

## **Memo**

**To:** Southwest LRT Minneapolis Station Area Strategic Planning Participants & Stakeholders

**From:** Adele Hall, Hennepin County, & Amanda Arnold, City of Minneapolis, Co-Project Managers, Southwest LRT Minneapolis Station Area Strategic Planning

**Date:** April 26, 2011

**Re:** Minneapolis Station Area Strategic Plans

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### Intent

Hennepin County and the City of Minneapolis recently completed a station area strategic planning process for the Royalston, Van White, Penn, 21st Street, and West Lake Street stations along the Minneapolis portion of the proposed Southwest LRT line. The purpose of the Minneapolis station area strategic planning process was to anticipate and plan for issues related to access to the stations, land use, market change, and potential impacts that will inform City of Minneapolis land use policy, as well as work conducted under the approaching Preliminary Engineering phase of the Southwest LRT project.

The station area strategic planning process was the first step in localized LRT planning in Minneapolis and addressed many issues and concerns raised by stakeholders. However, there are many issues, such as traffic impacts, noise and vibration impacts, and station design, that were outside of the station area planning scope. These issues, as well as those initially explored during station area strategic planning will be further examined during Southwest LRT Preliminary Engineering, Southwest LRT Community Works, and City of Minneapolis planning processes, all of which will contribute to furthering the vision, function, and design of the stations.

### Process

Robust public involvement was a key part of the station area strategic planning process, and input was sought from neighborhood and business stakeholders through a regularly-meeting Community Members' Working Group, as well as six public open houses, and many individual meetings. Many aspects of the plans reflect the constructive resident and business input into the project, however, in recognition of the fact that each station concept does not reflect universal consensus, the station area strategic plans, once complete, were open to public comment. Both the plans and the comments follow this memo; for more detail regarding public involvement, materials presented, and public feedback received please visit: [www.southwesttransitway.org](http://www.southwesttransitway.org).

### Product & Next Steps

The Station Area Strategic Planning document and associated market study present existing conditions, review past planning efforts, analyze issues, and present opening day and long range recommendations for each station. The Station Area Strategic Planning document, related market study, and comment are available for review and to download on the [Station Area Planning page](#) of [southwesttransitway.org](http://southwesttransitway.org).

### **Cc:**

Hennepin County: Commissioners Mark Stenglein, Gail Dorfman, & Peter McLaughlin

Hennepin County: Southwest LRT Community Works Project Managers Katie Walker & Patrick Connoy

City of Minneapolis: CPED Planning Director Barbara Sporlein

Metro Transit: Director of New Starts Projects Mark Fuhrmann & Southwest LRT Project Director Chris Weyer



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Some comments raised issues that were already addressed in the station area strategic planning document, some were new issues, and some were outside the scope of this planning document, but are relative to LRT project development.

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## **Royalston Station Comments**

**Karen Lee Rosar**

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January 10, 2011

Greetings. I am submitting my comments regarding the SWLRT Royalston Station Planning. I live in the North Loop neighborhood where the station is located. The email link posted on the SWLRT website fails when I hit the link.

1. Careful attention needs to be paid to the connectivity of pedestrians and bikers with regards to the station, the Farmers Market, the neighborhood, adjacent neighborhoods and Downtown.
2. Build the station to accommodate a "Mixed use Market District".
3. Busses should be easily accessible.
4. Create a linear plaza between Border Ave at the Farmers Market and the Royalston stop.
5. Connect Border Ave to Glenwood.
6. Enhance 5th Ave corridor to 7th Street.
7. Enhance the highway 55 intersection leading to the area.
8. Begin construction before the projected timeline. These projects take too long.

## **The Fish Guys, LBP Mechanical, Inc., and Stark Electronics**

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February 24, 2011

Dear Ms. Arnold and Ms. Hall:

This letter is written, on behalf of The Fish Guys, LBP Mechanical, Inc., and Stark Electronics as a response to the SW LRT Station Area Strategic Plan. We compliment the City of Minneapolis and Hennepin County on the station area planning process and appreciate the challenges associated with balancing current conditions with future needs. However, the plan has a number of inadequacies and reflects a lack of understanding of the current conditions and business operations on Royalston Avenue.

The Plan anticipates land uses changes with no suggested implementation. Furthermore, without the suggested land uses changes, a station at Royalston is not supported. The Plan shows a clear lack of understanding of the geographic constraints of Royalston Avenue. The Plan does not address existing and future parking issues for the businesses and the area.

Most significantly, The Plan does not reflect an understanding of the current business operations of the Royalston businesses. These are profitable, thriving industrial businesses with over 200 employees. While each business is different, all three require unfettered vehicular access. The Plan, as presented, will make it virtually impossible for these businesses to continue to operate efficiently, effectively and profitably at their current locations.

### **LAND USE CHANGES**

The challenge of the station area planning document is that it is written in 2011 and attempting to anticipate changes that may or may not occur in the future. The plan, as written, anticipates major land use changes on Royalston Avenue, but does not indicate how those changes would be implemented on property that is all privately owned.

A stated goal in the North Loop Small Area Plan is the expansion of the Farmer's Market. Anyone familiar with the area knows the Farmer's Market is not accessible by foot from the proposed Royalston Station. If the intention is to connect the Farmer's Market and the Royalston Station, for pedestrian use,

much more thought must go into how that will be accomplished, given the location of the existing businesses.

#### THE NEED FOR THE ROYALSTON STATION

The ridership associated with the Royalston Station is based on significant land use changes occurring and absent these land use changes, the case for the necessity of the Royalston Station is not made. The document assumes ridership at the Royalston Station that is highly speculative and acknowledges the Royalston Station has no major ridership-generating origins. While Royalston is envisioned as a “walk-up” station, it is not at all clear where riders are walking-up from, since there are no major ridership generators in the area. While the Royalston Station is viewed as a “reverse-commute” station, it is unclear why riders would choose to use this station rather than the Interchange/Target Field station across 7<sup>th</sup> Street. While it may be a goal to connect the Royalston Station with the Farmer’s Market, there is currently no connection and it is not clear how this would be accomplished.

#### GEOGRAPHIC ISSUES

The Plan indicates a clear misunderstanding of the Royalston Avenue area. We have to question whether the consultants ever visited the area and developed a clear understanding of the current conditions of the site.

The document portrays a very confusing, and potentially dangerous, mix of uses in a very small area. Specifically, page 26 of the Station Area Strategic Plan indicates that from east to west, across Royalston Avenue, there will be a sidewalk, curb, gutter, bike lane, a northbound vehicular traffic lane, dual LRT rail line and platform station with curb and cutter on either side and a southbound vehicular traffic lane with curb, gutter and sidewalk. It is not feasible to fit all these competing uses into the current footprint of approximately 95 feet that exists from the City of Minneapolis Light Duty Maintenance Facility and the western curb line of Royalston. The Plan appears to show the sidewalk on the west side of Royalston further west than it actually is. This location would adversely impact the businesses on the west side of Royalston. Moving any further west would result in a loss of property, signage and parking spaces for the businesses. In addition, it would further hamper access to the existing businesses by tractors/trailers/semis and other vehicles due to the shortened turning radius. The existing businesses would also be that much closer to the adverse physical and environmental ramifications of the SW LRT, further hindering their ability to operate.

#### PARKING

Everyone is aware of the current parking challenges in the area, particularly during the months when the Farmer’s Market is active. A drive down Royalston Avenue, on any day of the week, shows it is used for parking on a daily basis. The Plan does not acknowledge the impact of construction/operation on the parking issues in the area. Furthermore, if the Farmer’s Market is expanded, as is contemplated in the NLSAP, there will be additional parking challenges that will only be exacerbated by LRT construction and operation.

#### IMPACT ON EXISTING BUSINESSES

The document does not fully acknowledge or recognize the importance of the existing businesses along Royalston Avenue nor does it reflect an understanding of the business operations of the Royalston Avenue businesses.

Specifically changes should include:

- The “Top Issues” section should acknowledge that the SW LRT, and the Royalston Station, will have an adverse impact on the vehicular use of Royalston by the existing businesses.

- The “Principles” section should acknowledge that the existing businesses are healthy, thriving and contribute to the economy of our city. In addition, it should be a stated “principle” measures will be take to insure the businesses are not disrupted either during or after construction.

The document does not acknowledge the vehicular traffic associated with the existing businesses. The businesses on Royalston Avenue have chosen their locations because it supports their business model. Each business requires unfettered access to their businesses 24/7. These businesses will not be able to operate during construction and after construction. Furthermore, it is clear that the Royalston Station, as proposed, will have a detrimental impact on their ongoing business. If the businesses are to remain on Royalston Avenue, as is contemplated in the document, then there must be much more time and attention paid to the impact the SW LRT and the Royalston Station will have on those businesses.

All three businesses have continual traffic six days a week. These businesses are industrial and their traffic patterns reflect industrial uses. Specifics related to vehicular traffic at these three businesses are:

#### THE FISH GUYS

- 20 trucks per day, including 53’ footers; 6 ½ days per week
- 20-30 employee cars per day; 6 ½ days per week
- Daily courier service with a minimum 15 courier vehicles per day; 6 days per week

#### LBP MECHANICAL, INC.

- 12 service vans daily
- 6 pick-up trucks daily
- 3-4 tractor-trailer rigs per week
- 3-4 53’ tractor-trailer rigs per week
- Wholesale deliveries using a 25’ stake truck
- Daily courier service deliveries
- Weekly recycling and garbage pick-up
- Monthly scrap metal pick-up
- Weekly delivery of oxygen and acetylene
- Trailer-mounted portable boiler assemblies are stored in yard and must be accessible as needed
- 12 employee vehicles daily

#### STARK ELECTRONICS

Stark Electronics is the most industrial of the three businesses. The station, as proposed, will be directly in front of their business, adversely impacting their ability to operate their business.

Stark Electronics includes both the Stark Electronics employees and employees for Absolute Quality Manufacturing, Inc., (AQ), a division of Stark Electronics. There are currently 135 employees at this location. The vehicular uses at Stark Electronics are as follows:

- Semi-trucks; 53 ft trailer; 7-10 times daily
- Courier trucks; 11 daily
- Dock trucks; 7-10 times daily
- Maintenance vans; 4-5/wk.
- Sanitation Pick-up
  - Trash; 2 times/wk
  - Recycling; 2 times/wk

- Visitors, Sales Associates, Customer pick-up; 4-5 times daily

The business currently operates two shifts/5 days a week; 5:30 AM – 12:30 AM. It is anticipated a third shift will be added.

In order to fully appreciate the impact of the Royalston Station on Stark Electronics/Absolute Quality, it is important to understand the traffic patterns. The AQ vehicles reflect those employees involved in the manufacturing operations. The Stark vehicles represent the front office employees for both companies.

Employee Traffic Flow

AQ-Vehicles in by 6:00 AM (1 <sup>st</sup> shift arriving)	40 (These cars remain during 1 <sup>st</sup> shift)
AQ-Vehicles out by 6:00 AM (1 <sup>st</sup> shift drop-off)	15
Stark Vehicles in at 8:00 AM	18
Stark Vehicles out at 5:00 PM	18
AQ Vehicles in and out at 10:30 – 11:30 (lunch)	10
AQ Vehicles in/out at 3:00 PM (1 <sup>st</sup> shift pick-up)	15
AQ Vehicles out at 3:00 PM (1 <sup>st</sup> shift employees leaving)	40
AQ Vehicles in at 3:15 PM (2 <sup>nd</sup> shift arriving)	33
AQ Vehicles in/out at 3:15 (2 <sup>nd</sup> shift drop-off)	10
AQ Vehicles out at 12:15 AM (2 <sup>nd</sup> shift leaving)	38
AQ Vehicles in/out at 12:15 AM (2 <sup>nd</sup> shift pick-up)	10

In addition to their industrial operations, Stark Electronics houses the floats for the Downtown Council with the following vehicular needs:

- Aquatennial in August; cars, vans, dock trucks coming and going for 2 wks.
- Hollidazzle Parade – mid November – December. Numerous cars and police escorts that leave the building for the Nicollet Mall and return.
- Personnel that construct, maintain and repair the floats during June – November.

In conclusion, the assumptions about engineering, ridership, and station location only make sense if the land use changes are made and the area is no longer industrial. The businesses along Royalston Avenue will not be able to operate if the Plan, as presented is implemented.

We look forward to working with representatives of the City, County and Met Council as this project moves forward.

Duane Peterson  
Stark Electronics

Timothy Hayes  
LBP Mechanical

Mike Higgins  
The Fish Guys

## Van White Station Comments

**Hermann Weinlick**

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February 18, 2011

Like many other citizens of Minneapolis, I support this line. I do, however, have some concerns about the present plans. The Van White Station should be more oriented to be accessible for the neighborhood, not just a stop on the way between downtown and the suburbs. The plans could take more seriously the sentiments of the Harrison neighborhood in relation to train storage.

I live in Longfellow neighborhood and am well served by public transportation. I want the best for Harrison neighborhood also, which in many ways does not enjoy the benefits my neighborhood does.

**Kari Anderson**

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February 28, 2011

As a resident of Harrison Neighborhood and a long-time Representative to the Bassett's Creek Valley Redevelopment Oversight Committee, (the ROC,) my comments on this document are specifically in reference to the Van White station.

I appreciate that the Bassett's Creek Valley Master Plan was included in this document and that the station area plan was redrawn based on neighborhood feedback. It is a great testament to your process of incorporating input from community members.

As you may now know, the current plan for the **Van White Memorial Boulevard bridge** is a very different version of the original plan referenced in the document. Significantly, all of the pedestrian access of the original design is omitted. While I'm not a planner, this will likely have an impact on how the station is accessed by pedestrians and may need to be reconsidered in the station area plan.

The Strategic Planning Document also includes the **Hennepin County Rail Layover Facility** as a planning challenge. The document erroneously assumes that there has been a final decision made as to where the Rail Layover Facility will be located, when in fact no final decision has been made. Requests from Harrison neighbors for alternate scenarios without the facility were not obliged.

Additionally, I would like to clarify that the ROC has not supported the Rail Layover Facility as my colleague, Vida Ditter, indicated in her letter addressed to you on February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2011. The ROC does not have a unified voice on this issue and has thus not passed any resolutions regarding the Rail Layover Facility. *The ROC did, however, pass a resolution to oppose the sale of the land where the layover facility would be located from the City of Minneapolis to Hennepin County.*

My final comment is a concern raised at an open house for the station designs. The Van White Station plans were presented in two stages. I am afraid that the two stage plan would segment the process and result in the full vision not being realized. As an Environmental Justice Community, such **segmentation** is of great concern to Harrison residents. We are already seeing this happening with the Van White Memorial Boulevard bridge modifications and it is a deeply disturbing trend.

Thanks again for all of the work you have done to make this a fair and public process! Please feel free to contact me at (612) 360-3002 if you have questions



February 24, 2011

Each Minneapolis station area along the Southwest Corridor Transitway is full of opportunities for new residential development especially affordable housing, job creation, better alignment with the regional trail system, and access to a great new transit service that will serve individuals and communities along this transit corridor. A station area is a place that can have great intensity and vitality that arises from a compact and densely-build neighborhood mixed-use center. However, draft the Southwest Transitway Minneapolis Station Area Strategic plan does not reflect this philosophy in its details.

To justify the expenditure of public funds for this project there must be benefits to the communities the corridor runs through and particularly the areas where stations are located. There needs to be affordable housing preferably in mixed housing pattern as the city's plan calls for as well as business development to serve the people that use the station or live nearby. There also needs to be convenient access to the stations from the surrounding community. These are not adequately spelled out in the plan.

Of particular concern is the plan for rail storage rather than the plans that the Harrison Neighborhood worked on for so long. Little serious consideration of other options seems to have occurred. Why can't the storage happen at the other end of the line where there is less density and the pollution involved would have less impact? It's not right that suburban communities get the benefits and the city pay the costs. As usual this plan has the poorer people paying the cost in less opportunity and worse air quality. The Harrison Neighborhood should get a mix of housing and business development rather than more environmental degradation.

The Penn and 21st Street Stations need more provision for development that will benefit the public.

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**The Alliance for Metropolitan Stability**

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February 28, 2011

The Alliance for Metropolitan Stability is a broad coalition of 27 faith-based, social justice and environmental [organizations](#) advocating for public policies that promote equity in land use and urban development.

The Alliance for Metropolitan Stability is working with the Harrison Neighborhood Association to ensure the equitable development goals of the [Bassett Creek Valley Master Plan](#) are fully applied at the Van White Station. This 230 acre plan was included in the City of Minneapolis' comprehensive plan on January 12, 2007. Other active partners in this effort are Redeemer Center for Life, Lao Assistance Center of MN, Southeast Asian Community Council, ISIAAH, MICAH, and Housing Preservation Project.

The Harrison neighborhood is an environmental justice community with 78% people of color and 37% of their residents below the poverty level<sup>1</sup>. Since 2000, the Harrison Neighborhood Association along with the Bryn Mawr Neighborhood Association has been involved in creating the Bassett Creek Valley (BCV)

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<sup>1</sup> Retrieved from City of Minneapolis website Harrison neighborhood profile 4/15/10  
[http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/neighborhoods/harrison\\_profile\\_home.asp](http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/neighborhoods/harrison_profile_home.asp)

Master Plan. This development would revitalize the environmental justice community of the Harrison neighborhood and repair the decades of land use neglect and disinvestment at the Van White Station.

The current Van White Station Area Plan document advocates that commuter rail storage yard be located on Linden Yards East within the station area. Although no public decision has been made on where to locate a commuter rail storage yard, this publicly financed document clearly makes the case to store commuter trains on Linden Yards East. No alternative transit oriented development plans without rail storage were provided for the Van White Station area. Harrison leaders have made multiple requests for alternative scenarios integrating transit oriented development as outlined in the BCV Master Plan, but none were provided that did not include rail storage. Also the Van White Station Area Plan inaccurately states that city of Minneapolis has committed to sell Linden Yards East to Hennepin County Regional Rail Authority (HCRRRA). The most recent City Council Action on April 2nd, 2010 struck language prioritizing rail storage and directed City Staff to first study feasibility of development and rail storage and report back prior to any land sale negotiations.

It is not clear that commuter rail storage is even feasible, technically or financially. The neighborhood has not approved it. So why is it taking primacy over all other considerations in the Van White Station Area Plan? We don't know what the cost of adding a train storage facility will be, nor do we know where the funds will come from to pay for it. What assurances do we have that we will be able to maximize the full build out of the BCV plan if a rail storage facility is placed there? Why would the rail storage yards be placed in the Station Area Plans when there has been no approval of land transfer by the City Council?

