridor at grade, or worse, in part over a gigantic and totally site-inappropriate fly-over bridge, would permanently diminish the desirability this area as a place to live. Property values would fall dramatically and tax revenue from the area would drop accordingly. Comparative studies showing that property values go up with LRT are not relevant to this project since LRT is not typically put through highly developed urban parkland and neighborhoods. I doubt if a single comparator exists. So the environmental impact of this line is likely to be economically catastrophic for one of

the loveliest established neighborhoods in the city of Minneapolis. Simply referring to noise and vibration and visual impact is NOT an accurate assessment of the true environmental impact of this proposed route.

Running many dozens of trains a day alongside one of the critical links in the Midtown Greenway is also likely to significantly diminish the use of this vital route for commuting and recreational bicyclists. There is little mention of this in the DEIS but certainly, confronted with the noise and vibration and even danger of frequent fast trains and the presence of ugly electrical infrastructure the Greenway will become a much less attractive place for cyclists. Ironically in the context of a LRT project, many who use it for commuting might elect to drive instead, and those who use the area for recreation will simply go elsewhere. This again is a legitimate concern for a DEIS when analyzing the total impact of a new project on the current usage patterns of the area in question, as well as the more purely aesthetic and environmental factors, but not much is said.

My fundamental reaction to reading the relevant sections of this DEIS is that it grossly understates the total impact of the proposed LRT Route on the area from Lake St. to Penn Ave. Words such as 'ruin', 'destroy', and 'irrevocably degrade' would be far more apt than clinical commentaries on 'likely noise, visual impact and vibration'. In effect the DEIS looks at details, at the trees, if you will -- and utterly misses the forest. Because of this failure the relative benefits of the proposed line seem greater than they really are, or at least could be considered to be. Add in the legitimate concerns of St. Louis Park and those germane to West Lake Street and you have not a minor series of acceptable problems, but rather a potentially catastrophic impact of this route on vital, well-established businesses, schools, homes and parks situated along its final segment as it approaches downtown Minneapolis.

It is noteworthy that Eden Prairie successfully negotiated for a route which did not create the havoc for their community that this one would for ours. There were alternatives to Route 3a and ideally given the TRUE environmental impact of this route to St. Louis Park and Minneapolis planners ought to revisit the choice of route. If this cannot be done, and if this Line is really perceived to be vital to the future of Twin Cities transit, then it ought to be done right, without the devastation the current plan will create.

There is a solution, or at least a partial solution. Trains cannot be at grade from Lake St to Penn Ave, that is the bottom line. And there cannot be a giant railway bridge either, that would just magnify the problems where it would be located and would do nothing for the remaining segment. The trains must be buried, preferably in a tunnel, or at least in a deep trench. This is the only way to at least attempt to preserve the essential aesthetic of the corridor as it currently exists. A final EIS should insist that this be a cardinal feature of a final design, regardless of cost -- and make it clear that the current proposal emphasizing at- or above-grade alternative is unacceptable. SWLRT should serve the needs of the entire area, without significantly and negatively harming a large segment of it. We need the EIS to

support what should be this obvious necessity. And if this goal cannot be met for either financial or logistical reasons, the alternative should not be to move ahead in spite of the problems, but rather to return to first principles and use a different route. This type of project will only happen once, we will live with the consequences for decades, and so the community as a whole deserves a design which truly benefits the entire region, without the degree of compromise inherent in the current proposed design.



Matthew Moran

11/27/2012 11:22 PM

To <swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>

cc

bcc

Subject Promises Are Meant to Be Broken, There is No Way
Someone w/Bigger Political Ambitions is Going to Get by
After This Debacle

I'm the first to admit. I'm late to the game on this. I have seen the orange signs for a number of years. I thought. I'm nine blocks away to the west and five blocks away to the North. Shouldn't be a problem. I occasionally hear a train in the evening. I grew up in the train town of Elmhurst IL. The railyards were just to the east of my suburb and I walked to and from school along the tracks. But the rounding error by the consultant spurred my interest. So I read the Startribune article. Went to the Safety in the Park website and then went on to read the 67 page consultant report followed by watching the youtube presentation by Safety in the Park. As I turned each page and watched each slide go by I became more and more outraged at the suggested re-route. This plain and simple does not make sense. There has to be more going on here. I always wondered why the first light rail ran from downtown to Mall of America and are typically empty cars. There was no resistance to the light rail in its path from strong neighborhoods.

Even if you don't live along the tracks if you are a resident of Saint Louis Park this is going to affect your daily life. It is going to potentially cause you to wait longer to drop your kids off at school, it is going to affect your childrens education in high school as they will have multiple disruptions throughout the day as trains pass, and finally it is going to affect your financials as our property values are going to suffer under this plan.

I understand promises that have been made in the 1990s to areas that are politically well connected. The one thing that an elected official needs to remember. Is that when they were elected and took the oath of office, it was based on the vote of the many. Just as the many chose to vote for that official. In the future the many can decisively change their mind.

I grew up in Chicago. Politics there is ugly. There are many examples of decisions that just don't smell right. The size of the mistake harms the credibility of the consultant. This change in the numbers I would say ranks right up there.

It is time for the people of St Louis Park. Not just the ones within three to four blocks of the tracks to stand up be counted and assert the pressure that they have on the Mayor, the City Council, the School Board and the Met Council. To ensure that the proper decision is made and that the freight rail line and light rail line co-exist in the same corridor.

Last week Edina sent a swift message to the MAC council on the routing of planes. Richfield absolutely got walked on. It was a complete shame. We need to utilize the same playbook of protest.

Thank you,
Matt Moran
Saint Louis Park



Woody Woodward

11/28/2012 06:06 AM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us

cc

bcc

Subject Comment on DEIS

To whom it may concern,

This email is my communication in voicing concern with the St. Louis Park Freight reroute possibility. I am concerned for not only the quality of my own home life (living a block and a half from the tracks) but also the quality of life and safety of a significant number of people who also live next to or near the tracks.

It has come to my attention that there is a viable alternative which is less expensive and safer for all and retains the quality of life that our community currently has. Developing the current location of the freight trains is the much better option.

Know that I support the advancement of the railway, but the St. Louis Park reroute would be the wrong choice for the entire community.

I find it significant that the city council of St. Louis Park has passed resolutions to firmly voice their opposition to the reroute plan. They set out conditions to be met by the DEIS which address plans for mitigation if the reroute plan moves forward. I understand that no plans for mitigation have been set forth.

There is a viable alternative.

Sincerely,

John M. Woodward



11/28/2012 10:31 AM

To <swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>

cc

bcc

Subject LRT

Currently busses from Eden Prairie to downtown take approx 30 minutes. Will the LRT be a faster trip to the downtown area? I don't see how the LRT could pay for itself so wouldn't it be another tax?

Example I have to go to daycare so I need a car to take me from LRT station to daycare. I am essentially making car payments plus my taxes would increase. Can you address my concerns?

Wouldn't this impact the less fortunate people more directly because they have to pay higher taxes and cannot afford a car because they are paying higher taxes?

Charlie Fink



Drew Terwilliner

11/28/2012 10:42 AM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us

cc

bcc

Subject Comments from Local Residents

To Whom it May Concern,

After reading through the DEIS report and reading through the information available to the public about the southwest corridor LRT project we have the following comments:

We would like to begin with the most important comment we have. We believe that the Alternate Route 3C is a significantly better route than that of the 3A routes, and my reasoning goes above and beyond individual specifics listed in the DEIS to address the point that the 3A routes will bring the LRT through a commercial area (uptown, Nicollet area) where the 3A route goes through quiet residential neighborhoods. As you are well aware, siting this line is very difficult and there will be only one shot at it. Let's make sure that what Metropolitan Council puts it in the most sensible area to benefit the entire Metropolitan area. Running the light rail through a commercial area, heavily populated, and specifically zoned for restaurants, retail, shops and other commercial development is a far better use of time, money, and space than of having a large mass transit system run through a quiet neighborhood, such as the one surrounding the Kenilworth Trail.

We really don't know how to communicate this clearer than that, let's do what makes the most sense: have the LRT service busy commercial areas and not quiet neighborhoods. Please consider the Route Option 3C instead of 3A.

It appears from the DEIS that anywhere the LRT track is located, there will be significant noise issues. That being said we urge the Metropolitan Council to further examine and study the expected increases in noise and disturbances that the Southwest Corridor LRT will create. These are people's homes, many of which have their life savings invested in, and creating a LRT which creates additional noise will decrease property. We ask the question, would you like to live 50 feet from a train which makes 250 trips a day? We are urging the Metropolitan Council to further examine and study the effects of noise beyond what has currently been studied.

We also wanted to comment on the increases traffic the LRT will create around the West Lake Station, citing specific examples from the DEIS:

4.6 Air Quality

4.6.1.3 Traffic Analysis page 4-69

Air quality data summarized in Tables 406-2 to Table 4.6-4 indicate compliance with standards for air pollutants.

4.6.4 Long Term Effects page 4-75

The traffic analysis completed for this DEIS indicates that several intersections are anticipated to degrade to LOS D, E, or F as a result of at grade crossings, LRT stations, specifically those with

park and ride, will cause localized increases in traffic along adjacent roadways.

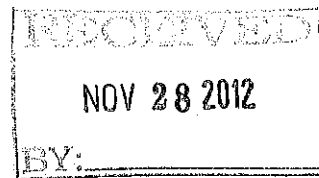
COMMENTS: Studies have not been conducted about future traffic patterns on the already saturated streets surrounding the proposed West Lake Station. Presence of small businesses in the area as well as visitors who have a destination of Calhoun Lake Parkway and other park and trail facilities contribute to current traffic congestion and overload within the half mile radius of the proposed West Lake Street Station. Please refer to the Capstone Project that discusses traffic and trail usage in Minneapolis. Currently, automobile traffic is frequently gridlocked in the area surrounding the proposed West Lake Street Station. It is expected that the West Lake Street Station will attract additional automobile use in this area. The Area is already experiencing extreme traffic congestion and adding additional traffic will only exacerbate the problem.

No degree of degradation of the air quality should occur in this already saturated area as a result of the West Lake Street Station. Request additional study of the current traffic flow and projected traffic flow increase related to LRT use based on studies of the Hiawatha line ridership characteristics for traveling to the LRT stations. These studies should then be used as the basis for planning the design of the West Lake Street Station, if the West Lake Street Station is to be built.

We thank you for your consideration of these comments and hope that the Metropolitan Council makes the correct decision in siting, noise reduction, and traffic reduction.

Regards,

Drew Terwilliger & Other Residents of:



Comment #135

To Whom It May Concern: (DEIS is not Objective)

I am writing in response to the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) - Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) published in regard the SWLRT which includes the proposed freight rail re-route in St. Louis Park, Minnesota.

The current SWLRT-DEIS has significant flaws and the planned re-route idea either needs to be dropped completely or a great deal more study must be done. As this action is proposed and described in Chapter 1, Section 1.3.2.3 as rebuilding a little known, lightly used spur line into a main freight rail line, which will initially allow a 788% increase of rail car traffic. What the SWLRT-DEIS does not address, but should, are the real world impacts of this action on the affected area.

Riddled with phantom assumptions, unsubstantiated assertions, and inexplicable omissions, the DEIS is not a serious attempt to consider the effect of the proposed re-route.

Chapter 1 of the DEIS states that without the re-route the TC&W's only options for moving its freight will be to access the MN&S tracks by use of the notorious switching wye in St. Louis Park, or to transfer cargo from railcars to highway trucks. The unstated assumption behind this statement is that the current route used by the TC&W will be severed. Presenting the either/or assumption for the switching wye or highway trucks creates the illusion of a fait accompli, when in fact the TC&W's current route through the Kenilworth corridor is a viable alternative.

Unsubstantiated assertions include the depiction in the DEIS that the historical character of the Kenilworth corridor (Chapter 3, page 58) would be compromised by its continued use for freight train traffic. The Kenilworth corridor was the home to not just railroad tracks, but an entire railroad yard for over one hundred years, beginning long before the current homes in the area were built.

Inexplicably omitted from the DEIS is how the re-route would be funded (Chapters 5 and 8). The re-route must be considered as part of the SWLRT and even without mitigation construction of the interconnect and upgrading the tracks on the MN&S to handle the heavier traffic is estimated to cost \$125,000,000, money that was not originally included in the projected cost of the SWLRT, but the projected budget for the SWLRT has not been adjusted to recognize the added expense. Also, missing from the cost estimates are the costs for maintaining the interconnect structure after it is built.

None of the mitigation requested by the City of St. Louis Park on behalf of her residents is being considered. This mitigation is not frivolous; it is necessary to maintain the safety, livability and property values for the residents of St. Louis Park.

Name: _____

Mark Perry



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MINNEAPOLIS MN 553

27 NOV 2012 PM 5 L



Hennepin County

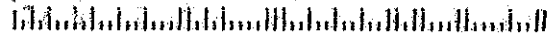
Housing, Community Works & Transit

ATTN: Southwest Transitway

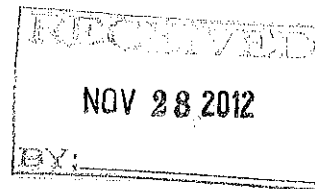
701 Fourth Avenue South, Suite 400

Minneapolis, MN 55415

55415184300



Fold here



Comment # 136

To Whom It May Concern: (safety at the high school)

I am writing in response to the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) - Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) published in regard the SWLRT which includes the proposed freight rail re-route in St. Louis Park, Minnesota.

