SOUTHWEST LIGHT RAIL PROJECT
PUBLIC HEARING
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2009
PROCEDINGS

COMMISSIONER DORFMAN: Okay. We're going to get started. Welcome everybody. Thank you so much for coming out to this important public hearing. This is a formal public hearing before the Southwest Light Rail Corridor Policy Advisory Committee, and it is on behalf of the Hennepin County Regional Rail Authority.

Everything that's said tonight, everything we hear from you is going to be transcribed for the record. Not all the policy advisory committee members could be here, and so we want to make sure that they all have an opportunity to hear what you have to say before any recommendations are made.

If there are PAC members, policy advisory committee members that are not here, but there are alternates in the front row, you should come up and take those spaces. So I just wanted to make sure that alternates should know that. If you have any question about that, you can ask Kathy Doty, who is running around somewhere.

Let me just briefly introduce the PAC members and the alternates, as well. Let me do that first. Then we'll tell you some brief ground rules, and we'll get started, because we're all here to listen to you tonight.
So I'm Gail Dorfman with Hennepin County. I'm on the Hennepin County Board. I represent Southwest Minneapolis and St. Louis Park, and I chair the policy advisory committee. I think you guys have to talk fairly closely to these mics to be heard.

COMMISSIONER CALLISON: I'm Jan Callison. I'm also a Hennepin County board member. I represent Hopkins, Minnetonka, and the northern part of Eden Prairie.

MR. REMINGTON: Hi, I am city council member Ralph Remington, and I represent Ward 10, which encompasses Uptown, the Wedge, East Isles, and so on and so forth, Cedar-Isles-Dean.

MR. ROWAN: Bruce Rowan, Hopkins City Council.

MR. DUFFY: Good evening. I'm Dan Duffy. I'm a member of the Policy Advisory Committee, and I represent the Twin West Chamber of Commerce, the business interest.

MS. SANGER: I'm Sue Sanger. I'm a member of the city council in St. Louis Park, and I'm the alternate for St. Louis Park to the Policy Advisory Committee.

MR. WAGNER: Tony Wagner, and I am the city council member for Minnetonka, and representing
the City of Minnetonka on the Policy Advisory Committee.

COMMISSIONER DORFMAN: And then if alternate Policy Advisory Committee members who are here could introduce themselves, too, that would be great, just so people know who you are and where you are. And you can use the mic right there.

MR. AKIN: Hi, everyone. I'm -- well, wait a minute.

COMMISSIONER DORFMAN: Is it on?
UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: It's on.
MR. AKIN: It's on.
Hi, I'm Gary Akin. I'm the alternate for the Twin West Chamber.

MS. TOLLIVER: Hi, I'm Luanne Tolliver, and I'm the alternate for the City of Minnetonka.

MS. KING: I'm Cheryl King, and I'm the alternate to Hopkins.

MR. DEWITT: I'm John Dewitt. I'm the alternate for the Midtown Community Rose Partnership.

MR. CUSACK: Good evening. I'm George Cusack, alternate for the Cedar Lake Park Association.

MS. VENOWITZ: Amy Venowitz, an alternate representing the Metropolitan Council.

MR. MILLER: Rod Miller with the Eden
Prairie Chamber.

COMMISSIONER DORFMAN: Now, I know there are, in addition to Cheryl King, who's on the Policy Advisory Committee, who already introduced herself as a city council member from Hopkins, and I know there's some other elected officials here. I saw the Mayor of Hopkins, Gene Maxwell, come in.

Gene, where are you? There you are.

Thank you so much for being here.

Are there any other elected officials that have come tonight, other than those of us up here?

Well, let me introduce State Senator Terri Bonoff, who's here and going to say a couple words, and then we're going to get started.

Terri.

SENATOR BONOFS: Thank you, Commissioner.

Well, welcome everyone. I just wanted to thank all of you for being here. I and Terri Bonoff represent the northern part of Minnetonka, Plymouth, and Medicine Lake in the State Senate, and I serve on the transportation committee.

So I'm here tonight really just to listen to what you have to say. And also I want to thank those at the table, because this project has been an
example of what true partnership can really be with
the county, the city, the Met council, the legislature
and you the citizens. So I'm anxious to hear what you
have to say, and I appreciate the participation of all
at the table. Thank you.

Okay. So we're here to hear from you
tonight. That's our sole purpose for being here, and
to comment about the Southwest Light Rail project,
which is generating lots of interest, as you can see,
throughout our communities. And, as a general rule,
what we're going to do tonight is we're really
listening to you. And so when we get an opportunity,
and I'll go over those ground rules, come up, and take
your time, be concise. We're designating three
minutes for everybody. The time clock is right there,
and so look for that. You'll get a signal when you're
getting close to the end.

We are not, as a rule, going to respond
to your comments tonight. Some of you may have
questions and certainly comments. We are going to
record everything for the record, and it will inform
decisions coming up by the Policy Advisory Committee,
so thank you very much again for being here tonight.

Just a little bit of background. I think
a lot of you know a lot about this project, but we've
been looking at the viability of light rail in this
corridor from Minneapolis to Eden Prairie for about
eight years now, and we have looked at a number of
different alternative routes and station locations.
We've been looking at environmental issues that would
need to be addressed on whichever route is selected.

And the hallmark of the work on this
project in the very beginning has been a very strong,
sustained, and comprehensive public involvement.
We've held more than 25 open houses, five public
hearings before this one today. We've made
presentations to 100 neighborhoods and business groups
and have really strived from the very beginning to
keep the public informed on our website, with
newsletters, and different outreach materials. Public
involvement is essential to doing this right, and so
it's absolutely critical that you're here tonight and
will continue to be involved as this project moves
forward.

This is, of course, a public hearing
tonight. We're following up behind another public
hearing before the Hennepin County Regional Rail
Authority on October 20th from 4 to 7 p.m. Downtown in
the Hennepin County Government Center on the 24th
floor. That's another opportunity to formally present
at a public hearing.

I have a list of speakers who have signed up in the order they signed up, I believe. Some people signed up on the website. Some people signed up, most tonight, and people are continuing to sign up. And so I'm going to call names. There's a few people that have to leave early because they have to pick up kids and stuff, and so I'm going to call on them first; otherwise, I'm going to go in order, and if you haven't signed and halfway through, you feel the need to say something, just fine, go out to the desk in the back and sign up, and they'll be an opportunity for you to do that.

Again, it will be keep your comments to three minutes. And when you come to mic -- and you can go to either mic. And what I'll do is give the first two names, and so if you are second, you can be prepared and come down so you're ready to go as soon as the person in front of you finishes. And state your name and address, and then offer your comments. And to be respectful to all the speakers, because we have a lot of people, I think, who want to comment tonight, please refrain from making comments or applause. We really want everyone to just feel free to get their perspective out in an open environment.
And so, again, thank you for coming, and we will begin tonight by -- who wants to be first on the list? The first person I have is Will O'Keefe, and then the second person will be Nancy Johnston.

If somebody's not here when they call -- when I call their name, we'll just go back and try to pick them up later if they're getting here later.

Will.

MR. O'KEEFE: Okay. Can everybody hear me? All right. So I am here -- my name is Will O'Keefe. I'm a resident of Uptown and live at 3538 Fremont. I am here as a concerned citizen, I guess you would say. This is no case of not in my backyard. This is a case of practicality. The route of 3C is not the most practical route. In fact, it's not even the most feasible route for light rail. Light rail, as a project, is incredibly worthy. And I believe firmly in its prospects to improve the community and improve the Twin Cities region, but in order to do so, it has to be comprehensive.

And so while I do think that 3A is the best route for commuters from the Southwest suburbs, the most important thing to be done is to combine that with streetcar car system along the Greenway. What this achieves is providing more comprehensive transit
to Uptown, Lyn-Lake, and the Southwest suburbs. This means that not only will it be best for commuters, but it will be better for people trying to get in and around Uptown, which, as I'm sure everybody knows, is a nightmare with traffic and everything else.

There's a reason why not that many people ride the buses along Lake Street trying to go place to place, because it stops every 20 seconds. It's not a fast route. A streetcar would be faster and would have a dedicated route. It could reach higher speeds and more properly hit the areas that need it. And, really, in a lot of respects, it would help the growth of Uptown and Lyn-Lake. And Lyn-Lake is, obviously, a burgeoning neighborhood development for residential and commercial development. So I think that a streetcar is the proper way to further that development and move forward.

This really is an issue of practicality in my mind. 3C is a really interesting route and one that I was, in all honestly, really excited about; but it will have a harder time getting funding from the FTA. And if you were to combine 3A with a streetcar, it would improve 3A's chances, and it would improve the likelihood of a streetcar getting through, because when it happens on its own, it is harder to get FTA
funding, which whether we like it or not, it's not real fair.

So I think the streetcar is the best way to go, in addition to light rail, and that would be my thoughts. So thank you.

COMMISSIONER DORFMAN: Thank you very much.

Nancy Johnston is next, followed by Joanne Strate, followed by Ross D'Emanuele.

Nancy.

MS. JOHNSTON: My name is Nancy Johnston, and I live at 2833 East Lake of the Isles, and I'm president of the East Isles Residents Association. You have been sent our recommendation passed by our board last June. It is based on the neighborhood meeting that we had in May, at which Ms. Katie Walker presented a lot of material. And it was considered then by the board, and the board has continued to study and evaluate and look at the material that has come out and has reaffirmed our recommendation that -- our strong recommendation that the Southwest Transitway LRT route be through the Kenilworth Corridor.

And you have received this and also our reasons for this, which I would just mention are
because of traffic and safety concerns, noise and
vibration, environmental issues, the existing transit
along the Midtown Corridor, especially Lake Street and
Hennepin, the cost and federal funding, and ridership
and development evaluations that have been done.

I also don't feel that this is not in my
backyard. I think when we start -- when our board
started this in our neighborhood, we weren't sure. We
were all very much in favor of mass transit. We use
it. My husband uses it every day. It's wonderful bus
service along Hennepin and the Uptown Corridor. But
we do feel, in looking at all the data and facts, that
the Kenilworth Corridor is the prefer -- much
preferable over the Midtown Greenway. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER DORFMAN: Thank you very
much.

Joanne Strate and Ross D-Emanuele.

MS. STRATE: Hi, I'm Joanne Strate, like
karate and Maserati. I live at 5417 Smetana, and this
is in my backyard, as you might recall, Gail, because
I've talked to you.

Anyway, just to get the record straight,
I am a proponent of light rail, and I'm here to fight
the uphill battle. And I'd like to see 1A get chosen.
I know 3A's probably going to win by a landslide, but,
you know, we've got Brett Favre, so stranger things can happen.

My comment -- and I do have some questions, and I guess you're not going to answer them, so I'd just like some verifications at some point. But my major comment is I'm in sales, and I'm driving around -- I work out of my home, and I'm driving around a lot. Smetana has a very steep grade, and where this is going to cross, I think, is an accident or accidents waiting to happen, fatalities waiting to happen.

I don't know if anybody's looked into the grade situation, because if it's snowing, I totally avoid going up Smetana because it's slippery, and going down, it's the same situation. And I don't know if you're looking at heated streets or anything of that nature. I've got to move along here.

Questions, if I can get a verification, who knows when, I was wondering what the dollar difference is for 1A and 3A. I know that 1A is cheapest because it's on the existing rail line. And I would be very curious to know what the percentage is for federally funded versus state or county funded. So I'd like to know -- you know, that would certainly make a difference. I'm sure 1A is a lot cheaper.
And I did check -- because when I talked to a few of you people in the meeting last month, they said, well, your home value is going to increase. And so I was kind of checking on the Internet to see if I could find any data that would support that. And there has been some studies done in Denver, and they said, yeah, the home value could appreciate by somewhere from 12 to 33 percent. And I thought, okay, that's cool. However, I'm not sure if they're talking proximity to the stations or just the line itself, in which case I don't know where I stand there.

And last, but not least, I talked to Elise at Minnetonka about decibel levels, and -- considering I'm a block away, and I know the train runs from 5A to 1A, every several minutes during peak, every 10 minutes during nonpeak. And she says it will be like an air compressor outside, and a can opener inside. And is that at -- I'd like to know if that's at the crossing level. And she said Minnetonka says you can't have any whistles. And I know that the crossing is like right at the border of Minnetonka and Hopkins. So those are my concerns, and I've got a whole 13 seconds left to tell a joke, but I can't think of one right now.

COMMISSIONER DORFMAN: Thank you very
much.

For folks who ask very specific questions that deserve answers, we are, as quickly as possible, going to get them up on our website, the question and the answer, at southwesttransitway.org. And then if you don't have access to the website, you can also give us a call, and we'll make sure you get answers to your questions.

Ross D'Emanuele, followed by David Greene.

MR. D'EMANUELE: Thank you. I'm Ross D'Emanuele. I live at 2808 Irving Avenue in Minneapolis. And I urge the Policy Advisory Committee to approve the recommendations of the Technical Advisor Committee and designate route 3A as the locally preferred alternative.

We know for a fact that the Midtown route involves dozens more government takings of property, which raises the spectrum of lawsuits that can halt the project for years. We know that the Midtown routes involve dozens of more historic resources, which again raise the prospect of lawsuits that could stop the project for years. And most important we know after a study of all the routes, none of the Midtown routes are viable to even go into preliminary
There has been and I'm sure there will be tonight a lot of talk about study data and the process and how somehow both of them are flawed, and I think those arguments are really a proxy for saying we don't like the results of the study data and the process. The fundamental facts are that all of the routes are subject to the same exact process, the same exact study methodology done according to FTA standards and by independent professionals who have no interest in the outcome.

