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Bottineau Transitway Draft Environment
Impact Statement Public Hearing
Before Hennepin County Commissioner Mike Opat
Thursday, May 13, 2014
Brooklyn Park, Minnesota

Reported By: Lori Morrow, RPR, CRR, CLR, CCP

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- John Jordan, Brooklyn Park City Council
- Bob Mata, Brooklyn Park City Council
- George Selman, Robbinsdale City Council
- Rich Gates, Brooklyn Park City Council
- Lona Schreiber, Metropolitan Council

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(Reporter's Note: The first two speakers, Ms. Lokken and Mr. Althouse, spoke directly to the comment reporter and did not speak publicly to the commission.)

MS. BARBARA LOKKEN: Barbara Lokken, L-o-k-k-e-n, and my address is 7924 Oregon Avenue North, Brooklyn Park.

I've got a couple of concerns certainly from where I live on what's happening. And one of them is what kind of -- what will it do to the crime in the area. Brooklyn Park has so many problems with crime as it is now. And as a homeowner, I'm really concerned about what kind of crime it might bring to the area. And I know we don't have a crystal ball, and we can't predict that, but has there been any kind of a study done on that on other areas that have had light rail and how it's affected the crime in the area? So that's my first point.

My next point is that of noise. I'm just -- there's a row of houses on the other side of us, and their backyards face West Broadway. And those people are going to have a lot of their backyards taken away. And I'm just really worried about the noise level that we're going to hear in the neighborhood and what's being done to help that noise level.

And the third issue I have is that of property

1 value. I'd like to see any kind of a study that's been
2 done on property value and how it affects homes that are
3 close to light rail. And how does the city respond to
4 that? Or is it just tough luck for people who live
5 close? You know?

6 And then I also have another question. Is
7 there anything we can do to reverse it, maybe have that
8 line go down not West Broadway but Highway 81? And I
9 know they have done all kinds of studies and this and
10 that, I'm sure. But as the people that live in
11 Brooklyn Park, do we have any chance of reversing the
12 current decisions on this? And if we do, how do we go
13 about working through that process?

14 MS. KIMBERLY ZLIMEN: I want to make one more
15 quick announcement for anybody who came in after the last
16 time. The public hearing will be starting at 5:30, but
17 you can sign up at this table right over here to give
18 verbal testimony. And you can also submit written
19 comments from now and through May 29 on the Draft EIS,
20 the Bottineau Project. But sign up over here if you want
21 to give verbal testimony at tonight's public hearing.

22 MR. RANDY ALTHOUSE: Randy Althouse, that's
23 R-a-n-d-y, A-l-t-h-o-u-s-e, 7117 - 88th Avenue North,
24 Brooklyn Park, 55445.

25 I just wanted to say I read this literature,

1 and I support the changes they're proposing. I think
2 it's a great idea. And I like the new library idea and
3 the light rail. I think it would be great, and I think
4 it would help boost the property values of the homeowners
5 in the area. That's really all I have to say.

6 (Reporter's Note: The public hearing
7 begins at this point.)

8 COMMISSIONER OPAT: Good evening. This is a
9 new system for me, so I'm trying to get oriented here. I
10 appreciate the help. My name is Mike Opat. I'm a
11 Hennepin County Commissioner, and I will be conducting
12 the public hearing tonight.

13 We're going to go over some logistics. But
14 before we do that, we have some Brooklyn Park City
15 Council members here. I'm going to make the apologies
16 for the mayor. He had something come up at work. He's
17 not going to be able to be here tonight. I know he
18 intended to be.

19 We have council members here. So maybe we
20 could start at the end, and, Council Member Gates, you
21 could give an introduction.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER GATES: Council Member Rich
23 Gates from the Central District.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER SCHREIBER: Lona Schreiber,
25 Metropolitan Council, District 2, which includes the

1 Cities of Brooklyn Park and Brooklyn Center.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER JORDAN: John Jordan, West
3 District City Council.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER SELMAN: George Selman,
5 Robbinsdale City Council. I also chair the Community
6 Advisory Committee for the corridor.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER MATA: Bob Mata, West District.

8 COMMISSIONER OPAT: Bob has a meeting down the
9 hall. He's going to be coming back.

10 Appreciate everybody coming out tonight, and I
11 appreciate all of you coming out tonight. I'm sure folks
12 got a chance to meet back in the open house area to look
13 at some of the information there.

14 Tonight we're having the public hearing for the
15 Draft Environmental Impact Statement. Some of the
16 logistics -- well, first off, so what that is is a public
17 hearing, and it means just that. We're here to listen to
18 you. We're not going to be involved in a give and take
19 here. We want to give everybody their three minutes at
20 the podium if they choose to use three minutes. If you
21 want to be a speaker, you can sign up in the back. Maybe
22 folks could wave their hands back there. I can't see the
23 screens, but when your name is -- when you're on deck, if
24 you'd come up here and sit at one of the first three
25 chairs here -- there's paper on them for the upcoming

1 speakers -- and then you can -- there we go. All right.
2 Then we'll be able to move through in an orderly fashion.