We would also like to point out that on page 40 of the Van White Station Area Plan under "Origins, Destinations & Connectivity" there is no mention of the existing businesses around Glenwood Avenue within the station area. International Market Square and the Bassett Creek Valley area currently have 171 small businesses. This significant business community would definitely benefit from the Southwest LRT station at Van White Boulevard. It would be useful to find out how many people are employed by these businesses in the future analysis for Southwest LRT. There is also a great future opportunity to grow the community of businesses in the area with its access to Southwest LRT, downtown Minneapolis, and I94.

In addition to this, city of Minneapolis Public Works has informed the Bassett Creek Valley Revitalization Oversight Committee that there are insufficient funds to build the Van White Memorial Bridge and road as originally designed. The original design for the bridge included two road beds, one going north and the other south. These road beds were wide enough that they could be striped into two lanes in each direction as and when traffic increased on Van White to warrant the increase in lanes. Initially, the road beds would be striped with one lane in each direction and the additional space was for pedestrian and bicycle traffic. In this original design, there were connections to the different bicycle trails that move through the Bassett Creek Valley (Cedar Lake Trail, Luce Line Trail, and Van White Trail). There were vehicular connections between east and west Linden Yards area. Van White Memorial Boulevard was designed to very carefully coexist/enhance the Van White SW LRT station, and vice versa. Hundreds of community and business stakeholders reviewed the plans and commented on them.

With the lack funds, only the east road bed of the bridge will be built, as well as the abutments for the second bridge. The connections between roadways, trails and the LRT station will be diminished as a result of these changes. It appears the city of Minneapolis and Hennepin County Regional Rail Authority are engaged in short sighted planning that lacks coordination on their efforts within the Van White Station area. It seems odd that Hennepin County is working to secure property for the Interchange that

may not be up to capacity for another 50 years and yet the city of Minneapolis is short changing a bridge that could restrict that future capacity.

The Van White Station has the ingredients of land, community, planning, and developer to create a national model for transit oriented development. The fulfillment of the Bassett Creek Valley Master Plan at this station area will have a significant impact towards the success of the Southwest Light Rail Transit by increasing ridership and transit oriented development (transportation supportive land use and economic development). The economic development impact on the LRT station area would strengthen the Southwest LRT's federal application by creating a vital transit oriented development bringing 2,800 jobs, 500 units of housing, 1,000 new residents and a vital new tax base to the City of Minneapolis and the Southwest Corridor at the Van White Station.

**Harrison Neighborhood Association**

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February 28, 2011

See letter below.



# Harrison Neighborhood Association

February 28, 2011

Adele Hall  
417 N. 5<sup>th</sup> Street  
Suite 320  
Minneapolis, MN 55401

Ms. Hall:

It is with great concern and disappointment that the Harrison Neighborhood Association submits the following public comment. As an Environmental Justice community, we have very serious concerns about the decision-making process, final product, and next steps stated in the Station Area Strategic Planning document. The Station Area Strategic Planning Document is seen in some ways as a step backwards for our community and in conflict with principles of Equitable Transit Oriented Develop (ETOD).

Community members have been working for over 15 years create a redevelopment in Bassett Creek Valley consistent with Transit Oriented Development (TOD) that would generate needed jobs, housing, community supporting businesses, community connections and needed tax revenue for local government. As a result, Harrison residents have been strong and vocal supporters of the Kenilworth alignment. They see the Southwest Light Rail Line as a means to reduce racial and economic inequities by connecting Northsiders to regional job centers and encourage redevelopment in Bassett Creek Valley to address the history of discriminatory planning that has left North Minneapolis isolated and marginalized.

The Bassett Creek Valley Planning process has enjoyed a high level of community engagement. Over 650 people provided input into the BCV Master Plan that was approved in 2007. The community identified priorities were living wage jobs, diverse and affordable housing options, and that the redevelopment of publicly-owned lands must promote the revitalization of the entire area. Unfortunately, this input and work approved by the community and City Council has not been adequately reflected in the station area planning process for the Van White Station Stop. The original drawings showed very little of the envisioned development for Linden Yard West and open-air rail storage for Linden Yards East. Improvements have been made in the renderings since September 2010, but community is only being provided scenarios with commuter rail storage. This is concerning because there has been no formal decisions committing Linden Yards East

for a rail-layover facility nor have the needed feasibility studies been completed to make that decision.

The fair and just redevelopment of Bassett Creek Valley will not only benefit the Harrison neighborhood, North Minneapolis and the City of Minneapolis. It will benefit the Hennepin County by expanding the tax base, locating upwards of 6,000 jobs, and create close to 900 units of housing. The success of Bassett Creek Valley is a regional equity issue.

The Harrison Neighborhood Association requests that the following additional points be included in the public comment for the Station Area Strategic Plan:

1. The Station Area Strategic Plan lacks credibility as a guide for policymakers for the following reasons:
  - a. Community requests for designs without a commuter layover facility were never met. Harrison residents representing the Harrison neighborhood and the 5<sup>th</sup> Ward on the SWLRT Citizen Advisory Committee raised concerns at meetings. Residents that attended the open houses also voiced concerns about the lack of options and focus on accommodating rail storage at the expense of Transit Oriented Development.
  - b. The final document clearly advocates for siting the commuter layover facility on Linden Yards East. The final document demonstrates this prejudice by only providing the merits of Linden Yards East despite stating on pages 43 (Van White Station Stop) and 62 (Penn Station Stop) that “it is not within the scope of this Station Area Strategic Planning to evaluate the merits of sites...”. Both Linden Yards East and Cedar Yards (Penn Station) are considered viable sites by the 2010 Interchange Feasibility Study. The prejudice towards Linden Yards East is demonstrated again by providing Van White Station Stop with renderings that only reflect the commuter layover facility.
  - c. The final document misrepresents the formal Minneapolis City Council’s position on the sale of Linden Yards East. The two misrepresentations can be found on pages 43 and 62. In reality, the City Council struck language prioritizing rail storage over development and directed City staff to explore joint development strategies and report back. This action was passed April 2, 2010 and the formal proceedings have been attached to be included in the formal comment.
2. The illustrations depicting development over commuter rail storage are misleading for policy makers and disconnected from the reality of developing a platform that could accommodate Transit Oriented Development on top and several acres of rail storage underneath.
  - a. Key feasibility work has not been started. The City of Minneapolis has recently received a grant to do limited feasibility work. The proposed feasibility study will provide more information but it is unclear if there will be any definitive answers provided at its end. Here are a few key questions that need to be answered before a plinth is pursued as a solution:

- (1) Is a joint development strategy (plinth or other scenario) feasible, (2) What would be the cost, (3) Where would additional resources come, (4) Which public entity is responsible for securing the resources, (5) Will this decision reduce or delay benefits of redevelopment, (6) What is the impact to low-income communities and communities of color, (7) What are the cumulative impacts of rail car storage on an Environmental Justice community? (8) What are the impacts to potential property tax revenues from the site? (9) Will there be open-air rail storage? If so, how long and what impact will that have on the marketability of Linden Yards West? (10) Do the feasible joint-development scenarios conform to Equitable Transit Oriented Development principles?
- b. There are no illustrations or mitigation strategies to address 20-30 years (possibly more) of open air rail storage. The funding for a development platform would be parsed out between each of the commuter lines due to funding formulas for transit projects. This will undoubtedly impact access, mobility, development potential, and maintain the isolation of the area. It is unfortunate that no illustrations were provided to address interim challenges of open air rail storage which is the reality even if a joint development scenario is feasible.
3. The final document does not adequately acknowledge or address the needs of Harrison property owners, renters and business owners. North Minneapolis stakeholders are not referenced under the Land Ownership section on page 35 or in the Origins, Destinations & Connectivity section on page 40, however Southside institutions and residential property are addressed. This Bassett Creek Valley is home to over 170 businesses and over 150 homes, all of which are in the ½ mile radius of the Van White Station Stop. Strategies to improve pedestrian, bicycle, and automobile access to the Van White Station Stop focused solely on the Van White Memorial Blvd. Other innovative or creative solutions were not developed. Increasing the accessibility for those originating from the station stop is incredibly important. Based on our research, the top job skills that resident have North Minneapolis match the top industries along SWLRT Corridor. Included with this letter is that jobs and industry data.

Graduate students from the Hubert H. Humphrey Institute produced a report quantifying the potential impact if commuter rail storage prevented redevelopment around the Van White Station Stop. The opportunity costs to the City of Minneapolis and the surrounding community include but are not limited to:

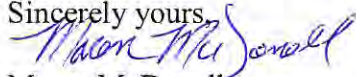
- Loss of 2,800 jobs
- Loss of 500 new housing units (some affordable) and 1,000 new resident occupants
- Diminished overall catalyst impact of any development that does occur on economic development of adjacent commercial parts of Harrison.
- Fragmentation of land use within the Bassett Creek Valley
- Loss of increased walkability, street activity, affordability, and location efficiency created by transit oriented development
- Loss of future Tax Base

The Bassett Creek Valley Planning process and development have enjoyed a high level of community engagement. Hundreds of people have been involved stating priorities of living wage jobs, diverse and affordable housing options, and that the redevelopment of publicly-owned lands must promote the revitalization of the entire area.

There is a strong track record of partnership between Hennepin County, the City of Minneapolis and the community. Hennepin County has contributed to the construction of the Van White Memorial Blvd and invested substantial sums to remediate two former Superfund sites. The City of Minneapolis has committed significant planning resources to the area and made our joint priorities for the area the formal land use and development policy for the City of Minneapolis. It is critical that we work together to preserve all our gains and realize our shared vision of a revitalized Bassett Creek Valley that equitably benefits the surrounding community.

We appreciate there is still much more work to be done in planning the Southwest LRT Line. We also know that the decisions made now will frame the future opportunities for North Minneapolis, the City and the region as a whole.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Maren McDonell". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "M".

Maren McDonell  
Board President

# MINNEAPOLIS CITY COUNCIL OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS

## REGULAR MEETING OF APRIL 2, 2010

(Published April 10, 2010, in *Finance and Commerce*)

Council Chamber  
350 South 5th Street  
Minneapolis, Minnesota  
April 2, 2010 - 9:30 a.m.  
Council President Johnson in the Chair.  
Present - Council Members Glidden, Goodman, Hodges, Samuels, Gordon, Reich, Hofstede, Schiff, Lilligren, Colvin Roy, Tuthill, Quincy, President Johnson.  
Lilligren moved adoption of the agenda. Seconded.  
Vice President Lilligren assumed the Chair.  
Johnson moved to amend the agenda to include a new motion #2 approving the Council Committee Reporting Department document. Seconded.  
Adopted upon a voice vote.  
The agenda, as amended, was adopted 4/2/2010.  
President Johnson resumed the Chair.  
Lilligren moved acceptance of the minutes of the special meeting of March 10, 2010 and the regular meeting of March 12, 2010. Seconded.  
Adopted upon a voice vote 4/2/2010.  
Lilligren moved referral of petitions and communications and reports of the City officers to the proper Council committees and departments. Seconded.  
Adopted upon a voice vote 4/2/2010.

### PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

#### COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE:

COMMUNITY PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (274129)  
Status Report on 2010 Census.

#### COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (See Rep):

COORDINATOR (274130)  
City of Minneapolis' Five-Year Goals, Strategic Directions and Values.  
INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS (274131)  
State Legislative Agenda: Support information House File 3184 (Champion) and Senate File 2809 (Higgins).



The **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, TRANSPORTATION & PUBLIC WORKS** and **WAYS & MEANS/BUDGET** Committees submitted the following reports:

**Comm Dev, T&PW & W&M/Budget** - Your Committee, having under consideration the recommendations of the Departments of Community Planning & Economic Development and Public Works relating to Bassett Creek Valley Exclusive Development Rights, as follows:

a) That Ryan Companies be granted exclusive development rights to Linden Yards West through 2015 provided annual progress is demonstrated as described in the staff report;

b) If Linden Yards East is selected as the preferred site for a rail layover facility, direct City staff to work with the Hennepin County Regional Rail Authority (HCRRA) on a joint development strategy by 12/31/2010 to maximize development, including air rights after rail needs are accommodated;

c) Modify provisions related to Ryan's good-faith deposit of \$20,000 (currently in possession of the City) to provide that such deposit shall be fully refundable upon written request by Ryan to terminate their exclusive development rights, until 30 days after definitive conclusions of the negotiation period between the City and HCRRA regarding commuter rail storage, to allow Ryan to assess the impact of such agreement on their proposed development;

d) Direct City staff to continue its analysis of Ryan's proposal, negotiate mutually agreeable terms and conditions for one or more redevelopment agreements under the basic framework outlined in the report, and return to the Council for authorization and further direction when appropriate;

now recommends:

**Comm Dev & T&PW** - Approval of recommendations (a), (c) and (d) and that recommendation (b) be referred back to staff with direction to draft alternate language.

**W&M/Budget** - Approval of recommendations (a), (c) and (d), and approval of recommendation (b) to read as follows: "b) If Linden Yard East is selected by the Hennepin County Regional Rail Authority (HCRRA) as the preferred site for a rail layover facility, City staff is directed to work with the HCRRA on joint development strategies to maximize development and report back to the City Council on these strategies by 12/31/2010."

Quincy moved to amend the report by approving the Ways & Means/Budget Committee recommendation and deleting the Community Development and Transportation & Public Works Committees recommendation. Seconded.

Adopted upon a voice vote.

Samuels moved to further amend the report by adding thereto the following paragraph:

"e) Direct staff to include principles relating to construction related workforce and contractor diversity, housing, workforce opportunities, finance and community connections and participation for any City development agreement(s) with Ryan Companies, as fully set forth in the Department of Community Planning & Economic Development (CPED) staff report contained in Petn No 273109, passed by Council action on November 7, 2008." Seconded.

Adopted upon a voice vote.

The report, as amended, was adopted 4/2/2010.

**Comm Dev, T&PW & W&M/Budget** - Your Committee, having under consideration the following recommendations of the Departments of Community Planning & Economic Development (CPED) and Public Works relating to City Community Garden Lease Agreement Standards, as follows:

a) Passage of the accompanying resolution approving community garden lease agreement standards and delegating authority to the CPED and Public Works directors or their respective designees to enter into standard form City Community Garden Lease Agreements for the leasing of non-buildable and non-developable City properties for community gardens; and

b) That the proper City officers be directed to prepare a Procedure Document consistent with the Minneapolis Contract Monitoring Procedures Manual prior to any execution of the subject agreement;

now recommends:

# Residence Area Characteristics Report - 2006 LED Data -

**The following neighborhoods included in report:**  
 JORDAN, HAWTHORNE, WILLARD-HAY, NEAR NORTH,  
 HARRISON, SUMNER-GLENWOOD,




Northside  
SKILLS

	Percent	Number	Metro %	Metro #
<b>Annual Average Earnings by Worker</b>	<u>Selection Stats</u> <input type="checkbox"/>		<u>Metro Stats</u> <input type="checkbox"/>	
<\$14,400	29.3	3144	20.2%	273,536
\$14,400-\$40,800	48.1	5166	34.2%	462,524
>\$40,800	22.6	2420	45.6%	615,753
Total	100.0	10730	100.0%	1,351,813
<b>Age of Worker</b>	<u>Selection Stats</u> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<u>Metro Stats</u> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
30 and under	34.1	3662	27.0%	364,520
31-54	53.1	5701	57.4%	776,016
55 and over	12.7	1367	15.6%	211,277
Total	99.9	10730	100.0%	1,351,813
<b>Workers by Industry of Primary Job</b>	<u>Selection Stats</u> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<u>Metro Stats</u> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	0.1	6	0.2%	2,481
Mining	0.0	5	0.0%	345
Utilities	0.2	24	0.3%	3,909
Construction	2.9	313	4.4%	59,103
Manufacturing	11.0	1177	12.1%	164,063
Wholesale Trade	4.9	524	6.1%	82,821
Retail Trade	10.4	1115	10.9%	146,653
Transportation and Warehousing	3.5	377	3.2%	43,800
Information	2.4	253	2.6%	35,200
Finance and Insurance	5.1	545	6.5%	87,597
Real Estate, Rental, and Leasing	1.9	209	1.9%	25,494
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	5.8	617	6.9%	93,836
Management of Companies and Enterprises	3.6	389	4.4%	59,748
Admin, Support, Waste Management, Remediation	8.2	880	5.6%	75,084
Educational Services	8.3	888	8.4%	113,982
Health Care and Social Assistance	14.9	1597	11.7%	158,056
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	1.3	139	1.3%	17,179
Accommodation and Food Services	9.1	976	6.9%	92,591
Other Services (Except Public Administration)	4.6	496	3.3%	44,182
Public Administration	1.9	200	3.4%	45,689

<b>All Primary Jobs (including private and public)</b>	100.1	<b>10730</b>	100.0%	1,351,813
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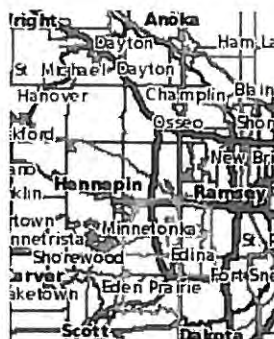
<b>Commuteshed (Cities where workers are employed who live in the selected area)</b>				
	<i>Primary Jobs</i>	<i>Jobs in Goods Producing</i>	<i>Jobs in Transportation &amp; Utilities</i>	<i>Jobs in Other Services</i>
Minneapolis city	1798	103	246	1449
St. Paul city	385	34	34	317
Bloomington city	191	7	44	140
Plymouth city	183	80	30	73
Edina city	180	10	16	154
St. Louis Park city	161	20	28	113
Golden Valley city	128	39	28	61
Eden Prairie city	90	22	35	33
Minnetonka city	88	33	17	38
Brooklyn Park city	84	12	26	46

 Source: US Census Bureau, LED Residence Area Characteristics Files (2006). Please note that Residence Area Characteristics are based on **all primary** jobs while Workplace Area Characteristics files are based on **all** jobs.