The current SWLRT-DEIS has significant flaws and the planned re-route idea either needs to be dropped completely or a great deal more study must be done. As this action is proposed and described in Chapter 1, Section 1.3.2.3 as rebuilding a little known, lightly used spur line into a main freight rail line, which will initially allow 788% increase of rail car traffic. What the SWLRT-DEIS does not address, but should, are the real world impacts of this action on the affected area.

Besides my general concerns about the SWLRT-DEIS, the portion of the report dealing with freight rail noise and safety at the High School (Chapters 3, 4, and 9) causes me the greatest concern. The unique noise and safety issues associated with locating main line freight within 35 feet of the High School parking lot and 75 feet from the building are not adequately discussed. When the High School is mentioned the information is dismissive. At no point in the SWLRT -DEIS are the negative impacts the extra freight trains will have on the learning environment and safety of the students at St. Louis Park High School. Before the proposed re-route should even be considered the cost of sufficiently mitigating the impact to St. Louis Park High School need to be evaluated.

Examples of concerns include but are not limited to the following:

- A plan for emergency evacuation of the school should evacuation be necessary when a train is passing
- How will the many classrooms affected by train noise be sound proofed
- How will the students who want to use the new rail bridge to cross Hwy. 7 on their way to school be kept off the bridge.
- How will the added vibration of longer, heavier and more frequent trains be mitigated to the investment the school makes in technology is not lost.
- How will the safety hazards of blind crossings, curves and hundreds of teenagers in close proximity be eliminated
- How will a derailment be prevented so our children's lives are not at risk

None of the mitigation requested by the City of St. Louis Park or the St. Louis Park School Board on behalf of her residents is being considered. This mitigation is not frivolous; it is necessary to maintain the safety, livability and property values for the residents of St. Louis Park.

Name: _____

Mark Perde



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MINNEAPOLIS MN 553

27 NOV 2012 PM 4 L



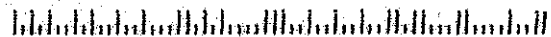
Hennepin County

Housing, Community Works & Transit
ATTN: Southwest Transitway

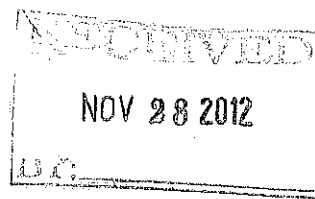
701 Fourth Avenue South, Suite 400

Minneapolis, MN 55415

55415184300



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Comment # 137

To Whom It May Concern: (property values)

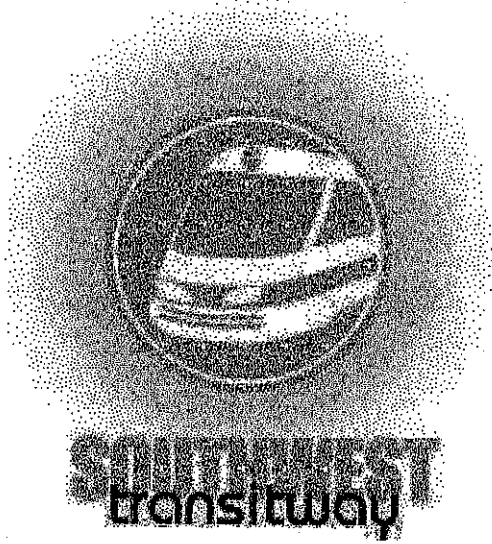
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Besides my general concerns about the SWLRT-DEIS, the portion of the report dealing with loss of property value in the re-route area should be in Chapter 9: Indirect Impacts, but it is not, and this causes me great concern. The SWLRT-DEIS does not mention the impact of re-routed freight trains from a main line freight corridor to a bridge line on property values of the re-route area. Freight rail re-routes are not exclusive to Minnesota and the cost of the re-routes to residents has been documented. For example, according to an article in a 2001 issue of The Appraisal Journal bringing additional freight rail traffic to an area will negatively affect properties 250' feet from the rail tracks by 5-7%. All of the properties along the MN&S are well with in 250'. Based on this article one can conclude that property values along the MN&S will drop more than 7%. Two major questions arise that are not addressed in the SWLRT-DEIS. First, what happens to the tax base of St. Louis Park when the drop in value is realized? Second, how are property owners who lose value because of this government action going to be compensated for their loss? It is unreasonable for the Hennepin County to ask any resident to pay a higher price for the benefits of light rail than others.

Name: _____

Mark Peard



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MINNEAPOLIS MN 553

27 NOV 2012 PM 3 L



Hennepin County

Housing, Community Works & Transit

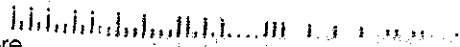
ATTN: Southwest Transitway

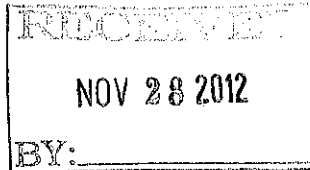
701 Fourth Avenue South, Suite 400

Minneapolis, MN 55415

55415164300

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To Whom It May Concern: (closing 29th street)

I am writing in response to the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) - Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) published in regard the SWLRT which includes the proposed freight rail re-route in St. Louis Park, Minnesota.

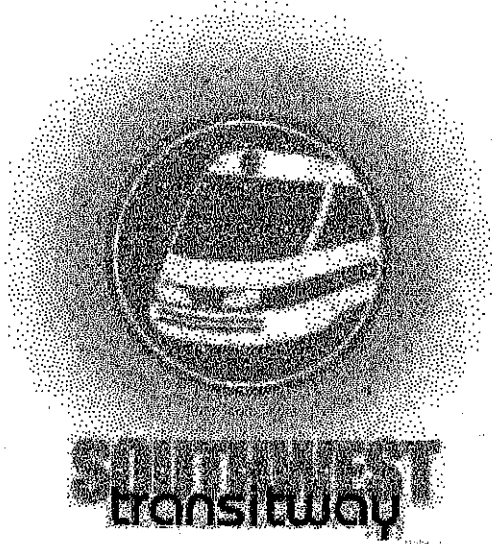
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Besides my general concerns about the SWLRT-DEIS, the portion of the report dealing with the closing of the 29th street crossings (Chapter 3/p. 135) causes me the greatest concern. Residents from the Birchwood neighborhood requested on behalf of the Birchwood neighborhood that the grade crossing at 29th Street stay open. According to page 135 of the DEIS the 29th street crossing is being closed as a mitigation measure. However, the closing of the crossing will not benefit the neighborhood; it will, in fact, jeopardize residents because it will make emergency vehicle access difficult—if not impossible—during winter months due to narrowed streets.

None of the mitigation requested by the City of St. Louis Park on behalf of her residents is being considered. This mitigation is not frivolous; it is necessary to maintain the safety, livability and property values for the residents of St. Louis Park.

Name: _____

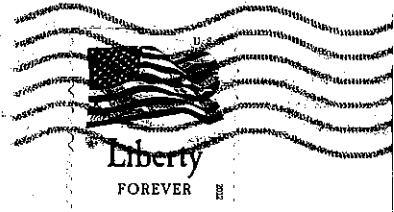
Mark Perdy



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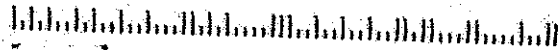
MINNEAPOLIS MN 553

27 NOV 2012 PM 5 L



Hennepin County
Housing, Community Works & Transit
ATTN: Southwest Transitway
701 Fourth Avenue South, Suite 400
Minneapolis, MN 55415

5541531843 C089



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RECEIVED
NOV 28 2012

To Whom It May Concern: (safety at the high school)

I am writing in response to the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) – Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) published in regard the SWLRT which includes the proposed freight rail re-route in St. Louis Park, Minnesota.

The current SWLRT-DEIS has significant flaws and the planned re-route idea either needs to be dropped completely or a great deal more study must be done. As this action is proposed and described in Chapter 1, Section 1.3.2.3 as rebuilding a little known, lightly used spur line into a main freight rail line, which will initially allow 788% increase of rail car traffic. What the SWLRT-DEIS does not address, but should, are the real world impacts of this action on the affected area.

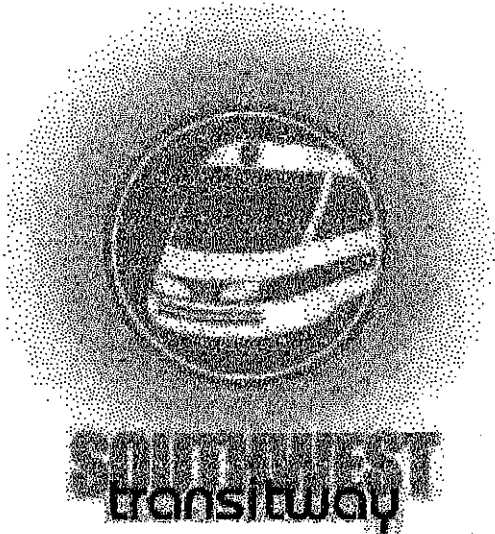
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- A plan for emergency evacuation of the school should evacuation be necessary when a train is passing
- How will the many classrooms affected by train noise be sound proofed
- How will the students who want to use the new rail bridge to cross Hwy. 7 on their way to school be kept off the bridge.
- How will the added vibration of longer, heavier and more frequent trains be mitigated to the investment the school makes in technology is not lost.
- How will the safety hazards of blind crossings, curves and hundreds of teenagers in close proximity be eliminated
- How will a derailment be prevented so our children's lives are not at risk

None of the mitigation requested by the City of St. Louis Park or the St. Louis Park School Board on behalf of her residents is being considered. This mitigation is not frivolous; it is necessary to maintain the safety, livability and property values for the residents of St. Louis Park.

Name: _____

Mark Purdy



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MINNEAPOLIS MN 554

27 NOV 2012 PM 2 L



Hennepin County

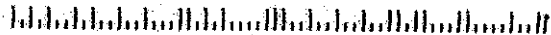
Housing, Community Works & Transit

ATTN: Southwest Transitway

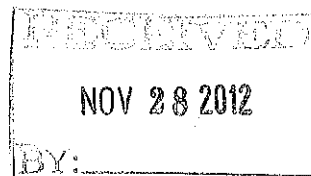
701 Fourth Avenue South, Suite 400

Minneapolis, MN 55415

55415184300



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To Whom It May Concern: (DEIS is not Objective)

I am writing in response to the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) - Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) published in regard the SWLRT which includes the proposed freight rail re-route in St. Louis Park, Minnesota.

The current SWLRT-DEIS has significant flaws and the planned re-route idea either needs to be dropped completely or a great deal more study must be done. As this action is proposed and described in Chapter 1, Section 1.3.2.3 as rebuilding a little known, lightly used spur line into a main freight rail line, which will initially allow a 788% increase of rail car traffic. What the SWLRT-DEIS does not address, but should, are the real world impacts of this action on the affected area.

Riddled with phantom assumptions, unsubstantiated assertions, and inexplicable omissions, the DEIS is not a serious attempt to consider the effect of the proposed re-route.

Chapter 1 of the DEIS states that without the re-route the TC&W's only options for moving its freight will be to access the MN&S tracks by use of the notorious switching wye in St. Louis Park, or to transfer cargo from railcars to highway trucks. The unstated assumption behind this statement is that the current route used by the TC&W will be severed. Presenting the either/or assumption for the switching wye or highway trucks creates the illusion of a fait accompli, when in fact the TC&W's current route through the Kenilworth corridor is a viable alternative.

Unsubstantiated assertions include the depiction in the DEIS that the historical character of the Kenilworth corridor (Chapter 3, page 58) would be compromised by its continued use for freight train traffic. The Kenilworth corridor was the home to not just railroad tracks, but an entire railroad yard for over one hundred years, beginning long before the current homes in the area were built.

Inexplicably omitted from the DEIS is how the re-route would be funded (Chapters 5 and 8). The re-route must be considered as part of the SWLRT and even without mitigation construction of the interconnect and upgrading the tracks on the MN&S to handle the heavier traffic is estimated to cost \$125,000,000, money that was not originally included in the projected cost of the SWLRT, but the projected budget for the SWLRT has not been adjusted to recognize the added expense. Also, missing from the cost estimates are the costs for maintaining the interconnect structure after it is built.

None of the mitigation requested by the City of St. Louis Park on behalf of her residents is being considered. This mitigation is not frivolous; it is necessary to maintain the safety, livability and property values for the residents of St. Louis Park.

Name: Mark Perich



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MINNEAPOLIS MN 553

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Hennepin County

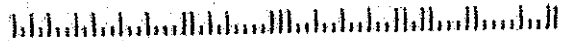
Housing, Community Works & Transit

ATTN: Southwest Transitway

701 Fourth Avenue South, Suite 400

Minneapolis, MN 55415

5541531843 0063



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To whom it may concern: (The process to choose the Locally preferred Alternative was flawed)

I am writing in response to the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) – Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) published in regard the SWLRT which includes the proposed freight rail re-route in St. Louis Park, Minnesota.

The current SWLRT-DEIS has significant flaws and the planned re-route idea either needs to be dropped completely or a great deal more study must be done.