3 Some of the folks up here have other
4 commitments that they will be on. I'm going to be here
5 for the duration of the public hearing, so just -- it's a
6 busy night, and people will be coming and going.

7 What else did I want to mention here?

8 I just ask you to, in respect for all the
9 speakers and all the different opinions, just refrain
10 from any cheering or clapping or applause. We'll let
11 everybody have their three minutes hopefully
12 uninterrupted, and we'll move through it, and we'll get
13 through this and hopefully gather a lot of opinions and
14 information tonight.

15 So with that, I'm going to let Joe Gladke from
16 the county give a little bit of an intro to the project,
17 and then we'll begin with the public hearing.

18 JOE GLADKE: Thank you, Commissioner Opat.

19 I'm Joe Gladke with the Hennepin County
20 Engineering and Transit Planning.

21 I'm just going to provide a brief overview
22 tonight. We've had a series of meetings over numerous
23 years. But some people, this might be your first
24 meeting, so I just want to provide a brief overview of
25 kind of where we're at right now, where we've been, and

1 kind of where the project is going from here.

2 The Bottineau Project involves several
3 different agencies. At the federal agency level, we have
4 the Federal Transit Administration. Hennepin County is
5 currently the lead agency regarding the selection of the
6 locally preferred alternative as well as a Draft
7 Environmental Impact Statement. Later on this summer,
8 we'll be transitioning the project from Hennepin County
9 on to the Metropolitan Council. They will really be the
10 lead entity regarding the FEIS, moving it forward with
11 preliminary engineering and ultimately with construction
12 and operations should the project continue to progress.

13 We also have a partnership with all the cities
14 along the line. They are very valuable to the entire
15 process. They control land use around the station
16 locations, and they are involved with getting input on
17 the project and making sure that it fits within the
18 community.

19 As far as the Bottineau LRT Project, you might
20 also hear it referred to as the Metro Blue Line
21 Extension. The Hiawatha Project was renamed Metro Blue
22 Line. And this would be an extension of that. If you
23 were in the other room, you probably got a chance to see
24 the video that kind of shows where it would start in
25 downtown near Target Field, head west on 55, up the BNSF

1 Railroad corridor, then head north on West Broadway up to
2 the final station. It is part of a larger system that we
3 envision for the entire Metropolitan area.

4 As far as where we're at right now, we have
5 spent several years looking at a variety of different
6 alternatives. We have a variety of alternatives on the
7 north end, a variety of alternatives on the south end.
8 We kind of got through that process. We're kind of at
9 the final end of the Draft Environmental Impact
10 Statement. That's kind of shown in the green blocks
11 going across.

12 The next step in that process will be the Final
13 Environmental Impact Statement, which will likely begin
14 toward the end of this year. We'll probably still take
15 another one to two years beyond that. Also on the top
16 line going across as far as kind of the project
17 development aspect of it, there's currently a request for
18 proposals out where Met Council is looking to hire a firm
19 to begin the preliminary engineering for the project.
20 That will be at least two years probably with that.
21 There's also a city approval process as part of the
22 approval of the plans moving forward.

23 Then on the bottom of the process there, we
24 kind of have land use planning. That's another kind of
25 process that's happening continuously with some of these

1 other processes as well.

2 We currently are working on the stations on the
3 southern end, two in Minneapolis, two in Golden Valley.
4 We'll likely be hiring a consultant toward the end of
5 this summer that will again work on the station area
6 planning. This is really kind of a half-mile radius
7 around each one of the potential station locations where
8 they look at pedestrian connections, bike connections,
9 land use around that, what should be considered for
10 potential changes as this type of investment moves
11 forward.

12 Very early on in the process, there were kind
13 of five goals that were looked at regarding this project.
14 Those five goals were to enhance regional access to
15 activity centers, enhance the effectiveness of transit
16 service within the corridor, provide a cost effective and
17 financially feasible transit system, promote sustainable
18 development patterns to support healthy communities and
19 sound environmental practices. These are really kind of
20 the five goals that were really looked at, looking to
21 carry forth in looking at the various alternatives as
22 well as the results.

23 We have looked at a variety of alternatives.
24 Back in early -- actually early 2012, we had some
25 meetings regarding scoping where we came out with a

1 variety of communities along the line, got input
2 regarding some of the key issues that folks thought that
3 were needing additional analysis as part of the DEIS. We
4 got input on the scoping decision. The scoping decision
5 document came out as a result of that in May of 2012.
6 That was a process that was looked at regarding the
7 selection of the locally preferred alternative moving
8 forward. In addition to that, shortly after that scoping
9 decision document was the preparation of the DEIS.
10 That's currently finished. We're in the kind of the
11 comment period right now associated with that. And the
12 comment period will be open until May 29.