# Workplace Area Characteristics Report -2006 LED Data-

The following cities included in report:  
Hopkins Eden Prairie Edina St. Louis Park Minnetonka

close print save



*Employment opportunities along corridor*

	Percent	Number	Metro %	Metro #
<b>Annual Average Earnings by Job</b>		<u>Selection Stats</u> <input type="checkbox"/>		<u>Metro Stats</u> <input type="checkbox"/>
<\$14,400	24.3	54497	24.6%	389,381
\$14,400-\$40,800	31.0	69490	32.5%	514,077
>\$40,800	44.6	99934	42.9%	678,573
Total	99.9	223921	100.0%	1,582,031
<b>Age of Job Holder</b>		<u>Selection Stats</u> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<u>Metro Stats</u> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
30 and under	28.5	63879	27.1%	429,183
31-54	57.5	128856	57.7%	913,103
55 and over	13.9	31186	15.2%	239,746
Total	99.9	223921	100.0%	1,582,032
<b>Jobs by Industry</b>		<u>Selection Stats</u> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<u>Metro Stats</u> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	0.0	19	0.2%	2,693
Mining	0.0	16	0%	381
Utilities	0.0	15	0.2%	3,737
Construction	3.0	6694	4.5%	71,717
Manufacturing	11.6	26022	12.0%	189,471
Wholesale Trade	6.4	14409	6.0%	95,091
Retail Trade	14.9	33439	10.3%	163,015
Transportation and Warehousing	0.8	1860	3.0%	47,137
Information	2.2	4836	2.4%	38,383
Finance and Insurance	9.0	20155	6.1%	96,334
Real Estate, Rental, and Leasing	2.8	6282	1.9%	30,692
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	7.7	17297	6.7%	105,883
Management of Companies and Enterprises	5.8	13095	4.6%	72,618
Admin, Support, Waste Management, Remediation	7.5	16840	6.1%	96,487
Educational Services	4.8	10815	8.2%	130,078
Health Care and Social Assistance	11.3	25279	11.8%	186,067
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	1.1	2484	1.5%	22,862
Accommodation and Food Services	6.8	15139	7.7%	121,754
Other Services (Except Public Administration)	3.3	7405	3.5%	55,007

Public Administration	0.8	1819	3.3%	52,623
<b>All Jobs (including private and public)</b>	<b>99.8</b>	<b>223920</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>1,582,030</b>

### Laborshed (Cities where employed workers in the selected area live)

	<i>All Jobs</i>	<i>Jobs in Goods Producing</i>	<i>Jobs in Transportation &amp; Utilities</i>	<i>Jobs in Other Services</i>
Minneapolis city	23447	2804	4488	16155
Eden Prairie city	14739	1913	3063	9763
Minnetonka city	10673	1099	2394	7180
Bloomington city	10538	1500	2000	7038
St. Louis Park city	9172	943	1931	6298
Plymouth city	8489	951	1848	5690
St. Paul city	7991	1171	1645	5175
Edina city	7592	641	1415	5536
Maple Grove city	5919	780	1265	3874
Brooklyn Park city	5115	1115	940	3060



Source: US Census Bureau, LED Residence Area Characteristics Files (2006). Please note that Residence Area Characteristics are based on **all primary** jobs while Workplace Area Characteristics files are based on **all jobs**.

## Penn Station Comments

**Dick Adair**

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January 21, 2011

Although I live in Bryn Mawr and have been a strong supporter of a Penn Av station, I recognize the costs of getting people down into the valley are likely too high to make this station practical.

Would it be more cost-effective to run shuttles to the Van White station from Penn and Cedar Lake Rd (along Glenwood and Van White)? I'm guessing you could do this every 15 minutes during peak ridership periods for 50 years and still save money. Or increase frequency of #9 bus service during these times and add a stop at the Van White station.

**Vita Ditter**

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February 25, 2011

I enjoyed the process very much. I also appreciated that when community members requested a different format to the meetings, the consultants and staff listened and, from member's perspective, improved the process.

Rather than repeating and agreeing with the issues and concerns raised in the "Comments on the Southwest Transitway Station Area Planning Document" prepared and submitted by the Bryn Mawr Neighborhood Association committee reviewing the report, of which I was a member, **I will instead fully endorse the Bryn Mawr document.**

Also, I will not comment on Royalston, 21<sup>st</sup> and West Lake stations. At the Station Area Planning meetings, my focus was on the Penn Avenue and Van White stations.

### **General Comments On the Report:**

Appreciate the consultants working to accommodate the City's policy that there will be no Park and Ride stations within the City limits. Strongly support this effort to change people's mind set from cars to public transport for their transportation needs.

The report indicates the lack of bus transportation to and from Van White and Penn stations. Yet, the report's next steps, for either station, do not include/recommend the creation of bus service to and from the stations. This needs to be corrected.

The report talks about missing sidewalks that would assist folk to get to and from these two stations. Yet, the report's next steps do not strongly recommend the building of sidewalks that would assure safe passage to and from the stations for pedestrians – especially since neither station has a park and ride lot.

It was disturbing to see how frequently the consultants would branch off and offer alternatives (under the guise of refinement) to plans already existing and approved (such as the Bassett Creek Valley Master Plan and Bryn Mawr Land Use Plan and others).

For the Van White station, although the report asserts that the Bassett Creek Valley Master Plan is the base plan upon which this report is built, the report immediately moves forward with changes it deems

necessary to the BCV Master Plan, e.g. “relocate a portion of the bike path parallel to station”, p. 47. On Page 43, this report advocates “that the station shift southward to a point equidistant between the existing pedestrian overpass and the proposed Van White Memorial Boulevard structure.” Or, on page 47, the report provides a small section on relocating “a portion of the bike path”. Or, on page 48, “slide platform south of the location shown in the LPA drawings. . .reduces the walk distance between the existing pedestrian bridge and the station...”. These adjustments have unanticipated consequences and result from not accepting engineering and drafting work completed by the BCV Master Plan – **as for instance, the existing pedestrian bridge upon which the consultants base several of their critical proposals will no longer exist once the Van White Boulevard is built, long before the station at Van White is built.**

In addition, the trail alignment advocated here would have bicyclists making right-angled turns at Van White station (see the two maps below – the first from the BCV Master Plan and the second from this report. Compare and contrast the Cedar Lake bike trail as it passes by the Van White station. From the Bryn Mawr Neighborhood Association comments: Putting sharp curves in a commuter bicycle path obstructs the free flow of cycle traffic. . . and, since the Cedar Lake Trail users will not be seeking to access the Van White station, does not seem well thought –out.”)

The research of the consultants at times did not accurately reflect the current bicycle and pedestrian situation where the Van White and Penn stations will be located. For instance, time and again, the report indicates that “this industrial character and vehicle-focused land uses acts as a psychological barrier for pedestrians and cyclists – p. 41”. The assertion is repeated in paragraph 1, page 58 and paragraph 3, page 59.

Yet the report also indicates that the Cedar Lake Trail is a federally funded commuter highway and heavily used – page 69. Current data (2009 MTC usage numbers: Kenilworth, 617,000 visits annually; LRT, 450,600 visits annually) would immediately show that trail usage, despite the heavy vehicle and industrial presence, is extremely robust and, per an article in the Star and Tribune, is expected to grow considerably once the Cedar Lake Trail extension to the Mississippi River is completed .

Another concern is that the report does not reflect any of the information and conclusions from the charette that the Cedar Lake Park Association held and to which over 200 people (including many representatives from the same CMWG neighborhoods and organization listed on page 7 of the project overview) came. The Cedar Lake Park Association charette was held just after the conclusion of the Community Members’ Working Group meetings, but prior to the completion of the writing of the report. At the least, the document, since it is the work of many of the representatives to the Station Area Planning process (not just one or two constituencies), should be attached as an appendix to the report.

#### **Specific Comments:**

#### **Project Overview:**

1. Page 6. section titled “Relationship to Other Projects” – This section should clearly indicate that the consultants, in addition to reviewing and accommodating the Locally Preferred Alternative and the Alternates Analysis, did also review and accommodate other approved plans (Bassett Creek Valley Master Plan, the Bryn Mawr Land Use Plan and the North Loop Plan, among others), for the City’s five light rail stations. And that these recommendations “supplement” rather than “guide” development by the stations.

2. Page 10. Refers to Van White as a "transitional" station. The term is not clear - is the report implying that because the Master Plan is a long term one, that there may be interim uses on the station site? Or because of the long term nature of the Master Plan, existing and new uses may need to coexist at the site? If the latter, the Master Plan is clear that the Van White station is a priority if development is to follow. Also, the City Council approved a contract, good through 2014, for Ryan Companies to move forward with development plans, as envisioned by the Master Plan, on city owned land at a pace satisfactory to the city. Met Council has approved a grant for \$100,000 to study feasibility of building above a layover facility. If plans move forward as anticipated, there should NOT be any "extended transitional period" cohabiting new and old uses should not be advocated for this site. Please adjust this text to reflect what the city has approved.
3. Page 10 (also page 60). The consultants did not fully understand the varied constituencies who would be served by the Penn station
  - a. pedestrian/bicycle users of the Trail systems in this part of the Minneapolis Park and Recreation's Grand Rounds, and Parade Stadium and the Ice Rink.
  - b. folks who wish to access Cedar Lake, Wirth Lake, Brownie Lake and Wirth Park (these lakes/parks provide both summer and winter activities), as well as Eloise Butler Wildflower and Bird Sanctuary and the Quaking Bogs
  - c. people who wish to access Bryn Mawr Meadows and its activities
  - d. Anwatin School. Bryn Mawr Elementary School. And, if connections are made to the neighborhoods to the south, Blake School
  - e. Qwest legal center on Wayzata Avenue North (north frontage road) and Target Center's credit center on Wayzata Avenue South (south frontage road)
  - f. bringing employees and customers to Bryn Mawr's two commercial nodes, one at the intersection of Penn and Cedar Lake Road and the other along Wayzata Avenue South (the south frontage road)
  - g. This station is also within walking distance of Target Field
4. Currently, although the Van White station lies within Bryn Mawr's boundaries, there is no easy vehicular access for most Bryn Mawr residents to the Van White station, and even less pedestrian access.
5. Page 34. A station at Van White would also serve patrons using the Walker Art Museum, Parade Stadium, Target Field, The Basilica of St. Mary, the Churches on Hennepin Avenue, Dunwoody and the Minneapolis Community and Technical College, Bryn Mawr Meadows and commercial and retail spaces on Glenwood Avenue, the Current Farmer's Market at Lyndale and International Market Square, in addition to well established residential neighborhoods. These would generate enormous pedestrian traffic throughout the week that could/would use the LRT. SOME, not all, of these institutions are mentioned on page 40 of the report.
6. Page 36. Please adjust the last sentence of the first paragraph - "have been identified by the Bassett Creek Valley Master Plan as the area's most promising redevelopment parcels". The Bassett Creek Valley Master Plan absolutely declined to identify any parcel in the Valley as "the most promising for redevelopment" for fear that developers might cherry pick and develop them and ignore the remainder of the Valley. So, **this is unacceptable language** in face of discussions and efforts at the ROC that no parcel within the BCV be considered more choice/more promising than any other parcel. The ROC has broken development into phases without referring to parcels as easier or harder to develop. The ROC also promoted a Master Developer who would plan and advocate for the entire Valley and help prevent cherry picking.
7. Page 37. The report accurately points out that there is currently no bus service on or anticipated from Glenwood or any other direction to this station – which would be detrimental to Valley residents getting to Van White station, especially if this is a No Park station. Yet the next steps for



this station (or for the Penn station, for that matter) do not strongly urge that bus transportation be instituted to these stations.

8. Page 39. The pedestrian bridge mentioned in paragraph #1 will be removed when West Linden Yards and Van White Memorial Boulevard are developed. Van White Memorial Boulevard is scheduled for completion in 2012. Please remove the reference to the pedestrian bridge and to its uses within this report.
9. **Page 41. Since the Van White station will not be built until at least 2016, 17, or 18, and Van White Memorial Boulevard will be completed in 2012, AND Ryan Companies is currently working on what to build on Linden Yards West and studying whether construction can be placed on top of a platform in Linden Yards East, it is highly likely that many of the industrial uses (City's storage facility on West Linden Yards and City's crushing facility in Linden Yards East will long be gone before the Van White station is built). Consequently, the vehicular connections necessary to support a station at the site identified by the BCV Master Plan will be in place, negating the need to move the station!!!! Nor does the report explain what impact moving uses around would have on the trails and the accesses to Van White and to the bridge supports and the width of the road beneath Van White, etc. When the engineers (TKDA's original plans) placed the station at the BCV location, it was done with all these other factors in mind.**
10. Page 41. The report states that the industrial character and vehicle-focused land uses at this site are a deterrent to expansion of pedestrian and bicyclist uses. This section again refers to the pedestrian bridge over the railroad tracks slated for removal. Observation would have shown (using 2009 MTC numbers) that such is not the case, that, in fact, the Kenilworth trail has 617,000 visits annually and the Cedar Lake Trail has 450,600 visits annually. Although the area, with its greatly industrial appearance (which will be ameliorated by the BCV Master Plan) is already heavily used by both pedestrians and bicyclists, it is anticipated that the number will dramatically increase as soon as the Cedar Lake Trail is completed all the way to the Mississippi River!
11. **Page 42. As a member of ROC, I have not seen the TKDA 2010 alignment. The design that ROC worked collaboratively with TKDA to create considered and contained all the trail and road connections and walkways and trails across the bridge. If this engineering design does not contain all these connections, it is not the design that was approved by ROC and included in the Master Plan which the City Council approved in 2006. And if these connections are not all anticipated and made, then this plan will be more detrimental than encouragement to development in the BCV.**
12. Page 43. Paragraph #2. The report "proposes that the station shift southward to a point equidistant between the existing pedestrian overpass (**to be demolished at the latest by 2012**) and the proposed Van White Memorial Boulevard structure. Station area planning further recommends vertical access, on the west side of the Linden Yards parcel, from both structures." **These two proposals are not "refinements" of the BCV Master Plan, they are a complete change from the existing plan. Nor, would this recommendation have been made by members of ROC, Bryn Mawr or Harrison who attended the meetings, public and working group. This suggestion goes contrary to the BCV Master Plan. These recommendations should be removed from the report.**
13. Page 43. It is distressing that the report indicates that consideration of the rail layover facility is beyond the purview of this report, but still outlines a variety of reasons why Cedar Lake Yards cannot be considered, and why Linden Yards East is likely to be the preferred choice for the rail layover facility. This entire section should be removed. In fact any reference to the rail layover facility should be removed from this report, if indeed considerations of the layover are beyond the purview of this report.
14. Page 44. Completely agree with the conclusion, at the end of paragraph #1, that Community members would like a formal and safe connection between Bryn Mawr, Bryn Mawr Meadows and the Cedar Lake Trail.

15. Page 44. In the highlighted section on Top Issues and Principles – there seems to be divergent views expressed by the two sets of consultants who have been hired to work on this area. The consultants working on the BCV Master Plan indicated that if the bridge is constructed as approved by the ROC and the City, then there is sufficient space beneath Van White for the station and emergency vehicles. The consultants working on the current report indicate that even if the station is moved, emergency vehicles will not be able to access the area below Van White or to the new development proposed by Ryan Companies on Linden Yards West.
16. **Page 45. Paragraph #2, column #1, indicates that construction of the Van White Memorial Bridge will be critical to providing both vehicular and non-vehicular station access to the larger community. This conclusion is most accurate. There is a danger that a truncated Van White Memorial Boulevard Bridge will be built – one that does not permit connectivity between east and west Linden Yards, one that does not provide adequate pedestrian and bicyclist trails/paths/sidewalks and connections among them. Need to work with all interested parties to insure that the original design of the bridge is built.**
17. Page 45. The existing Pedestrian bridge will be gone as soon as construction of the Van White bridge is completed - long before a station is built at Van White. There is pedestrian access to the station outlined in the BCV Master Plan - please use it. I found this page somewhat confusing as there was intense discussion about just these issues with TKDA and with ROC. Were those discussions and results not adequate to be included in this report? This text does not seem to parallel the Master Plan, so am a little confused.
18. Page 47. It does not make sense to make the bicycle trail make 2 right angles turns just to permit cyclists to load and unload their bicycles on and off the LRT. Please return to the BCV Master Plan design on this issue. Those consultants and ROC consulted with the Cedar Lake Trail users and cycling organizations before creating the trail alignments in the BCV Master Plan.
19. Page 48. Again, proposal to shift the station southward – just to reduce walk distance between a bridge that is scheduled to be demolished and the LRT station????
20. Page 48. On the Public Comment section: Please adjust the text, it does not accurately reflect public opinion on the subject. There is split opinion on a station layover in Linden Yards east. Some, including residents of Harrison and the Harrison Neighborhood Association and Harrison ROC members, are very strongly against any rail layover facility in the BCV. Others, including some members of ROC and other members of the public are willing to consider a rail layover facility if certain conditions are met – such as appropriate and attractive enclosure of the facility, such as adequate ventilation (clean up of diesel fuels, so the air in the BCV is not polluted), such as insuring there is no increase in noise in the Valley, such as a platform being built as soon as Ryan Companies identifies what kind of development it wishes to build above the rail layover facility. **The absolute statement in the report that “There should be no storage at this location” is not accurate at all and should be removed.**

Again, I support the Bryn Mawr Neighborhood comments written on the Penn Avenue Station, as authored by the BMNA committee sent in separately. Thank you for the opportunity to serve on the working group, and to provide these comments on the report.

Vida Y. Ditter

Vida Ditter’s comments continued on next page



Bassett Creek Valley Master Plan noting location and alignment of SW LRT station and the Trails that pass through the area where the station is located – these include the Luce Line Trail, the Cedar Lake Trail and the Van White Trail. **Please note** that the Cedar Lake Trail remains a straight line trail through the area, with no interruption and sudden curves to bicyclists. Alignments for other trails have gentle curves and gentle grades, easy for a bicyclist or pedestrian to negotiate. SW LRT station is located for easy access to pedestrians, cyclists and located so that the station area does not interfere with the Van White bridge structure.



Map from the Station Area Planning Report showing the Cedar Lake Bicycle Trail making right angled turns to move around the Van White station. In discussions that ROC had with the cycling community, this was the least desirable alignment for the Bicycle trail.

**Brian Willette**

February 25, 2011

Cedar Lake Park Association (CLPA) is submitting comments for the stations and areas affecting Cedar Lake Park and Cedar Lake Regional Trail. I fully support the comments of Cedar Lake Park Association. In addition to the CLPA comments, I want to underline several points.

1. The Penn Station and the intersection of the LRT line and the Cedar Lake Regional Trail, Pages 53-72  
 The Penn Station presents a number of challenges. The differences in elevation from Penn Avenue and the LRT line is a major challenge. There are two different drawings for the Penn Station. The drawing on page 66 shows the decent from Penn Ave using the existing helix of the 394 bridge and then a tunnel under the heavy rail line and the LRT line to the Penn Station platform. The tunnel poses serious safety issues. Sight lines are very limited, and many, if not most, people would fear being trapped and/or accosted in the tunnel.