If there were flaws in the data or the methodology, those flaws would apply equally to all the routes. To then go on and say that those flaws would favor one route or another is pure theorizing. In fact, I can guarantee you that if I spent two days and studied this -- the data sources and the methodologies, if you gave me a route, I could come up with a set of arguments why it favors that route over the other. That's not a basis for an unbiased assessment. That's just advocacy.

And that goes to a very fundamental point about the assertion that the process is somehow not transparent and fair. The advocates for the Midtown route are essentially asking you to allow them to
subject the data to their own study and analysis, to their own projections, their own estimates, their own theorizing. It is at that point that the process will become not transparent and not fair. It is then, not now, that you will have trouble justifying your decision.

So I urge you not to take that step. We have a viable, entirely appropriate route that was subject to an unbiased process and study according to FTA standards and by unbiased professionals. Let's build the Southwest LRT line and approve the recommendations of the TAC. Thank you.

COMMISSION DORFMAN: Thank you very much.

David, I think you have three folks with you, as well. As you come up to the mic, I just want to mention that we've been joined by Representative Steve Simon. Steve has -- has led our groups at the legislature to get support for this -- for the Southwest Corridor, so thanks, Steve.

David.

MR. GREENE: Hello. Thanks. My name is David Greene, and I've got some folks with me that needed to be out of here by 7:30, so I thank you for working with us on that.

For over six years, I've been leading
transit campaigns with ISAIAH, which is an organization of a hundred churches and congregations dedicated to racial and economic justice here in Minnesota. One of the things we did was secure the local sales tax that's going to fund a large portion of this line.

Now, I live in Uptown, and I'm tired of being cut off from North Minneapolis. That's where my dad grew up, and I've got roots there. That's why I support the 3A Kenilworth alignment for the Southwest LRT, and so does ISAIAH. There are all sorts of technical reasons for this: cost, engineering, logistics, ridership. But I really want to focus on people. Who is this line going to serve? It's going to serve suburban commuters, and it should. It's going to serve Downtown Minneapolis, and it should.

So let's think about our transportation history for a moment.

Over the years we've constructed freeways and other barriers that have led to a reality where a person living in North Minneapolis does not have a viable transit option to get to a job in the southwest suburbs. That's a whole lot of people cut off from opportunity. The 3A alignment restores that link, and with connecting bus service will be a vital artery for
the whole north side, serving both those heading out and those heading in.

This is a racial justice issue. If we're going to spend a billion dollars on this project, we should get significantly improved transit service for those who need it the most. 3C and 3C2 do not do that. 3A does. If we choose to spend $500 million more on 3C to serve an area of Minneapolis already served by the best transit network in the state and we keep people in North Minneapolis cut off from schools and jobs, what are we saying? Do we want to say we're going to spend $500 million to keep transportation inequity in place? Shame on us if we do.

If we don't route along 3A, it's not transportation. It's amputation. And what of that $500 million? That's funding for another commuter rail line, at least, maybe two, not to mention streetcars that enhance bus services. This is a decision that affects the entire Twin Cities Metro area. Furthermore, we must keep Penn, Van White, Royalston stations going forward, as these are the opportunity links for North Minneapolis. We also need to maintain stations in the suburban job centers and those near educational institutions.

So I've heard the stories of those living
in North Minneapolis, and it's really clear to me that
this is the most right and just thing to do for the
City of Minneapolis. 3A makes our community more
healthy. Thanks for your work on this project.

COMMISSION DORFMAN: So come forward. I
don't know if you're on the list or not, but I think
you are, but go ahead and give your name and address.

MR. MCCOY: My name is Arthur McCoy, and
I live on 4th and 10th, and I'm (inaudible).

Simply, I think that the 3A line will do
a tremendous thing toward so many people that lives in
the Penn area, the Van White area, and the Hopkins
area, for education and for jobs. You know, now they
don't have to look inside the city anymore, they can
go out and find those jobs, and they can be more
flexible towards them.

I actually have a friend that stays in
the Hopkins area and has to catch three buses just to
make it to school on time and wakes up at 5 in the
morning, and he's complained about it numerous times
and things like that. So having this 3A, you know,
would do a tremendous thing for kids, for parents, and
so many others. I think that 3A will be really
outstanding for people that need jobs because of the
simple fact that people in the city is being cut off
from so many jobs, and I think that they need to get
the 3A because it will help them look and help them
have more opportunities to find jobs and things like
that.

COMMISSIONER DORFMAN: Thank you very
much. Go ahead and speak into the mic.

MR. TAYLOR: I'm (inaudible) Taylor, and
I live on 1816 Glenwood, and I also go to Hopkins
High. And I believe 3A is a pretty good train ride
for us because this is -- this is going to help with
diversity, for our cultures to experience a different
ethnicity. And this is creating more jobs so that
people in North Minneapolis, it's having them
experience something new.

This is also going to help people who --
who can't get on the bus because they have a
disability, their back hurts or whatever, you know,
medical conditions; and this train is going to help
them be able to move efficiently and smoothly
through -- through the suburbs and whatnot. And I
just -- I really feel that this is going to help a lot
of situations in life if we do this, so thank you.

COMMISSION DORFMAN: Thank you. And as
the next person comes up, let me just tell you the
next few people, Art Higgenbotham and Karen Lee
Rosar.

MS. CHATMAN: Thank you. My name is Babette Chatman. I live at 350 Logan in the Harrison neighborhood of North Minneapolis. I'm a property manager and a director of Outreach, and this young man that you just spoke to, who lives in one of our properties, he lives in North Minneapolis. He attends school in Hopkins. If there is a way for us to help him find a job between Hopkins and North Minneapolis, it would help him to be more independent.

Another reason that we think this is a great opportunity is that some of the tenants that we have in our properties can find jobs going west, as opposed to trying to find a job Downtown, which may or may -- everyone is trying to find a job Downtown. And there's -- there's this cross-exchange, because with 3A not only can we have people finding jobs in the -- in the southwest suburbs, but we provide an opportunity for residents to come into the cities. We have all this excitement around the ballpark. And so if we have light rail, then we don't have to worry about congestion of cars trying to come in our neighborhood and finding parking to walk to the Dome. They can take the light rail, and they will get Downtown, but they can also walk in our communities.
North Minneapolis is alive and well, and we think that this light rail would also open up more opportunities for broadening communities and the exchange of culture. I thank you.

COMMISSION DORFMAN: Thank you very much.

Art Higgenbotham and Karen Lee Rosar.

MR. HIGGENBOTHAM: Good evening, PAC members. I'm Art Higgenbotham, and I'm president of the Cedar-Isles-Dean Neighborhood Association. Our neighborhood is affected both by the Kenilworth route and by the Uptown route, so we have no specific axe to grind.

But I am here to talk on behalf of the Uptown group tonight. I think that it's important that we consider serving that part of Southwest Minneapolis. If we forego it at this point in time, Uptown remains a backwater on our metro transit system. We would like to ask you for deferral of the decision of the locally preferred alternative route until more complete and detailed information is available. Some of that information was presented to the Technical Advisory Committee hours before they met to make their decision.

But specifically tonight I'd like to talk about the issue of travel time. And I'd like to
address a view of those of you who live in the southwest suburbs. There was a study put out by the Hennepin County Railroad Authority two years ago that shows that it takes 4.4 minutes less time to get Downtown from Minnetonka, Eden Prairie, Hopkins, or St. Louis Park on the Uptown route to the 11th and 12th Street stations than it takes to go down to 5th and Nicollet on the Kenilworth route.

Now, of course, you can opt to get off at the Royalston Station and walk on an icy sidewalk with an Alberta Clipper at your back, through a crime-ridden neighborhood, half a mile to get down to Hennepin Avenue, but I don't think many of you want to do that. Rather, I think you're going to enjoy the extra 37 hours a year that riding the Uptown line will give you with your family if you live in Southwest. Not only that, but the Uptown line lets you get to Eat Street for a meal, the convention center, or Pfister Hall for a concert, to St. Thomas University, to the theatre district, to take your kids to the bus station.

Now, unfortunately, the Kenilworth line only takes you to the Minneapolis Impound Lot to tow your kid's -- get your kid's car that was towed there. So I would urge you to support the Uptown line in view
of the greater service to the Metropolitan area.

Thank you.

COMMISSION DORFMAN: Thank you, Art.

Karen, after Karen is Michael Wagner.

MS. ROSAR: Greetings. My name is Karen Lee Rosar, and my address is 111 4th Avenue North, and it's Downtown, Minneapolis. I am a board of director and cochair of the Planning and Zoning Committee of the North Loop Neighborhood Association, and I am here with that resolution this evening.

On July 30, 2008, the North Loop Neighborhood Association voted unanimously to endorse Southwest Transit alignment A. This alignment follows the Kenilworth Corridor into the North Loop Neighborhood. The North Loop Neighborhood Association board of directors considers alignment A to be the superior alignment.

Now, since that time, in 2008, it's clear that 3A is the desired and the superior alignment.

There is a long history of data, studies, and analysis regarding the Southwest Transitway. The study process began about a quarter of a century ago and increased prolifically between the years of 2003 and 2009.

There is reams upon reams of data that bring us to where we are today, at the end of this alternatives
analysis study.

Real data, studies, and analysis provided by Hennepin County, Met Council, MnDOT, and local comprehensive plans have produced one clear, superior alignment alternative, that being 3A. Your mission is to make a recommendation to the HCRRA. We expect you to make that recommendation based on real data, studies, and analysis completed, not based on political or special interest influence. Thank you very much.

COMMISSIONER DORFMAN: Thank you.

Michael Wagner, followed by Loren Aandahl.

MR. WAGNER: Hello. My name is Michael Wagner. My address is 3025 Lakeshore Drive, Minneapolis, Minnesota. I'm the vice chair for the West Calhoun Neighborhood Council, and I'm here to make a statement this evening on behalf of our neighborhood organization. I know that we're all busy, and we're going to hear a lot of testimony this evening, so I'll be concise in my statement.

With regards to route selection, the West Calhoun Neighborhood Council supports a route alignment that meets the LPA evaluation measures that ensures federal funding and brings LRT to the
Southwest community.

Now we'd like to talk about the West Lake Station claim. We have heard ongoing discussions about suburban stations and claims surrounding that. The West Calhoun Neighborhood Council would like to make sure that the proposed West Lake Station is studied with significant detail. We've had ongoing dialogue with the CNO Transportation Committee, the Midtown Greenway Coalition, our Council Member Becky Hodges, and adjoining neighborhood groups about the strategy for a West Lake Station.

We would like to offer the leadership to continue discussions that would bring all of the state corridors together to ensure that the West Lake Station exceeds all expectations.

We realize that there is a great opportunity create -- to create a true gateway neighborhood with an entrance at this station that welcomes people into the City of Minneapolis and the Chain of Lakes region. We recommend the following guiding principles are used in the planning and implementation of the West Lake Station. This is taken from the West Calhoun Development Guidelines Study.

The West Lake Station evokes a strong
sense of neighborhood identity, creates a unique gathering place for both residents and visitors, invests in the public realm, improve productivity from battles and accessible network of movement, enhance and protects existing strengths, promotes public safety and security, encourage environmental responsibility and sustainability.

In conclusion, we are in the pathway of a great opportunity here to bring communities together through transportation. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER DORFMAN: Michael, as -- as you know, and I think as many of you know, we've done a station in the area planning in the suburbs, but we have not done any in Minneapolis, and that will begin once the Metropolitan council has finalized an alignment decision, the LPA, and then we will also begin that, so thank you for those comments.

Loren Aandahl, followed by Jeff Strate.

MR. AANJAHL: Good evening. My name is Loren Aandahl. I live at 2121 Drew Avenue South in Minneapolis. I have 22 years of experience in the airline industry, planning international networks and routes. For most of these years, I was the department leader in the world's fourth largest passenger airline, and I have developed hundreds of network and
route forecasts.

As a resident of Minneapolis, I believe the 3C2 route through Uptown, Glenlake, and Nicollet best serves our city. I also believe that it is the route that best serves our suburban neighbors with a faster travel time in the core business district and connections to venues elsewhere in Minneapolis which one may patronize. It's my opinion that the ridership forecast for the Southwest LRT, examining the two options into Minneapolis, is riddled with multiple flaws that deny it any credibility. It defies common sense. Let me give you some specific examples.

First, the overall ridership forecast is identical between the two options, despite the fact that the Kenilworth alignment runs through an ultra-low density neighborhood and park, whilst the Uptown alignment runs through the busiest transit corridor, Downtown to Uptown, in the Metro area. I believe the Uptown option will have 20 to 30 percent more ridership.

Second, the boarding forecast for the 21st Street Station on the Kenilworth option is 1,000 per day compared to 1,100 per day for the Uptown Station on the Uptown option. This is nonsensical. Anyone who has been in the vicinity of the proposed
21st Station will know it is an ultra-low density neighborhood with minimal transit demand. Compare that with Uptown.

Third, the projected boardings for the 12th Street -- Nicollet Mall -- Station on the Uptown route is only 300 per day, despite this station's prime location to serve the western side of Downtown. This should be the busiest station on the entire line. By contrast, boardings for the nearby Royalston Station, a half mile from Downtown, on the Kenilworth alignment are projected at 1,900 per day, despite there being no substantial housing or businesses in this area next to the Hennepin County incinerator. And Royalston boardings are reduced to 400 per day on the Uptown alignment, but are still greater than that at 12th Street and Nicollet Mall. It doesn't make sense.

Fourth, the projected boardings at all stations to the west of West Lake Station are 10 percent higher for the Kenilworth option than the Uptown option, even though the Uptown option boasts shorter elapsed travel time to prime Downtown Minne -- to the prime Downtown Minneapolis Station, as well as access to the higher density neighborhoods along the Uptown route.
Fifth, there appears to be a minuscule amount of Uptown -- of Downtown/Uptown journeys projected for the Uptown route, despite this being the busiest transit corridor in the Metro area. People will use Met -- will use rail transit.