Besides my general concerns about the SWLRT-DEIS, I am particularly concerned with Chapter 12 (Public and Agency Coordination and Comments). NEPA 1500.2(d) states that the leading agency must "encourage and facilitate public involvement in decisions which affect the quality of the human environment." This regulation was clearly ignored in regards to the potential freight rail re-route issue. Hennepin County did not "encourage and facilitate" public involvement concerning this issue. In fact, Hennepin County refused attempts for public comments and concerns regarding the freight rail issue at all of the outreach meetings listed in table 12.1-1 and all of the community events listed in table 12.1-2. Public comments regarding the freight issue were denied at the 2008 Oct 7, 14, and 23 scoping meetings and the comment period that followed as listed in section 12.1.3.1. Public comments regarding the freight issue were refused at the 2010 May 18, 18 and 20 open houses. Most importantly, public comments regarding the freight issue were denied during the entire LPA section process. This included all of public hearings listed in section 12.1.4.1. In summary, all public comments regarding the freight rail issue were denied at all of SWLRT's major milestones leading up to the DEIS. Worse, the public was not made aware of the significant environmental impacts caused by SWLRT and the potential freight re-route because the freight issue was not discussed at any of the SWLRT meetings leading up to the DEIS. The only opportunity the public was given by Hennepin County to discuss the freight rail re-route was at the PMT meetings discussed in section 12.1.5. However, any discussion of possible alternatives to the re-route (co-location) or the freight re-route's connection with SWLRT was strictly forbidden at these PMT meetings. Lastly, the DEIS fails to mention the 2011 April 17 and 28 freight re-route listening sessions that were held by the city of St. Louis Park. Hundreds of St. Louis Park residents voiced their opposition to the freight re-route. Because those opposed to the re-route have been denied comment during the entire SWLRT planning process leading up to the DEIS, the freight rail issue needs to be dropped or significant more work needs to be done on the alternative studies and public outreach.

Thank You,

Name: _____

Mark Perdue



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MINNEAPOLIS MN 553

27 NOV 2012 PM 3 L



Hennepin County

Housing, Community Works & Transit

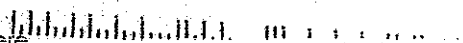
ATTN: Southwest Transitway

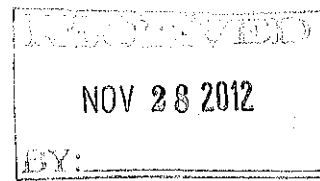
701 Fourth Avenue South, Suite 400

Minneapolis, MN 55415

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Comment # 142

To Whom It May Concern: (property values)

I am writing in response to the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) – Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) published in regard the SWLRT which includes the proposed freight rail re-route in St. Louis Park, Minnesota.

The current SWLRT-DEIS has significant flaws and the planned re-route idea either needs to be dropped completely or a great deal more study must be done. As this action is proposed and described in Chapter 1, Section 1.3.2.3 as rebuilding a little known, lightly used spur line into a main freight rail line, which will initially allow a 788% increase of rail cars traffic. What the SWLRT-DEIS does not address, but should, are the real world impacts of this action on the affected area.

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Name: _____

MART PERDUE



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Hennepin County
Housing, Community Works & Transit
ATTN: Southwest Transitway
701 Fourth Avenue South, Suite 400
Minneapolis, MN 55415

5541531843 0093

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NOV 28 2012

11-26-12

Comment # 143

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in response to the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) – Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) which includes the proposed freight rail re-route in St. Louis Park, Minnesota.

The proposed action of re-routing freight is described in Chapter 1, Section 1.3.2.3. The MN&S Spur tracks are a lightly used spur line within a high density urban, residential setting and directly adjacent to the St Louis Park Senior High. The current freight occurs five days a week, Monday- Friday, during normal business hours. The proposed action of re-routing freight would introduce mainline traffic and the community, residents, and students will be exposed to longer, heavier trains during weekends, evenings, and nighttime. In fact, the re-route will allow a 788% increase in the number of rail car traffic in this area. The increase of freight exposure will directly and negatively impact community health, cohesion of the neighborhoods adjacent to the tracks and educational quality within St Louis Park Schools. In addition, there will be negative impacts to the community at large. These impacts include but are not limited to, increased noise and vibration, increase in diesel fumes from laboring locomotives, loss of mobility with when multiple crossing are blocked simultaneously, decreased safety for home owners and students at the High School, decreased access to small businesses and a decrease in tax base caused by lower property values in the affected area.

I oppose the freight rail re-route as outlined in the SWLRT DEIS. I believe it will create an unsafe and unlivable situation for our school children, our local businesses, and our residents.

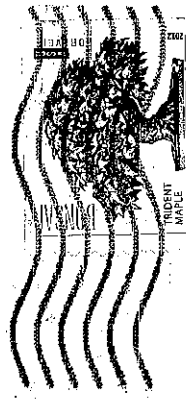
Thank you,

Name:

CHRIS LAVIN

MINNEAPOLIS MN 553

27 NOV 2012 PM 7 L



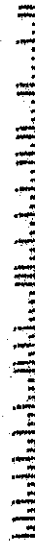
HENNEPIN COUNTY - HOUSING, COMM. WORKS & TRANSIT

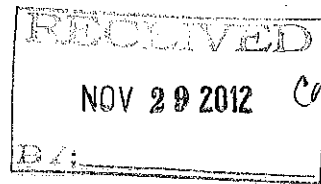
ATTN: SOUTHWEST TRANSITWAY

701 FOURTH AV S. SUITE 400

MPS, MN 55415

ES415184300





Comment #145

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in response to the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) – Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) which includes the proposed freight rail re-route in St. Louis Park, Minnesota.


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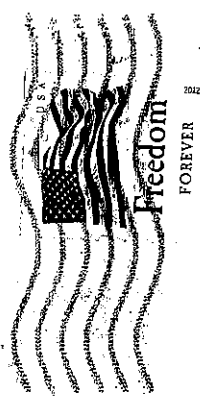
I oppose the freight rail re-route as outlined in the SWLRT DEIS. I believe it will create an unsafe and unlivable situation for our school children, our local businesses, and our residents.

Thank you,

Name: GERALD I. STAMM

PLEASE DON'T WASTE
ANYMORE TIME, ENERGY
& MONEY ON THIS PROJECT.
IT BELONGS ON THE
KENILWORTH LINE.

THANKS!


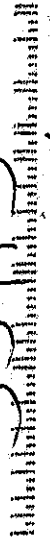


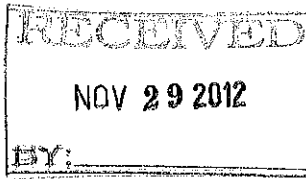
MINNEAPOLIS MN 553

28 NOV 2012 PM 7 L

HENNEPIN CO.-HOUSING COMMUNITY
WORKS & TRANSIT

ATT: SW TRANSITWAY
701 4TH AVE. SO. SUITE 400
MPLS MN. 55415





Comment # 146

Dear Staff;

Here are my comments on the DEIS for the Southwest Rail project. I have examined the first three volumes of the report.

I saw something shocking in volume 3 of the DEIS report. The map LRT Segment alternative 4 sheets 7-9 shows the removal of the trail north of the rail tracks through Saint Louis Park and removal of the trail bridge crossing of Highway 100. I hope this is a mistake. Volume one says nothing about a permanent closure of any trails.

The rail bridges across 494, Highway 212 and Excelsior Boulevard and the tunnel under Flying Cloud are good ideas. If bridges were not built at these locations, there would be unbearable traffic jams with an at grade crossing.

I have some predictions if the LRT project is completed.

Environmentalists will be horrified when they see a 30 to 40 foot swath of the route clearcut. Builders will have to cut down dozens if not hundreds of trees to have enough space for 2 sets of light rail tracks. Some are mature and look as if they are at least 20 to 30 years old. I suspect that the builders may even have to remove some of the trees just planted in the last few year's arbor day plantings. This will disappoint many of those who helped plant them.

Many trail users will be unhappy that the quiet, shady trail has become a barren wasteland due to the tree removal.

Tree removal will also significantly impact the view of homeowners along the route in Eden Prairie.

I am skeptical about the impact of traffic at Beltline and Woodale. The report seems to indicate that traffic would not be a great obstacle. I have seen the traffic in rush hour at Beltline. Trains passing through every ten minutes could create backups to Minnetonka Boulevard. The space between Highway 7 and the railroad tracks is only about 7 car lengths. The report probably assumes that rush hour drivers will drive rationally. This is not always true. An impatient driver going north on Woodale who charges into the 36th Street intersection just as the light turns red could easily back traffic up on 36th Street to Highway 100. Blocking the intersection, he would prevent anyone from moving until the light changed.

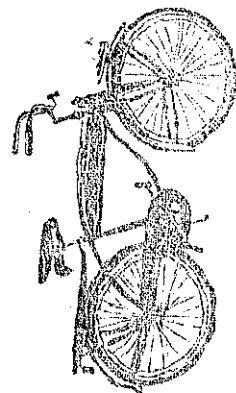
*Sincerely,
Steven Glantz*

STEVEN STEUCK

4

MINNEAPOLIS MN 553

28 NOV 2012 PM 7 1



HENNEPIN COUNTY
HOUSING COMMUNITY WORKS + TRANSIT
ATTN: SOUTHWEST TRANSIT WAY
201 FOURTH AVENUE S STE 400
MINNEAPOLIS MN 55415

55415184300



Rebecca Phelan

11/29/2012 07:52 AM

To "swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us"
<swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>

cc

bcc

Subject RE: Rail re route

This purpose of this e-mail is to comment on the DEIS and on the proposed re route of the freight line through St Louis Park.

I am opposed to the re route for three main reasons:

It is unsafe

It is expensive

It will negatively impact the entire city of St Louis Park.

The DEIS does not adequately consider how this freight re route will impact the community of St Louis Park.

It is clear to me after looking at the proposed line that this re route will be a safety issue for the city of St Louis Park. The proposal intends to re route freight along a line that was never intended to run freight. The route will pass through the SLP High School campus as well as neighborhoods. I have a child that currently attends the HS and another one on the way. I do not want my children or the children of others to have their education impacted by the freight noise and vibration. Now the trains are an irritant at the HS. If the rail traffic increases to the level that is predicted, this will have a major impact on our HS. I also see the safety issue as major, These analogies that trains have been running past the HS for years and nothing has happened, is comparing apples to oranges. The HS will be facing a very different type of rail traffic and much greater safety issues with the proposed re route. I also see the congestion that this new rail line could create to be a major issue for everyone who is trying to move around in St Louis Park.

The current SWLRT-DEIS has significant flaws and the planned re-route idea either needs to be dropped completely or a great deal more study must be done. As this action is proposed and described in Chapter 1, Section 1.3.2.3 as rebuilding a little known, lightly used spur line into a main freight rail line, which will initially allow a 788% increase of rail car traffic. What the SWLRT-DEIS does not address, but should, are the real world impacts of this action on the affected area.

Besides my general concerns about the SWLRT-DEIS, the portion of the report dealing with Noise (3-93 and 94) and Vibration (4-117) causes me the greatest concern. The SWLRT-DEIS underestimates the effects of vibration for because it considers only the immediate traffic increase from the re-route and not additional traffic that is likely to occur. Currently trains travel on the MN&S for approximately two hours a month. If the re-route occurs there will be a minimum of 6 hours and 39 minutes or a 232.5% increase in train related vibration will occur each a month. Currently, all vibration and its negative impacts occur five days a week during regular business hours. In the future vibration will occur on weekends and nights as well as during business hours. Not only will the duration of vibration increase, but also the amount of vibration will increase with longer, heavier trains. The assumption stated in the SWLRT-DEIS that the increase in vibration is insignificant is incorrect. Listed below are reasons why the assumptions are incorrect:

We are also led to believe that creating a quiet zone will end all of the noise issues. This assumption is incorrect for the following reasons:

1. A quiet zone is not a sure thing.
 - a. Implementation could be denied by the school board because the building of a quiet zone will limit access to the Senior High School
 - b. Locomotive engineers are compelled to blow the horn if they perceive a dangerous situation. What kind of responsible person would drive a train through a series of blind crossings, past several schools without blowing the horn?
2. Quiet zones do not limit locomotive noise
 - a. Multiple locomotives will be necessary for pulling a fully loaded train up the .86% grade if the new interconnect.
 - b. Multiple locomotives laboring with long trains will make more noise than the locomotives that currently use the MN&S
3. Trains traveling west will need to use their breaks to maintain a slow speed going down grade and through curves
4. Train wheels on curves squeal; the tighter the curve the greater the squeal.

Bells on crossing arms in a quiet zone will ring the entire time a train is in the crossing

It is a very expensive alternative. The re route will cost the taxpayers at least an additional 25 million dollars. This does not include any mitigation. Mitigation will surely be necessary. The DIES does not allow for any mitigation expenses. This is simply not honest. The cost of this re route is expensive and will get more expensive.

I urge you to go back to the drawing board. Take an honest, objective look at this freight re route issue. Look at in terms of safety, cost and quality of life for the community of St Louis Park.