The other drawing, on page 68, shows the sky bridge from Penn Ave over the heavy rail line and the LRT line with an elevator/stairs descending to the station platform. This is a much better solution. Safety is much improved. See the drawing in CLPA’s comments for a more developed rendering of this approach.

**2. The Confluence – The intersection of the LRT line and Cedar Lake Regional Trail.**

Both drawings for the Penn Station show the Cedar Lake Regional Trail coming close to the platform and then going down into a tunnel under both the heavy rail line and the LRT line. As drawn, both the bicycle and walking trails take a 90 degree turn before entering the tunnel and another 90 degree turn immediately after leaving the tunnel. Here too safety is a major concern. Sight lines are very limited and the feeling of going down in a hole, into the unknown, where one could easily be accosted is frightening. One or two assault incidents would frighten people away from using this regional trail which is a vital

part of Minneapolis' national renowned trail system and the metro wide system of trails. In 2009 close to a million people used the Cedar Lake Regional Trail and the connecting Kenilworth Trail. The number of people using these trails is predicted to grow as the metro area's populations grow. Also the percentage of the population using trails is also projected to increase.

A much preferred solution to the intersection of the Cedar Lake Regional Trail and the LRT line is presented in CLPA's comments. See the drawing of the Confluence in CPLA's comments. By moving the intersection south of the Penn Station platform a couple of hundred feet and then raising the LRT line four to five feet and lowering the Regional Trail a few feet, an over/under pass can be created. The design enables the flow of the Regional Trail to be maintained unencumbered. There are no sharp turns. Sight lines are long and unobstructed. Safety is maximized. In addition, this design better connects Cedar Lake Park to the park-like land in the adjacent area.

### **3. The 21<sup>st</sup> Street Station, pages 73-89**

A drawing showing the 21<sup>st</sup> Street Station on page 88 shows the LRT platform south of 21<sup>st</sup> street. 21<sup>st</sup> street is a main entrance into Cedar Lake Park. Most people going to the lake's East Beach use the 21<sup>st</sup> street entrance. The East Beach is a popular beach. It draws a lot of families with young children, adolescents and a high number of young adults. Safety at this intersection is of utmost importance. CLPA's design charrette addressed this safety issue as the top concern of this station's design. I refer you to CLPA's comments on the 21<sup>st</sup> Street Station. By designing a split platform--one platform on the north of 21<sup>st</sup> street and one on the south side—a four-way stop is created. All trains would start from a stopped position as they cross 21<sup>st</sup> street. All the people entering or exiting Cedar Lake Park using the 21<sup>st</sup> street can be easily seen by the train engineer/driver. This design maximizes safety at this crucial crossing.

Doing things right the first time saves money! To come back after a couple of assaults or tragic accidents and redesign and rebuild costs a lot of money. Usually, the costs of redesigning and rebuilding are staggering compared to doing it right the first time. An example of such a staggering redesign/rebuild cost is the redesigning/rebuilding of the confluence of I35W and the 62 Crosstown highway.

The suggestions made above address the key issues of safety and save money in the long run. The designs put forth in CLPA's comments will enhance people's experience of Cedar Lake Park, Cedar Lake Regional Trail, and even those riding the SW LRT.

### **Bryn Mawr Neighborhood Association**

February 28, 2011

Attached are comments on the Station Area Strategic Planning document which we are submitting on behalf of the Bryn Mawr Neighborhood Association(BMNA). These comments resulted from the input and work of a number of individuals, and they are being submitted by the following neighborhood representatives: Ted Kiesselbach, BMNA Co-Vice President, Vitta Y. Ditter, Bryn Mawr Neighborhood Business Association representative to Station Area Strategic Planning, Barry Schade, BMNA representative to SW LRT CAC and related efforts.

The neighborhood has strongly supported the SW LRT, and we appreciate the opportunity to participate in this planning effort.

#### **Additional Resources in Support of Station Planning**

We appreciate the opportunity to participate in this planning process and suggest that the following two items would be a useful addition to the Station Area Strategic Planning document.

### CLPA Charette

On November 14, 2010, the Cedar Lake Park Association and Bryn Mawr Neighborhood Association co-sponsored a Charette that looked at a number of features of the proposed Southwest LRT, including the Penn Station. Over 200 people attended the Charette, representing many neighborhoods and those organizations identified on page 7 of the Station Area Strategic Planning Document (Station Plan). Participants included elected officials, parkboard staff, and architects from around the country.

That day-long effort resulted in conceptual drawings and narrative that not only complemented the public input for Station Area Strategic Planning, but more accurately reflected the issues which the Bryn Mawr neighborhood and near-by residents are concerned about. The Charette resulted in capturing good ideas and energy about the value, purpose and vision of the Penn Station.

The Station Area Strategic Planning document would be enhanced by the inclusion of the results of that Charette. The Station Plan could be strengthened by embracing a larger vision for the Penn Station and taking into account the work of the Charette. The tone of the Station Plan should be about what is possible. The Charette offers a view of that possibility, and should be included in the Station Area Strategic Planning document as supplemental material.

### Capstone Project

A team of graduate students from the University of Minnesota's Humphrey School of Public Affairs is conducting an economic and community development study for the Penn Ave. Station for the Bryn Mawr Neighborhood Association. The project is being conducted as part of a Capstone workshop for 2<sup>nd</sup> year Humphrey students. The study is being conducted from January to May 2011.

The goal of the Capstone project is to create a community development plan that establishes links within Bryn Mawr and to the adjacent areas, preserves the character and personality of the neighborhood, and promotes the viability of the proposed Penn Ave. LRT station. The report will include a diagnosis of the economic community development potential in Bryn Mawr, a vision for future development in the neighborhood, and an action plan that details strategies to achieve the vision. The results of this work should be included in the Station Area Strategic Planning document as supplemental material.

### **Specific comments on Station Area Strategic Planning Document:**

Page 6 – Relationship to Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) and other plans: The planning process should do more than build on the Locally Preferred Alternative and Alternatives Analysis (AA) process. The planning process should also, at a minimum, include other plans such as: Bryn Mawr Neighborhood Land Use Plan, North Loop Plan, Basset Creek Valley Master Plan and the Near North Side Master Plan, all of which have been through public scrutiny and approval. These plans should be included as a supplement to the Station Area Strategic Planning Document.

Page 10 – Van White as Transitional Station: This transitional approach to the station's character should be consistent with and support the approved Master Plans for this area (Bryn Mawr Neighborhood Land Use Plan and Basset Creek Valley Master Plan).

Page 10. Access to recreation: The rest of the plan should be consistent with how the Penn Station is characterized here on page 10. While the Penn Station is shown as providing gateway access to recreational areas at the beginning of the document, this issue is not discussed in the section for the Penn Station. As suggested by this statement on page 10, the Penn Station would offer gateway access

both by offering transit connections, and also by providing better access to the valley for cyclists and pedestrians. The Metropolitan Council estimates that cyclists already make 450,000 visits to the Cedar Lake Regional Trail annually, and the Penn Station would provide a convenient access point to the popular trail system.

Page 11 – City Policy on Park-n-Ride: The neighborhood supports the city policy on Park-n-Ride and expects that bus service will be provided to the station to provide the proper connections to existing transit options.

Page 12 – Next Steps: The Station Plan recognizes the need to work with stakeholders and the BMNA welcomes continued involvement.

Page 33 – Van White Station pictures. Two of the pictures are some distance outside the service area for the Van White Station.

Page 34, 39, 40, 41 – Van White station will serve Bryn Mawr neighborhood: As described in the Station Plan, the Van White Station would provide minimal access for Bryn Mawr residents. Access across Bryn Mawr Meadows and the elevated pedestrian bridge over the tracks would be difficult if not prohibitive for most of the neighborhood. Under this scenario, the station would be an option only for the extreme northeast part of the neighborhood. The situation is made even more extreme by the planned disappearance of the pedestrian bridge. According to the Basset Creek Valley Master Plan, the pedestrian bridge across the tracks will be eliminated.

Page 36 – Land Use: The Station Plan is inconsistent with the Basset Creek Valley Master Plan by allowing cherry-picking by developers of choice parcels rather than relying on a Master Developer to redevelop parcels in the area in an orderly manner.

Page 38 – Van White provides I-394 regional access. It seems that the Penn Station also provides regional access by providing an easy connection to I-394, and this same consideration should be applied in the section on the Penn Station. The document understates access opportunities for the Penn Station.

Page 41 – Barriers to access: The Station Plan describes how the industrial character and vehicle-focused land uses act as a psychological barrier for pedestrians and cyclists. This is contradicted by any casual observance of the heavy pedestrian and cyclist use of the trail. Pedestrians and cyclists already heavily use the area, and the use is likely to increase with recent development of the trail. A recent article in the StarTribune stated that "the existing trail drew almost 1,200 daily users in a 2008 count, and Minneapolis bike planner Don Pflaum predicts that will at least double once riders can reach the river."

Page 43 – Moving the Van White station: The Van White LRT station has been placed in a different location from that outlined on the Basset Creek Valley Master Plan. No clear explanation was provided for moving the station. The TKDA plan and the Basset Creek Valley Master Plan resulted from a significant amount of research conducted in order to insure that the Van White Boulevard was placed in such a way that it supported the LRT station to be built below it. The location also supported the various trails that go through that location, and insured that there would be adequate passage between East and West Linden Yards. Moving the station is a significant adjustment considering that the Cedar Lake

Regional Trail sees over 450,000 visits by cyclists annually. Far more research went into the Basset Creek Valley Master Plan than went into the Station Area Planning effort.

Page 44 – Access to Cedar Lake Regional Trail: The neighborhood agrees with the referenced interest in providing greater pedestrian and cyclist access, as also addressed in the Basset Creek Valley Master Plan. However, the protection or enhancement of this access is not adequately addressed in the Station Plan. Instead, in the discussion of the Penn Station, the Station Plan proposes to further obstruct and impede access by building a fence.

Page 45 – Bus stop on opening day. The document is inconsistent in how it deals with bus access. Neither the Van White or Penn station currently has bus access, yet the opening day recommendation for the Van White station includes a bus stop. The same recommendation should be made for the Penn Station.

Page 45 – Many years to realize enhancements: Contrary to what the Station Plan indicates, the master developer has a short window of time in which to make significant progress.

Page 47 – NiceRide station. Good recommendation for both Van White Station and Penn Station. NiceRide also appears on the “Next Steps” chart (page 74) for the Penn station, and it is featured in the text on page 69. Because of the heavy use of the trails in the vicinity of both stations, provision should also be made for bike storage (bike racks or bike lockers) for riders who cycle to the stations.

Page 47 – Relocate bike path to parallel Van White Station. Putting sharp curves in a commuter bike path seems unwise and obstructs the free flow of cycle traffic. It is better to provide spur access to the station rather than bringing the path to the station. The neighborhood objects to suggestions in the Van White Station area plan that sharp turns be introduced in the Cedar Lake Regional Trail for the purposes of diverting it in the direction of the station platform.

Since the vast majority of Cedar Lake Regional Trail users will NOT be seeking to access the Van White station, forcing all riders to slow down and navigate turns and pedestrian traffic, will lead to congestion and heighten safety concerns. Instead, it makes much more sense to preserve the safety and increase the usability of America's first bicycle freeway by creating a spur that will allow station access for a small number of riders that will use the station.

Furthermore, the Kenilworth Trail and Cedar Lake Regional Trail, both heavily used trails, come together adjacent to the proposed Penn Station. For this reason, the Penn Station may actually provide a more attractive access point for cyclists because of its proximity to this juncture in the trail system.

Page 55 – Land Ownership: The development of the Penn Station may not require the use of private land because of the parcel owned by MnDOT on the bluff and public entities in the valley. Development on the bluff ancillary to the Station access would require private property.

Page 56 – Land use: Characterizing the use of open space in the valley as “passive” may be misleading. In reality, this is heavily used open space with almost one million active cyclists using this area of prairie restoration and converging trails annually. This is a highly valued amenity and the presence of occasional freight trains has not limited its use.



A major shortcoming of the Station Plan is its failure to demonstrate how the Penn Station would assist in the access and use of the parkland, lakes and bluff. This is addressed with considerable vision and some detail in the work of the CLPA/BMNA Charette. The Penn Station can become a regional attraction and destination. It would be another gateway to the park.

Page 58 – Roadway congestion: The traffic queues on the bridge have little to do with pedestrian and cyclist experience. However, the heavy traffic at the intersection is a problem.

Page 61 – Minimal visibility. Actually, minimal visibility in the valley would be a positive, if the station were designed to visually blend into the park-like landscape. Making the station less visible seems desirable. Visual clues at the upper level could easily signal the presence of the station.

Page 63 – Users of Penn Station. While the document dwells on use by Bryn Mawr residents north of I-394, it does not explore other possible users, including the Harrison neighborhood to the north. Given the correct infrastructure, the residents of Lowry Hill would have access also. The station would also be a bicycle hub for access to the trail network, a much more useful and attractive option than other stations discussed in the document. A bus connection would make the station accessible to the north and I-394.

Page 64 – Summary Analysis: One of the “Principles” should be expanded to “address pedestrian and bike **access** to trails in a manner that provides safe crossing of freight rail and LRT.” The present crossing of the tracks shows the current demand for access. That access must be maintained, whether the stations are built or not.

Disrupting access to the Cedar Lake Regional Trail while not providing a simultaneous improved access is illogical and unacceptable. The Cedar Lake Regional Trail was the first federally funded commuter bicycle trail. It is a prior use that has proven HUGELY successful at reducing VMT (Vehicle Miles Traveled) by encouraging and facilitating bicycle commuting and recreational biking/hiking/walking, and the whole point of LRT is to reduce VMT. It is unreasonable and shortsighted to disrupt neighborhood access to or neighborhood use of the Cedar Lake Regional Trail for the purposes of constructing/operating the SW LRT.

Also, it is important to “protect the park-like nature of the setting”, and this should be added to the list of principles. This applies to any construction, including the design of the station platform, bridge, access, etc.

Also, the representation of “community members split” on the station is a real surprise. Access for the Bryn Mawr neighborhood to the Van White station is much more problematic than access to the Penn Station. The Van White station is both distant to most of the neighborhood and would sit beyond the barrier of an unfriendly pedestrian bridge over the tracks. That same bridge is planned for elimination. The 21<sup>st</sup> street station is nearly inaccessible to the Bryn Mawr neighborhood.

In general, the Station Plan would do better to point out that the Bryn Mawr neighborhood would not be served by the LRT system if the Penn Station were not built. This should be discussed in the vision for the Penn Station, showing how essential the station is for the neighborhood. Without the station, the neighborhood will have no other option for LRT access.

Page 65 – Pedestrian underpass. This option has the singular advantage of lower cost, and there is no discussion of the problems associated with it. A tunnel has physical problems related to the water table and is a safety threat. The existing pedestrian spiral is avoided by residents, is not ADA compliant, and would not be a useful access to the platform level.

The Station Plan only considers constructing a fence in the section of the document on the Penn Station. The issue of whether to construct a fence should probably appear in the discussion of each station, not just Penn. The Bryn Mawr neighborhood has repeatedly raised concerns about losing access to the trails, and the Station Plan singles out the area adjacent to the Penn Station for more restricted access.

Alternatives for existing access to the trails all along the LRT route should be discussed. The multiple approaches to the trails reflect current demand and somehow should be addressed.

Page 69 – Construct trail underpass and not construct roadway: Both these ideas should be supported. The Cedar Lake Regional Trail is a major cycling freeway and there should be a grade separation where it meets the LRT track. A new roadway in the valley would compete with the park-like nature of the area.

Page 74 – Next Steps: Specific bus-LRT connections should be explored and added to the “next steps.” This would include connection to a north-south route and the I-394 route.

The “Next Steps” summary for the Penn Station is the only one that includes the building of a fence, even though the crossing of existing tracks occurs at other places where stations are planned (eg. Page 97). The document should be more consistent and discuss issues like this in a consistent fashion for all stations.

In addition, building a fence is a poor excuse for a plan. As explained above, it is unreasonable and unacceptable to limit neighborhood access to the trails by building a fence without simultaneously providing improved accessibility in other ways.

Providing access by way of a tunnel at the pedestrian spiral has prodigious problems for pedestrians as well as cyclists. Those problems are especially related to safety, real and perceived. In addition, the inclusion of a tunnel in the Penn Station Plan is an additional assault on adequate, bike-friendly access to the trails from the residential neighborhoods to the north, especially Bryn Mawr. Fencing off current de facto access and then crowding bikers and pedestrians together on a narrow spiral and through an underpass does NOT constitute adequate bike-friendly access and will in fact frustrate and impede the safe use of the Cedar Lake Regional Trail.

Bryn Mawr is an extremely bike-centric neighborhood and would suffer greatly if this access issue is not better addressed. This issue has been raised repeatedly by the neighborhood from the beginning of this planning process (see page 64). Instead of protecting or enhancing access to the trails, the Station Area Strategic Planning document has shown more ways to limit access.

## **21<sup>st</sup> Street Station Comments**

**Kara & Dave Walter**

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January 21, 2011

My wife and I are proponents of Light Rail Transit and are excited that Minneapolis is expanding its availability. We live in Kenwood near the 21st

Station and wanted to voice 2 primary concerns that are raised in the strategic plan released this week.

--Cedar Lake Parkway crossing at Burnham Road: like many in our neighborhood, we only have 1 way to reach our homes and that is to cross Cedar Lake Pkwy at Burnham Road. Already today during rush hour and other busy times, there are very long lines of traffic. With regular trains running, this could become a significant problem choking up high traffic areas beyond what is impacted today. We are an extremely strong advocate of a LRT tunnel under Cedar Lake Parkway and do not support an overhead pass.

We are concerned about protecting the beauty and nature surrounding our community.

-- 21st Station: given the proximity of the proposed Penn St and West Lake St Stations, we do not believe the 21st Station will generate enough usage to justify the cost and disruption of the local community/environment. Given the extremely limited access and high cost of the overall project, it just seems wasteful given the likely very low ridership as the report suggests. If there is a station built, we believe that a park & ride lot would disrupt the area tremendously and would be against that. As a resident of this neighborhood, it would be very easy to get to one of the other 2 local stops nearby. We look forward to future updates and eventually riding the LRT!

**Ryan Pederson**

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February 1, 2011

Regarding the 21st Street Stop. Please make it just not happen. Please have the train just keep going by. It will be awful for the neighborhood and area. There's no need to stop there, surely the folks in this neighborhood won't use this.