13 Exactly what is the DEIS? Well, the DEIS
14 assists decision makers with the assessment of the impact
15 associated with the project documents, the protests and
16 the need, as well as the alternatives that are
17 considered. It addresses transportation, social and
18 environmental impacts, as well as historical impacts and
19 other types of impacts. You'll see in the other room we
20 have kind of a detailed listing of the different sections
21 within the DEIS where you can find specific information
22 if you have more detailed questions. It also defines
23 potential mitigation measures that could be considered as
24 part of the project, facilitates review by federal,
25 state, and local agencies, facilitates review by the

1 general public, satisfies both national and state
2 environmental laws, and also provides a comparison of
3 alternatives and identifies an environmentally preferred
4 alternative.

5 You'll notice in the DEIS there are four
6 different options that are studied. Up on the north end
7 of the corridor, you'll see a study of a Maple Grove
8 section as well as a Brooklyn Park. Maple Grove is known
9 as A. Brooklyn Park is B. The blue section there is C,
10 which is kind of all the alternatives on the southern
11 end. There's an option known as D1, which stays within
12 the railroad corridor. There's another option known as
13 D2, which went out onto West Broadway and south on Penn.
14 And then they all come in and tie in at Target Field. So
15 these are the options that you'll see are studied in the
16 DEIS.

17 Going back to those five goals that I mentioned
18 earlier, and looking at those five alternatives in
19 addition to a no-build alternative and enhanced bus
20 alternative as well, this is kind of a high level
21 assessment to where that turns out. There are 22
22 different evaluation criteria surrounding those five
23 goals. And that's how they come up with kind of how
24 these range. And they range -- such as alternative BCD1
25 is both a locally preferred alternative and the

1 environmental preferred alternative. And that is a map
2 right here from those two options. Again, it is the
3 Brooklyn Park segment BCD1.

4 We have a series of open houses that we're
5 having right now. We're here tonight in Brooklyn Park.
6 We're going to be tomorrow night in Crystal. I also want
7 to mention that there's going to be another meeting on
8 May 21 that's going to talk about the Roadway Project
9 along West Broadway. The Roadway Project is a vision
10 that happened prior to the LRT Project happening along
11 West Broadway. So there is going to be more detailed
12 information about that meeting on the 21st if you're
13 interested in attending that as well.

14 Treatment of the DEIS comments. Hopefully, you
15 saw some of the comments forms that are here. You're
16 certainly welcome tonight to provide verbal comments.
17 You can also provide written comments. Those comments
18 will all be gathered. And we've asked for your email
19 address as part of the comments as well so we can
20 acknowledge that, yes, we did receive your comments.
21 Those comments will then be taken and gathered and kind
22 of put into different classification categories. Those
23 will be shared with the consultants that will be working
24 on both the preliminary engineering as well as the final
25 environmental impact statement.

1 So we do plan on trying to give back to those
2 comments, but it will be quite some time before people
3 kind of hear a response based upon their comments
4 relative to the process. But that's going to be -- as we
5 get into the FEIS, we can address those comments that
6 come up with more work on the project. There's very kind
7 of a high level of engineering work that is done
8 currently. There's much more detail of work that needs
9 to happen during our preliminary engineering and during
10 the last stage as well.

11 With that, I'm going to turn it over to
12 Commissioner Opat to begin the public hearing. I think
13 he's going to go over again kind of some of the ground
14 rules, and then we'll begin the hearing.

15 COMMISSIONER OPAT: Thank you, Joe. And again,
16 if anybody wants to sign up to speak, the table is in the
17 back. I'll ask that you raise your hands again, and then
18 those speakers who are on deck, please come up here.

19 I'll just mention, this is again the third of
20 four public hearings. Tomorrow night in Crystal will be
21 the fourth. And we're at the end of -- this has been a
22 long process, since 2008 I see on one of the slides.
23 It's hard to believe we've been at this -- well, it's
24 been longer than that. But even this last period for six
25 years now.

1 And then the other -- for timing purposes,
2 Mr. Gillette over here will give you a little 30-second
3 wrap-up sign there to kind of help you out. And I'll
4 just ask people to relax. And we're here to listen.

5 And then the last thing I'll say is I know
6 there's concern about both the road project, and some of
7 you may be here about that. That is going to be a
8 separate public hearing. And for some, the obvious
9 question might be, well, why wouldn't you do all of these
10 together. And the answer is, there's no guarantee we'll
11 get all the funding for this project. The light rail
12 projects are -- all of them are in the neighborhood of a
13 billion dollars. If you're following the Southwest
14 Corridor, even more than that. And half of that is to
15 be -- we seek federal funding for that. And we're in
16 competition with regions around the country. So in order
17 to -- meanwhile, the road needs improvement much sooner
18 than that. So that's why they travel on separate paths,
19 so to speak.

20 So with that, we'll begin. The first speaker
21 is -- and please state your name and address for the
22 public record. And I'm going to apologize in advance for
23 any mispronunciation. I'm going to do the best I can
24 here.

25 So Lana Ensrud is first, and on deck you can

1 see John McCarthy, Mary Ostrom, and Chuck Sutphen.