Sincerely,
Rebecca Phelan



11/29/2012 03:03 PM

To <swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>

cc

bcc

Subject Southwest LRT

For all of the studies and environmental assessments that get done for these kinds of projects, I always wonder why they do not get done with more efficient use of space. Instead there is always an excessive amount of frontage, clearance and overall footprint that, when done, one would comment that it appears wasteful in use of space. The LRT is one of those. If added to a roadway or other existing route, it would damage much less property and not carve another blemish on the landscape.

Secondly, with regard to the rerouting of freight trains to St. Louis Park, why? I understood that the current routing through Kenwood is too close to a bicycle path or some such thing. So what? How much space does a bike path really require? Furthermore, a bike path is pretty flexible when compared to a railroad track and has much less investment. Keep the freight going where it has been.

No matter what, with the deficit costs of this line, will taxpayers have a say in whether this line should even be done? We are already paying \$10-15 million for the Hiawatha Line and I don't know about the Northstar. How much subsidy will the Southwest line require annually? It is a great concept on paper and everyone gets to feel warm and fuzzy to be able to say that we have light rail transit, but does any promoter talk about the cost to operate?

Lastly, please do not screw up local roadways and street navigation by stopping all traffic at intersections near the rail line when the train comes through, like has happened on Hiawatha. That truly is the tail wagging the dog.

I look forward to your replies. Thank you.

Roger Shipp



Rachel Callanan

11/30/2012 01:50 AM

To "swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us"
<swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>

cc

bcc

Subject SWLRT comment

I wholly endorse the SW Light Rail--I cannot wait to hop on the light rail and get all the way to the capitol while reading the paper! (I do lobbying at the State Capitol.) But as an SLP taxpayer and parent of SLP HS students, you cannot ignore the disproportionate impact on SLP. SLP HS is one of the top ranked High Schools in the state. However, with increased freight rail traffic JUST 35 FEET from the high school, I believe it will disproportionately impact SLP compared to other communities that stand to benefit from SWLRT. I advocate for the co-location of the light rail with the existing freight rail running through the Kenilworth area. Yes, homes will be lost with this route, but I feel that for the long term (decades or longer) protecting SLP high school outweighs any individual property rights concerns.

Sincerely,

Rachel Callanan



arthur higinbotham

11/30/2012 11:49 AM

To swcorridor <swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>

cc

bcc

Subject SWLRT DEIS Response

The following is a summary of my comments at the Eden Prairie hearing on the SWLRT DEIS, with one correction as noted:

"Section 8.0, Table 8.1-1 of the SWLRT DEIS shows \$218,044,000 for Guideway and Track Elements and \$122,810,000 Stations, Stops, Terminals Intermodal for LRT 3A. The video released by the SW Transitway entitled, "A Virtual Ride from Eden Prairie to Target Field" illustrates infrastructure that could not possibly be covered by these cost estimates. A better estimate for these costs, based on costs of other projects, including \$5.1 million for the Martin Sabo pedestrian/bicycle flyover at 29th St. and Hiawatha and \$100 million for the bored tunnel underneath the airport from the VA building to the Humphrey terminal, includes:

I494 Flyover (at interchange withwy. 212)	\$50 million
Highway 212 Flyover	\$40 million
Highway 62 Flyover	\$40 million
3000 foot bridge over Minnetonka wetland	\$30 million
Highway 169 Underpass	\$20 million
T&CW Freight Relocation to St. Louis Park	\$120 million
W. Lake St. Station Access Roads	\$30 million
Cedar Lake Parkway LRT/Trail Tunnel	\$10 million
(Note that cut and cover tunnel is substituted for overpass)	
2 New Bridges over Cedar/Isles Channel	\$5 million
Cedar Lake Trail Underpass	\$5 million
LRT Flyover of BNSF Tracks	\$10 million
LRT Flyover of N. 7th St.	\$10 million
Park and Ride Ramps (Eden Prairie/Hopkins/Wooddale/Belt Line)	\$60 million
15 Station Stops (W. Lake and Penn Av. @ \$15 million each)	\$150 million
Track and Webguide (16.4 miles)	\$30 million
Environmental Requirements:	\$100 million
Safety/Security Fences	
Pedestrian/Bicycle Flyovers	
Noise Barriers	
Vegetation Replacement	
Penn Av. Station Vehicle Access	\$10 million
Royalston Station Commercial Offstreet Parking	\$5 million
Excelsior Boulevard Traffic Congestion Relief	\$25 million
Contingency (for Mitigation)	\$75 million
Total	\$825 million

Summary:

Track and Webguide/Station Stops	\$825 million
NOT DEIS Totals	\$341 million

Total Project Cost	\$1881 million
NOT DEIS Totals	\$1275 million

This increase of 50% will affect position of SWLRT on FTA New Starts list. Early completion of PE will costs and should not be delayed any further."

Arthur E. Higinbotham



Marilyn Olson

11/30/2012 11:55 AM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us

cc

bcc

Subject southwest light rail

This email is to inform the EP city council and Hennepin County that I am in favor of the SW light rail system. It provide for less highway congestion plus add employment opportunities to the area.
It is my understanding that the bike trails from EP to Minneapolis will remain and be parallel to the train route in some areas.



arthur higinbotham

11/30/2012 12:01 PM

To swcorridor <swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>

cc

bcc

Subject RE: SWLRT DEIS Response

The project total number should now be \$1,759,200,000 rather than \$1,881,000,000.

Art

From: ahiginbotham@msn.com
 To: swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us
 Subject: SWLRT DEIS Response
 Date: Fri, 30 Nov 2012 17:49:45 +0000

The following is a summary of my comments at the Eden Prairie hearing on the SWLRT DEIS, with one correction as noted:

"Section 8.0, Table 8.1-1 of the SWLRT DEIS shows \$218,044,000 for Guideway and Track Elements and \$122,810,000 Stations, Stops, Terminals Intermodal for LRT 3A. The video released by the SW Transitway entitled, "A Virtual Ride from Eden Prairie to Target Field" illustrates infrastructure that could not possibly be covered by these cost estimates. A better estimate for these costs, based on costs of other projects, including \$5.1 million for the Martin Sabo pedestrian/bicycle flyover at 29th St. and Hiawatha and \$100 million for the bored tunnel underneath the airport from the VA building to the Humphrey terminal, includes:

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Environmental Requirements:	\$100 million
Safety/Security Fences	
Pedestrian/Bicycle Flyovers	
Noise Barriers	
Vegetation Replacement	

Penn Av. Station Vehicle Access	\$10 million
Royalston Station Commercial Offstreet Parking	\$5 million
Excelsior Boulevard Traffic Congestion Relief	\$25 million
Contingency (for Mitigation)	\$75 million

Total	\$825 million
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Summary:

Track and Webguide/Station Stops	\$825 million
NOT DEIS Totals	\$341 million

Total Project Cost	\$1881 million
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This increase of 50% will affect position of SWLRT on FTA New Starts list. Early completion of PE will costs and should not be delayed any further."

Arthur E. Higinbotham

**Butch Johnson**

11/30/2012 02:36 PM

To Katie Walker <swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>

cc

bcc

Subject DESI - LRT Stations

Hi,

I attended a meeting last night to discuss concerns about the LRT and was given this email to respond to.

Here are my thoughts.

Blake LRT Station

I support moving Blake LRT Station & Parking Ramp to south side of tracks. Much better access for cars coming from 169 & Excelsior Blvd. even the cars coming from Hwy 7 may find easier access from Excelsior Blvd. I also think that having the station closer to Super Valu and Cargill would attract riders.

Down Town Station

I really like the potential of this station for Hopkins. Having a 21 century transportation station as the Gate Way to the small town feel of Hopkins is a win win for all. This station is located where MTM Minneapolis Threshing Machine was located at the end of 1800's and eventually merged in to Minneapolis Moline. Lots of history at this location.

Shady Oak LRT Station

With this station actually in Hopkins but close to the Minnetonka border seems to allow Minnetonka an opportunity to encroach on Hopkins city planning. I would encourage cooperation between the cities to create a plan that does not conflict with the Hopkins city plans.

Opus LRT Station

Because the Opus road patterns are difficult to understand I would like to see access and exit routes to and from 169 and Shady Oak simplified. It does appear that one could make Bren a through road going both ways and make access to the LRT station simpler from both Shady Oak & 169 more efficient. Am I seeing a new road created in the graphic for what I don't know?

Please add me to any update emails or if there is a way I could participate further let me know. Thanks for the opportunity to share my thoughts.

Butch

Please include previous correspondence when replying.

Butch Johnson

**nancy eder**

11/30/2012 03:01 PM

To <swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>

cc

bcc

Subject DEIS comments

To Hennepin County and the city of Minneapolis,

As a citizen of Hennepin County, a member of ISAIAH, and a person interested in the redevelopment of the northside, I would like to comment on the DEIS.

I have read the comments submitted by David Green, and agree with them. On a cold spring day, we filled a school bus to tour the Basset Creek Valley and Harrison neighborhood. The plans developed by the Harrison neighborhood association, in cooperation with the city and county, make a lot of sense. One person in our group could not believe that now the city and county are pulling back from supporting these carefully developed plans, mostly so they can place a train storage facility in Basset Creek Valley. Some of our members live in expensive condos overlooking this area, and they are also concerned about the amount of diesel smoke that would waft up to their buildings. Obviously, a train storage facility should not be placed near concentrated housing.

The Harrison neighborhood, and the business area along Glenwood Avenue, clearly needs development. The light rail station at Van White Blvd. would contribute to this. This area was begun to be developed and now the city and county must not drop the ball. The multiple-use housing that replaced older housing near the freeway is working. Now we need to continue to develop that southern part of the North side. We all can see that this area will be alluring to business and housing development once it is clear that the city will not neglect it. It is, as Isaiah's summary points out, the only large area as yet undeveloped near downtown. Development here must consider the present residents and those who cannot afford expensive housing. They need access to all parts of the city for jobs and school.

Please do not shut out the voice of the Harrison neighborhood committee. We need to continue to involve those affected in decisions made about their neighborhoods.

Nancy Eder

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in response to the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) – Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) which includes the proposed freight rail re-route in St. Louis Park, Minnesota.

The proposed action of re-routing freight is described in Chapter 1, Section 1.3.2.3. The MN&S Spur tracks are a lightly used spur line within a high density urban, residential setting and directly adjacent to the St Louis Park Senior High. The current freight occurs five days a week, Monday- Friday, during normal business hours. The proposed action of re-routing freight would introduce mainline traffic and the community, residents, and students will be exposed to longer, heavier trains during weekends, evenings, and nighttime. In fact, the re-route will allow a 788% increase in the number of rail car traffic in this area. The increase of freight exposure will directly and negatively impact community health, cohesion of the neighborhoods adjacent to the tracks and educational quality within St Louis Park Schools. In addition, there will be negative impacts to the community at large. These impacts include but are not limited to, increased noise and vibration, increase in diesel fumes from laboring locomotives, loss of mobility with when multiple crossing are blocked simultaneously, decreased safety for home owners and students at the High School, decreased access to small businesses and a decrease in tax base caused by lower property values in the affected area.

I oppose the freight rail re-route as outlined in the SWLRT DEIS. I believe it will create an unsafe and unlivable situation for our school children, our local businesses, and our residents.

Thank you,

Name: CAROLIN BLES



Butch Johnson

11/30/2012 05:28 PM

To Katie Walker <swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>

cc Billee Kraut

bcc

Subject DESI - Opus LRT Stations

Hi,

I went back and looked at Bren again and I think it would be fairly simple to make Bren a 2 way all the way.

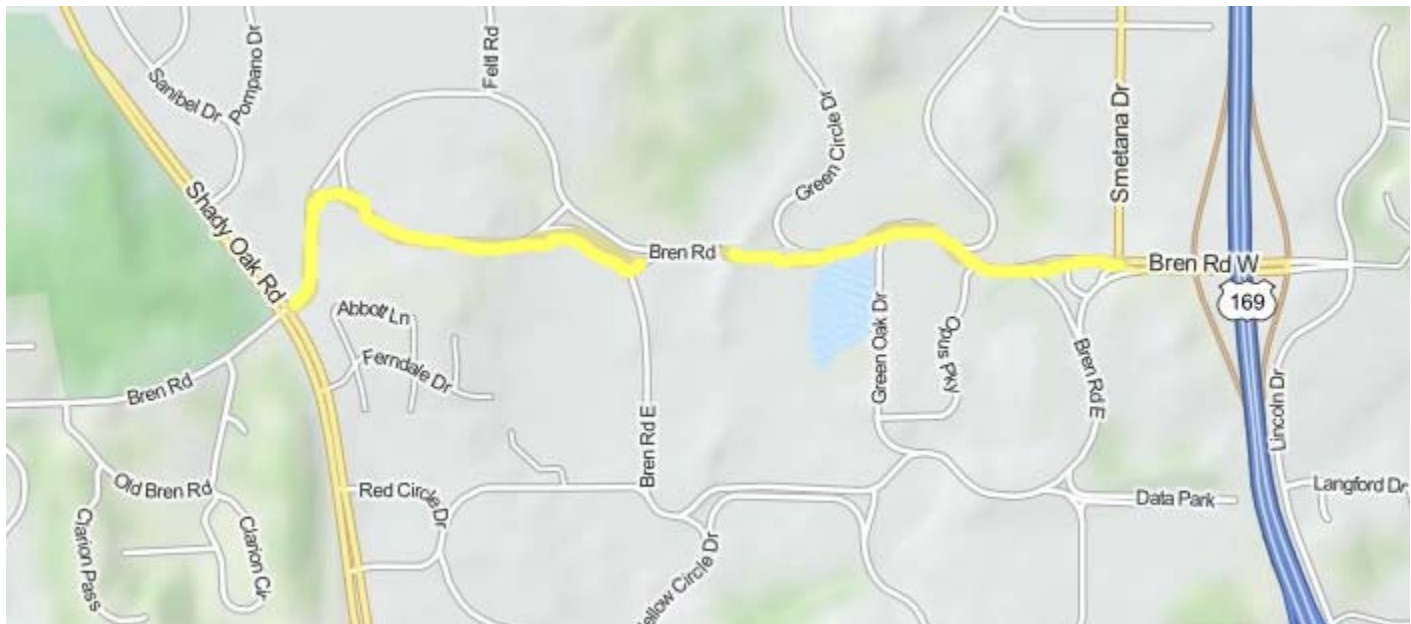
It now starts out on both ends as a 2 way and then goes to ways in the middle. Why not make it simple to drive through Opus and easy access to the LRT station. The yellow line in the graphic below is one way to solve this.