**Kenwood Isles Area Association**

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February 26, 2011

Adele – attached, please find the Kenwood Isles Area Association's (KIAA) response to the Station Area Plan for the Southwest LRT. You will see that our response focuses primarily on the proposed 21st Street station, with additional attention to the Penn Ave. station's proposed access point at Kenwood Pkwy and Douglas Ave. We appreciate the opportunity to raise these matters to your and the planners' attention. Please do not hesitate to let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

**KIAA Board Response to SW Transitway Station Area Strategic Planning Document**

- The Kenwood Isles Area Association (KIAA) greatly appreciates that many of the concerns raised by neighborhood residents regarding the proposed 21<sup>st</sup> Street LRT station voiced through the various planning sessions this past summer and fall are incorporated into the Planning Document. Among these are:
  - Attention to maintaining the unique character of the neighborhood, including our quiet residential areas, vibrant urban parks and trails, and natural greenspaces.

- Recommendation for minimal station build-out at 21<sup>st</sup> Street in order to maintain the current parkland location and minimize visual/audible impacts
- Recommendation against adding a park-and-ride location
- KIAA would like to add some comments to the Planning document and emphasize other points of concern addressed within that document.

**Response to 21<sup>st</sup> Street Station:**

- While visual/noise impacts and safety concerns due to at-grade crossing concerns are key issues for local residents (as noted at **p. 85**), these certainly are not the *only* primary concerns. While not an exhaustive list, a more comprehensive list of concerns with the station itself include:
  - Impact of lights and noise related to the LRT and station to our neighborhood and parkland. In particular, KIAA seeks serious attention to the issue of light and noise pollution as the introduction of bells, whistles, flood lights, etc. would have a significant detrimental effect on quality of life for our residential neighborhood and adjacent parks. Bells and whistles at the 21<sup>st</sup> Street crossing are a relatively infrequent occurrence with current freight trains.
  - Characterizing *Hidden Beach* (see **p. 78**) as a “quiet beachfront area” ignores a key safety issue presented by the 21<sup>st</sup> Street station. The proper name for this park is East Cedar Beach, which should be corrected at **pp. 78 and 82**. On hot summer days, use of this beach increases dramatically. On some days, potentially scores of city residents park in the neighborhood and walk across the proposed LRT tracks at 21<sup>st</sup> to access the park property. This pedestrian traffic creates substantial safety issues related to the station, particularly if steps are not taken to mitigate.
  - While trenching or tunneling would likely present the maximum benefit in mitigating crossing and noise/visual pollution concerns, at minimum, further consideration of the proposed at-grade crossing alignment must be made. Rather than the single platform for both north and southbound trains recommended by the planners, KIAA urges serious consideration of a split platform as recommended by the Cedar Lake Park Association’s Design Charette.
    - A split platform alignment (with a southbound platform located just *north* of 21<sup>st</sup> Street and a northbound platform located just *south* of 21<sup>st</sup> Street) would present a variety of excellent mitigation opportunities.
    - Primary among these is that trains going both north and south would stop *prior to* the 21<sup>st</sup> Street crossing and, when they leave the station to continue their journey, would slowly cross 21<sup>st</sup> Street from a dead stop.
    - This divided station alignment would make the crossing much safer for pedestrians, bikers, and park users.
    - This alignment likely also benefits neighborhood residents as the slower train speeds may eliminate the need for bells, whistles, and other noisy/intrusive alerts.
    - Berming and other landscaping alternatives around the station must be studied and implemented in order to further minimize visual/audible impacts and pollution.
  - Impact of additional traffic (including fast-moving traffic) in our quiet neighborhood, diminishing quality of life and presenting a safety hazard to children, pedestrians, and bicyclists.

- Consideration must be made for children walking to/from school at Kenwood Elementary, which is within the .5 mile radius of the station. Currently, the school day begins around 7:30 a.m., and additional fast-moving traffic, particularly with drivers from outside the neighborhood rushing to access the LRT station, poses a direct threat to these children.
- 21<sup>st</sup> Street receives heavy bike and pedestrian traffic during the warmer months as park users move between Lake of the Isles and the Kenilworth trail system.
- Appropriate mitigation measures should be considered, including speed management techniques (possibly including additional stop signs, increased enforcement of existing stop signs, etc.). All effective means to encourage LRT users to access the station via existing transit options, walking, or biking should be explored and implemented.
- Impact of parking by LRT users on homeowners and residents in the direct vicinity of the 21<sup>st</sup> Street station. No current parking restrictions are in use— parking management mitigation measures must be studied and implemented as necessary, with a focus of maintaining maximum flexibility and convenience for neighborhood residents.
- Protection or enhancement of the current green space, forest, and park use of the land adjacent to the 21<sup>st</sup> Street station.

• **Response to Penn Ave. Station:**

- At **page 59**, the Sidewalks & Trails section includes a surprising new idea for “...a new connection to the Kenwood neighborhood at approximately Douglas Ave.” A drawing of this idea is shown on **p. 68** as a steep switchback-design pathway for pedestrians and bicycles, beginning at Kenwood Parkway near the intersection with Douglas Ave and proceeding down the steep bluff. Nearby Kenwood Parkway residents have provided comments questioning this switchback path access concept – a sample of those comments are provided here verbatim as KIAA is skeptical that sufficient opportunity was given to residents to comment on this switchback proposal during public open houses:
  - This is a long trek to the Penn station. Kenwood area residents would access 21<sup>st</sup> St Station, or use the City Bus before using this route to the Penn Station.
  - This area is so isolated that women, in particular, would not use it.
  - This idea seems like an almost silly, overly expensive, and likely-to-be-little-used access option. Don’t provide access here just to be able to say you did.
  - If built, this path would have prohibitively expensive maintenance and lighting problems. Winter maintenance (snow and especially ICE) would be especially problematic, since this place would have to meet ADA standards year-round.
  - People view this spot as having serious security issues, especially during hours of darkness, and would avoid using it.
  - If this access were implemented, on-street parking would increase.
  - Don’t waste scarce funding on this location.
  - Has this concept been suggested to “beef-up” ridership projections for the Penn Station? If so, that’s a false hope.
  - Rerouting the # 25 city bus to the Kenwood Trail spur (down the steep Kenwood Pkwy hill to the long-existing bike trail connection) would be logistically difficult, as this is the precise

spot where Kenwood Parkway is divided into 2 one-way sections. Turning a bus around in that location would be a problem, especially during rush hours and in the winter. Furthermore, Kenwood Pkwy was not constructed to handle truck or bus traffic.

KIAA believes that the effort required by Kenwood and Lowry Hill residents to access the Penn Station using the proposed Kenwood Pkwy access (down the steep bluff and across the “valley” open space) provides significant disincentives. When bad weather, potential personal safety issues, and extraordinary and costly maintenance requirements are also weighed, **we believe the access to the Penn station from Kenwood Parkway near the Douglas Ave intersection should be eliminated from consideration.**

- KIAA also provides the following additional comments and concerns on the text of the Planning document:
  - The introductory *Community Context* section (**p. 9**) does not mention the important existing geographic and topographical characteristics that complicate parts of the Kenilworth Corridor. This rail corridor is a long-existing railroad right-of-way, acquired some years ago by the Hennepin County Regional RR Authority. The track area is essentially flat. In contrast, parts of the adjacent built neighborhood areas (Bryn Mawr, Lowry Hill, north Kenwood) are at the top of steep, high bluffs, a long distance above the track and station locations. These elevation differences are not revealed in the many flat maps in the report, and these elevation factors create substantial and costly challenges for access to the Penn Ave station in particular. The context section also does not mention the two crucial at-grade crossing complications: Cedar Lake Parkway and W. 21<sup>st</sup> St.
  - At **page 6**, the *Project Background* section emphasizes that this transit corridor should provide “development opportunity”, and that it should lead to potential “new projects” that may be proposed within each station area. The project sponsors expect their transit investment “to create neighborhood value, enhancement and economic development.” These general objectives are inappropriate for the 21<sup>st</sup> St Station area, and we object to their being viewed as “universal” goals to be applied to all segments of the corridor.
  - At **page 10**, the Planning document states that “This station is expected to serve primarily local residents *who have expressed a strong desire for a station* that blends with the park-like character of the area.” (Italics added) This statement could easily be misconstrued to mean that residents around the 21<sup>st</sup> St location have been clamoring for a LRT station. In fact, many neighborhood residents are unenthusiastic and question the value of having a station at 21<sup>st</sup> St. Some residents want this station to be eliminated from further consideration (see **page 88**). On the other hand, other residents are supportive of the idea and would like to see the neighborhood’s access to public transportation enhanced. KIAA suggests the following text revision: “...local residents who have expressed a strong desire to preserve the park-like character of the area...”
  - KIAA notes that, at **page 76**, under Existing Conditions -- local residents may also use this station to access many different city or suburban destinations, depending on their interests and the connections available on opening day or later.

- KIAA urges attention to these and other neighborhood concerns in order that the proposed LRT station be built with the highest design standards and most effective mitigation practices available to ensure long-term benefits for our city, our neighborhood and our adjacent parks.

**Pat Scott**

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February 28, 2011

As you know, I have been part of the group of citizens in the KIAA area who have participated in meetings of the Station Area Community Working Group. I have participated in helping to draft the comments you have already received, sent on behalf of the KIAA Board concerning the SWLRT Minneapolis Station Area Strategic Planning Document.

In addition, I am submitting my own, personal comments on the document and on the process that has had a substantial price tag in both consultant and staff time/dollars, and citizens' time and effort.

1. There is a significant disconnect in this process, since the ridership projections for these stations were part of earlier work done for the DEIS document (into which affected neighborhoods had NO direct input). At most Mpls station locations, these ridership projections were predicated on the installation of park and ride parking lots. Since the concept of these parking facilities has, in most cases, been rejected and eliminated in this recent station area planning exercise, the ridership numbers that supposedly justify establishing all these Mpls stations are greatly inflated.

2. Given the disconnect identified in #1 above, it seems apparent that several of the proposed stations that have recently been studied in such detail, probably should be eliminated from the plan on the grounds that the ridership numbers cannot justify the expense of building these stations; and in addition, these near-downtown neighborhoods already have reasonably fast access into downtown via Metro Transit buses, particularly during rush hour, and have a very short commute by car, if that is the desired mode of travel chosen by citizens.

3. As one takes these factors into account, it becomes more apparent than ever that this corridor has REALLY been chosen to benefit and speed the trip of suburban users into downtown Minneapolis. The SW Corridor is not "scary" route. It doesn't traverse neighborhoods that suburbanites might regard as "troubled". It's the shortest, quickest route to move suburbanites from the SW suburbs into downtown Minneapolis and beyond.

4. Proposing all these stations begins to seem like a cynical, but rather futile gesture, sort of a "sop" in an attempt to persuade us city residents that this corridor is supposed to be a help to us, not primarily a route to serve suburban riders. It borders on an expensive "window-dressing" exercise.

5. If there truly were interest in utilizing this SWLRT line to serve city ridership, the chosen (preferred) route would have been the 29th St rail corridor, where the Midtown Bikeway now operates. Furthermore, it is my understanding that Hennepin County required the Midtown corridor work to be engineered and built so LRT could also be accommodated in that corridor in the future.

6. In my opinion, for the above reasons, no further effort or expense should be devoted to the 21st St., Bryn Mawr, or Van White stations or "station areas."

7. West Lake St seems viable; it would be a logical station location regardless of whether the chosen LRT route were heading east along the 29th St Corridor or northeast along the Kenilworth corridor.

8. Several very serious and expensive issues continue to plague the Kenilworth route: the current grade crossing of the tracks at Cedar Lake Parkway; the need to rebuild the rail crossing area over the somewhat fragile channel that connects Lake of the Isles with Cedar Lake; and the grade crossing at W. 21st St., where residences exist on Upton Ave, west of the grade crossing.

9. The festering dispute over relocating freight rail use, currently operating in the Kenilworth Corridor, to other existing rail corridors to the west, in order to accommodate the SWLRT line, needs to be settled soon. The City of Minneapolis has clearly indicated that relocation of the freight rail activity is a firm condition of the city's willingness to accept the SWLRT use of the Kenilworth corridor.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide additional input into the Station Area Strategic Planning exercise. I recognize that some of these comments will also pertain to the DEIS, whenever that document is released for public review.

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**Kathy Williams**

February 28, 2011

1. The consultants/team did an excellent job regarding the 21st Street Station. My only comments are:
  - a. Page 76 under Existing Conditions -- local residents will also use this station to get to schools (Blake, Anwatin, Bryn Mawr, U of M, etc.), the Mall of America, the airport, Minnehaha Falls, St. Louis Park, Eden Prairie, Hopkins, St. Paul, and many more places as more and more light rail and even high speed rail is added to the system.
  - b. Page 78 and 82 -- change "Hidden Beach" to its official name (I think it's East Cedar Beach). Kenwood neighbors spent a lot of time and effort to eliminate the old name.
  - c. General – I look forward to using this station. Please do not eliminate it. Kenwood neighbors deserve access to public transportation just like everyone else. Our only public transportation currently is a bus (Route 25) which only runs M-F during rush hours. And, historically, this is where the station was located.
2. I disagree with the split platform (2 stations) idea that is recommended by the Cedar Lake Park Associations' Design Charette for the 21st Street Station (not part of this document). I'm not sure that doubling the cost of building the station, adding maintenance costs, adding more light pollution, and having a negative visual impact (especially on the owners of the house nearest the station) , is worth the value added. Do we know what the difference in the speed of the train as it crosses 21st Street will be with and without the 2nd platform? – seems to me that it will be minimal; it will be either leaving the station from a complete stop or slowing to stop at the station. I'm sure Kenwood can work with the engineers/designers to make this station as safe as possible without adding up to \$400,000 cost to the project.
3. I do not support the new connection between the Kenwood neighborhood and the Penn Ave. Station described on page 59 and shown in a drawing on page 68. This is a long trek to the station. Very few people would use it. It's a secluded area. It would be costly to build the proposed switchback and to keep it clear of ice/snow in the winter. This seems to have been added very late in the process. The Kenwood neighborhood association (KIAA) did not have time to communicate it to neighbors for their input.



## **West Lake Station Comments**

**Stephen Ocvirek**

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January 28, 2011

Hello, As you can see from the attached photos, our building, Calhoun Towers has a good view of the Lake Ave & Excelsior intersection. The one thing I found that the plan did not address clearly was HOW the problem would be fixed with the current traffic situation, (let alone adding all the extra traffic and buses).

It is clear that the congestion problem is when traffic from Dean Blvd. and West Calhoun Parkway stop the Lake ave. flow. It is very easy to see from the top of the building.

At this point in time, the majority of renters and the management of Calhoun Towers opposes adding the parking lot behind our building due to the congestion we experience on Excelsior. Furthermore, there are times you cannot turn on Excelsior even if a stop light were installed because the traffic is backed up in both directions. If anyone would like to see the traffic flow from the top of the building to verify this, feel free to contact me.

## **Cedar Isles Dean Neighborhood Association**

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February 18, 2011

Resolutions of Comments for Approval by the CIDNA Board with Reference to the Station Area Strategic Plan of December 2010

### **I. Existing Conditions pg. 92**

Housing is predominately medium- and high-rise buildings, with both for-rent and for-sale products. Some townhome development is also within the station area.

Comment: Note that north of the proposed station within 1/8 to ¼ mile along and next to the Kenilworth Trail there are townhouses on both sides of the track as well as the Calhoun Isles high-rise building (constructed from previous grain elevator structures). This immediate area is close to the station and exists at a curved section of the trail and is at the narrowest part of the Kenilworth trail (approximately 62 feet). In addition, the Cedar Lake Parkway crossing is very close to the north of this section. As a result there exists a major concern with noise as well as vibration factors. It is anticipated that noise from necessary horns as transit cars approach both the station from the north as well as transit cars travelling south towards the Cedar Lake Parkway crossing will create a constant irritation to the population in the adjoining residential area. It has been observed that freight train noise in particular is amplified at higher elevations in the apartments of the Calhoun Isles high-rise. It is requested that adequate study be conducted to assess these potential irritants and provide suitable mitigation to assure the expected tranquility of the neighborhood and in particular to quell the exceptional noise factor at higher elevations with the Calhoun Isles high-rise apartments.

### **II. Barriers to Access pg. 99**

Pedestrians seeking to access the station from the west and north will also encounter difficulty finding formal routes through large, privately owned blocks.

Comment: Provision should be made for access from St. Louis Ave. to the Kenilworth Trail and provision of a sidewalk included to allow pedestrian access to the West Lake Street Station.

### III. Existing Conditions pg. 92

Housing is predominately medium- and high-rise buildings, with both for-rent and for-sale products. Some townhome development is also within the station area.

Comment: Presently the freight train utilizes the Kenilworth trail and Station Area Planning has been conducted with the assumption that the freight train line will be moved and replaced with the light rail transit system. It is imperative that the freight train be moved and that a tandem system of light rail and freight train system not be considered. Such a complex system is untenable for many reasons one of which is the problem entailed with the narrow section of track just north of the West Lake Street Station. Additionally, rail traffic congestion at the station would be difficult with the need to have pedestrian approaches from various directions. Also, future plans to provide Greenway transportation that would couple pedestrian movement with the light rail system would be even more difficult than presently exists. This includes structural considerations as well as safety considerations realizing that provision would be required for pedestrian traffic to cross the tracks.

#### West Calhoun Stakeholder Group

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February 25, 2011

1. The Sample Transit-Oriented District design just shows a rearrangement of the same intensity of land use/development. In order to justify rebuilding, there would need to be increased density.
2. Moving Calhoun Village, Whole Foods Market and MGM Liquors would be very costly because of contaminated soil and the need for pilings; and situating parking immediately adjacent to the station is contrary to this station's being a prime candidate for transit-oriented development, as stated in the text of the document.
3. The planning still needs to show a strong connection from the station to Lake Calhoun for bikes and pedestrians, including direct sight lines from the station to the lake if possible. This should be done in a way that reflects the concepts of "Context Sensitive Solutions," and "Complete Streets," as advanced by the Minnesota Department of Transportation, and the "Livability Principles" at the core of the "Partnership for Sustainable Communities" among the U.S. Departments of Transportation and Housing and Urban Development and Environmental Protection Agency.
4. There still is no clearly demonstrated pedestrian access from the north.
5. There needs to be a seamless connection between the SW LRT and the proposed Midtown Greenway streetcar line.
6. It is unworkable for freight rail and light rail to share the Kenilworth corridor.
7. The designation "West Lake Station" should be considered a temporary placeholder. It does not resonate with this group of neighboring stakeholders, and may be ambiguous or unhelpful for transit riders unfamiliar with the area. The perspectives of both types of users need to be balanced. The ideal name will be clear, specific, brief and memorable. Such an important issue should not be handled in an ad hoc manner, and should be subjected to appropriate, rigorous analysis before a final decision is made.