2 JOE GLADKE: Commissioner Opat, if I can
3 interrupt you one second. I'm going to talk to several
4 people in the room next door. If people have questions
5 this afternoon, I'll be available in the other room to
6 address those questions and help people make sure they
7 try and get answers to their questions. We had quite a
8 crowd earlier, and I didn't necessarily get a chance to
9 talk to everyone. So we will be in the other room to
10 answer more questions.

11 COMMISSIONER OPAT: All right. Thank you.

12 MS. LANA ENSRUD: Good evening. Thank you for
13 this opportunity. My name is Lana Ensrud. I'm a 26-year
14 resident at Brooklyn Park, and I live at 10531 Welcome
15 Drive North.

16 I've spoken once before before the council
17 and to some of the city staff who originally told us
18 don't worry about it, this is not going to happen on
19 West Broadway. Every week, most days actually, in the
20 Star Tribune there are articles about light rail. And I
21 would like to quote just from a couple of those and ask
22 you to consider -- particularly our city leaders, ask you
23 to consider these issues that I'm about to mention
24 running down the middle of our city.

25 One article addresses the safety issue. This

1 article is about the Green Line, which is launching soon.
2 And it states that St. Paul Police are launching a safety
3 campaign for drivers and pedestrians because trains will
4 run as often as every 10 minutes. And the city council
5 member in St. Paul said, quote, we got people crossing
6 the barriers in some cases, we got motorists making left
7 turns at times that they shouldn't or getting stuck in
8 the middle of the intersection on the tracks in some
9 cases, and we know that there have been accidents
10 involving light rail.

11 There's been an issue with vibrations and
12 noise. One article talks about, for example, Minnesota
13 Public Radio, where they say, quote, the floor is
14 vibrating, the ceiling is shaking, the structure is
15 making noise, and the Met Council has been forced to
16 spend a million dollars' worth of concrete and rubber
17 pads outside the MPR, a couple of churches in the area,
18 and a U of M research lab.

19 There is an issue of how it will look, how
20 hectic the area becomes. You know, to the southwest,
21 residents are up in arms saying that the tranquility of
22 those neighborhoods will be lost. The paper says they
23 are worried about the aesthetics of 220 trains a day
24 coming through their neighborhoods.

25 There's an issue with our own Brooklyn Park

1 citizens, not just those who will lose their homes but
2 anyone who currently drives on West Broadway or lives
3 near it. You know, it is troubling to me that the
4 decision on this light rail is being made by people who
5 do not live in the neighborhoods. Our two city council
6 members who oppose it are the only two of our city
7 leaders who actually live in that district.

8 There is article after article about light rail
9 that raises red flags about the wisdom of putting a line
10 right through the middle of our city, tearing up streets
11 while it's being built, access to neighborhoods,
12 businesses, churches after its built.

13 And, you know, having said that, light rail is
14 coming to Brooklyn Park. The only question is where
15 should that route go. Common sense tells me it is not a
16 wise decision for our city. You know, we've talked about
17 this before.

18 I have three questions for our city leaders I
19 would like to hear the answers to. What is more
20 desirable about the West Broadway route than any other
21 option? Who will benefit specifically from this route?
22 And why is Brooklyn Park unique from all these other
23 suburbs who want light rail routed out of site and
24 through unpopulated areas?

25 Thank you.

1 COMMISSIONER OPAT: Next is John McCarthy.

2 MR. JOHN MCCARTHY: John McCarthy, 8001 College
3 Park Drive.

4 I happen to live in a pocket neighborhood. If
5 you do anything on West Broadway, you are going to
6 severely hamper coming in and out of my neighborhood for
7 all the residents in that neighborhood. I also work for
8 the City of Minneapolis. And to this day, whenever I'm
9 out on 26th and Hiawatha, all day long that light rail
10 screws things up. You didn't put the money in there to
11 sync the lights with the light rail. You still haven't
12 fixed it. Things like that seem to be overlooked. You
13 just want to cram the rail in and get the thing going,
14 and it screws up the traffic wherever it goes. So
15 syncing the lights.

16 Also, you want to widen West Broadway. Are you
17 going to cut into the college's land as well as the
18 residents, or are you going to do it all on one side
19 until they get past the college and then widen it on both
20 sides? Are you going to have a dogleg? That's going to
21 affect you laying sewer, water, all of that.

22 Are you going to completely close down
23 West Broadway as you're working on that project? And
24 if you do so, when you do set up for the light rail for
25 later, if you're planning on splitting it right down

1 the middle of West Broadway, that doesn't work so good
2 downtown. In the winter, I work nights. In the summer,
3 I work during the day. Wherever the light rail runs
4 downtown, even where the infrastructure is set up for it,
5 when you can only be on this side of the tracks or this
6 side, all you have are headaches. You have people that
7 cannot figure it out. You're always having congestion
8 and light issues and people trying to turn.

9 Also, I don't know how the sewer system runs.
10 When you start tearing all that up, are you going to have
11 temporaries up for months and months and months while you
12 refit?