You would need to have a few new intersections.

Smetana is a 2 way all the way.

Thanks again,

Butch



Opus LRT Station

Because the Opus road patterns are difficult to understand I would like to see access and exit routes to and from 169 and Shady Oak simplified. It does appear that one could make Bren a through road going both ways and make access to the LRT station simpler from both Shady Oak & 169 more efficient.

Please add me to any update emails or if there is a way I could participate further let me know.

Thanks for the opportunity to share my thoughts.

Butch

Please include previous correspondence when replying.

Butch Johnson



Eric Ecklund

11/30/2012 11:36 PM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us

cc

bcc

Subject Southwest Corridor Rail Alternative

I am a resident of Bloomington, and close to the terminus of the Southwest Corridor light rail line in Eden Prairie. I am a full supporter of this project, but I've seen the disagreement over what to do with the freight trains in the Kenilworth Corridor. This is not an easy answer, and in any outcome there will be winners and losers. It is very late into the Southwest Corridor project, but I have researched a possible alternative to this issue. I attached a PDF document showing information about light rail trains sharing tracks with freight trains on the Kenilworth Corridor and details about new rolling stock for the Southwest Corridor and other rail projects in Minnesota.

Although it may be too late to reconsider more alternatives for the Southwest Corridor, as a future civil engineer and supporter of public transportation in Minnesota I hope to be involved in many more light rail projects in this region in the coming years.

Thank you.

Southwest Corridor Compromise



By Eric Ecklund

Current Proposal

The Southwest Corridor Transitway is a light rail project from Minneapolis Interchange Station (Target Field) serving the southwest suburbs of St. Louis Park, Hopkins, Minnetonka, and Eden Prairie. The Southwest Corridor would be a continuation of the Central Corridor light rail line from downtown St. Paul. The current proposal are for light rail trains to operate on the Kenilworth Corridor, which is currently used by freight trains and a commuter bicycle trail, between Minneapolis and Hopkins. Freight trains would move operations to the MN&S short-line (Dan Patch Line) through St. Louis Park with a rail bridge connecting the Kenilworth Corridor with the MN&S, and new track built from the MN&S to BNSF Railroad's Wayzata subdivision going towards downtown Minneapolis. Light rail trains would operate alongside freight trains between St. Louis Park and Hopkins and during the approach to downtown Minneapolis. Overall the Southwest Corridor in it's current proposal would cost around \$1.25 billion to build, and would commence operations in 2018.

Some residents of St. Louis Park are concerned about the moving of freight trains to the MN&S, mainly for safety because tracks are within feet of people's backyards and St. Louis Park High School. Tracks on the MN&S have been questioned for their condition, especially if longer and heavier freight trains operate on this line. Canadian Pacific owns the MN&S tracks and is currently making track improvements on this rail line, but there is still a concern for car traffic and foot traffic being backed up at railroad crossings because of longer trains running at slow speeds. The reroute of freight trains will cost around \$23 million. If this issue is not worked out the cost of the Southwest Corridor could rise, and the start-up of operations could be significantly delayed.

Southwest LRT



Shared Track Alternative

One of the alternative studies for the Southwest Corridor was light rail trains sharing tracks with freight trains on the Kenilworth Corridor, which would reduce cost significantly and freight trains could continue to operate on the Kenilworth Corridor. Under Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) regulations, existing and new light rail vehicles would need to be retrofitted for operation on active freight train tracks, which would be costly and may affect operations on the Hiawatha and Central Corridor light rail lines. Light commuter trains, which have similar characteristics to light rail trains, could operate on the corridor currently proposed, and share tracks with freight trains on a small portion of the Kenilworth Corridor. The rest of the Kenilworth Corridor will probably have enough room for freight train operations to be separate from Southwest Corridor operations. The commuter bicycle trail can also stay in the Kenilworth Corridor, except possibly in the Lake of the Isles area, where there is little clearance for trains. During the approach to downtown Minneapolis the Southwest Corridor trains would operate on separate tracks from freight trains. The Southwest Corridor trains would most likely use the Northstar Commuter Rail station platform at Target Field Station for the terminus in Minneapolis. This means that the Southwest Corridor would not be a continuation of the Central Corridor from St. Paul, but in order for this project to be done right some cuts from the original proposal would need to be done.

Currently the Kenilworth Corridor is only used by Twin Cities & Western (TC&W), who operates two freight trains daily six to seven days per week on the Kenilworth Corridor. TC&W also operates five to seven unit trains per month, some running on the Kenilworth Corridor and others don't. Train schedules would be negotiated with TC&W and any other railroad companies operating on the Kenilworth Corridor. The schedule of the light rail trains will probably be affected if tracks are shared on the small portion of the Kenilworth Corridor, but it won't be a major affect.



The Bombardier Flexity Swift, used on the Hiawatha Line.



The red dotted line is the portion of the Kenilworth Corridor where passenger trains would share tracks with freight trains. This portion would be expanded to two lines of track to reduce conflict of train schedules. The Kenilworth Trail may need to be relocated, or property purchased, along this portion to allow clearance for two lines of track.

Rolling Stock

The type of rolling stock that would be considered for the Southwest Corridor to share tracks with freight trains are diesel multiple units (DMUs). An example of a DMU is the Stadler GTW (pictured at right).

While DMUs can operate on tracks used by freight trains, the FRA requires that they operate under temporal separation. Temporal separation is a procedure where freight train operations are suspended while passenger trains are in operation, and vice versa. This procedure would most likely not work for the Southwest Corridor. An exemption by the FRA is the only way this proposal can be further studied. Keep in mind that in some places, including most European countries, DMUs share tracks with freight trains and high speed passenger trains everyday. Likely only a small portion of the Kenilworth Corridor will require freight trains sharing tracks with DMUs. Most, or the rest of the corridor, has enough room for freight train operations and passenger train operations to be separate.

The FRA also requires that station platforms along active freight train tracks be lowered to reduce the risk of railroad crew getting hit by the platform while working on freight trains. This would mean when passengers are boarding they need to climb steps, and people with disabilities will need special assistance to board the train. On light rail lines including the Hiawatha Line, level boarding platforms are used so boarding is easy for all passengers. Along the small portion of the Kenilworth Corridor where DMUs would share tracks with freight trains, the step-boarding process would be required. This will most likely not work for the Southwest Corridor because it requires the train to be at the platform considerably longer for passengers boarding and de-boarding. To solve this issue, gauntlet tracks could be installed on the Kenilworth Corridor so freight trains have clearance when passing stations, and level boarding by Southwest Corridor trains would be allowed.

All passenger trains that share tracks with freight trains are required by the FRA to be increased in buffer strength, so damage to the passenger train is reduced if it collides with a freight train.

Although light commuter trains like the Stadler GTW have similar characteristics to light rail trains, in some situations light commuter trains are not ideal, including steep grades and tight turns. These issues should be taken into consideration if light commuter trains are studied for the Southwest Corridor.



Facts about the Stadler GTW:

The Stadler GTW can be electric powered from overhead lines, or diesel powered, which eliminates the need to install overhead power lines. The Stadler GTW has similar passenger capacity to the light rail trains operated on the Hiawatha Line (the Flexity Swift); the Stadler GTW can seat 108 passengers and standing room for 92 passengers, and the Flexity Swift can seat 66 passengers and standing room for 120 passengers. The Stadler GTW weighs 144000 pounds, where as the Flexity Swift weighs 107000 pounds. The Stadler GTW diesel type can achieve almost the same acceleration as the light rail trains to be used on the Central Corridor (the Siemens S70). Service acceleration of the Siemens S70 is 1.34 meters per second. Service acceleration of the Stadler GTW is 1 meter per second. There are different versions of the Stadler GTW, depending on passenger capacity needs. The data above is for the Stadler GTW 2/6 version, which is used on two commuter rail lines in Texas. In addition to the Southwest Corridor, a DMU rolling stock could be used on other rail projects in the Twin Cities including the Bottineau Corridor.

Conclusion

Many alternatives have been studied for the Kenilworth Corridor, and all of the alternatives have pros and cons, and any alternative chosen will have winners and losers. The MN&S should not be used as a major freight rail corridor. In the past, the MN&S was served by many freight trains daily, but in the present there are too many houses along the MN&S for more freight trains. The Kenilworth Corridor has almost no curves and most housing along the Kenilworth Corridor isn't close to the tracks.

More in depth studies of the Southwest Corridor should be done if the option of track sharing between freight trains and DMUs on the Kenilworth Corridor is chosen.

If track sharing is chosen, the neighborhoods living along the MN&S won't have to worry about more freight trains, the Kenilworth Corridor could be used for the Southwest Corridor and freight trains, and there would be no need to build an expensive rail bridge from the Kenilworth Corridor to the MN&S.

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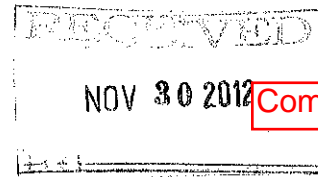
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Comment #164

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in response to the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) – Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) published in regard the SWLRT which includes the proposed freight rail re-route in St. Louis Park, Minnesota.

The current SWLRT-DEIS has significant flaws and the planned re-route idea either needs to be dropped completely or a great deal more study must be done. As this action is proposed and described in Chapter 1, Section 1.3.2.3 as rebuilding a little known, lightly used spur line into a main freight rail line, which will initially allow a 788% increase of rail car traffic. What the SWLRT-DEIS does not address, but should, are the real world impacts of this action on the affected area.

Riddled with phantom assumptions, unsubstantiated assertions, and inexplicable omissions, the DEIS is not a serious attempt to consider the effect of the proposed re-route.

Chapter 1 of the DEIS states that without the re-route the TC&W's only options for moving its freight will be to access the MN&S tracks by use of the notorious switching wye in St. Louis Park, or to transfer cargo from railcars to highway trucks. The unstated assumption behind this statement is that the current route used by the TC&W will be severed. Presenting the either/or assumption for the switching wye or highway trucks creates the illusion of a fait accompli, when in fact the TC&W's current route through the Kenilworth corridor is a viable alternative.

Unsubstantiated assertions include the depiction in the DEIS that the historical character of the Kenilworth corridor (Chapter 3, page 58) would be compromised by its continued use for freight train traffic. The Kenilworth corridor was the home to not just railroad tracks, but an entire railroad yard for over one hundred years, beginning long before the current homes in the area were built.

Inexplicably omitted from the DEIS is how the re-route would be funded (Chapters 5 and 8). The re-route must be considered as part of the SWLRT and even without mitigation construction of the interconnect and upgrading the tracks on the MN&S to handle the heavier traffic is estimated to cost \$125,000,000, money that was not originally included in the projected cost of the SWLRT, but the projected budget for the SWLRT has not been adjusted to recognize the added expense. Also, missing from the cost estimates are the costs for maintaining the interconnect structure after it is built.

None of the mitigation requested by the City of St. Louis Park on behalf of her residents is being considered. This mitigation is not frivolous; it is necessary to maintain the safety, livability and property values for the residents of St. Louis Park.

Name: _____

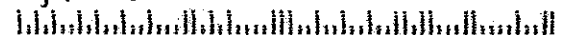
Stephen G. May

MINNEAPOLIS MN 553

29 NOV 2012 PM 6 L



Hennepin County - Housing, Community Works & Transit
Attn: Southwest Transitway
701 Fourth Ave S., Suite 400
Minneapolis, MN 55415
55415184300





Eric Roberts

12/01/2012 11:26 PM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us

cc jmolby@earthlink.net

bcc

Subject Public comment on SW LRT proposal

We're writing a personal note in support of the KIAA response regarding the proposed LRT line.

Most importantly, we strongly share the opinion that:

- 1) The freight lines must be relocated to avoid unnecessary destruction and dislocation of our neighborhood homes and parkland.
- 2) The bridge over Cedar Lake Parkway must be below grade to avoid an unsightly and disconnecting bridge at that crossing
- 3) All efforts possible must be made to mitigate noise.
- 4) We're constant users of the Cedar Lake park, all effort must be made to retain it.