\* A large, diverse group of stakeholders, most of whom have property or business interests immediately surrounding the station, have been meeting regularly since late 2010. Through these discussions the group has developed a mutual understanding of the range of perspectives represented, and jointly developed this set of shared comments.

The group includes: Brad Pfaff (Calhoun Village), Jack Pfaff (Calhoun Village), Kelly Doran (Doran Companies), Dan Blackburn (Whole Foods Market), Tryg Truelsen (Tryg's), Paul Setter (MGM Liquors), Terry Maglich (MGM Liquors), Thatcher Imboden (Ackerberg Group), Tim Springer (Midtown Greenway Coalition), Colleen Dreher (Lakes CitiHomes), Larry McMillen (Lakes CitiHomes), Ed Bell (CIDNA), Art Higinbotham (CIDNA), Ryan Fox (CIDNA), Steve Goltry (CIDNA), Ed Ferlauto (CIDNA), Jeff Peltola (WCNC), Meg Forney (WCNC), Michael Wagner (WCNC), Kathy Cobb (WCNC), Seth Doorn (WCNC), David Rhees (WCNC), Gary Knutson (WCNC).

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**Gary Lange**

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February 28, 2011

There is a serious omission in the "Public Comment" area of the "West Lake Station" section of the "Southwest Transitway Station Area Strategic Planning" document.

During CIDNA and other LRT meetings, many written and verbal concerns were raised regarding the impact of the proposed LRT as it intersects Cedar Lake Pkwy/Cedar Lake Ave on the SouthEast corner of Cedar Lake (suggestions included a below-grade tunnel similar to the one listed in the "Public Comment" area of the "21st Street Station" section of the document).

These concerns of the CIDNA residents and other stakeholders were discussed at length, and must be included in any final draft of the Southwest Transitway Station Area Strategic Plan.

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**Jeffrey Peltola**

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February 28, 2011

My primary substantive concerns with the content of the document are reflected in the comments submitted by a multi-stakeholder group.

My personal remarks here focus on the process associated with the half-year long project. I participated in the Community Member Work Group focusing on the West Lake Station, and attended each round of the open houses.

Overall, I felt the public engagement process, unfortunately, left a lot to be desired, and did not create an optimal environment for the best ideas to come forward. Of the four CMWG meetings, only the middle two were moderately productive, from my perspective. More time at each would have been helpful, and more of a workshop environment (akin to meeting #3) would have been more conducive to teasing out the community's knowledge and ideas. While the open house format is suitable for providing information, it is ill suited for receiving and incorporating feedback. The posted document does not appear to have any substantive summary of the open houses and the views shared there.

With respect to the West Lake Station area, I actually felt toward the end of the process that some of the best ideas were cast aside and some of the worst were included in the end. For instance, a surface parking lot on county rail authority owned land – even if temporary – would be terrible, and would go against what seems clear to be the prevailing view of the community. Also, a permanent parking structure immediately adjacent to the platform area would be an awful development which would seriously degrade the potential to create a thriving transit and pedestrian oriented area. I hope the subsequent planning efforts will continue to consider localized traffic flow improvement options in the area, including the possibility of a local commercial street connecting the south and north sides of Lake

St under the bridge, which was discussed during the project. Infrastructure options for the point where Lake St and Excelsior Blvd meet should continue to be pursued, including such alternatives as modern roundabouts. This issue was not adequately reflected in the posted document. Further work on bike-ped access, connectivity and safety improvements is also extremely important. I appreciate the opportunity to comment for the record, and it was a pleasure to participate in this project.

### **Midtown Community Works Partnership**

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February 28, 2011

I have comments from the MCW Partnership on the Minneapolis Strategic Plan in the attached memo. I also have a resolution on Planning Principles for Streetcar Station Area Design passed by the MCW Partnership last August that was an outgrowth of a study completed by Humphrey Institute students that can be found here:

<http://www.midtowncommunityworks.org/ConnectingtheMidtownGreenwaytoLakeStreet.htm>. While this resolution is not exactly a response to the Minneapolis strategic plans specifically, I think it addresses broad planning goals.

TO: Adele Hall, Amanda Arnold

FROM: Faith Cable  
Louis Smith

DATE: February 28, 2011

RE: Southwest Transitway Station Area Strategic Planning -  
West Lake Street Station Area Comments

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The Midtown Community Works Partnership has consistently supported a Midtown Streetcar that would connect with Southwest LRT at the West Lake Street Station. The following comments reflect issues discussed at previous Midtown Community Works Partnership meetings and with Partnership members.

#### **Transit**

The MCW Partnership discussed the importance of a multi-modal connection between the Southwest LRT, Streetcar, and bus routes. Ideally, there should be a seamless connection between each mode, so a transit rider can walk between a bus, streetcar or LRT train easily. Sightlines, wayfinding signage and front doors to elevators should be considered from the vantage point of a person walking from each mode to another as well as from the neighborhood. As the first major transit investment at West Lake, we hope the Southwest Transitway Preliminary Engineering phase will consider how this multi-modal connection together.

The Partnership has debated if a future Midtown Streetcar can share a Southwest LRT maintenance facility, relying on varying levels of information about the feasibility of this idea. We believe the Portland system has a shared maintenance facility between the streetcars and the LRT, which may be useful to research further. If the shared maintenance facility is feasible, that may have implications on the station design if the two tracks need to connect. We hope the Southwest Transitway Preliminary Engineering will analyze the feasibility of this idea and share the results with the MCW Partnership.

It may also be useful to consider if there will be adequate space for an expansion of the Midtown Streetcar to the west in the (distant) future. Although no plans currently exist for any streetcar efforts beyond West Lake, opportunities to make long-term expansion possible could aid transit planning in the next generation.

### **Sidewalks and Trails**

The MCW Partnership has been a consistent supporter of the Midtown Greenway trail and the design challenge of a parallel LRT-trail-streetcar configuration that will put the trail in the middle of a transit “sandwich.” As shown on page 107, Midtown Greenway trail joins with the Kenilworth Trail just north of the SW LRT station and the combined trail runs east of the SW LRT line. The Midtown Streetcar is anticipated to run south of the Midtown Greenway trail, and would be east of the joined trails – effectively placing the trail in the middle of the primary connecting point between the Southwest LRT and the Midtown Streetcar. We hope the Southwest Transitway Preliminary Engineering gives adequate consideration to ensure the safety of bicyclists, some of whom are used to traveling at high speeds around 20 mph, while making a convenient pedestrian connection between transit modes and to the West Lake businesses. Opportunities to concentrate pedestrian movement to a few locations across the trail or connect from the LRT via the Lake Street bridge could be considered. We hope a pedestrian and trail movement plan for the an opening day of the Southwest LRT and also for the Midtown Streetcar can be conceived together even if they are realized at different times.

### **Land Use**

The long-term goal of a transit oriented district at West Lake aligns with MCW Partnership priorities. We hope the transformation of this area over a period of time can build on the existing businesses which provide valuable services to the area while still creating redevelopment potential. The MCW Partnership will continue to take an interest in redevelopment at this station and can offer a forum for discussion as needed.

## **RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF PLANNING PRINCIPLES FOR STREETCAR STATION AREA DESIGN**

WHEREAS, the Midtown Community Works Partnership requested a study by the Humphrey Institute’s Neighborhood Revitalization course on the connection between the future Midtown Greenway Streetcar and Lake Street destinations likely to be visited by transit users;

WHEREAS, the *Connecting Midtown Greenway Transit to Lake Street Destinations* study by the Humphrey Institute investigated the connections between future Midtown Greenway streetcar stations and Lake Street businesses, ways a future streetcar could enhance economic development benefits to the Lake Street commercial corridor, and possible urban design strategies that could improve the connections to destinations and potential economic development;

WHEREAS, the process for this study included meetings with the Midtown Community Works Partnership staff, the Lake Street Council staff and its Economic Development Committee, the Midtown Greenway Coalition staff and its Land Use and Transportation Committee, as well as a presentation at a combined board meeting of the Lake Street Council and Midtown Greenway Coalition on January 28, 2010;

WHEREAS, the *Connecting Midtown Greenway Transit to Lake Street Destinations* was presented to the Midtown Community Works Partnership on February 10, 2010;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Midtown Community Works Partnership hereby expresses its support of the planning principles for streetcar station area design in the *Connecting Midtown Greenway Transit to Lake Street Destinations* study as follows:

1. *Priority Connection to Lake Street:* a high priority is placed on the creation of an environment that supports and connects to Lake Street businesses through utilizing physical elements such as station access, egress placement, lighting and lines of sight that bear the Lake Street orientation in mind;
2. *Retail at Greenway Level:* opportunities for active uses such as retail and service business within and immediately adjacent to station areas should be considered in the planning process from the initial stages. This may include space set aside within stations for food, newspaper, coffee, and other carts or kiosks. New building development in parcels adjacent to stations are encouraged to include basement-level space that could be used for retail fronting the Greenway such as the Freewheel Bike Center;
3. *Serving the Local Service Needs:* each station area should aspire to a full spectrum of local-serving business and add local services such as child care, car sharing, grocery and drug stores, or farmers markets which can serve the daily needs of local residents that are not currently offered within their community;
4. *Engage the Greenway:* new developments should purposefully engage the Greenway, either directly interacting with the Greenway through lower level workspaces, residences, or gardens, or should be set back to create a public promenade and overlook;
5. *Land Use and Development:* land use and development plans should be consistent with the City's 2007 *Midtown Greenway Land Use Development Plan* by utilizing a design strategy that adds the greatest density immediately surrounding the stations while tapering off into surrounding neighborhoods and also should consider stepping down building heights on the south side of the Greenway to preserve solar access;
6. *Infrastructure and Streetscape:* infrastructure improvements should locate new pedestrian and bicycle routes to optimize access by walking or biking; should repair existing sidewalks in poor condition; should create a high-quality streetscape with features such as lighting, benches, landscaping, trash receptacles, and wheelchair/ stroller ramps; should strengthen the connections along the north-south streets that link the Greenway and Lake Street; and should include promenades along the Greenway or reconnections of 29th Street where possible;
7. *Wayfinding Signage:* wayfinding strategies such as signage should provide direct and concise information for riders with information at street level and the Greenway level, should consider ways to incorporate public art or artistic components and may use station names that include prominent nodal destinations;
8. *Placemaking and Visual Perspectives:* placemaking implementation should clearly define a concrete map of the passenger experience such as the intended pathways for streetcar passengers, the visual perspectives passengers will encounter, and the opportunities to extend the line of sight from station areas to Lake Street from key access points;

9. *Greenway Business Improvement District*: individual businesses and associations along the Lake Street corridor may want to consider forming a voluntary Greenway Business Improvement District (GBID) to fund enhanced streetscape and station amenities, additional maintenance, or wayfinding to ensure a high-quality passenger experience from the streetcar's inception rather than rely on piecemeal improvements made as redevelopment occurs;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Midtown Community Works Partnership commends these planning principles to the City of Minneapolis, Hennepin County Regional Rail Authority, and the Metropolitan Council in future streetcar transit planning as well as complementary land use plans and station areas plans for the Midtown Greenway Streetcar and surrounding area.

DATED: August 4, 2010

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_

Commissioner Gail Dorfman  
Chair, Midtown Community Works Partnership

### **Andy Hestness**

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February 28, 2011

I wanted to write to offer some comments on the Southwest Transitway Minneapolis Station Area Strategic Planning Document.

My comments are regarding the Penn Station.

I would suggest investigating a bridge road connection between Douglas Ave./Kenwood Parkway and Penn Ave. south of I-394 at bluff-level. Vertical access to the LRT station could be provided from this new roadway bridge in a manner more similar to the access for the current 46th St BRT station on 35W. This would provide direct car and bus access to the station as well as better accommodate pedestrians and bicycles and address many of the access issues identified in the study. Further, a roadway connection would provide an additional link between north and south Minneapolis, where there are currently limited options to move between the two areas. It would also provide improved access to I-394 from Kenwood/Lowry Hill. I think a road connection should be an option included in the study at a minimum as a long-range option, if it is not included on the opening day recommendations.

The plans as they are proposed provide very poor access to the station from the neighborhoods on both sides. This is particularly true on the Kenwood/Lowry Hill side. The pedestrian bridge option is a substantial improvement for the Bryn Mawr side, but this still creates an unacceptably long and circuitous access route to the station from the Kenwood/Lowry Hill side. The routes that involve long paths to the station down slopes concern me. Regardless of lighting or other safety features, these routes would have limited pedestrian activity as well as limited visibility and would likely feel unsafe and could potentially be unsafe for transit users, discouraging transit use.

A pedestrian/bike bridge that connects both to Douglas Ave/Kenwood Parkway and Penn Avenue with vertical circulation down to the station would be a potential compromise if a new roadway could not be built for cost or other reasons. My main point is that it is most important to make a bluff-level connection to the neighborhoods on both sides of the station.

## **General Comments**

### **Donna Pususta Neste**

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February 14, 2011

After reading the SW Transit Report that will be submitted to the Federal Government on February 28th, I have to say that there is little in there that reflects the city's or the county's goals for mix-use development or residential development in which a certain percentage would go toward affordable housing. For instance, the neighborhood that surrounds station 21 loves the idea of having a station but wants no new development. Though the county owns land around that site they backed down from their goals of development on the corridor that will run through that neighborhood when the neighborhood challenged them. I would suggest that along with the amenities that comes with a station, are also responsibilities to the broader community. If a neighborhood cannot meet those responsibilities then the station should be placed elsewhere. The City and the County should not be afraid to ask for the concession of working toward a shared vision of inclusivity from a neighborhood which will have the privilege of a station on a lite rail line.

### **Adele Della Torre**

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February 15, 2011

I enjoyed reviewing the good work of the station area plan and the document on the website. I've participated in some of the meetings and have an understanding of the Bassett Creek Valley Redevelopment history. It is exciting to glimpse the futuristic changes that could greatly improve Minneapolis neighborhoods. We want these potential changes to advantage all Minneapolis residents.

I have several points I would like to address. One: I wish the Comprehensive Plan of Minneapolis was more directly addressed in the Station Area Planning. We know the benefits of increased density and these nodes are the ideal site for mixed-used and diverse housing options, yet most stations do not propose opportunities for these housing changes. One station in particular is obviously protected from such development. Is it worth the cost of placing a stop in an area that's only riders will be immediate residents?

Two: The residents of Kenwood obviously are heard in this report. I want to make certain that Northside residents are heard, too. The Bassett Creek Valley Redevelopment Plan has been in community process for over 15 years. It has been approved by the City of Minneapolis. In this document rail storage in Linden Yards East is clearly shown as a choice site. I am concerned about this Environmental Justice issue for the Northside and it's negative impact on the BCVR. Some community benefits need to be traded. This is a community that is looking for density, affordable housing, mixed-used buildings and their hard earned development plan shouldn't be threatened for rail storage.

Third: As housing develops around these station areas, shouldn't there be a land-use policy so that a percentage of housing is available to those below 60% of MMI? These are the folks who most greatly need access to mass transportation. Gail Dorfman once told me how Northsiders who work in the western suburbs can cut an hour and twenty minutes off one-way of their commutes once the SW LR is in service. Will there be housing close to these stops reserved for families of low income? I'm not an architect, an engineer nor urban planner so my comments are not based on professional assessment of your plan. But I do have an interest in a community process where future changes benefit all.



**Marcia Ann Ness**

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February 18, 2011

How are you? May I introduce myself as a Hennepin County resident from St. Olaf parish. Living downtown I have become keenly aware through my church activities of the problem of affordable housing, encountering homeless people (one with a master's degree in math) with incomes like \$649/mo. Recently I was one of 15 people who met to discuss the Southwest Corridor light rail plan and I became familiar with the inadequacies of the draft plan, which largely ignores the development of affordable housing and its impact on job availability and access. I am turning to you today to ask if this is a concern of yours also and what position you are in to help "flesh out" the barebones draft.

Housing affordability is not dealt with in land-use sections. In the absence of a plan and standards, one is left to wonder what the "picture" is for inclusion of housing in a multi-use framework. Ease of access to stations and safety concerns are yet to be addressed in an acceptable manner. What one might expect with regard to stop-area development is unclear. An idea of what a proper balance would be with respect to development in relation to acreage is lacking. It is very troubling to see that the push is on for taxpayer funding for a new Vikings stadium that could be distant from the light-rail system ("The Journal" serving downtown & northeast Minneapolis, Feb. 14-27, 2011, 'Time to Act'). An informal survey I have made of perhaps 30 people found no one in favor of taxpayer funding except one couple who happen to be renters rather than property owners. If this development is allowed to come to pass, let the taxpayer get something back from it, some people say. What, may I ask, do you think of getting a percentage for affordable housing? Legislators may welcome a way to sweeten the "pill" of the business community's push for taxpayer funding for their constituents. What, should you care to comment, do you think?

**Jo Ann Sorenson**

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February 21, 2011

Subject: Response to Action Alert from MICAH (Metropolitan Interfaith Council on Affordable Housing)

I am writing to respond to the "action alert" from MICAH that I received from Donna Neste, coordinator of Mount Olive Lutheran Church Neighborhood Ministries.

I am concerned and saddened by the lack of neighborhood support for the development of affordable housing (mixed income development) in the area surrounding Station 21 (the area of Cedar Lake and Lake of the Isles). It is my understanding that Hennepin County owns land in this area and has made a commitment to make the corridor accessible to low income residents. I support the planning for transit lines that benefit EVERYONE, including those who need it the most-low income people. Everyone deserves a safe place to live and the infrastructure of transportation to work sites that provide a living wage. Stability in a person's living situation that promotes independence will enhance self esteem and reduce crime. All of us will benefit in a society that welcomes diversity in our neighborhoods.

Thank you for considering my comments as you attend future planning meetings.

**Gail Nielsen**

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February 22, 2011

I am writing in regards to the proposed light rail coming from the south west area. It is my understanding that the proposed stations were supposed to be willing to arrange for low income housing. It is my understanding that the Transit Station 21 does not want to change anything in their neighborhood, as making sure that there would be arrangements for housing for people who are less fortunate than them I am hoping if there will be no housing as talked about, that another spot is found for Transit Station 21.

Thank you from a concerned citizen hoping to end poverty and homelessness soon.