Sixth, the forecast seriously underestimates the amount of connecting traffic between the Uptown option and the Central and Hiawatha LRT.

Seventh, the forecast is based on peak weekday ridership patterns. The Uptown option will generate much more traffic on weekends and in the evenings.

I believe that the Uptown option has a traffic forecast that will be at least 20 percent and likely 30 percent higher than the Kenilworth option. This, in combination with capital cost reductions that will be spoken to separately, will ensure that the Uptown option is fully competitive, if not more so than with the Kenilworth option in terms of the CEI formula.

One last point. The forecast for the Southeast LRT alignment decision needs to be completely reworked to ensure it is accurate. I volunteer to lead the project to ensure a fair
forecast based on -- which to base the final alignment
decision. Neither the PAC nor the Met council should
make any final decisions until this is done. Rail
transit is meant to serve the people. The Uptown
option does this best. Thank you.

COMMISSION DORFMAN: Thank you very much.

Jeff Strate, Colleen (inaudible).

(Applause.)

MR. STRAIT: Madam Chair, Committee

Members, my name is Jeff Strate. I live at 15021
Summerhill Drive in Eden Prairie. I recommend that
this policy committee accept the recommendation of the
technical advisory. I believe 3A is a good route.

I've been tracking the studies and the
hearings over the past four or five years, and I
believe the process has been very good and thorough.
The future economic studies will be more intense, and
so those concerns of neighbors who live along the
route, say in the Opus/Minnetonka area, I think will
be satisfied when we come down to the final route.

Now, the great thing about this for Eden
Prairie, the core of Minneapolis, is that it's not
just going to help Minnetonka and Hopkins and Eden
Prairie. It's going to help all events. More of us
are going to be commuting Downtown to work, yes, to
enjoy Downtown entertainment, but also a number of more workers are going to come in from North Minneapolis to our Golden Triangle district, to Opus, where we have lots of empty warehouses and work locations right now.

We have lots of unemployed people. This thing is going to be a spark to our economy and Minneapolis, Eden Prairie, Minnetonka, and Hopkins, and St. Louis Park. Can't leave them out either.

That's all I have to say right now, except I do believe that when this thing is looked at during the course of the next year or two, that feeder services, microbuses and minibuses, will feed in from the Lake Street/Midtown area will be created, as they have and will be done in Eden Prairie with our Southwest Transit System.

So the rail line is not the only way of transportation. It's going to be married to other factors and other transportation systems. Thank you.

COMMISSION DORFMAN: Thank you very much.

Matthew Dahlquist, followed by Jerry Krause.

MR. DAHLQUIST: Good evening, PAC members. My name is Matthew Dahlquist. I live at 3309 St. Paul Avenue in Minneapolis. I'm the vice president of the Cedar-Isles-Dean Neighborhood
Association, the chair of that association's transit committee, and the representative from Cedar-Isles-Dean to the Midtown Greenway Coalition. I've also lived in Southwest Minneapolis virtually all of my adult life, and I thank you for the opportunity to address you this evening.

The Technical Advisory Committee recently recommended the 3A alignment based on the cost effectiveness index of HDR Consultants after their study of the currently viable alignments. Within the next day, a document compiled by the Concerned Citizens for Optimizing Southwest LRT Services will be available to you, key members of the PAC, and other public officials, as well as posted on the Web. This document raises questions and detailed concerns about the TAC's recommended issues. I'm here to speak briefly about the capital cost section of that document.

It is of great concern that the cost difference between 3A and 3C2 has ballooned by nearly $500 million, or over 300 percent, since the beginning of HDR's work. As of today the public has seen virtually no detail on these capital costs and virtually no explanation of this dramatic increase in the cost of 3C2. Without further detail the public
has no option but to speculate about the components of these cost numbers. Therefore, tonight we offer suggestions where 3C2, as currently designed, is widely and dramatically overpriced. These adjustment potentially reduce 3C2's capital cost by over $260 million.

Additionally, we have detailed areas of necessary mitigation along the line of 3A, that as far as we know, are not addressed in 3A as it is currently designed. These items could add over $130 million to 3A's cost. As outlined in previous resolutions by the neighborhoods along 3A, these mitigation measures will be necessary should this become the final route selection.

Because tonight's three-minute limit is not enough time for me to discuss each of the 13 individual items of detail, I urge you all to carefully consider the capital cost section of this forthcoming document. If implemented, these adjustments to the two alignments will bring the cost difference between them down to a much more reasonable figure, potentially, as well as about $175 million. In concert with up-to-date and much more realistic ridership numbers, as Loren just spoke to, a new CEI analysis will make 3C2 the best choice to serve the
greatest possible number of people.

Unfortunately, these cost adjustments do not address the more important issue. The TACs recommendation has only just been made public and with insufficient detail. Tonight is the only public hearing allowing citizens' input between the release of the TACs recommendation and the PAC vote on that recommendation scheduled to take place in just a few short weeks. But all the public has to comment on tonight are some lump-sum dollar figures and some abstract CEI numbers with very little supporting detail.

The public needs to see the complete detail on the capital costs, needs to have a reasonable amount of time to digest that information, and deserves another public forum for comment before the PAC takes any further action. In the absence of these items, there cannot be an open and honest public discussion of the merits of these possible alignments or of the alignment selection process.

I thank you in advance for your consideration.

COMMISSIONER DORFMAN: Thank you very much. Can you make sure that that report you were talking about gets to staff so we can make sure all of
the PAC members and the alternates, as well as the
committee members get a copy of that. Thank you.

   MR. DAHLQUIST: We'll be sending it out
in the next 24 hours.

   COMMISSIONER DORFMAN: And I think the
LPA report from the TAC is on the website now, so you
can check that out, too.

   Jerry Krause, followed by Jennifer Munt.

   MR. KRAUSE: Thank you, Commissioner
Dorfman. My name is Jerry Krause. I live in
Minneapolis at -- in the last couple of decades have
been Uptown, Lowry Hill, and over the last eight years
in Bryn Mawr, north of Interstate 394, at 417 Oliver
Avenue South.

   Also, for the past decade I have used
Metro Transit bus service for daily commutes from my
neighborhood to the Hamline Midway area in St. Paul.
I also am a frequent user of the Cedar Lake Trail
System, running there several times a week. Also,
some of you are aware I'm currently a member of the
Citizen Advisory Committee for the Southwest
Transitway. I would urge the committee to support the
LRT 3A Kenilworth route alternative, which has been
recommended by the TAC, for three primary reasons,
which are embedded, I think, in TAC's recommendation.
First, importantly, the cost-effective index. Only route 3A is within this range of cost-effectiveness, which is qualified for federal transit matching monies.

Secondly, the redevelopment of Bassett Creek Valley. I've been on this redevelopment oversight committee for the last eight years. The City of Minneapolis approved the redevelopment plan for this 200 acre parcel just north of Interstate 394 to be served by the Van White LRT Station. The entire valley is roughly within six blocks of this stop alone. The Lenden Yards area, which is directly adjacent to 394, that area alone is proposed to build out one and a half million square feet of office space and 600 new residential units over the next couple of decades.

To give you an example of how large Lenden Yards, itself, is, it's roughly 4,000 feet long, and at most points it's about a block wide. If you superimposed it and moved it into Uptown, it would stretch from the 28th Street Greenway all the way to Franklin Avenue.

Lastly, there have been some concerns raised in other venues concerning the suitability of the Kenilworth alignment and compatibility with
existing rail, as well as the running, walking, and biking trails. Not unlike the rest of the route, which runs through Hopkins, St. Louis Park, and the most Southwest portion of Minneapolis, this area would also be similarly aligned along an existing linear freight rail system.

Also, those of you who use this area are quite aware that the northerly side, called Cedar Lake Park, is presently heavily used, notwithstanding the fact that it shares that corridor with the Burlington Northern and Santa Fe's main freight line.

Thank you so much.

COMMISSIONER DORFMAN: Thank you very much.

Jennifer Munt, followed by Christina Mallow.

MS. MUNT: Commissioner Dorfman, Advisory Committee Members, my name is Jennifer Munt. I live at 5261 Beachside Drive in Minnetonka. I can't wait to ride my train from the Shady Oaks Station. I come to you tonight as the president of Transit for Livable Communities. We're an organization of 10,000 transit riders, bicyclists, and pedestrians. We advocate for livable communities and more transportation choices.

We hope that you select the 3A Kenilworth
alignment primarily for four reasons. First, we think it maximizes the likelihood of securing federal funding, as well as state and local matching funding that we need. Bottom line, we would like to see this line built within our lifetime, and we think the 3A alignment is the one that will get that done.

Secondly, we think that the 3A alignment also improves service connections to both north and west sides of Minneapolis.

Third, we think that enabling South -- that it enables Southwest LRT trains to connect onto St. Paul via the Central Corridor or to the Mall of America via Hiawatha LRT without a transfer. This would be impossible with the Nicollet alignment, and it would be costly and time consuming with an 11th/12th Street alignment.

And, finally, we think that the 3A would maximize the potential for integrating LRT with Minneapolis' proposed streetcar network, which includes lines on the Midtown Greenway between Hiawatha LRT and Southwest LRT and Nicollet Avenue.

Finally, we would encourage you to consider the elimination of the Mitchell Road Station. We believe that this could save up to $60 million and that the proposed Mitchell Road Station has low
housing and commercial density, and it's less than three quarters of a mile by highway from the Southwest Transit Station. The substantial cost savings from adopting a 3A alignment and the elimination of Mitchell Road Station would ensure money for other transits projects, such as a streetcar on the Midway Greenway Corridor that would connect to Uptown and the Hiawatha LRT line, expanded bus service, and the East Metro Transitway project. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER DORFMAN: Thank you very much.

Jennifer Munt -- you don't get a second chance.

MR. T'KACH: I'm speaking for Christina, though.

COMMISSIONER DORFMAN: You are? Well, please give your name and your address.

MR. T'KACH: My name is Michael T'Kach.

Thank you. Good evening. I'm a property owner along Kenwood Parkway, along the corridor, and I thank you for allowing us access to speak with you this evening and to be heard for as much time as you've given to us. I really appreciate it.

I'd like to speak very briefly, but sincerely, that I'm here to advocate for the goal of
getting light rail built in Minnesota, my primary goal. I strongly encourage the panel to vote for a plan that will meet the federal guidelines so they're eligible to receive this half of the federal dollars.

I believe that that is the plan that meets the cost-effectiveness guidelines, and that is plan 3A, running along the Kenilworth Corridor, called the Network alignment. It runs along the vacant area of the Kenilworth Trail. I thank you for acting and voting responsibly to bring this light rail project to Minnesota. Thank you. That's all.

COMMISSIONER DORFMAN: Thank you very much.

Cameron Slick, followed by John Erickson.

And I also want to just say to the members of the Policy Advisory Committee that if you need to get up and take a break, I think we'll keep going; but if they get up and have to take a few minutes, we'll make sure you catch up with what everybody just said, as well, so please feel free to do that.

Cameron.

MR. SLICK: My name is Cameron Slick, and I live at 2312 Lyndale Avenue South in the historic apartment building next to Leaning Tower Pizza, and I
am fully in favor of 3C2. I'm going to be talking about busing activity, urban livability, and operating costs.

I think that these studies have improperly calculated ridership. For instance, Royalston Avenue, which was mentioned earlier, really is in what is the middle of nowhere. There is not substantial housing or business right there. However, HDR calculated that based on route A, that this station would generate 1,900 trips a day, which doesn't make any sense to me. In addition to that, it only would generate 400 riders per day on route C, which doesn't make much sense compared to route A.

Does it mean that people who would be able to actually use that station would only want to go to the suburbs or into -- further into Downtown, rather than to Eat Street and then link in Uptown. Furthermore, the Nicollet and 12th Street Station is supposed to only have 300 daily boardings, the same as the Van White Boulevard Station, which is in the middle of the most polluted soil in the state of Minnesota, but there is no existing development and where all development would be wholly speculative.

This station is in extreme close proximity to Target's headquarters. It's also close
to the Foshay Tower, the AT&T building, LaSalle's Plaza, and several large hotels. I learned that Downtown stations often have mixed ridership between all the stations, so those numbers are probably truly inaccurate. I also don't think any of the ridership numbers generated on the urban stops on the 3C alignment are accurate, because there are eight connecting bus routes there. At Uptown you have four or five. At Lyn-Lake you have the Lyndale Avenue bus, and at Franklin you have the Number 2 bus.

And a precedent was set for the Hiawatha line in reducing the number of buses in a particular corridor. The bus that's Route 7, which uses primarily Minnehaha Avenue, is only operating about every half hour. University Avenue bus service will also be substantially reduced because it will have light rail in the entirety of the avenue. Nicollet Avenue will have four stops within its corridor, all of which are less than a mile apart. I don't understand why we can't reduce bus service on Nicollet Avenue, which as of today there are 138 roundtrip buses.

Most importantly, seeking this opportunity to encourage urban development and to put the light rail line in the city would be a great
mistake to see us do a route that really doesn't serve anybody. And this precedent would be very dangerous for future light rail lines, like the Bottineau Boulevard route. That's all.

COMMISSIONER DORFMAN: Thank you, Cameron.

John Erickson is next, and followed by Cheryl LaRue.

John, welcome.

MR. ERICKSON: Thank you. Good evening. My name is John Erickson. I'm a resident of Southwest Minneapolis and have been active on the light rail issue since about 2002. I have two points I want to make tonight, mostly general points, not getting into the specifics that some of the other speakers have gotten into.