We appreciate your attention to these items.

Eric Roberts
Laura Davis



Damon Farber

12/02/2012 11:49 AM

To "swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us"
<swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>

cc

bcc

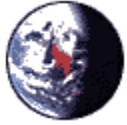
Subject Address Correction / DEIS Comments - Damon Farber

Please note that the addresses in my earlier comments 1-6 (see comment 1 below) indicated that the addresses identified to be affected by co-location were . That is **INCORRECT** and should be adjusted to reflect

1. *Page 3-34, Segment A (see Exhibit 1) stipulates that under the co-location Option (LRT 3A-1) three homes on Burnham Road will be taken ("permanently used"). According to the DEIS (Chapter 3, page 3-34, Segment A) those homes are "the first three single family homes north of Cedar Lake Parkway along Burnham Road". As many as 57 town homes north of the West Lake Station are also slated for removal. In addition there will be "disturbance" to parkland on the east side of Cedar Lake to accommodate a realigned Burnham Road where it intersects with Cedar Lake Parkway. I questioned this at the November 13, 2012 open house/public hearing and both the Hennepin County and its engineering representative stated that it was an error that three homes on Burnham Road were to be taken. Rather two homes on Burnham Road and one home on Park Lane were the single family homes being considered for removal under the co-location scenario.*

There is no text describing any taking of private property on Burnham Road or Park Lane under Option LRT 3A, which assumes that the freight train would be moved to St Louis Park. Page 11-3 of the DEIS indicates 4 properties, including .81 acres of Cedar Lake Park (I assume that this is the area by the beach north of Cedar Lake Parkway and west of Burnham Road), potentially being "used" permanently along with the historic channel. In that same table under the LRT 3A Option it appears that only one property and the historic channel are to be "used" permanently. Is that one property or is it the Cedar Lake Park? Neither the project engineer nor Hennepin County Community Works and Transit can confirm the addresses in either option. This needs to be clarified. Which properties are being alluded to in the DEIS for Options LRT 3A-1 and LRT 3A?

Respectfully,
Damon Farber



Kelly M

12/02/2012 03:18 PM

To <swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>

cc

bcc

Subject Train Re-Route in St. Louis Park

I live next to the track and strongly oppose the re-route. I moved in knowing there was a train track and actually researched heavily the number of trains that use the track before I purchased. Adding more trains will diminish the value of my property and cause a safety concern on Cedar Lake Road.

Kelly Ryman



"Dr. Eric Larsson"

12/02/2012 05:01 PM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us

cc |

bcc

Subject Comment on the Southwest LRT DEIS

We live within two blocks of a proposed stop on the new Southwest LRT line.

We support relocation of the freight rail. We use the adjacent parkland and trails weekly. They are a major route for us to use green transportation to the downtown. We plan to use both bikes and the new LRT to get there.

We oppose the bridge over Cedar Lake Parkway. It is essential that a solution be made, because the current freight rail traffic causes lengthy traffic jams around the Cedar Lake intersection. The more frequent LRT will certainly exacerbate the situation. However, we would prefer a tunnel for the LRT which will have a much lesser environmental impact on the parkland there. See the attached picture of the traffic backup on Burnham Road on April 23, 2009, when the one-way bridge was opened to two-way traffic due to construction. Every train during rush hour tremendously backs up the commuter traffic that uses this route.

We want the noise reduced. The current freight rail is noisy. When the trains run by, we feel our house rattle. By moving the freight rail, we hope this will lessen the overall impact of noise and inconvenience of the LRT. However, the constant noise from the LRT will still vastly outpace the current situation. We hope that the best possible mitigation controls will be put in place.

We demand preservation of the current park trails. The Cedar Lak Park and Kenilworth Trail are jewels in the city of Minneapolis, that greatly increase property values. In addition the transit value of the bike paths also greatly increases property values and reduces overall gas-powered traffic in our area. The current gas-traffic is at its maximum. See the attached picture of the traffic backup on Burnham Road on April 23, 2009, when the one-way bridge was opened to two-way traffic due to construction. Please maintain the accessibility of bike and foot traffic as the LRT is put in place.

We oppose the 21st St. Station, because local traffic is already at its maximum. Key streets in the area are already designated as one-way due to the dramatic amount of commuter traffic that uses these residential streets. See the attached pictures of the traffic backups when a train is going through. Every train during rush hour tremendously backs up the commuter traffic that uses this route.

We oppose a Park-and-Ride at the 21st St. Station, because local traffic is already at its maximum. Key streets in the area are already designated as one-way due to the dramatic amount of commuter traffic that uses these residential streets. See the attached picture of the traffic backup on Burnham Road on April 23, 2009, when the one-way bridge was opened to two-way traffic due to construction. Every train during rush hour tremendously backs up the commuter traffic that uses this route.

We demand vibration mitigation for the LRT. The current freight rail can be heard from our home. When the trains run by, we already feel our house rattle.

Thank you for your attention.

Yours,

Eric Larsson and Kara Riedesel

[.net](#)





12/02/2012 06:22 PM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us

cc

bcc

Subject Freight and Light Rail Co-Location

There should be no reroute of freight rail through St. Louis Park.
The existing Kenilworth line has plenty of room for co-locating freight and light rail.

It's straighter, flatter, safer and MUCH less costly for taxpayers if freight and light rail co-locate.

Reroute bicycles and trail users. The few people that use this trail can adjust to a reroute, no problem. Minimal impact on a few people but If rail is rerouted... tremendous impact at all levels.

Common sense, fiscal responsibility must prevail.

If assessed fairly and reported in truth with full disclosures to the public the answer will be Kenilworth light and freight rail co-location.

Sincerely,

Mark Sawinski



herbsthelene

>

12/03/2012 08:46 PM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us

cc

bcc

Subject Comments to Southwest Light Rail Transit - Draft
Environmental Impact Statement

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in response to the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) – Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) published in regard to the SWLRT which includes the proposed freight rail re-route in St. Louis Park, Minnesota.

The current SWLRT-DEIS has significant flaws and the planned re-route idea either needs to be dropped completely or a great deal more study must be done.

As this action is proposed and described in Chapter 1, Section 1.3.2.3 as rebuilding a little known lightly-used spur line into a main freight rail line, which will initially allow a 788% increase of rail car traffic through St. Louis Park.

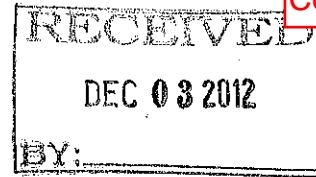
If you look at the attached map, you can see how this proposed re-route will cut through a major swath of St. Louis Park and disrupt the daily lives and safety of homeowners, students, commuters and business owners. Moreover, this spur line was never designed to be used as a major freight corridor as is being proposed in the DEIS.

Common sense begs that a better option must be available. The good news is that there is; co-locating freight rail along the SWLRT line (within the Kenilworth Corridor) has shown to be a safe, viable and cheaper option.

Please carefully consider the negative impact this re-route of freight rail will permanently have on the city St. Louis Park and whether funding this re-route versus funding co-locating is the smartest use of taxpayer dollars.

Sincerely,

Helene Herbst



December 1, 2012

Hennepin County Housing

Community Works and Transit

ATT: Southwest Transitway

701 Fourth Ave. South, Suite 400

Minneapolis, MN 55415

Re: Response to SW LRT DEIS

Concerns:

As community members and property owners directly impacted by the SW LRT plans we are concerned about the following issues:

- Noise
- Vibration
- Safety
- Visual Effects

Noise:

The level of noise in the Calhoun Isles area will have severe impact on our community. It is an increase over the ambient of one million times in intensity.

Vibration:

The vibration of the proposed LRT frequency presents concerns about the long-range effects on the concrete construction of our Calhoun Isles Condominium and Town Houses. The frequency of proposed schedule (every 3.5 minutes) increases the potential of damage to our property.

Safety:

The Park Siding Park is a playground just across a single lane street from the Kenilworth trail and right a-way. The Kenilworth biking and walking train crosses the LRT tracts at three locations. Will these crossings remain safe?

Visual Effects:

Our current environment is peaceful and pastoral. To place a fast LRT train, running every 3-½ minutes places the peace and tranquility of our community in jeopardy. The current plan calls for a bridge that will rise up and cross Cedar Lake Ave. This will certainly have a disturbing impact and the beauty of the area.

To Minneapolis residents this area has been a park, bike path, and lakes that have brought pleasure to many. A surface LRT would destroy this.

Suggested Alternative to Current Plan:

Place the LRT below grade level. This could be accomplished with a tunnel or ditch with fully enclosed sound barrier. The West Lake Street Station should be enclosed also. Such a system would ease the problem of the Cedar Lake Blvd. intersection, allowing the road to be a grade bridge over the LRT track.

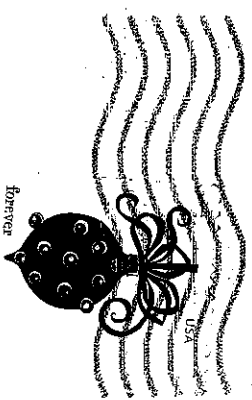
Thank you for the opportunity to express our concerns and suggested alternative.

Quincy Goldfarb
Aryane Goldfarb

Mace & Audrey Goldfarb
3141 Dean Ct. #1102
Minneapolis, Minnesota
55416

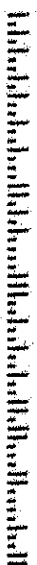
MINNEAPOLIS MN 553

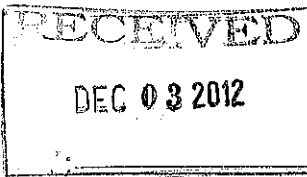
01 DEC 2012 PM 7 L



Hempin Co. Housing
Community Co. of Clark & Transit
At: Southwest Transitway
701 Fourth Ave. So., Suite 400
Minneapolis, MN. 55415

3541531843





To the Members of the Metropolitan Council re proposed relocation of freight rail:

For safety concerns, heavy freight rail should be kept on the wide Kenilworth Corridor and co-located there with light rail as has been done in several other cities!

We are looking forward to the coming Southwest Light Rail Train as a much needed part of our transportation network. However, we strongly oppose the reroute of the freight trains from the Kenilworth corridor to St. Louis Park, an unnecessary, expensive governmental move that would create serious safety hazards in St. Louis Park. As you know, this move is proposed by Hennepin County and the Met council, NOT by the railroad.

It is unconscionable to move the freight traffic from a wide flat area that has historically been a railroad yard, built to handle freight trains and multiple tracks, with wide right of ways in most places, to a narrow, multi curved bed running through a much more congested area in St. Louis Park and next to a major high school. At St. Louis Park High multitudes cross the tracks daily going to McDonalds, to the football field, and just walking along the tracks on their way to and from school. It is also unconscionable to spend 23 million dollars, not including the surprisingly undetermined costs of the not yet defined mitigation, creating unnecessary safety hazards for our residents!

Increased noise and increased vibration due to the much longer, much more frequent trains is another issue at SLP High and to hundreds of homes along the route.

Also, while a short 8 car train can stop in 100 feet, a 132 car freight train running at 25 miles an hour requires a mile or more to stop. The long freight trains will therefore not be able to stop for a student, or even an auto or bus caught on the tracks at one of the numerous at grade crossings in St. Louis Park.

In addition, A long freight train would be on several tight curves at once exponentially increasing the likelihood of derailment. Since a significant part of the track is elevated and close to homes, this poses a real threat even if the train is not carrying a hazardous product like ethanol which some do.

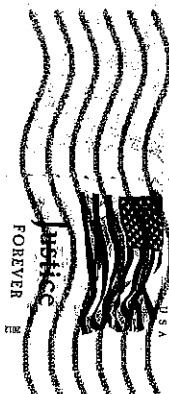
Therefore, to say that a track bed suitable for short, 8 car trains running at 10 mph is also suitable for a 132 car freight trains running at 25 mph with sharply increased frequency each day is ludicrous and strains credibility. Unfortunately, The Draft Environmental Impact Statement ignores the facts re St. Louis Park and minimizes the dangers created by the proposed, unnecessary relocation

Consider the safety hazards of relocation, and avoid making this major error! Thank you-

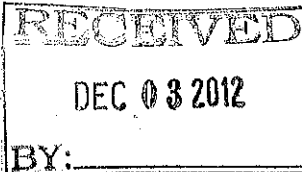
Brendalee + Theodor (Ted) Litman, residents since 1962
Brendalee and Theodor Litman

MINNEAPOLIS MN 553

01 DEC 2012 PM 5 L



Hennepin County
Housing, Community Development & Transit
ATTN: Southwest Transit
701 - Fourth Ave. So, Suite 400
Minneapolis, MN 55401



Comment #175

I am writing in response to the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) - Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) which includes the proposed freight rail re-route in St. Louis Park, Minnesota.

The proposed action of re-routing freight is described in Chapter 1, Section 1.3.2.3. The MN&S Spur tracks are a lightly used spur line within a high density urban, residential setting and directly adjacent to the St Louis Park Senior High. The current freight occurs five days a week, Monday- Friday, during normal business hours. The proposed action of re-routing freight would introduce mainline traffic and the community, residents, and students will be exposed to longer, heavier trains during weekends, evenings, and nighttime. In detail, the re-route will allow a 788% increase of rail cars traffic. The increase of freight exposure will directly and negatively impact the community health and cohesion of the neighbors adjacent to the tracks. In addition, there will be negative impacts to the school system and educational quality within St Louis Park, including the decreased safety of students at the High School.