13 And will there be any additional assessments or
14 levies put on us? Because you say, well, we're going to
15 get the funding for this, and then this is going to pay
16 for that. And then you go to do it, and, oh, gee, we're
17 short of money, so guess who is going to take another
18 short to pay for it.

19 Thank you.

20 COMMISSIONER OPAT: Thank you. Mary Ostrom.

21 MS. MARY OSTROUM: My name is Mary Ostrom. I
22 live at 8560 South Maplebrook Circle. I'm a part of
23 Maplebrook Estates Townhomes. I didn't make it to the
24 previous meeting in April, but my neighbors who did say
25 that some of the council members asked where have we

1 been. Why couldn't we have known about this project.

2 The answer to that question is simple. We've
3 been at work. Maplebrook Estates consists largely of
4 working-class people, residents who basically pour every
5 dime into improving their homes. Our homes are getting a
6 little older. We're at the point now where we're
7 replacing windows, putting in new furnaces, putting in
8 new central air-conditioners. We are a group of
9 residents who care deeply about making improvements to
10 our townhomes and making them the best they can be,
11 improvements, I think, that would never be compensated by
12 the county in their purchase price of our properties.
13 And I think, if anything, planners should be looking at
14 decreasing speed limits on West Broadway, adding more
15 stoplights, and respecting the fact that this is a
16 residential neighborhood. I don't know whose advice the
17 planners and politicians who work for this project have
18 been taking, but I think, clearly, that it is the wrong
19 advice for Maplebrook Estates.

20 Thank you.

21 COMMISSIONER OPAT: Thank you. Chuck Sutphen.

22 MR. CHUCK SUTPHEN: That's a good way to
23 pronounce it.

24 COMMISSIONER OPAT: Good?

25 MR. CHUCK SUTPHEN: Yeah. That's the Dutch

1 way.

2 COMMISSIONER OPAT: What's the other way?

3 MR. CHUCK SUTPHEN: With a short U.

4 My name is Chuck Sutphen, and I live at 8309
5 Rhode Island Drive North in Brooklyn Park. And I'm one
6 of those people who will be cut off. I won't be able to
7 come here to meetings at the City Hall because the street
8 will be torn up, and there's no way out of our
9 neighborhood east -- I mean west. There's no way out.
10 So if you got West Broadway broken up, torn up, well, I
11 won't be able to make any of the meetings. I'm sorry.

12 But I spent seven years on the CLIC, the
13 Citizen Long-Range Improvement Committee. And for six of
14 those seven years, I tried to get people to fix this
15 street, West Broadway, before some college kid gets run
16 over, because there's no sidewalk on the west side of the
17 street. And they keep saying, oh, we're going to have
18 the light rail, we're going to get the light rail, we're
19 going to get it all fixed.

20 There's a big mud puddle there at 83rd Avenue
21 where the water won't run anywhere. In the wintertime,
22 it's a sheet of ice. They won't fix it. They are
23 waiting for the light rail. Well, I'm waiting for the
24 light rail, too, to go somewhere else.

25 I lived in New York where they have the L

1 trains and the subways. I lived in Philadelphia where
2 they had the L trains and subways. In the city proper,
3 the trains were up, or they were underground. They
4 weren't in the middle of the street. They took the
5 trolleys out in Philadelphia and put in electric buses
6 called trackless trams, tremendously more efficient than
7 a train. And what about the geese who try to cross the
8 street? They get run over by cars now. What's going to
9 happen when the trains are coming through there, and the
10 geese don't know to stop for the train?

11 If I go to the V.A., when I go to make my left
12 turn into the compound, the red light is on. You know
13 how that works. That red light stays on forever. And
14 then when it finally does turn green, the things are
15 down, and the train comes. Then the light turns green
16 again, and the trains come from the other way. So then
17 the light turns red again, and you're sitting there for
18 10 minutes waiting to get into the V.A. Now, is that
19 ridiculous or what?

20 So I would appreciate it -- I mean, people need
21 rapid transit. But the poor people who it's supposed to
22 serve are not going to be able to get on the train
23 because they have to take a taxi to the train station. I
24 mean, my goodness, let's be practical. It's going to
25 cost billions of dollars, and those dollars are not free,

1 just like freedom isn't free. Is that right, sir?

2 MALE SPEAKER: That's right.

3 MR. CHUCK SUTPHEN: Freedom is not free. Your
4 tax money, whether it's state, county, federal, it's all
5 coming out of your pocket. And they are taking it to do
6 some, what they call here a boondoggle. There's nobody
7 that can ride that train for what it costs to operate it.
8 Nobody.

9 Thank you.

10 COMMISSIONER OPAT: Thank you. Chris Berne.

11 MR. CHRIS BERNE: It's Chris Berne, and I live
12 at 8743 North Maplebrook Circle.

13 I'm a light rail supporter, but I think the
14 current plan up West Broadway is flawed. The roadway --
15 I'll beg to differ what the Commissioner said earlier
16 about that the road and the light rail are separate.
17 They are integrated because the county wants to build the
18 road now with light rail in mind, even though light rail
19 hasn't been approved yet. So it is part and parcel of
20 the same issue that we'll be talking about here next
21 week.