First, I'm presuming that everyone here tonight wants the route that's chosen to be as viable and as attractive as a long-term transportation option as is possible for the citizens of the Southwest suburbs, as well as the citizens of Minneapolis. With that in mind, it seems reasonable to presume that we ought to choose a route that provides transportation to work in Downtown Minneapolis for our suburban neighbors, as well as residents of Minneapolis.
But also we need to choose the route that provides transportation to work in the Southwest suburbs for residents of Minneapolis, as well as some subset of our suburban neighbors. In other words, this is a two-way transportation route that we're looking for. And as members of the PAC, I think it's important that you look at both routes in both directions before making your decision.

Additionally, if the LRT could also provide access to certain places inside of Minneapolis -- being a Minneapolis resident, I'm obviously pushing this -- places like Orchestra Hall, the convention center, St. Thomas University and other higher learning facilities in Downtown Minneapolis, as well as business and entertainment interests in various locations in Minneapolis on both nights and weekends, then that cost -- the increase in the ridership would reduce the overall cost of this line. And while that is a tough one for the PAC members to consider, it is an important one because we've seen that occur on the Hiawatha line. As you consider which route best meets the needs of everyone in the Southwest Corridor on a long-term basis, it becomes clear that 3C2 has more merit than route 3A.

Secondly, based on the questions and
concerns that have been raised, both this evening and
in this last two to three weeks, it is fair to say
that had the PAC members had to use the currently
available information and make decisions based on that
currently available information, they would not be as
informed as they should be for a decision of this
magnitude.

If I were in your shoes, I would require
a more complete, up-to-date, and accurate data related
to this project, including but not limited to
ridership projections and construction cost. By
requiring that information prior to making your
decision, you will clearly enhance the quality of your
final decision and better represent and serve all
citizens of Southwest Hennepin County. Those are my
comments. I urge you to consider both of those
points. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER DORFMAN: Thank you very
much.

Cheryl LaRue, followed by Kari Anderson.

MS. LARUE: Commissioner, PAC Members, my
name is Cheryl LaRue. I'm a resident of Downtown
Minneapolis. I am representing a group of volunteers
from multiple Minneapolis neighborhoods. We believe
route 3C best serves the City, as well as suburban
neighbors. This group of volunteers has been working
diligently so that the sentiment of the general public
can be heard. We've spoken to thousands of residents
in both Minneapolis and the suburbs, residents from
Minneapolis and the suburbs who support 3C because it
serves the area of most density and which allows
employment opportunities, patronage of businesses, and
enjoyment of events in multiple destinations, Uptown,
Lyn-Lake, Midtown Corridor, Eat Street, Downtown
Minneapolis, rather than just one destination,
Downtown.

Tonight I am not only representing the
dozens of volunteers, but more than 3,500 Minneapolis
and suburban residents who have signed a petition in
favor of 3C, and I have those right here. And we're
not done. As with the decision to have Southwest
light rail travel through the area of high density and
employment in Eden Prairie, the Golden Triangle, we
encourage you -- 3,500 people-plus -- to make the same
decision in Minneapolis and select route 3C, rather
than a route that diminishes vital park land and runs
through a low density residential area. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER DORFMAN: Kari Anderson,
followed by David Porter.

MS. ANDERSON: Hi. My name is Kari
Anderson. I live at 218 Logan in North Minneapolis, and I am a member of the Harrison Neighborhood Board, and I am on the Bassett Creek Valley Redevelopment Oversight Committee that has been working on development in the area where the Glen Lake station will hopefully be.

If you can just for a second picture driving west out of Minneapolis, look to the left, and you'll see the Walker Art Center, and you'll see a sculpture garden, lots of city amenities on the left. If you look to the right, which is where Harrison, Bryn Mawr, and North Side starts, you'll see the city maintenance facilities. There's a rock crusher, there's a manure pile, and there's a bunch of garbage there. And we -- it's a garbage dump.

I have been on a committee working with local businesses, Ryan Companies has been working with us, a developer. Some of you are very -- probably very familiar with the Bassett Creek Valley master plan. But it's -- what's clear, if you picture this dichotomy, it's clear that city policy and county policy has -- has favored one area over the other. So I think that it's important to keep in mind that with the 3A alignment, the city and the county have an opportunity to give an equal chance to the north side,
to the north side residents and businesses to do some very innovative transitway development in that area. As I mentioned, the Ryan Companies have spent over a quarter of a million dollars on this already, and our neighbors have spent countless hours over the last two years developing this data, so I'd like you to keep that in mind when you're thinking about where the rail should go. And I support the 3A alignment because of that.

The other thing that I -- nobody's mentioned yet, but it goes straight to the Twins Stadium, and so all the people in the western suburbs, it's an easier -- easy way to get to the Twins Stadium, which is a -- it will bring people into the neighborhood through the new development.

So thank you very much for your time.

COMMISSIONER DORFMAN: Thank you. David Porter, followed by Todd McIntyre.

David? Is David here.

Todd.

MR. MCINTYRE: Hello. I'm Todd McIntyre. I'm president of Great Prairie Sports, a nonprofit entity. Southwest Policy Advisory Committee, I thank you for the opportunity to present testimony in regards to the future alignment of Southwest
Transitway.

Over the years various aquatic groups have searched the land to develop a facility for swimming, diving, water polo, and synchronized swimming. As the developments continually consume urban opportunities, site selection becomes more challenging every year. Bassett Creek Valley has been of interest to me for many years, and the Kenilworth alignment, I believe, is the best site in the Metropolitan area for the Great Prairie Sports Center.

The proposed entity for the redevelopment of the Bassett Creek Valley is significant. According to the master plan, the projected construction of 3,000 housing units will welcome 6,900 new residents. This would elevate Bassett Creek Valley itself into one of the top 120 most populated cities in the state of Minnesota. This figure doesn't account for the proposed development of two and a half million square feet of commercial space all on a tract land consisting of 56 acres. Especially with the new Target Field, the Kenilworth alignment is essential to the future health and vitality of Bassett Creek Valley.

The Great Prairie Sports Center in the city of Minneapolis would not only provide a unique
community asset, but it would also create strong economic impact opportunities. The Great Prairie Sports Center is a significant UB state (inaudible), offering a multiple season, multiple sport international destination while focusing on the disciplines of aquatics, gymnastics, and volleyball. It would also be able to provide training facilities for ethics and public and private schools and from the Courage Center in Golden Valley.

From 1985 to 2007, the obesity rate in the state of Minnesota increased 150 percent, costing $1.4 billion in health care expenses in 2004. The Great Prairie Sports Center wants to reverse this trend in Bassett Creek Valley.

Both USA Swimming and USA Water Polo have created programs to reach demographics traditionally not part of the aquatic sports. If the Great Prairie Sports Center is not developed in Bassett Creek Valley, the youth of North Minneapolis may never use this facility.

From 1987 to 2000, all of Minnesota's amateur sport venues generated $377 million in economic impact. The 2006 Schwan's USA Cup staged in the city of Blaine generated $5.1 million in economic development alone. Both Hennepin County and the City
of Minneapolis would be well-positioned to enjoy its fair share of new revenues from local, state, regional, national, and international events.

If the Southwest Transitway is not developed on the Kenilworth alignment, the next best option for the Great Prairie Sports Center will probably be in the city of St. Paul. However, we desire to crown more national and international champions near the home of the Breakfast of Champions. The Southwest Transitway with a Kenilworth alignment will leverage the value of Bassett Creek Valley and establish an exceptional legacy for the city of Minneapolis.

COMMISSIONER DORFMAN: Thank you very much.

David Porter is not here still, I assume. Edward Ferlauto, followed by Andy Hestness.

MR. FERLAUTO: My name is Edward Ferlauto, and I reside at 3156 Dean Court, Minneapolis. I'm speaking on behalf of the Calhoun Isles Condominium Association, 140 townhomes and condominiums are located on Dean Court in Minneapolis, in between the proposed station of the Rio D. Shopping Centers on Lake Street and Cedar Lake Parkway; that
is, we are located at the wishbone intersection of the Greenway and Calhoun Parkway. We will be impacted no matter which route is selected. Because the Southwest Technical Advisory Committee has recommended the Kenilworth option, my comments will focus on that option.

The right-of-way is very narrow as it passes by our homes. Currently, there are mature trees and shrubs that separate our homes from the current railroad tracks. We do not want to see this green environment removed. The LRT will come extremely close to our homes because of this narrow right-of-way; not just close, but extremely close. We are concerned about the vibration and the noise that will be close -- it is so close, as well as the visual impact of the overhead wires.

As you know, the Cedar Lake Parkway is a major thoroughfare for autos. We recognize that solutions must be found to keep traffic flowing when the LRT is passing through that intersection every seven minutes. The residents at Dean Court use this as one of the few exits that are available from our homes, and we deem traffic will interfere with our entrance and exodus. However, we feel strongly that the solution is not having an LRT on an overpass. An
overpass would mean that the train would be two stories high as it passes by our townhomes and condominiums. This would be ugly, unsightly, and unacceptable; and the noise would carry throughout our complex. Please find another means for the traffic mitigation.

We are also concerned about the noise from the bells at both the station and Cedar Lake Parkway crossing. We ask that your -- there should be sensitivity to how that sound carries into our community.

In summary, as an association leader, I'm taking a position to oppose the Southwest LRT. We are not taking a position on which route the line should take, rather we are focusing our comments on the corridor that has been recommended, Kenilworth. Since the corridor is so narrow as it passes our homes, we are concerned about the loss of our green environment, the potential vibration, the potential for noise, and the visual impact of the overhead wires. Please make note also that we strongly oppose a Cedar Lake Parkway overpass.

COMMISSIONER DORFMAN: Thank you very much.

Andy Hestness, followed by David
MR. HESTNESS: Hi. I'm Andy Hestness. I live at 1001 Cole Avenue Southeast in Minneapolis. I don't live particularly close to any of the alignments, but I've been very interested in the planning for this line.

I really encourage this board as a policy board to kind of take a step back from this -- this whole conversation and think about some of the policy impacts of this decision you're about to make on this line. We're looking at building high capacity, urban-focused transit that runs frequently throughout the day and night. A lot of the information I've seen so far has really focused on thinking about commuters and things like that.

But, really, as we as a region develop and think about how we can allow people live without cars and get from place to place more accessibly, I really encourage you to -- to look at the ways we can do that, and I think the best alignment for that reason is 3C. Either of the alignments -- because it provides additional destinations without -- throughout the corridor. And transit is really driven by destinations on the line, so people are going to ride the train if there's places to go. And with the
density of housing and businesses, entertainment within the middle of the alignment, I think that's a really strange route, both from people from Downtown to Uptown, from the suburbs to Uptown, and from Uptown to both Downtown, and the suburbs for jobs and all of those things.

I think it's really important to -- in light of that to really look at the -- at what's about to happen and how we can think through it. In light of that, I just really strongly encourage you to take a hard look at all the ridership forecasts. A lot of people have, you know, looked at various things that may make the ridership data look like it may not be accurate. I just really encourage you to take a hard look at all of that and make sure we make the right decision, because this is going to be in our region for a long time, and it's just really important to me that we serve that.

In closing, I'll just go back -- I grew up in city of Minneapolis and -- but transit I haven't had for a long time, and when the Hiawatha line was first being built, I was very excited. I was talking to everyone about this line. And the first thing everyone would say to me is it doesn't go to Uptown. That's -- that's where I want the train to go. And I
just really encourage people to think about that as really being the focus of this, and we can -- we really should look at Uptown as a regional destination and part of the regional transportation system, the same way we think of Downtown, the University, Downtown St. Paul, the airport, Mall of America.

This is one of the place people want to go, particularly people of my age range, and let's find a way to do it. We may have to adjust bus routes. We may have to rethink how it's going to work on Nicollet Avenue, but let's try to commit ourselves to making this work. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER DORFMAN: Thank you very much.

Russ Adams, followed by David Siegel.

MR. ADAMS: Good evening, Commissioner Dorfman and Members of the Advisory Committee. My name is Russ Adams. I'm the executive director of the Alliance for Metropolitan Civility. We're a coalition of over 25 organizations that work on racial, environmental, and economic justice issues in Twin Cities growth and development patterns. A number of our partner groups have already come before you and mentioned that they're in support of the 3A Kenilworth alignment. That includes the Harrison Neighborhood
Association that just spoke, groups like ISAIAH, TL --
Transits for a Livable Community, as well as a group
called MICA.

We are coconvening a table of
organizations like those groups around the regional
transitway's vision. That is being projected
throughout the Twin Cities Metro area. We've paid
some attention to the Southwest Transitway, but we're
also looking at Bondo and other future corridors. And
one point that probably really does need to be made
is -- and I think everybody who's come up here tonight
has made very strong points for their routes that they
prefer, but it's very important that we look at the
entire regional transit system when we talk about
making connections; because there is going to be some
winners and losers in whatever route you decide to do
today and it's very important for us to look forward
and think about what areas that are being left behind,
how can we reconnect them, and maybe that's going to
take streetcars, or it might take better buses.

The purpose of the regional transitway
staple that we coconvene is to ensure fair and
equitable access to transit and affordable housing for
low income communities by promoting an inclusive
public input process and influencing future corridor
alignment stops, locations, planned use plans, and development opportunities along these transitways.

I do want to encourage you to think about that beyond just the routing decision that you'll make as the county and public agencies review these options and down the line to begin to do stationary planning and the community engagement. We'd like you to give careful consideration to a few core principles. One is that we just simply need to ensure that people have a variety of ways to move about our region and access employment and housing opportunities. Transit links people to places they live, where they work, learn, shop, receive medical care, and play. There is a remarkable interdependence of people and places along a transitway.

