Southwest Transitway DEIS Comments

Comments Received from the General Public

Part 5 of 5

Comment #628

December 29, 2012

Hennepin County Housing, Community Works & Transit 701 Fourth Avenue South, Suite 400 Minneapolis, MN 55415 swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us RECEIVED JAN 0 2 2013 BY:_____

Dear Project Manager,

Introduction

This is a comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement ("DEIS") for the Southwest Transitway (LRT) project ("LRT Project"). As residential property owners of 2553 Washburn Ave. S., in the Cedar Isles Dean Neighborhood, we are personally and directly impacted by the LRT Project as our property is located between the proposed 21st Street and West Lake Street Stations immediately adjacent to Kenilworth Trail and the Kenilworth Corridor Bridge.

While there are many issues of importance related to the LRT Project, this comment letter will focus on specific themes related to the proposed 21st Street and West Lake Street stations and the area between these stations, as follows:

- 1. <u>Re-Location of Freight Trains</u>: We support the re-location of freight trains to accommodate light rail, and do not support the co-location alternative:
- Environmental Effects: The DEIS is flawed in its analysis of noise and vibration implications and does not address light and electromagnetic concerns with regard to the location of the 21st Street and West Lake Street Stations and the area between these stations:
- 3. <u>Social Effects:</u> The DEIS is flawed in its conclusion that the operation of LRT along Segment A is not anticipated to adversely affect community cohesion.

Discussion:

1. Re-Location of Freight Trains:

The DEIS concluded (in the final paragraph of Chapter 11, pg. 11-11, 11.2.5) that the co-location of light rail and freight trains do not meet the project's purpose and need and is not a practicable alternative. As a result, co-location is not recommended as the environmentally preferred alternative. As impacted residential property owners, we agree completely with the conclusion that co-location is not a viable option.

A decision, however, to co-locate the freight and light rail would have material and detrimental effects on our property as it is not clear whether our property would need to be acquired to complete the project.

2. Environmental Effects (Noise, Vibration, Visual, and Electromagnetic Interference): As impacted residential property owners, we are significantly concerned about the environmental impacts of the LRT project due to the high number of trains that will travel by our property daily. The increase from a few freight trains per day to hundreds of LRT trains per day will drastically and severely impact our and our neighbors exposure to noise and vibration.

As to noise, our property is located in an area that is considered to have a "severe impact", and as a result, significant mitigation will be required. However, the impact of noise level and noise incident frequency has not been properly assessed in the DEIS. As a result, further study needs to be done.

Moreover, the DEIS incorrectly classifies Segment A property as Category 3 land use. However, in FTS's land use categories for Transit Noise Impact Criteria, Category 3 is most commonly associated with institutional land uses. In contrast, Category 1 is for tracts of land where quiet is an essential element on the intended purpose. The property in our neighborhood is aligned with Category 1 use – it is quiet, serene, and park-like. As a result, noise impacts should be re-evaluated under the standards set for Category 1 land uses.

As to vibration, while the DEIS (page 4-118, 4.8.6. Mitigation) provides that detailed vibration analysis will be conducted during the Final EIS, we urge that the range of frequencies and vibration incident frequency be taken into consideration.

The DEIS does not examine or discuss the impacts of LRT train light, corridor light, or the impact on presently dark areas of neighborhoods like ours. More analysis is necessary to determine the impacts and mitigation required.

In addition, the DEIS does not discuss potential health hazards related to electromagnetic interference for those people that live in close proximity (40 feet or less) to exposed overhead wires. Such information should be provided to the public and such hazards must be mitigated/avoided.

<u>3. Social Effects Related to Segment A</u>: The DEIS is flawed in its conclusion of the social effects related to Segment A. On page 3-58, the DEIS states that the implementation of LRT along the proposed Segment A "is not anticipated to adversely affect community cohesion because Segment A is currently bisected by a freight rail line and adding LRT service does not alter the existing barrier." This is unsubstantiated and incorrect, as currently, freight trains pass through infrequently, between 4-8 times per day, and the tracks are easily crossed. For

example, there is an informal pathway immediately adjacent to our property that passes over the freight tracks and connects Washburn Ave. to Kenilworth trail, Kenwood Isles neighborhood and the Kenilworth Channel Bridge. High-speed high-frequency trains would absolutely eliminate the informal pathways, and would therefore create a barrier between CIDNA, the Kenilworth Trail and the Kenwood Isles neighborhood.