22 The current plan for Broadway will dislodge 30
23 to 50 families out of a one-mile corridor of this road.
24 And it will also negatively impact dozens of other
25 families who don't necessarily butt up against the rail

1 line but will be in very close proximity.

2 Many of these homes that will be taken are
3 under water. Everybody that lives there is middle income
4 or low income. Many of these are immigrant families who
5 have come to this country to find a better way. This is
6 their home. This is their dream. And it will be taken
7 away from them.

8 In the Middlebrook Townhouse Association where
9 I live, it's a development of 436 people -- families, not
10 people. Excuse me. Families. It is slated to lose
11 dozens of homes. The cost to purchase these homes is
12 multiplied because most of these units are either quads
13 or six-plexes. So if you take one, you need to take
14 four. Now, when you buy the home, you have not bought
15 the land. The land is owned by the common interest
16 community of Maplebrook Townhouse Association. That land
17 will need to be purchased. Furthermore, with the loss of
18 eight to ten percent of our homes in that community,
19 there will be an ongoing, permanent loss of revenue for
20 our community that will need to be part of this
21 discussion.

22 I have an alternative plan that I would like
23 the engineers to take a look at. I've discussed it now
24 with some of the city council members of Brooklyn Park
25 and have gotten positive response. I'm a business owner,

1 so I know what I'm going to be saying here may not sit
2 well with business people. But I think what we need --
3 what it needs to do is come in south of Fleet Farm along
4 83rd, go north up Wyoming, doglegging into Winnetka,
5 across 610 where Winnetka used to go across. It is all
6 public right-of-way. It is all roadway. There is not a
7 single home that will be taken. There is not a single
8 business that will need to be disrupted. There will be
9 access issues, as there are access issues along Broadway.
10 I get that. I understand that. But I think it deserves
11 this consideration, and I think it needs to be looked at.

12 If the light rail were to go there, one of the
13 issues is the community college will not be directly
14 served. They will be within three blocks. If you've
15 ever lived in Minneapolis, taken public transport,
16 walking three blocks to your bus stop is nothing. Once
17 you get downtown, you might have to walk three, four,
18 five, six blocks to get to where you're going. Three
19 blocks to serve the community college is not an issue as
20 far as I'm concerned.

21 We don't want another Southwest Light Rail
22 debate here. Let's get this done right on the front side
23 rather than spending tens of millions of dollars
24 afterwards to fix a problem that wasn't done right
25 initially.

1 Thank you.

2 COMMISSIONER OPAT: Thank you.

3 Dan Couture.

4 MR. DAN COUTURE: Good afternoon. My name is
5 Dan Couture. I live at 8521 South Maplebrook Circle.

6 And my issue with the Draft Environmental
7 Impact Study is the fact that it's incomplete and
8 inaccurate. I'm going to just ask everyone in the room.
9 If you own a home between -- along West Broadway between
10 78th Avenue North and 93rd Avenue North, please raise
11 your hand. Hold them up, please. I want everybody to
12 see.

13 The folks who are raising their hands right now
14 are not reflected in this Draft Environmental Impact
15 Statement, because the properties between 78th Avenue and
16 93rd Avenue aren't included in any of the statistics that
17 were considered when you were evaluating Option A to go
18 through Maple Grove or Option B to go through
19 Brooklyn Park.

20 Thank you. You can put your hands down.

21 Is anyone here to talk about wetlands, saving
22 wetlands, or are we basically here to save our homes,
23 maintain our property values, to enjoy the peace and
24 quiet that we presently enjoy along West Broadway? We
25 don't want light rail trains coming 500 times a day every

1 10 minutes, 21 hours a day, from 4:00 a.m. to 1:00 a.m.
2 clanging their bells all along West Broadway.

3 The issue that I have -- a cynical person would
4 say that the reason why the West Broadway reconstruction
5 project was broken out from the light rail Bottineau
6 Transitway was to separate and to hide the impact of
7 these people's homes on the project, because, currently,
8 you're only showing that you have to take eight homes
9 along segment B, when, in fact, the true number is closer
10 to 60. And the number of homes impacted is closer to
11 100, not the 30 that are listed. That's what we're here
12 about. We're not here to save wetlands or trails. We're
13 not asking you to dig tunnels. We want you to put this
14 somewhere else. Keep it along 81. Take it up through
15 the granite quarry and head it towards Maple Grove.
16 These folks want to hang onto their homes. They want to
17 maintain their property values. People want to live near
18 transit. They don't want to live on transit.

19 FEMALE SPEAKER: Thank you.

20 MR. DAN COUTURE: I think everyone who has seen
21 this is familiar with this document. It's a scorecard
22 that they use to evaluate all the options. On here it
23 says, if any area, any one area of an alternative is
24 considered poor, the entire alternative is graded poor.
25 I think the fact that we're going to be losing 60 homes

1 along West Broadway and impacting another 100 homes that
2 we're taking property from is going to grade the adverse
3 impacts for the BCD1 option poor, which then makes the
4 Maple Grove option the only non-poor option remaining.