This means that transit policy has less to do with moving people efficiently from point A to point B than it does to provide people with greater access and more choices. It allows us to erase years of community isolation from transportation improvements and empowers people to engage in creative place-making if we have the wisdom to deploy a comprehensive community engagement strategy. And there are opportunities for jobs, particularly in the construction of the -- the original transitway.
We really encourage the county and the local cities to think about how to connect low income communities and communities of color to those job opportunities. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER DORFMAN: Thank you, Russ. David Siegel, followed by Tom Lais.

MR. SIEGEL: Hi. I'm David Siegel. I live on Kenwood Parkway in Minneapolis, not too far from --

COMMISSIONER DORFMAN: David, you have to sort of talk right into the mic to be heard.

MR. SIEGEL: I'm Dave Siegel.

COMMISSIONER DORFMAN: There you go.

MR. SIEGEL: I live on Kenwood Parkway in Minneapolis, not too far from where the 21st Street -- post 21st station is, and I strongly, strongly advocate any one of the 3C routes as superior to the Kenilworth Corridor. Bureaucratic decision processes like this are designed so that they look as though the output is objective, but we know that that's false. It's not as though you simply follow the rules, input a number, and out pops your answer. You guys have had to make many, many subjective value judgments along the way, and I think that we need to examine those very, very closely.
And one of the reasons I think we need to examine that closely is because in looking at the map of Minneapolis 50 years from now or looking at the map of Minneapolis who's familiar with the transit systems of other major cities around the world, who saw the recommendation that could build a transit line that bypasses the major cultural centers and the major concentrations of the population and of business in the city would think we were nuts. Any process that leads to a decision like that has to be examined because the decision -- the decision just does not make sense.

One of the examples of value judgments or subjective decisions you have to make is obviously how to weight different types of data to allow you to make projections of ridership. Why you would choose to emphasize ridership projections for a myriad that's just a twinkling in city planners' eyes; namely, the --

COMMISSIONER DORFMAN: Bassett Creek.

MR. SIEGEL: -- Bassett Creek area while ignoring --

COMMISSIONER DORFMAN: That doesn't mean I agree it's a twinkle, but...

MR. SIEGEL: -- while ignoring the real
development that already exists in great concentration in other parts of the city is absolutely baffling to me. We have so much experience with designing transportation systems that bypass existing concentrations. When we built our interstate highway system, we -- we did that, and we saw what the results of that were: withering central cities, withering neighborhoods. Yes, development grew around the transportation modes, but existing areas have withered. We've done that experiment thousands of times. Let's not repeat that mistake.

Building the route along the Kenilworth Corridor basically would say that the whole purpose of that line is to move people from Downtown Minneapolis -- not even the heart of Downtown Minneapolis, but a piece of Downtown Minneapolis out to the suburbs. This is a way of promoting more urban sprawl, because it simply moves people from point A to point B, reducing -- reducing the disincentives for locating yourself further and further out from the core. That is not the way we should be developing our urban area. We need to be thinking about what kind of transportation system we will be proud of having built a hundred years from now.

COMMISSIONER DORFMAN: Thank you very
much. We've been joined by County Commissioner Peter McLaughlin, who chairs our County Regional Rail Authority, as well as the county's Transit Improvement Board.

MR. LAIS: Thank you. My name is Tom Lais. I live in Maplewood, Minnesota. I commute from almost the county border of Washington, all the way through Minneapolis every day. I want to say to this Commission, thank you, thank you very much for considering light rail. I think it is a phenomenal, supportive, connective alternative to the automobile. And for us bikers, it's also a great way for us to get around when there's snow, rain, and other types of adverse weather.

Regarding the corridor, I would say that it does seem to be kind of a push for me for either the 3A or the 3C. I do work at the Midtown Exchange, and having access to the light rail is very important to me. I will comment on the fact that the Midtown -- or the Greenway is a phenomenal asset for both the city of Minneapolis and the state of Minnesota. I use it quite frequently. It is not uncommon for me to get on my bike at 5:00 in the morning, ride from almost Woodbury off to Hopkins, this great community. I love it. It's just phenomenal.
I would encourage that everyone who speaks, everyone who comes here today encourage the light rail. And I guess the decision as to whether use 3C or 3A is up to you, not me. And if there's anything I can to do support it, I will. Thank you very much.

COMMISSIONER DORFMAN: Thank you very much.

Eric Lind, followed by -- have you seen Council Member Samuels -- by Bob Carney, Jr.

Eric. He may have left. I saw him earlier.

Bob Carney.

MR. CARNEY: Can someone do a favor for me and focus that.

My name is Bob Carney, Jr. I am a moderate progressive Republican candidate for mayor of Minneapolis, somewhere between endangered and extinct. You've heard -- I bet a lot of you have heard a lot of these things before, but this is something that you haven't heard. I'm going to show this to the audience first, and then tell you about it.

This is a map for what I call a sky bottle, and this is going to be an all-weather, enclosed skyway system for bicycles and Segway. And
I'm going to now point this to the decision-makers here and tell you about it.

One of the things I'm proposing in my campaign for mayor is what I call a sky bottle, and this is an automate -- an all-weather, elevated, skyway system that would be above the current skyway system. It would be connected to ground level by elevators, rather than by the hairbrained kind of ramps you go Downtown and then back to Hiawatha to get over to Hiawatha Avenue.

The plan would be to have one route going from the -- from the milling district down Nicollet Avenue, and then over to the convention center, down the 35 corridor; and that would connect up with the Greenway. There would be the all-weather, enclosed route from the Greenway going from the Southwest line, whatever you decide on for that, and then over to the Hiawatha line. There would be another outgoing from what I call Trainsville over by the current Metrodome and over to the university.

So the idea here is to have an infrastructure that would make it possible for people that live in this triangle, from the Greenway to the Southwest line to Hiawatha to Downtown, to be able to get to this nexus of locations, such that people that
are living in that area could get by with even one
less car or could get by with no car. And for that
reason, I think that this thing can be paid for with
tax increment financing. This is a way of starting to
build an infrastructure that gets us away from cars.

I want to point out one other thing. In
terms of economic development, this route would go by
the convention, and, as a result, people would be able
to rent Segways and bikes, and they'll be able to go
on this entire location nexus using the system,
including links to all the trails that go to Downtown
and links to our park system. So if you have a
convention, people that are going to that convention
can get on this system any time during the year,
meaning we can have conventions during the wintertime,
and they can also link up with our park system. So I
think that this would be a tremendous way of
introducing people to Minneapolis in a unique way.

I just want to let you know that I'm
going to be advocating for this, and I hope that
you'll factor this into your consideration. The plan,
a 10-page report, is on my website,
republicancontract.com, and I urge all of you to take
a look at it. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER DORFMAN: Thank you very
much.

Bill Strand, followed by John M. Hall.


Marcy Gohmert. I think I may be mispronouncing it.

Yes?

MR. CHISHOLM: Is it possible for Lenny Chisholm to take Don Samuel's spot?

COMMISSIONER DORFMAN: You know what, come on up, for having the guts to ask.

And I think Council Member Samuels may be arriving later, but please give us your name and address for the record.

MR. CHISHOLM: My name is Lenny Chisholm, 1901 -- can everybody hear me?

THE AUDIENCE: No.

MR. CHISHOLM: Is this a little better?

COMMISSIONER DORFMAN: Yeah. You have to speak into the mic.

MR. REMINGTON: You have to talk right in there.

MR. CHISHOLM: My name is Lenny Chisholm. I'm from Springboard Economic Development Corporation. I have my office at 1901 Glenwood. One of the things I've come here today, and I'm glad you let speak
early, because I was really having a hard time waiting for the end, is that in our community everything is over there. We have Hard Rock Cafes, we have Maple Grove; but North Minneapolis it seems to be missing the "I'm right there." We need opportunities. This is a transit-oriented development opportunity.

The freeways were designed years ago to take people out of the city. Now we have an opportunity to bring people back in. We have an opportunity to bring jobs and economics to North Minneapolis, which I think is very important. We have an opportunity to take the mom who has to take three buses to get to her suburban job down to one and the young man who has to go all the way to the Mall of America to work at what once was called Camp Snoopy down to one opportunity. That is why we're here today.

We're not a twinkle in someone's eye. We are a reality. And North Minneapolis has been the subject of disinvestment for a number of years. When the Jewish community was there, Glenwood was a very vibrant spot. Plymouth was a very vibrant spot, so was Golden Valley -- Golden Valley Road, I'm sorry, and Broadway, also. Now we have a lot that sits on the corner of Plymouth and Penn that has been dormant
for 35 years. The last thing that was there was a gas station. We have a lot that's on the corner of 7th of Emerson that I can't remember what was there.

We lost the McDonald's on the corner of Plymouth and Penn, which I've never seen happen. We lost a Target on Broadway, which I've never seen happen. We have a Cub that we're in danger of losing because the produce section is not making any money. We need these type of opportunities to come through North Minneapolis. That is why I am here, because in the 20 years I've been here, I've seen a lot of disinvestment. Maple Grove now has Pittsburgh Blue, Benihana's, and Granite City; and North Minneapolis is still looking for a place to eat after 5:00. There is no outdoor cafes.

Some people say, well, what is -- the ridership model should look like, and they take into account all the young kids that will come from Eden Prairie. They see that culture of North Minneapolis. They buy more Rap music than the kids in North Minneapolis. We need this road, this new train to come to North Minneapolis. Thank you for your time.

COMMISSIONER DORFMAN: Thank you very much.

Linda Hagmeier, followed by Maren
McDonell.

MS. HAGMEIER: Good evening. My name is Linda Hagmeier. I live at 5451 Pompano Drive in Minnetonka, which is in the community of Beachside, a townhome community. Thank you, first of all, for allowing me to speak to each of you this evening.

I've owned my home, my townhouse, in Minnetonka for the past seven years. I grew up less than two miles from where I'm living right now, and after 17 years in the city of Chicago, I moved back to Minneapolis and immediately sought out a place to live in Minnetonka, specifically Beachside. I am on the board of directors of our townhome association. I'm speaking for them, as well as myself.

I want to tell you tonight that my neighbors and I love the area that we live in. We love living in Minnetonka. We have roots in the community, and we're very proud of our city. We're aware of all the issues that bring us here tonight, and we want you to know that we support the decisions that you have to make, but it's important that you understand that we're deeply concerned about the rail line or the plans of the rail line.

These plans have tremendous potential for adverse effects on our community and specifically our
subdivision. From my understanding, the line is going
to run one block from the back of my townhome, not
just mine, a lot of my other neighbors. Because the
current plan calls for the trains to pass close to our
homes, we believe there's tremendous potential for
light rail noise pollution around our homes, as well
as environmental degradation to our neighborhood.

There's a wildlife area that abuts our
backyards and runs to the intersection of Smetana and
Belfour Roads. The area holds a wetland that supports
all types of nesting birds, as well as wildlife. The
sanctuary also serves as an effective natural barrier
between our properties and the businesses that
neighbor behind us. We're concerned that this area
will be lost with the construction of the line on its
present route through the intersections of Smetana and
Belfour. We're also concerned that the line will
bring a disruption to the solitude that right now we
all enjoy. It doesn't take a lot of thought about the
noise that would come from light rail. And I'm
running out of time.

Just a couple steps that we you ask to
take into consideration. Protect the trees, which
will help the noise level. Protect the wetlands and
provide safety for all the residents that right now
are living in the area. And myself and my neighbors invite any and all of you to come and sit with us on the back of our decks, because you'll be able to see where this line going to go. Thank you for your time.

COMMISSIONER DORFMAN: Thank you very much.

Maren McDonell, followed by Lyle Kill.

MS. McDONELL: Hi. My name is Maren McDonell, and I'm the Harrison Neighborhood Association president. We support the 3A alignment. It is the most economical and practical line. This line has very promising diverse commuting members. It will also generate the reliable transportation for over 3,000-plus residents on the north side who commute daily to work, and it will also create jobs, housing opportunities, and possible new businesses.

With major connections throughout North Minneapolis, this line transforms the north side and finally connects North and South Minneapolis, and North side is a lot more than the impound lot. I would invite all of you to come to the North Side and tell me it's not. Thank you.

Thank you very much, Maren. Lyle Kill, followed by Council Member Don Samuels.

MR. KILL: Hi. You know, I've been
hearing a lot about running a train through South Minneapolis.

COMMISSIONER DORFMAN: Can you give us your address for the record.

MR. KILL: Yes. I live at 526 Oliver.

COMMISSIONER DORFMAN: Thank you.

MR. KILL: You know, I've a heard a lot about moving the train through South Minneapolis. They talk about how they've got all these buses and things like that. Maybe they should come to the Harrison neighborhood and see the two bus lines that run through there that are available for 4,000 residents.

It's really easy to want more when you've already got a lot, but when you don't have much, like Harrison neighborhood, then this little bit, having a train running near the neighborhood, not even through it, makes a big difference in how people look at where they live. And I think that's something you really need to bring into consideration before you start listening to a lot of things about crime-ridden neighborhoods, which we are not.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Thank you.

MR. KILL: And about lack of ridership, because I think you'd be really surprised by how many
people actually do get on that train if it comes into that area. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER DORFMAN: Thank you very much.

Council Member Don Samuels, followed by Aimee Johnson.

COUNCIL MEMBER SAMUELS: Thank you. I'm sure everything's been said. I just want to say thank you for allowing me to speak. When Martin Luther King was seeking for a metaphor speech on the mall, he mentioned that America had -- to the Emancipation Proclamation and the admiration -- referred to a check that had been written and that came back insufficient funds.

And I've been wondering about what makes this insufficient funds factor. And I think it's that in the euphoria of making decisions for justice, we often forget that the time when the check is to be cashed, it's -- it's going to be a -- require a compromise by somebody. It's going to come out of the account of somebody. And he said that we -- all of us Americans have inherited that promise, all of us. And so -- but when the time comes to pay, we realize that it's more than we had thought the promise implied.