**Mary Engen**

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February 24, 2011

As a Minneapolis resident with concerns about public transportation and affordable housing, I am writing to support concerns expressed by MICAH in relation to the land use at the proposed stations. In particular, the land use sections of the station plans are not specific as to their use. I am particularly concerned that affordable housing is not mentioned in the plans. As a concerned citizen and a person of faith, I am very concerned about the need for increasing the affordable housing available for low-income people in our community. If plans are being made regarding land use around the transit stations, affordable housing should be included in the plans. Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

**Safety in the Park**

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February 26, 2011

The Kenilworth multi-use trail runs north-south through the station area, sharing the future LRT corridor with existing freight rail (which will be removed from this section of the corridor when light rail is constructed).

It is critical to comment on the assumption that the 21st Street Station will not have the current freight rail. At this time, the CP/TC&W freight tracks exist in the Kenilworth Corridor and there has been no decision made by either Hennepin County or the Minnesota Department of Transportation to relocate the tracks from the existing position. There are multiple possible locations for the freight traffic, but Hennepin County seems to be operating under the dismissive assumption that the neighborhoods of St Louis Park will be accepting of the additional freight rail traffic.

The MN&S Sub was developed and maintained as a secondary track with narrow Right of Way, multiple curves, multiple grade changes, and more than ten at-grade street intersections. Because of the history of light traffic, the community and neighborhoods of St Louis Park were able to developed around the tracks. More than 200 homes are adjacent to the tracks with property lines as close as 10 ft and home structures as close as 34 ft. At least 5 schools are within close proximity. The St Louis Park Senior High Campus that is divided by the tracks with athletic fields and academic facilities on opposite sides of the tracks and a student parking lot is located within 35ft of the tracks. One wing of the High School is within 75 ft. from track center. The characteristics of the MN&S Sub necessitate frequent crossings by pedestrians, bicycles, and motor vehicles. In fact, officials at Minnesota Department of Transportation are aware that students frequently use the MN&S railroad bridge to cross over Highway 7 and have noted that there has been no tragic outcome from this use because of the low rate of freight traffic

traffic<sup>1</sup>. This level of safety could not be maintained if the freight is relocated because the current TC&W freight traffic is 15-20 times greater than the current MN&S traffic in terms of daily movement. This is a significant increase that would have a profound negative impact on the residents in general and students in particular of St Louis Park (decreased safety for community youth and residents, decreased accessibility due to traffic congestion, decreased public health, and decreased community integrity and livability.)

The proposed plan for 21st Street Station without freight rail is a negligent oversight and error. The final location of the freight has not been decided and further SWLRT plans without including the freight would be dismissive to the community of St Louis Park.

Sincerely,  
Jami LaPray  
Thom Miller  
Co-chairs of Safety in the Park

1 City of Edina Transportation Commission, Time stamp 36.36  
[http://edina.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view\\_id=3&clip\\_id=1125](http://edina.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=3&clip_id=1125)  
CC:  
City Council Members of St Louis Park:  
Minneapolis City Council Member Lisa Goodman:  
Hennepin County Commissioner Gail Dorfman:  
Metropolitan Council President Susan Haigh:

Attached and below please find supporting details and data:

City of St Louis Park City Resolution 10-071

Resolution requesting Hennepin County Regional Rail Authority (HCRRRA) reanalyze the potential routes in

the 2009 TCWR freight rail realignment study in great detail

July 6, 2010

- Included in this resolution is the statement that reevaluation should include an analysis of routing both freight rail and light rail through the Kenilworth corridor right-of way.

- Attachment A- City of St Louis Park City Resolution 10-071

Kenilworth Corridor Analysis of Freight Rail/Light Rail Transit Co-Existence

Prepared by R.L. Banks & Associates

December 2010

- Scenario 1- Placement of freight track on the west side of the LRT tracks through the corridor

- Scenario 2- Removal of the commuter bicycle trail and placement of the freight tracks on the east side of the LRT tracks through the corridor

- In the conclusion section of the Analysis is this statement: In Summary, scenarios 1 and 2 would be workable if all affected parties were willing to accept the impacts of implementation

- Attachment B- Conclusion from Kenilworth Corridor Analysis of Freight Rail/Light Rail

Transit Co-Existence

Minnesota Department of Transportation presentation to City of Edina Transportation Commission regarding potential impacts and changes in freight traffic

January 20, 2011

- Included in this presentation is a statement that there are three options for the TC&W freight: Kenilworth Corridor, MN&S Sub, and a new construction along existing ROW near Highway 169.

- Stated by Dave Christianson- 'At this time, no decision has been made on the location.'

- At this time, meeting minutes are not available. The best reference source is the meeting video.

[http://edina.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view\\_id=3&clip\\_id=1125](http://edina.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=3&clip_id=1125) Time stamp 22.30

City of St Louis Park Consultant report on possible locations of the freight

Prepared by Short Elliott Hendrickson Inc.

February 14, 2011

- Scenario 1A- Revise the LRT, freight tracks, and trail alignment to best fit in Corridor

- Scenario 2A- Revise the LRT and freight track alignments and relocate the trail off the Corridor

- Scenario 1A and 2A are considered reasonable engineering options. It was discussed that these two scenarios would have a smaller impact to the adjacent properties in Kenilworth than the R.L.Banks study due to best fit parameters.

- Attachment C- City of St Louis Park, Meeting Date February 14, 2011 Agenda Item #3

Attachment D- Safety in the Park flyer

INSERT ST. LOUIS PARK RESOLUTION IN FINAL PDF HERE

INSERT RL BANKS PAGES IN FINAL PDF HERE

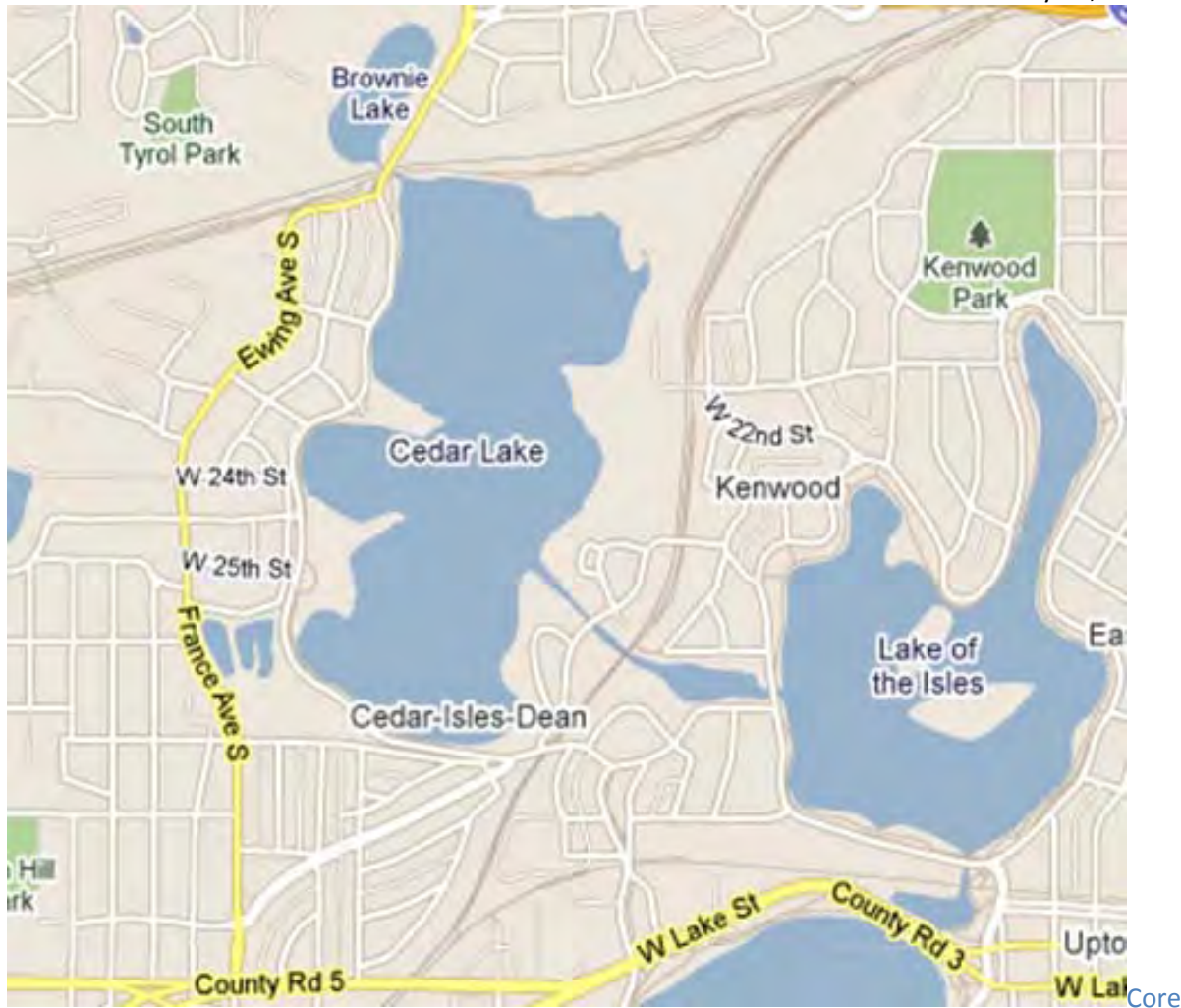
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INSERT RL BANKS PAGES IN FINAL PDF HERE



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INSERT ST. LOUIS PARK RESOLUTION/SEH REPORT IN FINAL PDF HERE



### Principles

The Cedar Lake Park Association (CLPA) embraces public transportation as the future of urban transit. In 2008, CLPA recommended selecting a Southwest Light Rail Transitway (SW LRT) alignment that best served the common good of the people and cities in the area. It further noted that if the Kenilworth Corridor was selected, people using Greater Cedar Lake Park<sup>2</sup> should continue to enjoy the aesthetic of experiencing a nature park.

The alignment has now been chosen and preliminary plans are being discussed revolving around a line that would run between downtown Minneapolis to Eden Prairie. The alignment would run through Greater Cedar Lake Park alongside the Kenilworth bicycle and pedestrian trails. Within Greater Cedar

<sup>2</sup> Greater Cedar Lake Park: On the east side and north end of Cedar Lake, a pie-shaped park area stretches from the Kenilworth bluff on the east to the Bryn Mawr bluff on the north. People enjoying Cedar Lake Park or using the Cedar Lake and Kenilworth Trails experience this bluff-to-bluff area as an integral green space, and refer to it as Greater Cedar Lake Park.

Lake Park, two transit stations have been proposed. A high volume transit line with multiple stations could significantly alter the character and experience of Greater Cedar Lake Park, as well as the surrounding neighborhoods.

One goal of the Cedar Lake Park Association ([www.cedarlakepark.org](http://www.cedarlakepark.org)) is to preserve the natural experience for today's park users as well as for future generations. The park is a place of respite and enjoyment for lovers of flora and fauna—a natural and wild area but one mile from downtown Minneapolis. It also contains trails that serve a million visitors a year. Its bicycle and pedestrian trails connect hundreds of miles of non-motorized trails. Given the inevitable development that comes with population growth, it is imperative that we preserve the natural settings in and around Cedar Lake, while enhancing the public transit opportunities. This dynamic poses a creative tension.

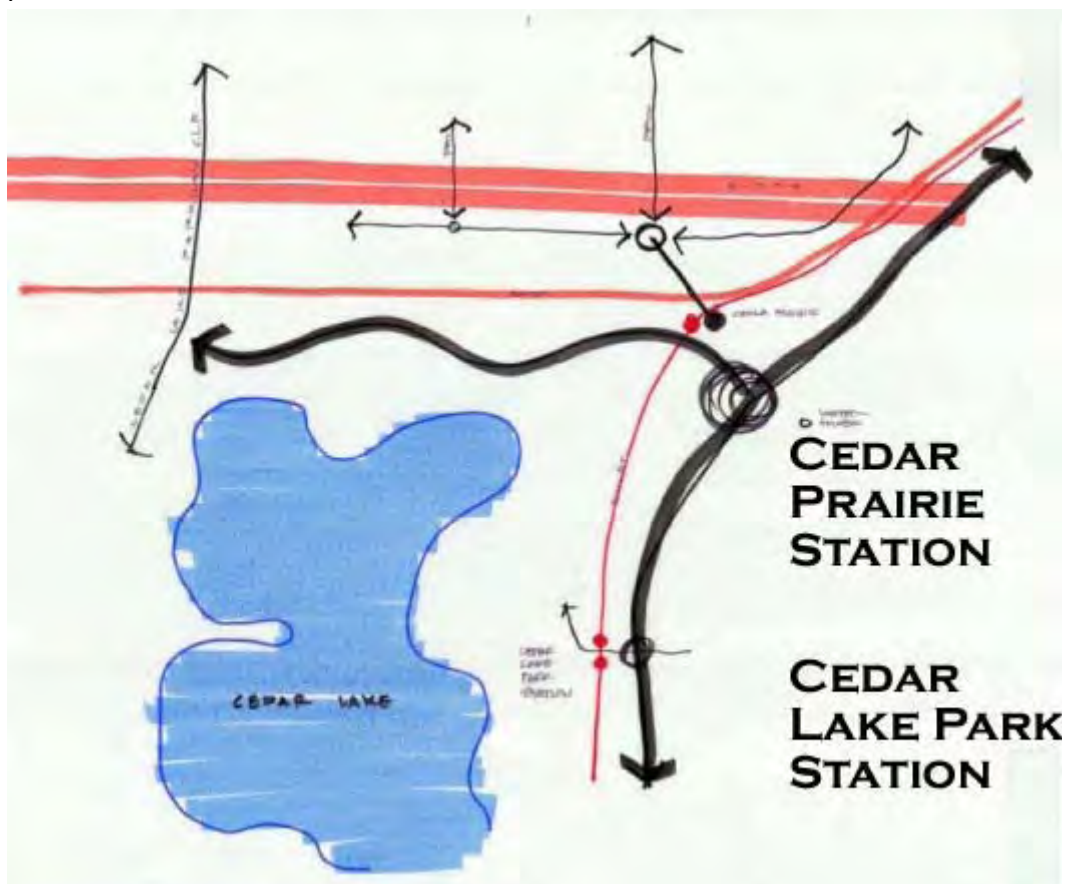
The Cedar Lake Park Association has developed design principles for use as a basis to discuss the Southwest Light Rail Transitway through the Cedar Lake area. These includes the following:

1. Safeguard human life, protect the water quality in Cedar Lake, and enhance the wildlife habitat, habitat connectivity, and the quality of natural environment.
2. Minimize any negative impact on people's experience of Cedar Lake Park and parklands.
3. Maintain neighborhood and regional access to Cedar Lake Park, Cedar Lake Regional Trail, Kenilworth Trail, and Midtown Greenway.
4. Minimize the intrusiveness of permanent and temporal changes to the environment of Cedar Lake Park and parklands.
5. Mitigate unavoidable changes in the environment with investments that provide exceptional value to the goal of nurturing nature.
6. Design any and all stations that are adjacent to the Cedar Lake Park in such a way that they are compatible with a park setting and the aesthetic of the neighborhood.

## Articulating the Concepts

Preliminary plans show two stations in Greater Cedar Lake Park: one adjacent to Penn Ave and Interstate 394 to service the Bryn Mawr and Harrison neighborhoods, and one near West 21<sup>st</sup> street and Upton Ave to service the Kenwood and Lowry Hills neighborhoods. Of key concern to the CLPA is how the SW LRT presents itself to the park and surrounding communities as well as how the park and surrounding communities present themselves to the SW LRT. The concepts below show how the character of the two stations differs.

Based on its core principles, the Cedar Lake Park Association identified several issues related to the projected SW LRT. Seeking to gain a visual representation of those concepts, the CLPA and the Bryn Mawr Neighborhood Association hosted a design charrette. There citizens from the surrounding neighborhoods extenuated these core concepts and articulated the issues surrounding the juxtaposition of parks, trails, light rail, and transit stations. Based on that discussion, noted landscape architects (see appendix) created the following designs. These designs and the narrative that accompanies them are not meant to be specific to-the-inch scale construction documents, but seek to illuminate the challenges and illustrate the opportunities available. They are meant to be a catalyst for further discussion in the community.



## The Confluence of the Cedar Lake and Kenilworth Trails



View of the Cedar Lake Regional Trail looking westward from I-394. Photograph courtesy: Meredith Montgomery

In its current alignment, the SW LRT will cross the existing Cedar Lake Regional Trail (CLRT) in Greater Cedar Lake Park. This intersection poses a critical challenge for creative design. The award-winning Cedar Lake Regional Trail is the first federally funded bicycle commuter freeway in the nation. The CLRT connects the western suburbs to Minneapolis and to the University of Minnesota. It also links the Kenilworth Trail, the Midtown Greenway, and the Mississippi River trails. Together, these trails form more than 100 miles of continuous off-road transit. Designed as a non-stop, flow-through commuter route, the CLRT serves as the linchpin of our country's largest, fully integrated, commuter bicycle system.

At the intersection of a major motorized freeway and a rail line, no one would consider an at-grade crossing; a grade separation would be mandatory. Certainly, the same should be true at the intersection of a major non-motorized commuter freeway and a light rail line.

#### **Issues**

- Safety issues for bicycles/pedestrians at crossing and near station.
- Blockage of free-flow of bicycles would decrease use of trail as commuter line.
- Lack of trail/park use would negatively impact park funding.
- Lack of access to other trail systems by blockage due to frequent closing of trail.
- Increased noise pollution.