Besides my general concerns about the freight rail re-route, the section of the SWLRT DEIS that describes the noise and vibration has flawed methods and conclusions. The vibration and the noise measurements were done with current MN&S traffic. It is important to note that the re-routed freight will be longer, more frequent, and include more locomotives per train.

Vibration, Chapter 4.8.4: The conclusion that vibration will have no significant impacts is incorrect. Vibration impacts will be longer in time and the total amount will increase with the heavier freight and additional locomotives.

Noise, Chapter 4.7.5:

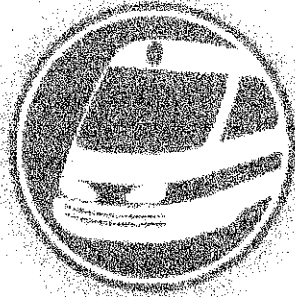
Quiet zones: The DEIS fails to describe the real world issues with the quiet zone. The SLP Senior High is both bookended by two blind curves and has athletic facilities on both sides of the tracks. The operating rail company, TC&W, has stated in a public document that it has safety concerns with a quiet zone due to the proximity of the tracks to schools, residents, and businesses. It will be impossible to design a quiet zone that will be both safe for the area while maintaining access for the adjacent Senior High school and local businesses. The quiet zone is listed as mitigation for noise impacts but it is a mitigation that is not supported by the neighborhoods, school board, or the operating rail companies.

A quiet zone will not eliminate all noise impacts and the assessment fails to measure other sources:

- a. the rail to wheel curve squeal from the tight interconnect curve
- b. the additional noise of the locomotives as it throttles up both the southern interconnect ramp and grade change at the northern connection,
- c. trains traveling west will need to use their brakes to maintain a slow speed going down grade and through curves
- d. diminished livability from the introduction of night freight traffic
- e. the amount of time exposed to the noise impacts of the stationary crossing bells will increase significantly due to increase in train numbers.

The re-routing of freight will negatively impact the safety, livability, and community cohesion of residents, students, and communities. The SWLRT DEIS does not adequately describe the impacts and as such, the freight reroute should not be given any further consideration as an option.

Name: Carol Waugh



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transitway

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MINNEAPOLIS MN 554

29 NOV 2012 PM 3 L



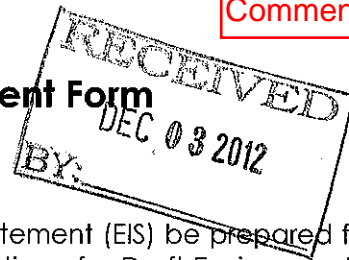
Hennepin County
Housing, Community Works & Transit
ATTN: Southwest Transitway
701 Fourth Avenue South, Suite 400
Minneapolis, MN 55415

55415184300

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Draft Environmental Impact Statement Comment Form
Southwest Transitway Project



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

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

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

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

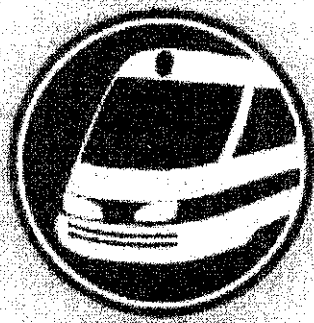
To DEIS

From James Mickman M.D., Sara Brenner Mickman

I have come to accept the LRT however with these caveats:

- 1) No Freight Rail - relocate it. It is unfair for our neighborhood to have both the LRT + heavy rail. The park will be massively effected by colocating, so the Freight MUST be moved.
- 2) No cement overhead train at cedar lake parkway. Build a tunnel! The bridge is an eye sore and inappropriate to parkland.
- 3) Make sure that there is maximal noise mitigation.
- 4) Keep the Kennilworth trail intact.
- 5) NO parking lot at 21st. It will increase people from burbs coming in and parking negating the purpose of reducing traffic into Minneapolis

Name: Sara Brenner / James Mickman M.D.



SOUTHWEST
Transitway

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Hennepin County

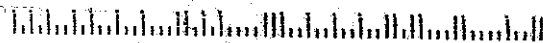
Housing, Community Works & Transit

ATTN: Southwest Transitway

701 Fourth Avenue South, Suite 400

Minneapolis, MN 55415

55415184300



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Draft Environmental Impact Statement Comment Form

Southwest Transitway Project

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Our neighborhood will be severely and negatively impacted by an increase in noise, pedestrian, and automobile traffic with the LRT

I support LRT with the following provisions:

① Minimize the noise impact as much as possible

② Build off street parking to minimize street parking

③ Security is a huge issue. Design of the stations & parking structures should take this into account

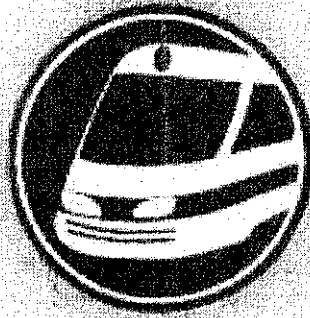
④ Relocate the freight line. LRT is enough!!

⑤ Have a reasonable plan for the increase in traffic flow!!

Name:

Brian Miller

Thank you!



SOUTHWEST
Transitway

Fold here



Hennepin County

Housing, Community Works & Transit
ATTN: Southwest Transitway

701 Fourth Avenue South, Suite 400

Minneapolis, MN 55415

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RECEIVED

DEC 03 2012

BY:

Draft Environmental Impact Statement Comment Form

Southwest Transitway Project

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

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

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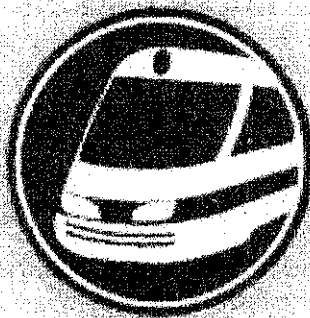
Public hearings on the DEIS will be held in November 2012. To learn more about the hearings, please visit www.southwesttransitway.org

My concern regarding a parking lot on 21st street is that greatly increased traffic around / near Benwood Elementary school will bring greatly increased danger to the pedestrians (students + parents) and the many school buses that already cause traffic congestion and delay. This will be a significant morning hazard to many.

Name:

Kenne M. Englund

Thank you!



SOUTHWEST
Transitway

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MINNEAPOLIS MN 553

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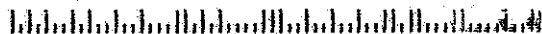
Hennepin County

Housing, Community Works & Transit
ATTN: Southwest Transitway

701 Fourth Avenue South, Suite 400

Minneapolis, MN 55415

55415184300



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"Palma, Russell L"

12/04/2012 02:28 PM

To "swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us"
<swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>

cc

bcc

Subject comments on SW Light Rail line

I am writing in response to the DIES and the proposed SW Corridor Light Rail Line. While I am strongly supportive of the light rail line, I have the following concerns in the area where I live, between the proposed West Lake and W 21st Street stations. I favor putting the light rail line in a trench or tunnel below grade level between these two stations for the following reasons:

1) safety: This is a very crowded area, with many pedestrians, bicyclists and children. There is Park Side Park, two Cedar Lake beaches, the Greenway, Kenilworth and Cedar Lake bike paths, and people who walk to businesses on Lake Street and Excelsior. Having the light rail line on grade would be very disruptive and dangerous to these groups.

2) noise: The light rail corridor is extremely narrow in this area, and there are single family homes, town homes and condominium homes in very close proximity to the proposed line. To have light rail trains of the frequency proposed, and where the tracks are curved (producing squeal), will produce a significant increase in ambient noise.

3) visual impact: The proposed bridge over Cedar Lake Parkway would be grossly out of scale with the buildings in the area and present an extreme visual change in a currently park-like atmosphere, as would the electrical line towers. Again, putting the corridor in a trench or tunnel would alleviate this issue.

This corridor is so narrow in this area, another suggestion would be to have a single set of tracks between the W 21st Street and West Lake stations, where the trains would alternate leaving the stations in either direction. Further, this would reduce the cost of putting the light rail in a trench or tunnel.

Sincerely,

Dr. Russell Palma



D S

12/04/2012 02:59 PM

Please respond to
D S

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us

cc

bcc

Subject Comments on SWLRT DEIS

Attached is a word document containing my comments on the SWLRT DEIS

Dale Stenseth

12-03-2012

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in response to the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) – Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) which includes the proposed freight rail re-route in St. Louis Park, Minnesota.

The proposed action of re-routing freight is described in DEIS Chapter 1, Section 1.3.2.3.

It becomes clearer every day that Hennepin County has had an unpublished agenda to reroute Freight Rail from the first day. The proof of this includes oral and published comments made by a Hennepin County Commissioner early in the process: "This is a done deal." The same commissioner is also quoted as saying, "Promises were made." (To Kenwood residents to reroute the freight traffic out of Kenwood.)

The railroad does not want the proposed freight rail reroute. The existing Kenilworth route is the shortest and straightest and most level route. It is clear that huge incentives to use the longer, more expensive reroute would have to be offered to the railroad, an additional tax payer expense. Hennepin County does not want to recognize or include this significant and continuing cost.

The proposed Hennepin County Flyover Bridge, to get freight traffic over HWY 7, is such a boondoggle that the railroad has stated they would not take ownership or be responsible for bridge or ramp maintenance. Again, tax payers would be stuck with this unrecognized cost.

Additional, noisier diesel power would be required to get freight trains up and over the proposed Hennepin County Flyover Bridge, increasing danger and noise.

Hennepin County has consistently downplayed and minimized safety, economic, environmental, and quality of life impacts to St. Louis Park.

Hennepin County is actively engaged in socio-economic discrimination, in trying to move freight rail from the Kenwood area to poorer neighborhoods.

Finally, in what appears to be another act of bad faith, another Hennepin County consultant 'typo' has been identified in the Strib, understating costs of the proposed reroute by 100 MILLION dollars. (11/28/2012)

Because of all the reasons stated above, I oppose the freight rail re-route as outlined in the SWLRT DEIS.

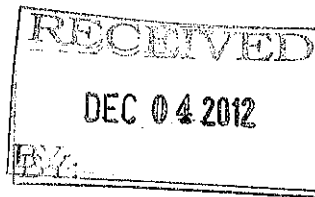
Co-location of freight and light rail through the Kenilworth Corridor is the only option that is economically feasible and practical.

This DEIS, the EAW, and every step of the process has been biased. (Hennepin County Commissioner statements, "It's a done deal," and "Promises were made.")

Because of prior comment filtering behavior, Hennepin County can not be trusted to include all comments, so this comment is being copied to Federal officials with a request to suspend any funding for any Freight reroute or SW Light Rail. Surely there are other more deserving and more honest requests for federal money.

Most sincerely,

Dale Stenseth



To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in response to the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) - Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) published in regard the SWLRT which includes the proposed freight rail re-route in St. Louis Park, Minnesota.

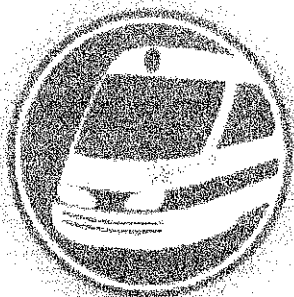
The current SWLRT-DEIS has significant flaws and the planned re-route idea either needs to be dropped completely or a great deal more study must be done. As this action is proposed and described in Chapter 1, Section 1.3.2.3 as rebuilding a little known, lightly used spur line into a main freight rail line, which will initially allow a 788% increase of rail cars traffic. What the SWLRT-DEIS does not address, but should, are the real world impacts of this action on the affected area.

Besides my general concerns about the SWLRT-DEIS, the portion of the report dealing with loss of property value in the re-route area should be in Chapter 9: Indirect Impacts, but it is not, and this causes me great concern. The SWLRT-DEIS does not mention the impact of re-routed freight trains from a main line right corridor to a bridge line on property values of the re-route area. Freight rail re-routes are not exclusive to Minnesota and the cost of the re-routes to residents has been documented. For example, according to an article in a 2001 issue of The Appraisal Journal bringing additional freight rail traffic to an area will negatively affect properties 250' feet from the rail tracks by 5-7%. All of the properties along the MN&S are well within 250'. Based on this article one can conclude that property values along the MN&S will drop more than 7%. Two major questions arise that are not addressed in the SWLRT-DEIS. First, what happens to the tax base of St. Louis Park when the drop in value is realized? Second, how are property owners who lose value because of this government action going to be compensated for their loss? It is unreasonable for the Hennepin County to ask any resident to pay a higher price for the benefits of light rail than others.

12/1

We bought our house at over 20 years ago as a nice safe nest egg and place to raise a family. The train is elevated behind our house and the tracks are up on a hill about 25 feet from our back fence. We are one house down from the railroad bridge that crosses Minnetonka so there is no chance of the tracks being moved over or altered. The noise and vibration from increased freight rail traffic would be very detrimental to our quality of life. If by chance a train derailed, which JUST happened in New Jersey, it would crush our trees, our fence, and possibly our dogs or kids if they happened to be in the yard. The length of the proposed trains would also block multiple street crossings at once, making it harder for pedestrians, cars, and emergency vehicles to access our neighborhood. Please stop the freight rail re-route!