We have an historic opportunity here,
once again, to have sufficient funds in that account for the people in our community that have been historically deprived, quarantined, blocked off, boxed in, isolated, and -- from jobs and opportunities from the rest of the region and the city. And the City is working hard to undo those historical injustices, and now it's time for the region to participate.

We participate with the region. We have regional johns coming to -- prostitutes coming from Blaine. We have regional police officers and social workers and even preachers coming in to work in North Minneapolis and then commute back out. And we have regional and even international slum lords coming in and providing services for vulnerable people from Thailand and Detroit and Gary. So we are a regional part of the city, but we are locked in, and we are not regionally connected.

Now is the time to deliver on that promise, to open the outward gates so that we can pour into that verdant garden of Eden Prairie and get some of those lush jobs out there for our people who are ready to work and just need a little help from the region to be acknowledged as a partner in our city and in our region. Let us out. Let us out of the gates to work to give our contributions to this larger
community, and make the sacrifice now to make that
happen by withdrawing from your own demands for the
demands of a people whose cries have been muffled by
isolation for far too long. Thank you very much.

COMMISSIONER DORFMAN: Thank you.

Aimie Johnson, followed by Ron Werner.

MS. JOHNSON: Well, I'm afraid I'm not
that charismatic, and I have the opposite position. I
live at 2001 Kenwood Parkway, and I support the 3C
option for a lot of reasons. First of all,
Mr. Remington, thank you for your editorial in the
Star Tribune. I thought that was very well-written
and brought to light a lot of points about areas of
concern that I think people have about flaws in the
way that this has been thought about, specifically
ridership.

I don't have to reiterate the number of
points that have been made today about running it
through the vacant area of the Kenilworth Trail,
versus the dense area of Uptown. Lyn-Lake is growing.
The condos are growing. The businesses are growing.
It's a destination area. I feel that Minneapolis has
been underrepresented in this process where the
suburbs have been highly represented. I have to say I
was very encouraged by the recommendation to choose
the 1C option through Eden Prairie, because I felt that the choice of the 3C option was partially not recommended because of its dense population and its cost of building, and I think that the Technical Advisory Committee is looking at a way to take the easy way out by running it through the empty area of the Kenilworth channel through a park land in a very low density, private residential area.

So I was encouraged by that recommendation to run it through a dense, costly area of Eden Prairie versus the Hennepin County Railroad Authority area, which would be a lot less costly. I don't want to see that come at the expense of the 3C option. I don't want it to go through the dense area of Eden Prairie and then run through a trail on the Minneapolis side. We need to serve the densest area of population and riders that we can. I think that's been underestimated. I think that that needs to be looked at and more thought given before a choice is made.

Because, as people have said, this is going to support our community for 50 years. Don't take the easy, cheap way out. This needs to be the right thing for the City of Minneapolis, as well as the City of Eden Prairie, and I urge you to make the
right decision for the future, not just for the simple
cost. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER DORFMAN: Thank you, Aimee.

Ron Werner, followed by Anders

Zymboden.

MR. WERNER: My name is Ron Werner. I
live in St. Louis Park, 2148 Glenhurst Road by Cedar
Lake. I'm going to actually bring up a question that
hasn't been posed tonight.

I have read many objections to route 3A
and the Minneapolis trail, been going to other
meetings, and one of the themes that seems to be that
this route, 3A, will be running through park land and
insinuating that it will have a devastating impact on
this park land. Now, I'm very familiar with the
Kenilworth Corridor, and I am perplexed by the park
land issue.

First, there already is an active rail
line that runs through the entire Kenilworth Corridor.
The rail line has been there for a very long time, and
it doesn't seem to have had any horrible impact on the
so-called park land.

Second, this Kenilworth Corridor is not
designated as a park. Prior to the construction of
the bike trail in 1996, I think, there was just a cow
path through the area, and it was basically scrub land.

Third, the Kenilworth bike trail and the vast majority of that corridor is owned by the Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority, not the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board.

There may be a small sliver of land between the existing rail line and the Kenilworth bike trail that might be considered park land, and I will tell you the vegetation on this sliver of land -- because people tell you, oh, the trees and everything's going to go -- consists of spindly volunteer Box Elder trees, which is a scrub tree; Siberian Elm, a scrub tree; and Buckthorn, an invasive shrub that communities are trying to eradicate.

So how could light rail route 3A, which would utilize the footprint of an existing rail line, have a horrible, disastrous impact on this so-called park land, which has been mentioned twice tonight by people who are supporting another line. Now, I have not heard any outcry from -- not even a peep, from the Minneapolis Park Board regarding this potential devastation or impact of a park area. One would think that indeed if this were the case, they would be very vocal on the issue.
Can this board clarify, where is the park land? And I read it in an editorial just the other day. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER DORFMAN: Thank you very much. We're going to respond, as I said at the beginning, to all questions on-line. So we'll get you an answer to that.

Andrew Zymboden and Doug -- I'm having trouble reading the last name, but Meadow Creek in Hopkins. Does that help? Yes?

MR. STRANDNESS: Yep.

COMMISSIONER DORFMAN: Followed by Dennis Brun.

MR. STRANDNESS: Good Evening. My name is Doug Strandness. I'm here representing Meadow Creek Condominiums in Hopkins, 823 Old Settlers Trail. Meadow Creek is the largest homeowners association in the state with about 1,000 residents. It is located on the south end of Hopkins and Smetana Road and 11th Avenue South. It is a little more than a half a mile from the proposed Opus Station. And our request we hope is an easy one to say yes to. We are asking that there be a pedestrian walkway from the Opus Station to Smetana Road and 11th Avenue South, or somewhere in that vicinity. There does not appear to
be one proposed at this point.

Meadow Creek is part of the Westbrooke neighborhood of Hopkins, which is a very dense multifamily neighborhood with well over 1,300 units. We're confident that such a pedestrian pathway would attract a lot of ridership from that neighborhood to the Opus Station. Thank you very much.

COMMISSIONER DORFMAN: Thank you very much.

Jan, we're trying to find this on the map. You're going to have to let us know if it's close to Shady Oak or Opus and where it is, so we may assure that we respond. Thank you.

MR. STRANDNESS: It is actually much closer to Opus.

COMMISSIONER DORFMAN: To Opus? Okay. Good. Thank you.

Dennis Bruns followed by Tracy -- Tracy Kill.

MR. BRUNS: Good evening. I'm Dennis Bruns. I live 63745 Harlan Drive in Eden Prairie. I strongly oppose route 1A, which would be putting light rail on the trail of Eden Prairie, but instead I strongly support the 3A/3C route through the Golden Triangle area where there are numerous businesses and
employers. There are not numerous businesses and employers on the trail. So it belongs from Golden Triangle and throughout the area.

This is in line with the Eden Prairie City Council, and numerous Eden Prairie citizens and residents have voiced to you in the past. Please don't ruin the trail of Eden Prairie when there are much better alternatives, such as the 3A/3C route.

Thank you.

COMMISSIONER DORFMAN: Thank you very much.

Let's see, Tracy Kill, followed by -- I'm going to mess your name up, I'm afraid -- Holly Verhage and Sasha Renee. Go ahead.

MS. KILL: Hi, I'm Tracy Kill. I live at 526 Oliver North in Minneapolis. I'm probably going to reiterate some of the things that have already been said with less eloquence, but basically I live in Harrison. It's west of Downtown. Our neighborhood has been historically underserved by the City and by transit, in particular. This would be a huge boon to our neighborhood.

We've talked a little bit already tonight about the Bassett Creek redevelopment plan. There's been a lot of work that's gone into that. It's really
important to our neighborhood. This transit option
would mean a lot to that development and would bring a
lot of jobs and funds into our neighborhood that has
been traditionally overlooked. It seems basically
unfair to give this transit line to an area that
already has so much and to overlook a neighborhood
that is struggling. And that's really all I have.

COMMISSIONER DORFMAN: Thank you, Tracy.

Holly and Sasha, followed by Sarah

Brenner and then Dave Payne.

MS. RENEE: Hi. I'm Sasha Renee. I live
at 2121 3rd Avenue South, which is Whittier
neighborhood where the 3C line would directly affect
that neighborhood, and I believe in a negative way. I
really feel that, yes, it is a high density area, and
a lot of people live there, and I think our
transportation system that is already in that area is
very effective. We have many buses along many streets
that run very often with Nicollet Avenue, having the
majority of buses that go on Nicollet are the green
buses, electric, so very low pollution.

I -- also, I work at the Bad Waitress
Cafe on 26th and Nicollet and Spy Host Cafe on 25th
and Nicollet, part of Eat Street. I know people say
that's like a high density destination area, and
they'd like to be able to get there. Well, it's already easy to get there, and what happens with the construction, it would be devastating to that area, and there wouldn't be anymore destinations. It would just -- I think the construction, because it's going to be on three streets in a row, would strongly impact the businesses that are there.

I've lived in that area for 25 years, and I've only seen positive effects in that neighborhood. With all the business coming to Eat Street, crime is down. Home ownership is up. And I think if those businesses can't survive with all the construction, that's going to just really be detrimental to -- to the area and totally unnecessary and not cost effective, and I'm just very opposed to it, personally, and so is the owner of the Bad Waitress and Spy Host, too. He's very concerned about his businesses, and he owns a home in Whittier, as well.

COMMISSIONER DORFMAN: Let me just clarify that the choice is either -- right now is looking at either Nicollet Place or Blaisdell. It would not be Yellow Creek. There would be a choice, but I think your point is well taken. Thank you.

Holly.

MS. VERHAGE: My name is Holly Verhage,
and I live at 2643 Pillsbury, also in Whittier. I've lived and worked in Whittier almost six years, which is the entire time that I've lived in the state of Minnesota. I'm here -- me and Sasha are both here representing both Spy House, Spy House East Isles, and the Bad Waitress Diner and also ourselves personally. We wanted to address --

COMMISSIONER DORFMAN: All have really good coffee and food, by the way.

MS. VERHAGE: Thank you.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Good waitresses.

MS. VERHAGE: We wanted to address the effects it would have on the Whittier neighborhood. And then I also have a letter drafted by the owner of all three businesses, which was sent to Katie Walker, Commissioner McLaughlin, and Commissioner Dorfman that I'd just like to read real quick.

It says: I am writing in regards to the possible proposed construction of the light rail system down Eat Street. I am the owner of the Spy House Coffee Shop, 2451 Nicollet, as well as The Bad Waitress Diner, 26th Street and Nicollet Avenue; and I'm also a homeowner in the Whittier neighborhood. I have invested approximately a million dollars in this neighborhood, and, as a result, Whittier has become my
true home for over seven years.

Therefore, it concerns me deeply about
the thought of Nicollet Avenue/Eat Street being torn
up for an overextended period of time, whereas the
vital and positive benefit for a business, this is
nonexistent. The economic impacts would be
devastating to hundreds of businesses, churches,
schools, day cares, and a plethora of restaurants,
grocery stores, as well as the immediate residents of
Whittier.

Eat Street has come a long way since I've
been here, and our progress and transformation from a
once blighted, crime-ridden neighborhood is the result
of honest and true hard work and devotion. Excuse me.
Pride, sacrifice, and passion have all influenced the
rebirth of Nicollet Avenue. It would be a detrimental
decision to even consider a light rail study of such a
proud, diverse, and up-and-coming neighborhood that
has achieved its right as an economic staple for
nearly 15 years. Families have built a foundation
around their businesses that are located here.
Alternative routes need to be examined more closely
where such a negative economic and social impacts are
extraordinarily less.

The Kenilworth Trail proposal would be
far less devastating socially, morally, ethically, as well as $500 million less expensive. I feel that in this economic climate, sacrifice must be met when incurring more debt that will placed on small businesses, families, and a future generation.

And then also speaking personally, as a South Minneapolis resident who does not own a car, I consider that the current mass transit bus system is totally adequate and reliable. I have no problem getting anywhere within 10 minutes, anywhere I need to go. Bike ridership has been up in South Minneapolis 15 to 30 percent just in the last two years. Also, the light rail works more effectively when there are less stops and speed is interrupted. The Whittier route would not directly serve Whittier residents. It will be underground.

And also there's a question. The opening of Nicollet is more advantageous to neighborhoods and businesses on Lake and Nicollet, moving the K-Mart over, and really opening up that street would really help the neighborhood, and we were just wondering if the light rail would put a stop to that, also.

COMMISSIONER DORFMAN: Thank you. Thank you very much.

Council Member Remington.
MR. REMINGTON: Thank you. Thank you, Commissioner Dorfman. I just wanted to clarify something the last two speakers -- for the last two speakers.

The 3C route is the one that goes -- is proposed to go under Nicollet. The 3C2 is under either Blaisdell or First. It would not be under Eat Street, so there would not be construction on Eat Street from the 3C2 route, only on the 3C route.

COMMISSIONER DORFMAN: Thank you, Council Member.

Sarah Brenner, followed by Dave Payne, followed by Lois Sander.

MS. BRENNER: Hi. My name is Sarah Brenner, and I live at 2526 Upton Avenue South. I want to thank the committee for having this forum for us to speak, and I want to let you know that I do support the Midtown route.

Uptown is currently a highly congested area, while Kenilworth is a relatively low density neighborhood. Currently, it's serviced by one bus that runs only in the morning and in the evening and about every half hour. I've ridden the bus before, and it's poorly -- it's poorly ridden, and there's not much ridership there currently. It's -- it would have
a very negative impact, I think, because it would be just Eden Prairie, Hopkins, Minnetonka people coming Downtown, and there's really nothing along the Kenilworth Corridor until you get to Near North. And while I respectfully, you know, respect the people that desire to develop the Near North side and want to spur development in that area, it's not that heavily a populated area either. And I respectfully suggest that the decision needs to be made on real ridership that currently exists now and for the long-term.