5 COMMISSIONER OPAT: Thank you.

6 Thomas Hanson.

7 MR. THOMAS HANSON: Thomas Alfred Hanson,
8 6741 - 83rd Place.

9 I've lived in Brooklyn Park all my life. And
10 I'm glad to see light rail coming up. My folks sold
11 their house on 94 and Lyndale right where the fire
12 station is, where an on-ramp -- I bet everybody has drove
13 up 94 and got on the on-ramp there from the farmer's
14 market there at one time. And the freeway didn't
15 actually end until 1979. My dad died before he ever had
16 an opportunity to use it.

17 And you can't stop progress. Yeah, you can
18 change it. You can alter it. But I do believe it's one
19 of the best things that can possibly happen for
20 Brooklyn Park. We have a lot of industry up there. We
21 have the college. We have a new library coming. People
22 who complain now are probably not good for anybody in 20
23 or 30 years when it becomes a valuable asset, and there
24 will be more traffic than there is today on 94, 81, 252.
25 I know everybody loves sitting in traffic. Where you can

1 sit on a train and fly down to downtown, and it's just
2 like the trunk, the tree, little limbs coming into the
3 main trunk and they zip you downtown. Three dollars to
4 go from here to the airport, Mall of America, St. Paul or
5 Southwest is a phenomenal idea.

6 Yeah, it's going to impact people. Impacted my
7 folks. We moved to Brooklyn Park. I live close to it.
8 I'm for it 100 percent. Yeah, there's maybe an
9 alternative going up the railroad tracks all the way to
10 Monticello, but that's not what we're here for. So I
11 like the ES55 alternative, BCD1 myself. And I think over
12 a period of time, when we're all gone and we look back,
13 it will be just like Chicago's L that's like riding a
14 boxcar compared to light rail that goes down to the mall
15 right now. And I'm glad to see the county and the city
16 look ahead and say let's check Broadway before we decide
17 to not build West Broadway and then turn around and tear
18 it up a couple of months later or a couple of years later
19 because all of a sudden it's going to go through no
20 matter what. So I'm glad they're thinking ahead and
21 working together as a team instead of everybody always
22 saying they're spending my tax money, they should have
23 done this before, they should have done this.

24 Well, everybody is commenting, and that's my
25 comment. We've lost a lot of wetlands. We lose them all

1 the time. And just take a drive out pheasant hunting in
2 Montevideo, Minnesota. You can see drain tiling
3 everywhere. I mean, you're worried about wetlands on
4 West Broadway? Give me a break. There's drain tiling
5 that just does not quit. And then they wonder why the
6 rivers flood after the ground thaws and the drain tiles
7 rip up.

8 Thank you very much for the opportunity.

9 COMMISSIONER OPAT: Thank you.

10 Jean Kidd.

11 MS. JEAN KIDD: Jean Kidd. I live at 1717
12 Xerxes Avenue North in Golden Valley.

13 I'm sorry I'm at your meeting. I couldn't make
14 our meeting in our community.

15 My issue with -- and I was at the 2008 meeting,
16 so I've been along in this project a long time.

17 My issue is with the Met Council, that this is
18 going to switch over to their control so that your
19 elected officials are no longer in the loop of decision
20 making. And this body that will govern over this project
21 is not elected. And that's my issue with this entire
22 project is that a group of individuals that are
23 hand-picked, hand-selected, and not involved in the
24 election process where we as members of a democracy get
25 to participate are going to be making decisions about all

1 of us.

2 When it comes to the wetlands, I don't know how
3 they're going to navigate or where they're proposing
4 multiple stations right outside my door. And it's
5 interesting that two bridges, one on Golden Valley Road
6 and then one on Plymouth, were just recently redone.
7 Their tracks would not fit underneath that. So you're
8 talking about draining the wetlands down there. And I
9 find it interesting that they want to propose a station
10 on Plymouth Avenue when in fact I was part of a process
11 when the bus company wanted to stop having bus service on
12 Plymouth Avenue because they said we don't have the
13 ridership to support it anymore. Then, lo and behold,
14 we're going to put a station there.

15 I am for light rail. What I'm looking for,
16 though, is transparency in the process. And that, to me,
17 does not exist. I don't know what's gone on from what I
18 saw originally in 2008 what was proposed and what's
19 looking -- what I'm looking at now. It wasn't even
20 remotely similar. And where did that happen? Because
21 I've been involved. And it was like all of a sudden
22 we've got a completely different project. And no one
23 will -- everybody always says, oh, well, I wasn't
24 involved in the project back then. I don't know what
25 happened. I'm not there. It's where is the

1 accountability? Who does know? Linda Higgins probably
2 knows. I know. The members of my community know. But
3 like everybody here, they tend to take that path of least
4 resistance where they think they can put things through
5 and no one will show up. I'm so happy everybody showed
6 up here. So I'm looking for transparency, and I want the
7 Met Council to be a voted-on body, not people that just
8 get to be put on there to make decisions and the elected
9 officials are no longer in that process and then we say,
10 oh, the Met Council did it. That's not fair. That's not
11 why we live in America.

