

RESOLUTION NO. 11-058

RESOLUTION RELATING TO FREIGHT RAIL ACTIVITY IN THE CITY OF ST. LOUIS PARK

WHEREAS, the City of St. Louis Park is committed to protecting and enhancing the quality of its neighborhoods; and,

WHEREAS, several railroads operate within the City of St. Louis Park and the City seeks to reduce the impacts of freight rail traffic on the community of St. Louis Park; and,

WHEREAS, the City of St. Louis Park has participated in the Technical, Policy and Community Advisory Committees for the Southwest Transitway, as well as the Southwest Corridor Community Works Steering and Technical Committees, and the Metropolitan Council Southwest Management Committee for Southwest LRT; and

WHEREAS, the Southwest LRT Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) unanimously recommended the selection of Route 3A as the locally preferred alternative with conditions including that agencies work cooperatively to identify impacts, mitigation requirements, and mitigation funding options to address the potential of rerouting freight rail in a parallel process with the Southwest LRT DEIS and to identify the freight rail issue and impacts as a part of the “secondary and cumulative impacts;” and,

WHEREAS, the City of St. Louis Park has reviewed several studies completed by Hennepin County including the *TCWR Freight Rail Realignment Study* by TKDA, dated November, 2009, *Kenilworth Corridor: Analysis of Freight Rail/LRT Coexistence* by RL Banks, dated November 2010, and the *Freight Rail Study Evaluation of TCWR Routing Alternatives*, by Amfahr Consulting, dated November 2010; and

WHEREAS, the City of St. Louis Park is reviewing the *MNS EAW* prepared by Kimley Horn for Hennepin County Regional Rail Authority and MnDOT for the potential of rerouting freight rail traffic to the MNS line; and

WHEREAS, the City of St. Louis Park adopted Resolution 10-070 (attached) on July 6, 2010, stating that it opposes the rerouting of freight rail traffic from the Kenilworth corridor to St. Louis Park unless certain conditions were clearly met; and

WHEREAS, the City of St. Louis Park completed its own studies in addition to Hennepin County’s studies on rail routes, including *SEH Technical Memorandums #1, 2, 3, and 4*; and

WHEREAS, the City Council of St. Louis Park that the City of St. Louis Park makes the following findings:

1. It has been established in Technical Memorandum #3 by SEH that there is a viable route through the Kenilworth Corridor for light rail and freight rail, with the relocation of a

portion of the regional trail, acquisition of property and appropriate mitigation measures to address such items as grade separated crossings, and station area impacts. In comparison to the MNS line, the Kenilworth route is shorter, has fewer curves, has fewer elevation changes and is significantly less expensive to construct.

2. The appropriate mitigation of any and all negative impacts associated with rail rerouting have not been included in the EAW for the MNS Reroute Study. The potential negative impacts that are not thoroughly addressed include but are not limited to noise, vibration, odors, traffic congestion and safety, school use and safety, park use and safety; potentially diminished property values; and, circulation/access in the community by vehicle, pedestrian, transit and bicycle.

3. The proposed reroute of train traffic to the MNS line does not include (a) the elimination of railroad switching, sorting and blocking operations within the City of St. Louis Park, (b) the removal of the existing “wye” rail tracks in the vicinity of Oxford Street and its replacement with a new direct connection to MNS south bound, and (c) the removal of the other tracks not needed for through train traffic including the rail tracks east of the proposed north interconnection.

4. The proposed reroute of train traffic to the MNS without a direct connection to MNS south bound could result in negative community impacts from trains using the proposed north bound connection to the MNS as a means to access the MNS tracks to go south. Neighborhoods north of the Bass Lake Spur would be unnecessarily exposed to train traffic that is actually seeking to go south from the Bass Lake Spur on the MNS tracks.

5. The proposed reroute of train traffic to the MNS line does not create a freight rail single track corridor with significant right-of-way and safety measures incorporated between the track and adjacent properties.

6. The proposed reroute to MNS increase the potential for additional future rail traffic through St. Louis Park per the *Minnesota Comprehensive Statewide Freight and Passenger Rail Plan*, with associated negative impacts on the community.

7. The conditions in the 10-070 City Council Resolution for rerouting freight rail traffic from the Kenilworth Corridor to the MNS rail line in St. Louis Park have not been met.

NOW, THEREFORE IT BE RESOLVED, by the City Council that the City of St. Louis Park hereby:

1. Supports the implementation of the Southwest Transitway LRT project; and,
2. Continues to support the May 23, 2001 Railroad Task Force Recommendations adopted by the City Council October 21, 2001; and,
3. Continues to support the July 6, 2010 City Council Resolution; and,
4. Supports the rerouting of TCW coal and other trains to western Minnesota in any case; and

5. Supports all measures to eliminate the switching wye; and
6. Opposes the rerouting of freight rail traffic from the Kenilworth corridor to St. Louis Park because the conditions of City Council Resolution 10-070 have not been met.

Reviewed for Administration:

Adopted by the City Council May 31, 2011

City Manager

Mayor

Attest:

City Clerk