So in light of these concerns, I'd really like to advocate for the Midtown Greenway because I don't believe that the Kenilworth line will service our community well. Thank you very much.

COMMISSIONER DORFMAN: Thank you so much.


MR. DORSEY: Good evening. Hi, my name is Rick Dorsey. My address is 14215 Greenview Court, Eden Prairie. And, first of all, I want to say I appreciate all your efforts that you've done working on the studies you've worked on. I do, in general terms, support light rail; however, I do not support the use of the HCRRA corridor that you've proposed. I
believe that in the study that you've done, you failed to address other options, and while the studies all started out based on the county owning these railroad corridors, we failed to look at better alternatives that will make better use of the money being spent.

With the primary issue being congestion of roads, I really don't -- when I look at the news every morning, I don't see the interior -- interior of the 494 Loop outside of the major corridors being listed as congestion heavy areas. If you look at it, it's the major arterials that are the real problem. And if we're trying to solve the primary problem with the transportation being -- providing means of reducing congestion, which frees up time for people and the safety issues, I think that we need to look at where the people are coming and going from already and provide a solution to that problem.

Now, not everybody goes Downtown. These light rail proposals are all linear, and they do not connect with each other, except Downtown. If I'm in Maple Grove and can't get to Eden Prairie very easily, if I'm in Eden Prairie, and I can't get to Bloomington Mega Mall very easily using light rail. The proposal that I would make would be is to look at the current corridors that are there, the freeway corridors,
using -- capitalizing on the Hiawatha line we already have. Perhaps one option would be to take and go from Eden Prairie, down 494 to the Mega Mall, connect up there. So now you've connected up with the whole 494 strip where there's a huge amount of people going all the time.

Another option would be to take and you could -- because you're not in neighborhoods where you have cross-sections, which are very expensive to take care of, you can lay a lot more track on such a corridor, go across the 394, the HOV lanes, put track all the way out to Ridgedale, come down 494 to Eden Prairie. Those all serve purposes with rail being the purpose of most efficiently transferring large quantities of people long distances. Stopping on every corner is not the most feasible use.

I believe the interior corridor -- the interior 494 ring has sufficient roads that the people from outside the ring aren't coming and congesting them. So if you take that pressure off from the outside, you suddenly open up all the roads on the inside further, and there's less congestion.

I understand that there is the need for looking at development, but that's not the purpose of this. I think that the reason that people supported
looking at light rail is because they want to get
congestion taken care of. Thank you.

I do have a copy of something I submitted
at a previous -- or we talked about previously and
submitted to somebody with the HRA, and I'll submit it
here for the record.

COMMISSIONER DORFMAN: Thank you. We'll
make sure that that's distributed.

MR. DORSEY: Thank you.

COMMISSIONER DORFMAN: Vida Ditter,
followed by Lois Sander.

MS. DITTER: Members of the PAC, you all
know me. I've spoken before in support of 3A, so I
think I will pass. You all heard me before. It's
getting late. I think people would like to wrap up.

COMMISSIONER DORFMAN: Thank you very
much. We do have your previous testimony.

Lois Sander.

MS. SANDER: I will also pass.

COMMISSIONER DORFMAN: Okay. Where are
you? Since we talked on the phone, I just wanted
to -- okay. Thank you.

Jay Johnson and Donald Hoekstra. Jay,
followed by Donald Hoekstra.

MR. JOHNSON: And your locally preferred
I'm Jay Johnson from Chanhassen, 7496 Saratoga, in Chanhassen. I'm a former Southwest Metro bus commissioner and a long-time advocate of Reverse Commute, which Southwest started after I got off the bus commission. A lot of things happen after I get off the commissions.

Unfortunately, there's not a lot to it because of where the Southwest buses go. They really don't provide any access to the people of North Minneapolis to the Eden Prairie area. I'm in strong support of the 3A option. I believe that transit can be a driver of development, and if any place in Minneapolis needs develop right now, it is North Minneapolis. Some of the miracles that have happened on Eat Street and the Uptown area is now due for North Minneapolis. I visit that area quite often in some of the work I do.

And pretty much that's what I wanted to say, is that I'm for this route. We have plenty of good jobs out here in Chanhassen and Eden Prairie, and this will help -- help our employers and help the people in North Minneapolis. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER DORFMAN: Thank you very much.
Donald Hoekstra, followed by Cynthia Marsh.

MR. HOEKSTRA: I'm Don Hoekstra, and I live at 5643 Green Circle Drive, the Opus Complex of Minnetonka, and we've been told by various meetings that what you are considering in the Opus Complex, primarily the Glen Road east and west, is that you want road service crossing. I would strongly encourage you to consider above-grade for two basic reasons.

I think if you were to take every car that is in Opus during the daytime for people that work there and put them bumper to bumper, the street would be more than full. And if you expect the big -- you anticipate the big development, you're going to be bringing in a lot more cars, and we can't handle what you have there now.

Most of the people, I believe, that work in Opus live north and west of that area; therefore, the light transit probably would not help them. If they live south and west, yes, it would; but currently I don't believe it would help them.

The other concern I have is that in Green Circle Drive, I consider that our residential streets of the Opus Complex. There's five condominiums, and
in that five condominiums, there's approximately 800
people that live.

Next to us is the South Hampton complex
of apartments and the conservatory, and in those I
would imagine -- I'm guessing there's probably 3,000
people. All of us have access to the pathways in Opus
Complex. If you haven't seen them, you can walk
completely through all those pathways and never cross
a road. It's designed that way. I think Minnetonka
and the Opus people did a wonderful job with those
pathways. If you put in a surface road crossing,
you're going to be messing up those trials.

In this complex of all of these residents
that will live there, we have young children, children
that are learning to ride their tricycle or their
bicycle for the first time. We have older people that
walk with a cane, that walk with a walker. We also
have a few people that are in wheelchairs. I also
believe in Murphy's Law, and the light -- Hiawatha
light rail transit has proved this. There's going to
be fatalities. And I hope that in the Opus Complex,
it will not be your first grand -- one of your
grandchildren, one of your parents or your
grandparents, or even one of those people in the
wheelchair.
So I strongly urge that you do not consider grades -- the road surface grade coverage, that it be elevated. Thank you for your time.

COMMISSIONER DORFMAN: Thank you, Don.

Cynthia Marsh, followed by Dick Hagland.

MS. MARSH: Madam Chair and PAC council members, I'm here as -- I live at 2588 Upton Avenue South. I am here as a resident. I have worked with Cheryl LaRue and that group of volunteers.

I'm very much in support of 3C. I think most of the points have been made tonight, so I will just briefly say that I think that it should go through the most dense area, that it -- versus the lower density area. And I do question the numbers of ridership, and I think that several very strong arguments have been made about why those numbers are questionable to many of us already tonight.

I agree with the editorial that Councilman Remington wrote. I think he well-articulated many of the concerns about 3A and the reasons for 3C, and that this is a decision that should be for 20 years, 50 years in the future. I also want to add that if 3A is chosen, I don't think that there's been enough focus on noise mitigation and
disruption and so on. The residents that do live on that route are very, very close to that route.

The lady from Minnetonka talked about being one block away in an apartment complex, and I really respect that. Our homes are like 20 or 25 steps away from light rail. A gentleman spoke on behalf of the very lovely apartment complex with beautiful greenway. It's very, very lovely. Some of those buildings are about 10 steps away; not blocks, steps. It's very close.

And so I've gone to all our neighborhood meetings over the last couple of years, and I do not feel like if this route is chosen there's been enough focus on the mitigation for what would need to happen if that is the preferred route.

Thank you. I'd also like to say to our community that -- given in our country, that behavior at so many public meetings, we all feel so strongly and passionately about this, this has been a very respectful discourse tonight, and I think we should be proud of ourselves, and I thank all of you.

(Appause.)

COMMISSIONER DORFMAN: I think all of us have been thinking the same thing. Thank you for those comments. We've all learned a lot, and it feels
really different than those health care forums.

We have -- just so you know, some of you have been waiting for a long time, as have the members of the PAC. I have about 10 more names, and then we may have some folks that we already passed over that arrived, but I just wanted to let you know where we are.

Dick Hagland.

MR. HAGLAND: Scratch that.


MR. ADAIR: I'm Richard Adair. I'm from 200 Upton Avenue South in Minneapolis. I just want to thank you, and I'm so glad I'm on this side of that table and not on your side. This must make your head spin, you know, all this stuff: Uptown withering, the Bassett Creek Valley not being able to be redeveloped, grandchildren being killed. This just goes on and on. And I believe that everyone who spoke tonight has very valid points.

But I'm going to make another idea here -- present another idea for your consideration. We don't really -- you're doing 50- to 100-year infrastructure here. You don't really know who's going to be living in Uptown, what's going to be going
on in the Bassett Creek Valley this -- in this time frame. So I'm going to ask you to water down a little bit all these heartfelt and very valid points that you've listened to and think about planning a infrastructure for a future that you can't really know.

So I'm going to suggest three ways of simplifying this. Number one, rail transit for long hops, buses for short hops. I don't think it's too far from Lake Street to Downtown Minneapolis to use a bus. Number two, don't exclude parts of the city and the metropolitan area. And this is all those racial justice arguments that you've heard. Number 3, let's not give my grandchildren, who are now two and four, too much debt. They're going to be asked to pay for a lot of stuff that people who are alive and here today used up. And so I think you better have a real good reason if you're going to vote for something that's more expensive.

So putting those arguments together, I'm a proponent of 3A.

COMMISSIONER DORFMAN: Thank you. Kara Bancroft, followed by Mary Theresa Downey.

MS. BANCROFT: Hi. My name is Kara Bancroft. I live in Eden Prairie, 6309 St. John's
Drive. And I have the luxury of being a world traveler, and I've traveled through the most incredible public transit systems in the world. I just came back from Singapore this summer, and, God, I'm jealous. I know they have density that we don't have to work with, so, you know, I'll cut a little slack, but I do hope that as you proceed with this you look to the future, because our density is going to continue to grow.

Currently I am in what I consider to be a dead zone of transit. In order for me to get anywhere on transit -- and I'm a very green-thinking person -- I try, and I've made some really noble efforts to take public transit places, and it's really hard from Eden Prairie, unless you happen to live close to or in route to the Southwest Transit Station. I'm about halfway between Shady Oak and halfway between the Southwest Station. It wouldn't make sense for me to go backwards to then go back past my house to go Downtown. It wouldn't happen time-wise for me. It is very hard for me to take the bus Downtown. There are transfers that are slow and painful. The routes are slow coming all the way out; so I tend to agree with the light rail for long, quick, few stops between.

With that I've turned to biking for most
of my commuting, and I do commute three to four days a week on a LRT trail, so I just ask whatever route you choose, please keep that in your mind, as well, that it would be really sad to lose. And I see an increasing number of people out there with me each morning and each night using that trail to commute by bike, so please keep -- whatever route you choose, keep biking in mind as something that is being done and does need to continue as a part of that transit solution.

So I am going to say I really do wish secretly that 1 --

COMMISSIONER DORFMAN: 1A.

MS. BANCROFT: -- 1A -- thank you -- would be chosen, because it's like a half mile or less from my house. I could actually walk to transit. But hopefully that is also part of the solution, to connect -- connect those things that aren't connected. If it doesn't go through Uptown, I hope that there's a shuttle that will take me to visit my friends, so I don't have to wait 10 minutes to connect to a bus at the last stop before Uptown to get to another bus to the Uptown to wait again 10 to 15 minutes to connect to another one that will take me to the next location. So please keep all of those things in
mind to make this something that's useful, because, boy, I really want to see it succeed. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER DORFMAN: Kara, I think, speaking for everybody on the Policy Advisory Committee, there's a firm commitment and has been all along to preserving the existing bike trail throughout the corridor, whichever alignment is selected, so we'll make sure that happens. Anyway, we'll be looking at how we redevelop station locations to accommodate bikes and pedestrian, as well.

Mary Theresa Downey.

MS. DOWNEY: Hi. My name is Mary Theresa Downing, and I live in Shorewood, and I wish I could take public transit, but the buses only go every half hour in the morning three times, and then we have our three times at night coming out, and that's not what I need to do, so I don't take buses. I used to take public transit when I lived in Tokyo, and it was a real joy, and I sure miss it. I could take it in Minneapolis, too, because there a lot of buses in South Minneapolis, even further south on Lake Street. But I know in the Whittier neighborhood there are plenty of buses, and that's where you would be putting 3A -- 3C, so I wouldn't do that because they don't really need that. And I think what's
really needed is the route that goes through
Kenilworth where, no, there isn't much, but as
somebody pointed out, you're really looking at
something you can't see 50 years from now or 100 years
from now, and that was one of the arguments people
kept making against the Hiawatha line: There's
nothing there. No one will use it. Guess what? They
were wrong, and I hope that you will choose that.

And I'm here also to represent my son, Andy Exley, who is running for the city council in
Minneapolis in Ward 6 and lives in Whittier, and he is
very much in favor of 3A, as well. He does bike
everywhere he goes or takes the bus, and he's served
very well by the buses in the Whittier neighborhood.
So I encourage you strongly to look at 3A. Thanks.

COMMISSIONER DORFMAN: Thank you very
much.

Phyllis Hill, followed by Christina Le.

Phyllis Hill, Christina Le.

Christina Mallow, I see that you've
arrived. You were well-represented by Michael, but
you're on the list. Would you like to say anything?