12 So that's all I have to say. Thank you for
13 your time.

14 COMMISSIONER OPAT: Scott Greenman.

15 MR. SCOTT GREENMAN: My name is Scott Greenman.
16 I've lived in Brooklyn Park for 13 years. I grew up in
17 San Francisco and in and around San Francisco, one of the
18 only cities to keep their rail system. I've lived in
19 Chicago. I spent a summer in New York. I know what rail
20 does, and I'm for this project.

21 My questions are -- well, I live at 7575
22 Louisiana Avenue North, which is an impacted property,
23 right across from Cub and Target. Those homes -- those
24 twin homes are impacted. And it looks like they're going
25 to go from what it says -- what the map says.

1 I think this project, and especially the
2 alignment going up Broadway, is basically going to
3 connect Target to Target, Minneapolis to Brooklyn Park
4 North. And I think there are better ways to do it. We
5 have a rail line that goes to Monticello, goes right into
6 Maple Grove. Why not use that? Maple Grove probably
7 doesn't want it. What do you think? I think they don't.

8 I'm going to be impacted, like I said. I'm for
9 the project. It's -- I don't see any of my neighbors
10 here. Does anyone live in that area? Anyone? Anyone?
11 No? It's a big thing. Literally, my view is Cub and
12 Target. And I'm -- I don't know. I'm nervous. I'm
13 concerned. And I'm trying to lend my voice to what's
14 going on. And I'll be at all the other meetings, and I
15 will keep an eye on what's going on.

16 Thank you very much.

17 COMMISSIONER OPAT: Steven Jones.

18 MR. STEVEN JONES: Hi. My name is Steve Jones,
19 and I live at 7956 Orchard right over here, but I own a
20 property over there that's involved. That's 8208 Quebec
21 Court.

22 I just found out about this shortly before the
23 last meeting. And the lack of transparency around this
24 is really concerning to me, as several other people have
25 said. And now I'm just getting involved in it. I think

1 we just need to look at it a little more. What's coming
2 out in spades here is that what we're building here is a
3 conduit to Target for low cost labor for them, and we're
4 ruining my neighborhood for them, and I don't like it.

5 So thank you.

6 COMMISSIONER OPAT: Harry Kuehn.

7 MR. HARRY KUEHN: Hi. My name is Harry Kuehn.
8 I live at 8770 North Maplebrook Circle.

9 I just have a few comments. One of the council
10 members at the last meeting said where have you been. He
11 goes, where have you been? It's been in the papers.
12 Yes, we all know that. Don't treat us like an idiot. We
13 know it's coming. But the impact is not known. For
14 example, if you want a new house, you have to be 50 feet
15 at least minimum from the roadway. Now they are going to
16 put that thing 20 feet from my deck. That's okay. We're
17 going to grandfather you in. Thank you. You know? It's
18 nuts. And I guess the city council members, were you
19 going to put your face on the side of this train going
20 down the road? Because that will be your legacy. And
21 would any of you want this thing to run 20 feet from your
22 house? I don't think anybody would.

23 That's all I've got to say. Thank you for your
24 time.

25 COMMISSIONER OPAT: George Kroll.

1 MR. GEORGE KROLL: Hi. George Kroll. I live
2 at 8700 Maryland, and so I'm right off of West Broadway
3 but in far enough that my property won't be impacted
4 directly.

5 I think we've heard a lot of good comments so
6 far. And it seems like the people here realize that
7 light rail is probably going to come. The question is
8 what's it around. I think there's a lot of people in the
9 community who aren't represented here tonight. And I
10 just want to urge everyone to take one of these Bottineau
11 Transitway forms and take them home. It says, "Draft
12 Environmental Impact Statement." They were in that room
13 out there. Get a copy. Circulate them to your
14 neighbors. Make sure that your neighbors and that you
15 yourselves send in your comments to the Hennepin County
16 Housing, Community Works, and Transit so that your voices
17 can be heard. We all need to rally our community members
18 who aren't here so that their opinions can be heard.

19 And I'm thinking the majority opinion here is
20 that we don't want light rail coming down West Broadway.
21 I think people realize that light rail will come, but
22 there are better alternatives. And we need to make sure
23 the people who aren't represented here in our community
24 have their voices heard and these forms get into our
25 decision makers. So I'm just urging everyone to do that.

1 Thank you.

2 COMMISSIONER OPAT: Thank you. All right. Is
3 anyone else signed up? Okay. In that case, I want to
4 again let you know that the open house part will go on
5 for a little while. And with that, thank you all again
6 for coming and for sharing your remarks.

7 And let us adjourn.

8 (Concluded at 6:17 p.m.)

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