Name: Cindi Thompson

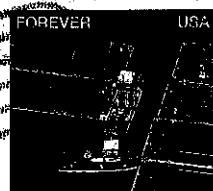


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MINNEAPOLIS MN 55415

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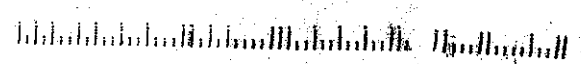


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Hennepin County
Housing, Community Works & Transit
ATTN: Southwest Transitway
701 Fourth Avenue South, Suite 400
Minneapolis, MN 55415

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Draft Environmental Impact Statement Comment Form

Southwest Transitway Project

DEC 04 2012

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

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

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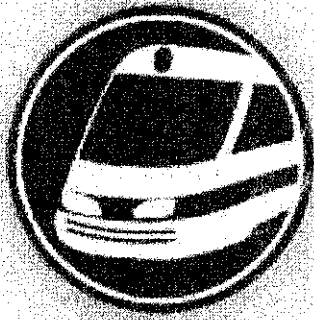
I have always been, and remain, AGAINST the light rail running in the Kenilworth corridor. I think it is shameful that there is such a lack of concern for this unique natural area that will be so adversely affected by light rail. I worked hard with a group early on to promote the uptown route - but it seems that politics wins out! I live. The noise and vibration (and view) will interfere with my daily life - walks along the trail will no longer be nature walks, opening windows will not be a relaxing prospect, the animals will disappear from our area, the lake will become so crowded that pollution will increase & traffic will be unbearable.

I am against co-location of freight & Light-rail and would prefer the freight only. ^{Having} Both will double all the above problems & will be NOT cost effective because of all the property elimination & bridge building ^{costs}. I still find it impossible to believe that this was the best alternative, monetarily or any other way. You might as well take our property and move us all out.

City/State/Zip: Yvonne Hnilc

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Thank you!



SOUTHWEST
Transitway

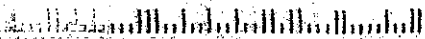
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Hennepin County
Housing, Community Works & Transit
ATTN: Southwest Transitway
701 Fourth Avenue South, Suite 400
Minneapolis, MN 55415

5541531843

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Draft Environmental Impact Statement Comment Form

Southwest Transitway Project

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DEC 04 2012

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I support freight rail relocation to avoid the destruction of homes & parkland that the location would entail. As a biker & roller skier who uses the Kennewick & Cedar Lake Trails daily, I would like to reinforce how valuable those trails are to recreation & public bicycle commuters. Please do not destroy the current beauty & use of these trails as LRT is routed through the area. These trails all work incredibly well as a connection to the Greenway, Lake trails, etc. That was the whole point when these trails were designed. A moosey & imposing bridge at Cedar Lake & Kennewick Trails should be reconsidered. These trails are not like Lake St. & Hiramatha, which is heavily populated with stores, businesses & commuter traffic. Wildlife would be greatly disturbed & that aspect of the trail system is what makes it unique. A proposed station at 21st St. is also going to bring increased traffic. This should be studied.

Name: _____

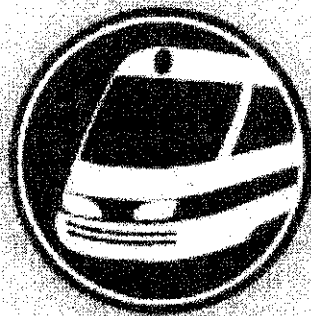
Address: _____

Jody Healey

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Thank you!



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Transitway

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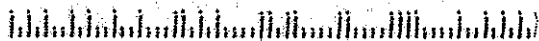


Hennepin County

Housing, Community Works & Transit
ATTN: Southwest Transitway

701 Fourth Avenue South, Suite 400

Minneapolis, MN 55415



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12/05/2012 01:48 PM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us

cc

bcc

Subject SWLRT DEIS

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in response to the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) – Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) which includes the proposed freight rail re-route in St. Louis Park, Minnesota.

The proposed action of re-routing freight is described in Chapter 1, Section 1.3.2.3. The MN&S Spur tracks are a lightly used spur line within a high density urban, residential setting and directly adjacent to the St Louis Park Senior High. The current freight occurs five days a week, Monday- Friday, during normal business hours. The proposed action of re-routing freight would introduce mainline traffic and the community, residents, and students will be exposed to longer, heavier trains during weekends, evenings, and nighttime. In fact, the re-route will allow a 788% increase in the number of rail car traffic in this area. The increase of freight exposure will directly and negatively impact community health, cohesion of the neighborhoods adjacent to the tracks and educational quality within St Louis Park Schools. In addition, there will be negative impacts to the community at large. These impacts include but are not limited to, increased noise and vibration, increase in diesel fumes from laboring locomotives, loss of mobility with when multiple crossing are blocked simultaneously, decreased safety for home owners and students at the High School, decreased access to small businesses and a decrease in tax base caused by lower property values in the affected area.

I oppose the freight rail re-route as outlined in the SWLRT DEIS. I believe it will create an unsafe and unlivable situation for our school children, our local businesses, and our residents.

Thank you,
Christian Berry

Name: Christian Berry



Susanne Wollman

12/05/2012 02:16 PM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us

cc

bcc

Subject Rail re-route through St. Louis Park

To re-route these trains through St. Louis Park just doesn't make sense. It will cost **millions more** to re-route them rather than co-locate, with NO mitigation for the people who live and work in St. Louis Park. St Louis Park has 5 schools within a half mile of the reroute and St. Louis Park Senior High is within 75 feet of the tracks, where as the co-location has NO SCHOOLS along the route. As it will take mile long trains at least mile to stop, the re-route endangers children not to mention the houses that you could stand on the back step and throw a rock to hit the trains. Many houses are VERY close to the tracks, yet no vibration impact studies have occurred with apparent unconcern for the impact on these houses property values. The re-route will cause at least six crossings to be blocked several times a day for more than 10 minutes. The time it would take emergency vehicles to drive around these trains is unimaginable.

I believe it makes sense, especially in these hard times, to make the choice that is most fiscally responsible for the people of Hennepin County. Clearly, re-routing the trains through St. Louis Park does not fiscally make sense.

Susanne Wollman
St Louis Park resident for 16 years

**Bonnie Black**

12/05/2012 02:43 PM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us

cc

bcc

Subject SW Corridor Work Destination Figures and the 21st St Station

The Kenilworth line does not serve the people of Minneapolis due to its proposed route through the LEAST densely populated (and highest income) parts of the city, i.e., Kenwood, ECCO, Cedar/Dean/Isles, and East Isles. Who really thinks that the nearby local populations will give up their SUV's to ride the LRT?

Re: Reverse commute. Fewer than 6% of the population of the above areas (including Bryn Mawr) go to either St.Louis Park and Eden Prairie combined.

Probably you have the following data from the Wilder Research Neighborhood Compass website based on the 2010 Census. I found this very interesting. Based on the info re the neighborhoods of Kenwood, CedaIslesDean, Bryn Mawr, ECCO and East Isles, of the 12,247 total population, 6463 work. Work destinations are Mpls 43% (2674), St. Paul 7% (437), StLPk 2.9% (193), Eden Prairie 3.2% (207). The number of people who use public transport currently is 895 -- 9.8%, most of whom live near the Hennepin Ave bus routes. Those people more than likely would continue to use the buses rather than make their way 1+ miles westward to use the LRT stations.

Those people going to Eden Prairie need transportation to their many distant workplaces, once they arrive in Eden Prairie. Hmmm. What is the logic here?

The idea that 1000 users per day would use a station at 21st St is quite erroneous. Someone made that figure up. It is statistically unsupportable that of the total 6463 working people in these neighborhoods 1/6 of them would use the LRT. The current bus into Kenwood alone cannot support itself on the little use it gets during rush hours only.

The increased influx of people to Cedar Lake Beach will necessitate increased police patrols. Imagine the access if there's an LRT stop there. Already people are coming in their cars from all over the city in the summer. The neighborhood safety concern is great.

So those are my thoughts. Maybe redundant, but I just wanted to be one of the voices that speaks out about the absurdness of putting the LRT through here.

I've written the mayor with my thoughts, too.

Bonnie Black

**barbara dorset**

12/05/2012 06:23 PM

Please respond to
barbara dorsetTo "swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us"
<swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>

cc

bcc

Subject SW LRT concerns

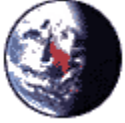
I would like to voice my concern about the SW LRT.

I have lived in the Calhoun Isles Condominiums for the last 13 years. My unit directly faces the Kenilworth Bike and Walking trail. Here are issues I have never had to deal with before but will have to deal with on a daily basis once the SW LRT arrives.

1. noise- noise level will be well above acceptable especially for me since I live on the 9th floor
2. vibration- unknown effects on a concrete structure, plus having to live with it on a constant basis
3. safety -park for kids is right next to the fast, vibrating, noisy LWT
4. visual pollution -I will look out my window to see poles, wires, and train cars. Currently I see trees, birds, trails and a park.
5. high voltage wires will kill birds, like Eagles and Cranes.
6. My property value will decrease as a result of the SW LWT. Any surveys that demonstrate property values increase as a result of a LWT do not take into consideration the financial damage to high end properties. All properties in these surveys are of low or modest value.

If the LWT were placed below grade level, none of these issues would be a concern. We should wait until we have the money to do the project right. Place it underground.

Sincerely,
Barbara Dorset



12/05/2012 07:14 PM

To swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us

cc

bcc

Subject Southwest LRT Concerns

To whom it may concern:

I am very worried about the SW LRT. I live in the Calhoun Isles Condominiums and face the Kenilworth bike trail. Here are my issues regarding its construction:

1. The noise level will be well above acceptable levels, which is both an environmental hazard, as well as a health hazard.
2. Protecting the environment - This is a beautiful habitat, with many wild animals, including fox, deer and rabbits, which will lose their homes. The high voltage will also kill birds such as eagles, geese, and cranes.
3. Vibration- the effects are unknown on our buildings, which puts us at risk
4. Denigration of our park system - the bike paths are an essential part of our neighborhood and thoroughway to downtown.
5. Expense - the numbers now suggest that building it on the Greenway through Uptown would be more cost effective PLUS have increased usage.
6. My property value will decrease as a result of the SW LWT.

If the LWT were placed below grade level or moved to the Greenway, none of these issues would be a concern. We should wait until there is funding to do it right, rather than make a mistake and have to do it again.

Sincerely,

Susan Shapiro



"Steve Andersen"

12/05/2012 09:53 PM

To <swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us>

cc

bcc

Subject Light rail concerns

I live very close to the proposed transit station near Lake Calhoun. I'm concerned about the traffic congestion currently and the increased traffic that the light rail will cause. I'd like to see a traffic study of the area. It also seems imperative that there be a good pedestrian-friendly (and bike-friendly) route between the light rail station and Lake Calhoun while finding a way not to make driving in the area impossible. Maggie Pastarr

DEC 05 2012

December 4, 2012

Hennepin County – Housing, Community Works & Transit
Attn: Southwest Transitway
701 Fourth Avenue South, Suite 400
Minneapolis, MN 55415

Dear HC Southwest Transitway:

I am writing this letter to you in response to the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) – Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) published recently. I am especially interested in the SWLRT that includes the proposed freight rail re-route in St. Louis Park, Minnesota.

I have come to believe that the current SWLRT-DEIS contains significant flaws and that the planned freight rail re-route idea either needs to be abandoned completely or a great deal more study must be done.

My greatest concern is for the St. Louis Park residents. The SWLRT-DEIS makes only passing reference to the safety issues that I find myself focused on now. From my perspective, this proposal/plan would rebuilt a little-used rail line and convert it into a main freight rail line, which will allow for a huge increase of rail car traffic. This is unsafe for many reasons:

1. Its physical proximity to St. Louis Park schools, homes and businesses—it will bisect the St. Louis Park high school campus!
2. It will create multiple grade level crossings.
3. It will impair routine, daily transportation for many people in St. Louis Park—both pedestrian and motorized traffic.
4. It will greatly increase noise pollution and widespread property damage in the community due to increased vibration.
5. First responders to *any* emergency call-for-help could be hindered when rail crossings are blocked.
6. Tight curves in the railroad track will make derailments more likely.
7. Railroad cars may carry hazardous materials that will create conditions for much more communitywide damage than anyone has currently been able to imagine.

Finally, none of the mitigation requests by the City of St. Louis Park on behalf of its residents is being given fair and just consideration. This mitigation is important—it is necessary to maintain the safety and livability and property values for the residents of St. Louis Park.

Amy Earle





MINNEAPOLIS MN 554

04 DEC 2012 PM 11

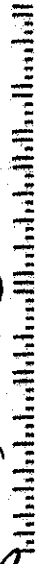
DEC 05 2012

Henegin County
Housing, Community Works
& Transit

Attn: Southwest Transitway
701 4th Ave S. #400

Minneapolis, MN 55415

5541531843



Eden Prairie 11/29/12



Draft Environmental Impact Statement Comment Form

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I think the plan of using
Technology is - is great - I would
however like to see it on the North
Side of the road -

Name:

Don L. Wassink

Thank you!