MS. MELLOW: Sure. I'm --

COMMISSIONER DORFMAN: Oh, I'm sorry,
MS. LE: My name is Christina Le, and I'm --

MR. REMINGTON: You have to speak up.

MS. LE: I'm here to represent many small businesses on Nicollet Avenue, and I do own property on there, as well. Overall, I thank you -- first of all, I want to thank you for giving me an opportunity to speak.

Overall, I do support the 3A route for the reason that because the stadium is being built there, which is a huge development. That once the 3A connects the suburbs to the stadium, it will also spur on more development within the North Minneapolis area everyone was speaking of. And I believe that when we put infrastructure in place, I believe that we have to take that fiscal responsibility and look at how it can in the future spur on development, rather than destroy some development that's already existing on a very commercial corridor of Nicollet Avenue.

So by doing that, making -- the small businesses won't survive the downtime of construction, and our business has been there for 20 years. So we have been investing in this area to make it what it is today as Eat Street. So I think that being that it's also commercial, that's where the jobs are. And,
again, back to fiscal responsibility, that we need to
continue keeping the existing jobs that we have,
rather than trying to destroy a commercial corridor.

And I understand that the other route
goes through parkways and beautiful areas, too. I
hope that they would understand there's give and take.
And there's -- and I think the positive part of it is
that the public can see the beautiful houses in the
area that the Kenilworth will go through. But,
anyway, I do thank you for the opportunity.

COMMISSIONER DORFMAN: Thank you.

Council Member Remington.

MR. REMINGTON: I just -- thank you for
your comments. I just wanted to clarify for the last
speaker, as well, that only one of the C routes go
through Nicollet. Two of them by -- go -- one goes
down 1st. One goes down Blaisdell. Also, the 3C2
route does go to the stadium, so that doesn't stop.
That goes all the way to the stadium. Just a point of
clarification.

COMMISSIONER DORFMAN: Thank you. Thank
you for that.

So Christina Mallow, followed by Marian
Dean, Aaron Cory, and Tad Spencer.
Christina.
MS. MALLOW: Hello. I'm Christina. I live at 2642 Irving Avenue South. I also with my husband own property. That location is two blocks north of the Midtown Greenway. We also own property on Kenwood Parkway, near the Kenilworth Trail, so this is definitely a case not related to NEMV. I thank all of you for letting me speak this evening, and I want to just touch on a couple of points, because I know there have been a number of issues repeated. And I just want to share thoughts on a couple.

One is there was an article in the paper yesterday that commented that we haven't had time, and I can say, since I bought my house 10 years ago, that this issue has been out there over 10 years. This issue has been there, the same issues discussed many times by the neighborhoods. I served on the Midtown Greenway Coalition for nine years. I no longer serve on the board, and I'm speaking tonight on behalf of my own personal interest in the Metropolitan regional area and the need for transit.

I don't feel like we're really comparing options like an either/or. It's either we pick route 3A, or we're not going to receive the federal assistance we need to create this light rail line. And it would be very tragic, because if we're to meet
the 2030 deadline that was spoken about in the article yesterday, we're going to need to start that light rail line now so that we can double transit by 2030. So that would be my first point.

The second point is I hear a lot of mention about density, and I think it's really important for those who are on the fence here to know that the study has been done in accordance with the Federal Transit Authority guidelines. This -- these guidelines dictate how the population usage was determined. And if you want to veer from that study, you will have to start all over again and perhaps without the 50 percent funding that we are demanding or requesting of the Federal Government.

So in order to get the ridership figures that are being talked about, like those high densities that could be used, you would need to start all over again and veer away from the Federal Transit Authority guidelines. So sticking within the parameters of the guidelines that have been given to us today, we need to be on route 3A in order to get federal funding.

If we go with route 3C through the Midtown Greenway up to Nicollet, it will cost $500 million more. It will avoid three of the major growth centers of Minneapolis that have been identified by
the city leaders. It includes the University of Minnesota, the Abbott, Northwestern, Allina, Wells Fargo location and the Bassett Creek section.

So if we add the 3A line with the Hiawatha line with a streetcar alignment through the Midtown Greenway, you will capture three of those locations, and at the same time you will save $200 million at a minimum in accordance with the Federal Transit Authority parameters under which we are required to work.

So I urge this group today to support the 3A line. Let's start light rail. Let's anticipate a regional system that serves the Near North, that serves the Uptown area, but it also keeps going east on the Greenway, all the way to the river and into St. Paul with a streetcar line that accomplishes growth for all parties in the Twin Cities region and at the same time serves the Southwest Corridor. So please work with the TAC and support 3A. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER DORFMAN: Thank you, Christina.

Mary Dean, followed by Aaron Cory.

MS. DEAN: Good evening, Commission Dorfman and PAC Members. My name is Mary Dean. I'm the executive director for the Whittier Alliance. The
|   | Whittier Alliance has taken the position of not supporting the 3C and supporting alignment 3A for obvious reasons. 3C2, to be clear on which line it is, would run down 1st Avenue. 1st Avenue is a heavily populated avenue. It's a very narrow avenue, and it would remove housing, and some of it is low income housing, which is, I believe, not part of the goal of mass transit. We would lose housing along 1st Avenue. It would -- the train would run underground, and it would be within 10 feet of people's basements. I know that there are people here saying it's within a block of their home. Well, 10 feet is a little more rattling, I think, when you're trying to do laundry or watch TV or whatever. And it would also, along 1st Avenue, cut through a major part of our historic district, so that is a major concern for the neighborhood. 3C1 along Nicollet Avenue would have a very detrimental impact on our independent businesses, both at -- almost 100 percent of those businesses is a single proprietor, family-owned business. They are -- they are doing well, but a long-term construction time frame would probably put them pretty much out of business, and that's an economic factor that has not |
been factored into the cost of the light rail on the 3C1 alignment. To reconstruct that would take interminable years, and I'm afraid we would also lose the character and the personality of Eat Street as it exists now if that did occur.

In addition, there are alternatives. The previous speaker spoke about the trolley. There is a trolley study that has been completed. It is a viable option for both the Midtown Greenway and for Nicollet Avenue, Chicago Avenue that would be an ideal connector for the Greenway and a less than half full means of transportation -- rail transportation for those who prefer rail transportation.

In the interim, the neighborhood is very, very, very well-served by many buses within half a block. If any of the routes within the Whittier neighborhood or the 3C alignments were chosen, keeping some of this hot plate jumping between the three streets, it would -- the bus, routes as I hear it, are presumably going to be sustained, so people would not go the six or eight blocks to the opposite direction. They would go the half block to continue taking the bus, so ridership, as you have found in the study, would not be increased any rate at all.

And nobody has spoken -- thank you. I
was going to mention the Downtown connections. Nobody has spoke about those. Just looking at the plan, it just seems like a snarl Downtown, an expensive snarl.

COMMISSIONER DORFMAN: Thank you, Mary.

Aaron Core.

MR. CORE: Good evening. My name is Aaron Core. I live at 2501 Harriet Avenue South, and I live probably about four blocks west of Nicollet Avenue. I also have -- that's my home there. I also have two properties in the Harrison, North Minneapolis, adjacent to the Bassett Creek planning area.

Tonight I speak in favor of 3A, partly in opposition to the 3C route through the Whittier Neighborhood, and I prepared my testimony in writing. First I understand that the alignment will not satisfy the -- the 3C alignment will not satisfy the Federal Funding matrix. 3A does seem to do it, so it seems like 3A would be the line to follow. I believe the other lines also fail for other reasons.

Building any alignment along Nicollet or adjacent avenues would cost so much in disruption to the Greenway, the neighborhoods, and local businesses that benefits in economic and transportation aims would have to be immense. Considering the great bike
and bus access currently available to the corridor, LRT has not justified their basis of transportation improvements to Minneapolis and rather should be opposed due to cost.

Secondly, the opportunity for public investment to be matched by private investments is greatest along the 3A alignment. This is particularly true in the Bassett Creek Valley master planning area where an opportunity for 150 acres of new transit oriented development is not just an opportunity or an idea, but it's been codified in Bassett Creek Valley master plan, as approved by the Minneapolis City Council.

Bassett Creek Valley master plan represents almost 300 million in private investments that -- who would generate thousands of new jobs, hundreds of new housing units and office units. These are private investments. It would be increased by magnitudes if the LRT line ran through it. What other proposed line in Minneapolis is poised for this new development. Infield development, the cor -- Nicollet or Blaisdell corridors does not compare. Even with the merits of transportation system aside, 3A wins due to the return on public investment. It would occur in a fashion much shorter and much greater than any other
line we can offer.

And, finally, thirdly, I think this is also about improving regional equity. 3A does not -- 3A is the only line that connects a historically isolated area, North Minneapolis. This would link jobs and opportunity to an area that severely needs it, better connecting North Minneapolis and its residents to the regional economy. Public investment should be designed to have this type of effect. I believe that people understand that 3A is the only truly viable route. It's the most rational policy decision no matter -- impacting on economic or social dividends. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER DORFMAN: Thank you, Aaron.

Thad Spencer, followed by the last name I have, David Bagley, and then we'll see if we've overlooked anybody.

MR. SPENCER: Thank you very much. I'm Thad Spencer. I live at 1918 Queen Avenue South. This is a very thin mic.

I've lived in West Kenwood for 15 years, and I've brought a business in Downtown Minneapolis for 21 years. Last April I bought a building in North Minneapolis at the intersection of Glenwood and Humboldt Avenue North, a dumpy little building.
gravitated into this beautiful place, and I have a
15-person employee business there. I'm a big fan of
the area. I think it's the up-and-coming place, and
it's a great way to get away from the sport stadiums
of Downtown.

I also bicycle to work, as do all of my
employees, and I'm just vehemently against this 3A.
And I'd like to stand up for that -- there was one
gentleman here that basically called them the scrub
patch of Buckthorn. I couldn't disagree more. It's a
beautiful area. I walk my dogs there. I bike there.
My children bike through the woods there. We
cross-country ski from Cedar Lake all the way through
Quaking Bog.

And it's just an amazing oasis with the
prairie grass and all this, and we want to run people
from Eden Prairie through it? I don't -- I don't see
the need for it. If they wanted to work Downtown,
they should have moved and lived in this area. And it
seems that we're all sort of being penalized with
people that are so invested in the area and decided to
work and live in the same area. So thank you.

COMMISSIONER DORFMAN: Thank you very
much.

David Bagley.
MR. BAGLEY: Good evening. I'm David Bagley. I am a member of the board of Whittier Alliance and also a member of the CMC.

So Whittier, as you've heard this evening, is, I believe, the heaviest user of mass transit in the state. It's certainly the best. And while many other people outside our community are eager for us to have the LRT running through our community, we are not.

We feel the 3C alignments don't serve our community. Both routes negatively impact Eat Street, not just because of the construction, but because of the positioning of the station just north of Franklin on -- on Nicollet there. It will significantly affect the flow of traffic down through Eat Street.

3C2 is planned to run up one or both, two narrow, residential, and historic streets, as you heard earlier. And I have to comment on that. We really don't feel if reflects well on the committee or the process that we've been through, but even at this stage, we in Whittier are facing alternatives nobody has named. Is this a 1st Avenue solution, or is it a Blaisdell solution?

We're sitting here trying to explain to our community, well, there's one route down Nicollet.
Okay, I understand that. And then there's this other route that might go up 1st Avenue, or it might go up Blaisdell; or it might go up Blaisdell and then 1st Avenue. It makes it extremely difficult for us to explain what's going on to the community.

Finally, I would like to reiterate that as a community, we have said we're extremely positive about the prospect of a light rail system or a -- I'm sorry -- a streetcar system running along the Midtown Greenway and connecting up Nicollet. That's a perfect solution for Eat Street. It's above ground. It connects Downtown to all the restaurants. That would be something that you will get extreme support from the neighborhood if we can get funding for that.

Thank you.

COMMISSIONER DORFMAN: Thank you very much.

So is there anybody whose name is on the list that hasn't been called who would like to speak, or anybody else who didn't sign up but hasn't already shared their view who would like to address the Policy Advisory Committee?

If not -- well, I don't know about everybody else on the PAC, but we have like really, really smart constituents. That's what I think. This
was really amazing. You know, we've been studying
this for a long time, and I think we learned a lot
tonight, and there were a lot of issues that were
raised in support of the various alignments and a
number of other issues that were raised that clearly
we need to look at moving forward.

So thank you all very much for giving
your time tonight and sharing your comments with us.
And the process from here is the polic -- the Policy
Advisory Committee will take up the recommendation
from the Technical Group on October 14th, and then
we'll have an additional public hearing that you're
welcome to come back to at the Government Center on
October 20th at 4:00 in the afternoon. That's going
to go to 7:00, time certain ending. And then the
Hennepin County Regional Rail Authority will take up
the recommendation on November 3rd and pass along our
recommendations to the MAC council.

So that's the process looking at the
alignment from here. We will also be finishing up the
draft environmental impact statement during this time,
which continues to look at environmental issues, and
that, too, the environmental assessment will move on
for the next year and a half. And it will be --
whichever alignment is selected, there will be a lot
of work, working with the communities around station locations and throughout the community to identify environmental and other issues and to look at appropriate mitigation measures for alignment to make it work for whichever community it goes through.

So thank you all again for your time. Thank you to the Policy Advisory Committee members. And we will continue this discussion later. Thank you.

(Proceedings adjourned.)
STATE OF MINNESOTA)
COUNTY OF HENNEPIN )

I, Dawn Workman Bounds, notary in and for the State of Minnesota, certify that the foregoing proceedings were reported stenographically by me at the time and place indicated.

Given under my hand on this the 29th day of September, 2009.

_________________________
Dawn Workman Bounds
Notary Public, Hennipen County, Minnesota
My commission expires January 31, 2014