Conclusion:

As property owners that are directly impacted by the LRT Project, we respectfully request that you consider the above concerns related to the DEIS. We also urge you to consider all factors to assist in mitigation of short-term construction effects and long-term impacts related to noise, vibration, and visual effects of the LRT project between 21st Street and Lake Street. One possible solution could be a tunnel for the LRT to pass between the 21st Street and Lake Street Stations.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. If you have any questions, please contact Debra Berns at (612) 208-0378 or <u>debra j berns@yahoo.com</u>

Sincerely,

Debra Berns Amy Lederer

SAINT PALE NN 550 31 DEC ZOIZ PWIL Hennepin County Works & Transit Housing Community Works & Transit ATTN: Southwest Transitwoy 701 Roveth Avenue South, 400 Minneapolis, MN 55415 55415184300 JAN 0 2 2013 BEANS/LEDERGE. REC A NEW WORK BY:

Comment #629

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

01/16/2013 03:27 PM

To cc

bcc

Subject Fw: Southwest LRT

From: Joanne STRATE Sent: Monday, December 31, 2012 6:15 PM To: Wheeler, William (FTA) Subject: Southwest LRT Importance: High

TO: FTA DATE: 12/31/12

RE: Southwest LRT, Region 5, Eden Prairie/Hopkins/Minnetonka/St. Louis Park/Mpls (2015 start)

A couple of my neighbors want me to send you a response as it relates to the progression of the 3A line and the PROPOSED Smetana Crossing on the border of Hopkins & east Minnetonka....we are 3 of the 114 units which will be effected with severe nosie & vibration as cited by the DEIS study. I have already responded various times regarding this & other issues...see below. I feel it's all in vain and it's politics as usual. I plan to investigate the legal Minnetonka noise levels as well. With that information, I'll probably contact WCCO-TV's reality check so the Met Council & company can't hide the true facts of the matter. Just so happens I work at a TV station and have contacts in the industry. If this waste of tax payer dollars continue and the line remains as the recommended 3A, then we need a QUIET ZONE. Per page 4-88 of the study, Pompano Drive residents are Segment 3, category 2 and it's noted there are 114 severe impacted units. **The Quiet Zone for the Smetana Crossing should be no train whistles and no post-mounted horns on the gates. To protect the citizens, we need only 4 quadrant gates with a median barrier.** A train passing every 7:30 will be impossible to live with and no one can sit outside or open their windows, or sleep during 5a-1a. Would you want to live here????? OUR PROPERTY VALUE WILL SUBSEQUENTLY DECREASE, NOT INCREASE AS SOME HAVE BLATANTLY LIED TO US. Don't know if we could even get a buyer for our units!!!

Joanne Strate, Marion & David Wolf, Austin Miller & Kylie Otte,

FYI...LRT is not the answer to transportation problems!

Starving the rest of our transportation system in favor of a more expensive, less efficient and totally inflexible light-rail system is the epitome of politics trumping common sense! **Using the Met Council's 2010 report,** the cost of a single ride on the Hiawatha line is \$2.46. Riders pay only \$.99 of this cost, leaving almost 60% subsidized by the public. But this isn't the true cost. Add in the 30 year amortized costs of bonding and a single ride actually cost \$6.42 which is an 85% subsidy! This equates to the public spending \$15M PER YEAR. The Northstar line costs \$13M, Central estimated @ \$17M and SW is \$12M. Improve bus service and rebuild critical highway infrastructure. The LRT mode of transportation has a negligible effect on traffic congestion! When you look at the costs, building more light rail lines like the SW LRT is nothing short of a money pit that will bankrupt our state. It's time to cut our losses and stop this madness!

Further issues ...

TO: Southwest Light Rail Project Staff ATTN: Deb Sisneros DATE: 11/16/11

I understand the SW LRT is in the early design and engineering stages now. I'm a resident of Beachside Two-II town home development in Minnetonka which has 5 Associations. It's established & very large. I have been battling the Metropolitan Council, to no avail, to change the route from 3A to 1A as detailed in the following four very good reasons. It doesn't have to be politics /lobbyists as usual to jam this decision down our throats to satisfy the "Opus World" of wishful thinking occupancy 25 years from now. They can have an adjacent station 4 blocks off Smetana. Perhaps my concerns & LOGIC will reach a receptive ear and common sense will rule the day!

ISSUE #1 - Route 1A would run on existing rail lines and would be far cheaper to the general public than 3A. Exact savings I'm sure have been calculated but not shared via the Met Council. Isn't the Federal government trying to cut costs these days due to our ridiculous economy? Does the added cost really justify the 3A route?

ISSUE #2 - The 3A route goes through Opus and crosses Smetana Rd on the way to downtown Hopkins. I live ONE block from this crossing! This is adjacent to residential zones, not empty lots or commercial property. People sleep here! Note: The average town home price is \$200K+ and we're not an eye-sore community! Trains running every 10:00 from 5a-1a with their vibration and warning bells is a definite "pollution" problem. Per the Met Council, it would be similar decibels to a blender ... I'm sure if you're deaf! And it's supposed to increase home value. Where's the logic in that? I don't live next to a station and would only hear, see, and feel the effects of the continuous trains which would lower my value for such an intrusion ONE block away! I'm 100% sure you wouldn't want to live here. Bad choice with zero disregard to surrounding upscale town homes and the rental apartments on the north side of Smetana! ISSUE #3 - Safety and congestion concerns are an issue. Smetana is a road with a long, steep grade. During the winter months if it's snowing or icy, it's difficult to navigate. Stopping abruptly at a crossing could be very dangerous. And lots of cars & semi's use this road. I'm assuming some one did a traffic flow assessment to merit my observations. Therefore, I predict car accidents waiting to happen and possibly horrible fatalities which could be prevented. Who wants a death on their shoulders/conscience? Logic doesn't prevail here. Note: There have been accident/deaths on the existing Hiawatha Line already without any of these concerns in play. The congestion would be another headache. Not so with route 1A!

ISSUE #4 - As it relates to human life, St. Therese is an upscale senior high-rise east of the crossing. In the last two days alone, 4 ambulances have sped down Smetana in route to address medical issues. Now imagine waiting for the crossing arm & traffic to clear/subside when every minute counts! This could be your parent's life in jeopardy! Get St. Therese's input. **AGAIN...BAD CHOICE OF CROSSING/ROUTE!**

Put some thought into doing the right thing for all concerned. Share with other decision-makers too. Thank you for your time, understanding & anticipated cooperation. I look forward to a change in the route! (*Obviously Gail Dorfman, Mark Fuhrman & company haven't seen the light!* Save gas & help traffic is their response!)

Also, by 2030 when this line is supposed to be at it's peak for Opus, which currently has alot of vacancy, people will be working out of their homes. Not even commuting to work. Dah? The undesirables will be using the line for crime instead and the public will pay dearly for their opportunity to ride the rails. Even the Northstar line ridership is having problems already! What about the trees & wildlife effected? What about the St. Louis Park freight lines issues? I guess I could go on & on. Is anyone listening and thinking rationally? Or...politics as usual?

Feel free to give me some real comments and not a canned response.

IF NOTHING ELSE...A QUIET ZONE @ THE SMETANA CROSSING. I DON'T WANT TO MOVE!

Thank you for your anticipated understanding, compassion, and action, Joanne

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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 <u>www.southwesttransitway.org</u>

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De need more help for our Somain Community * More ap Pupué house, toturas for our Kids puper housing . and Jops Name: Abdullahi Sheikh Ibrahim

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Ecderal 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

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"Jacobson, Nani"

01/07/2013 09:40 AM

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

bcc

Subject FW: Public Comment for Southwest LRT

From: Richardson, Mary
Sent: Wednesday, January 02, 2013 6:07 AM
To: O'Connell, Sam; Jacobson, Nani; Steinborn, Melanie; 'katie.walker@co.hennepin.mn.us'
Cc: Caufman, Robin
Subject: FW: Public Comment for Southwest LRT

From: swlrt Sent: Tuesday, January 01, 2013 7:36 AM To: Richardson, Mary Subject: FW: Public Comment for Southwest LRT

From: Todd Carlsen Sent: Tuesday, January 01, 2013 7:35:31 AM To: swlrt Subject: Public Comment for Southwest LRT Auto forwarded by a Rule

Dear LRT Representative,

I understand that the public is allowed to submit feedback regarding the Southwest LRT project. I have two related comments to submit:

1. If the Southwest LRT line were to ever expand westward or southwestward, it should follow Highway 212 so that many riders could easily and quickly access the line easily from the highway. The highway would feed the LRT line. That 212 route is wisely used by SW Transit buses, including a station along the highway in Chanhassen. Staying next to Highway 212 makes sense because that is where you would access the population of riders, on the highway, to sustain a westward LRT expansion. The highway was built to accommodate a future LRT line, I was told by a highway engineer, so expanding such a line would not requiring destroying valuable infrastructures.

2. The LRT line should never expand onto the Southwest Corridor biking and recreation train. That recreational trail is very valuable park and a regional treasure. There is some frustration that the LRT designers are not hearing how valuable it is to the citizens. It is a precious infrastructure development to the area and would be destroyed. Please hear what we are saying. You would be destroying something of great value, and that is a big cost. It also makes little sense to use the Southwest Corridor trail since not a large number of people could easily access a LRT line from that trail. The population is sparse along the trail west of Eden Prairie road and not easily accessible, and a LRT rail would not make sense on the Southwest Corridor. Instead, you definitely would want to run the LRT line along Highway 212 where many people from the highway could feed a LRT line. Run the line along Highway 212.

Kind regards,

Todd Carlsen

This email is intended to be read only by the intended reci ient. This email may be le ally ri ile ed or rotected from disclosure by law. If you are not the intended reci ient, any dissemination of this email or any attachments is strictly rohibited, and you should refrain from readin this email or e aminin any attachments. If you recei ed this email in error, lease notify the sender immediately and delete this email and any attachments.