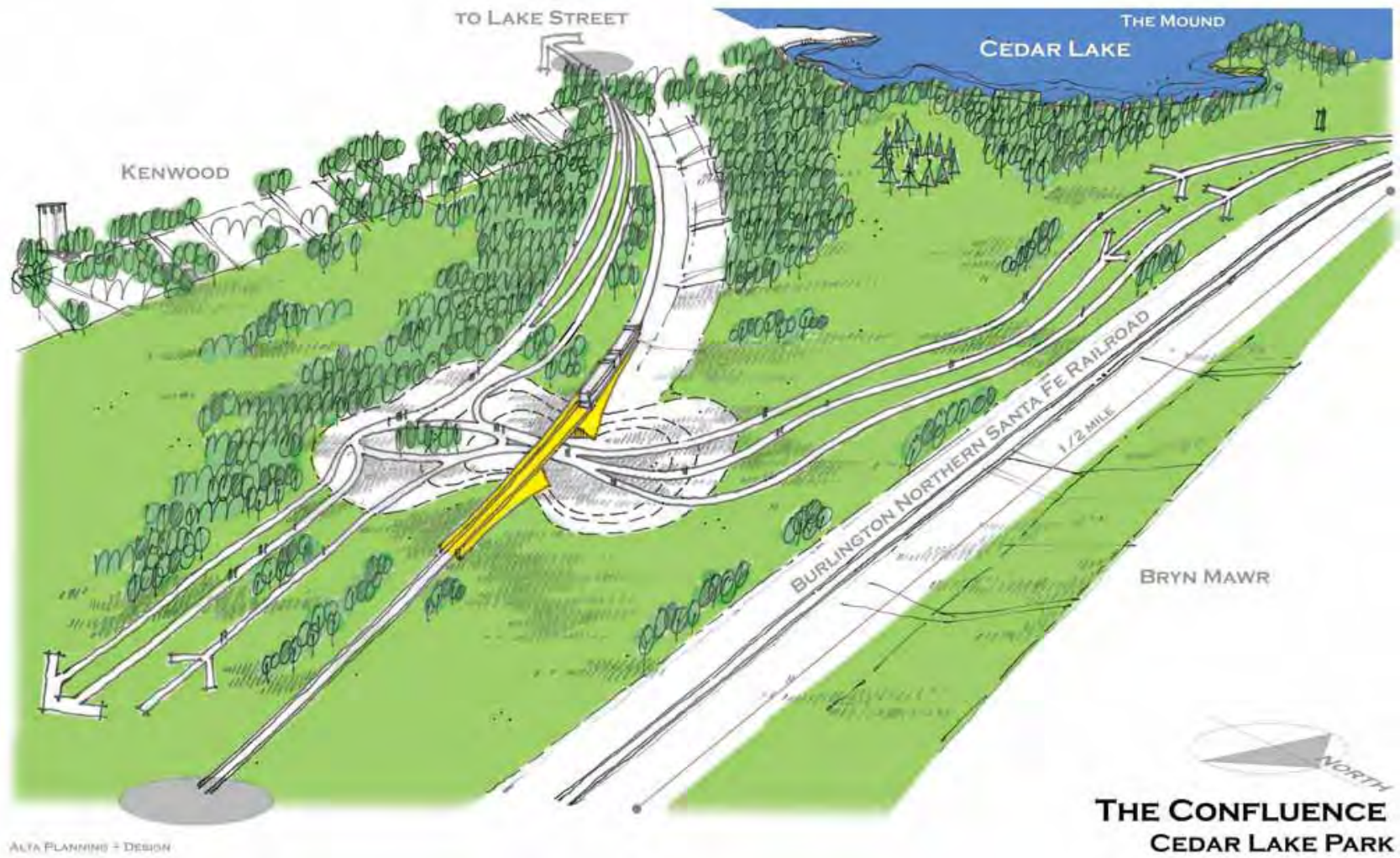
#### **Outcomes**

- Maintaining safe and continuous access to park and trail.
- Maintaining free flow of commuter route.
- Maintaining free flow of trail users in all seasons, including Loppet skiers in winter.
- Minimizing noise pollution.
- Provide safe access to station.

#### **Concept: The Confluence**

- Create a grade-separated crossing of trail and light rail.
- Flow the trail under the LRT including room for cross country skiing.
- Bridge the LRT over the trail.
- Link Cedar Lake Regional Trail (CLRT) to Kenilworth Trail via a roundabout.
- Access station from CLRT/Kenilworth Trails via spur.
- Sustain the viability of the CLRT as a federally-funded commuter freeway.
- Ensure the safety of walkers, runners, bicyclists and other non-motorized users of the trail.
- Protect the Cedar Lake Park prairies, mitigate the LRT's impact on the park, and preserve the City of Lakes Loppet cross country ski trails.
- Eliminate pedestrian and bicycle safety issues that would occur if bicycle traffic had to cross the LRT tracks at the proposed Cedar Prairie Station.
- Promote compatibility and enhance connectivity between multiple modes of transit as well as the neighborhoods to the north and south.

The sketch below shows such a grade-separated crossing. This concept would sustain the uninterrupted flow of the Cedar Lake Regional Trail as it converges with the Kenilworth Trail.





### **The Cedar Prairie (Penn Ave) Station**

The proposed Cedar Prairie (Penn Ave) Station will service the Bryn Mawr, Harrison, Kenwood, and Lowry Hill neighborhoods, as well as users of the trail system connecting to the Cedar Lake and Kenilworth Trails. Any station on this site should promote safe access and connectivity between the north and south, as well as east and west. In addition, Bryn Mawr would look favorably at commercial development along the northern strip of Wayzata Blvd.

#### **Issues**

- Disruption of access and connection between northern and southern neighborhoods.
- Negative impact on public access to trail system, (e.g., Cedar Lake Regional Trail, Kenilworth Trail) from Bryn Mawr and Harrison neighborhoods.
- Visual site pollution in respect to surrounding prairie land.

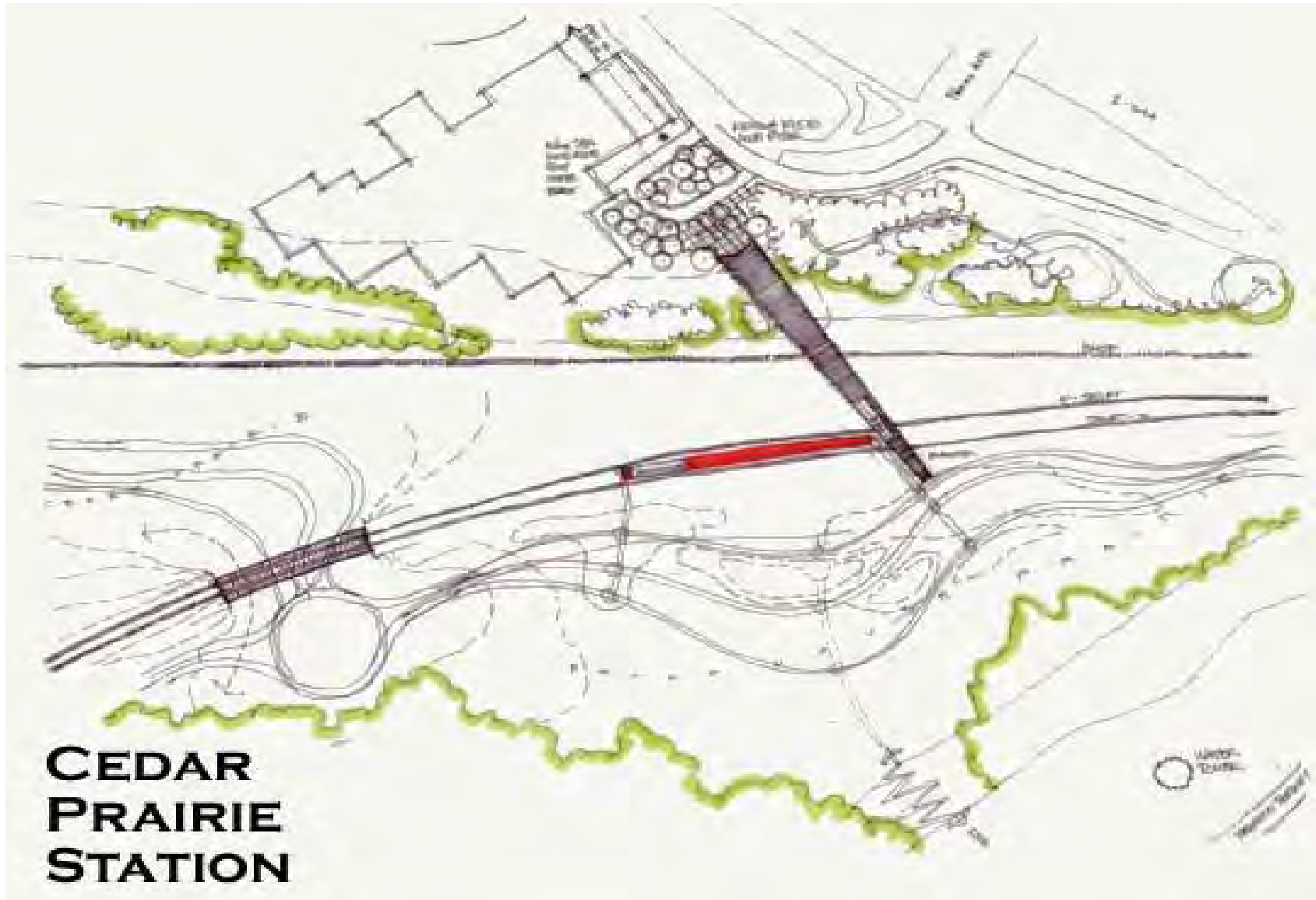
#### **Outcomes**

- Facilitate commuting to downtown Minneapolis and further east as well as reverse commuting to the commercial areas in the southwest suburbs.
- Reconnect the neighborhoods north of I-394 to those to the south.
- Provide commercial stimulus to the areas on the northern ridge adjacent to the station.
- Provide bicycle and pedestrian-friendly access to station from surrounding community.
- Enhance transit opportunities for the north side neighborhoods.
- Enhance access to the Cedar Lake and Kenilworth Trails for bicyclists and pedestrians.
- Create architecture (i.e. station) at the edge of the prairie that would minimally impact the viewshed of the surrounding prairie land or might even enhance it.

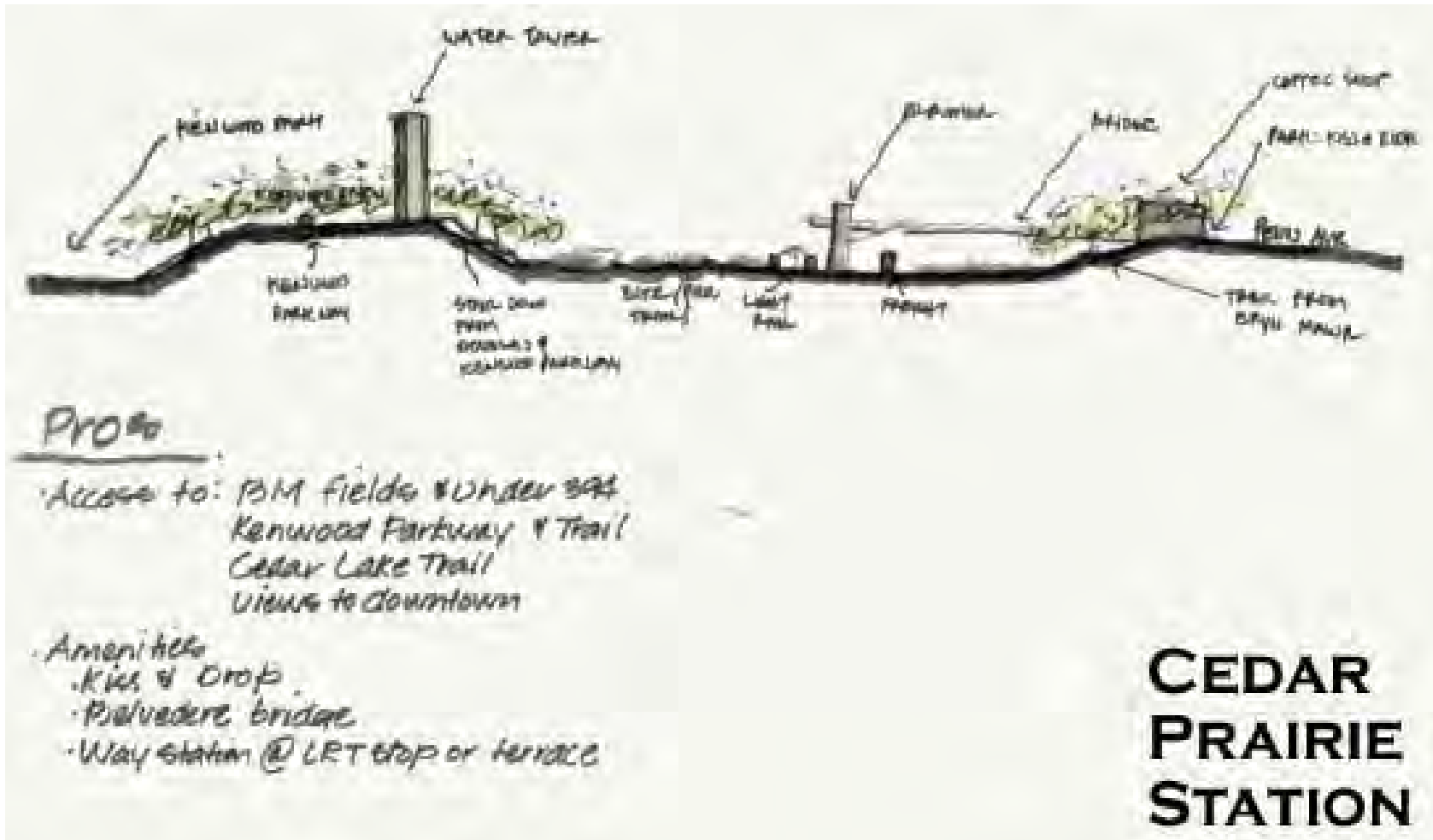
#### **Concept: 'Bridging the Neighborhoods'**

- Beautifully designed bridge traverses prairie from 'kiss and ride' drop-off area to Prairie station: aligned with Lowry Hill water tower. Bridge ramps down to an elevator at the station to provide access to the platform to the south and to Cedar Lake Regional Trail.
- Bridge narrows as it moves toward Lowry Hill. Narrowed perspective de-emphasizes its scale and focuses connection of prairie edges.
- Bridge could provide observation points (belvederes) along it and focus view of downtown with plantings, which would also break up horizontal axis across the prairie.
- Formal park access off of Penn Avenue with 'kiss and ride' drop-off, bus access, pedestrian sidewalk and access to park via bridge.
- Ramp from prairie to bridge provides access for bicyclists/pedestrians to station /trails.
- Pedestrian and bike access continues west to Kenwood Parkway, linking north and south.
- Potential trail connection up Lowry Hill with link to Douglas.
- Woodland Park at Lowry Hill base could be incorporated with bicycle/pedestrian trails.
- Commercial/residential development at top of north slope linking to downtown Bryn Mawr.
- Increased public access on Penn Ave and Cedar Lake Road, encouraging use of public transportation and acting as a calming device on these arteries through the neighborhood.

Below are designs that show how these goals can be accomplished.



This cross cut drawing shows some of the connections can be made and some of the aesthetic considerations:



## **Cedar Lake Park Station (W 21<sup>st</sup> Street and Upton Ave)**

This station will service primarily the Kenwood and Lowry Hills neighborhood. The area around the station has had a long history of recreational and commercial use. The main Minneapolis & St. Louis Railway Shops and Yards were just the north, while for much of the twentieth century, boating recreationalists used Dingley's Docks (just to the west of Upton) to launch their cruises.

### **Issues**

- Visual and auditory impact of LRT and station on neighboring residences.
- Loss of corridor character, including habitat and woodland values.
- Traffic congestion at 21<sup>st</sup> St. intersection.
- Potential for parking and idling congestion by commuters and beach users.
- Emergency access to stations and to beach.
- Concerns about commercial development in residential neighborhood.

### **Outcomes**

- Minimize visual and auditory pollution amid quiet residential neighborhood.
- Provide safe access to the lake from surrounding neighborhood and trail corridors.
- Emphasize a natural setting by plantings along the corridor to enhance its park-like character and provide opportunities for appropriate recreation.
- Blend the site into the surrounding park and neighborhoods by plantings and berming, as well as architectural station design that emphasizes its bucolic setting.
- Preserve and enhance the primary eastern access to Cedar Lake Park.

### **Concept: The 'Four-way' Stop**

- Develop split on-grade platforms on the northwest and southeast sides of W. 21<sup>st</sup> Street.
- Split platforms would slow the trains as they cross W. 21<sup>st</sup>. This street accesses a residential neighborhood beyond, as well as the main eastern entrance to Cedar Lake Park. Presently, many cars and people cross the track daily in both directions. With the trains slowly accelerating as they cross the street, safety is enhanced, and gates and horns may be unnecessary. .
- Develop 'sound-wave' land forms (berms) along the sides of the track to abate train noise, screen trains, infrastructure, and station from neighboring houses and strengthen existing landscape character. Minimize light pollution with proper direction and shielding. Sculpt terrain to restore woodland vegetation and create an esthetic that pulls the surrounding park into the corridor.
- Design stations to reflect historic nature of the site as early commuter station (Kenwood Depot) or designed as part of the sound wave concept (e.g. undulating planted roofs).
- Small auto drop-offs would be developed on east and west sides of the 21<sup>st</sup> street intersection: The west side of Thomas would be widened to accommodate 12 'kiss and ride' drop-off spaces. An unpaved pedestrian trail through the existing woods would connect riders with the platform.
- A similar drop off would be developed on the north side of 21<sup>st</sup>. west of the intersection, along with a small 'knuckle' turnaround serving both LRT station and Hidden Beach users.
- Develop the county land around station into a natural area with wildlife trails, native plantings, and habitat enhancement.





- Pros* *quiet, safe crossing*
- Split platforms - 4-way stop
  - Sculpted terrain - landscape acoustics
  - - recreation use
  - On street pickup/drop off
  - No parking lot(s)
  - Maintains & enhances woodland & prairie character

SECTION A-A'

## CEDAR LAKE PARK STATION

## **Cedar Lake Parkway**

Cedar Lake Parkway has a long history as a strategic connector in western Minneapolis. As early as the 1880s, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board recommended acquiring property along the west and south side of Cedar Lake as part of what came to be known as the Grand Round National Scenic Byway. The final section, from Cedar Lake to Dean Parkway, was not acquired until the 1920s. At that time, Theodor Wirth recommended a grade-separated crossing of Cedar Lake Parkway at the rail intersection: a good idea then and now.

### **Issues**

- Traffic congestion along Cedar Lake Parkway.
- Access to South Beach.
- Connectivity to Kenilworth Trail.
- Impedance of continuous and safe flow of motorized and non-motorized traffic on the Grand Rounds National Scenic Byway.
- Visual and auditory impact, especially loss of viewshed, on neighboring residences from train.
- Loss of aesthetic and visual character within corridor.

### **Outcomes**

- Maintain a continuous and safe flow of motorized and non-motorized vehicles and pedestrians along the Grand Rounds National Scenic Byway and Minneapolis Chain of Lakes with connecting trails.
- Maintain and enhance southern gateway to Cedar Lake Park.
- Eliminate safety and connectivity issues on bicycle and pedestrian trails.
- Minimize physical impact of train (speed, lights, noise, etc.).
- Provide access for bicyclists and pedestrians from neighborhoods to lake and park.
- Protect viewshed to lake and park from surrounding neighborhood.

### **Concept**

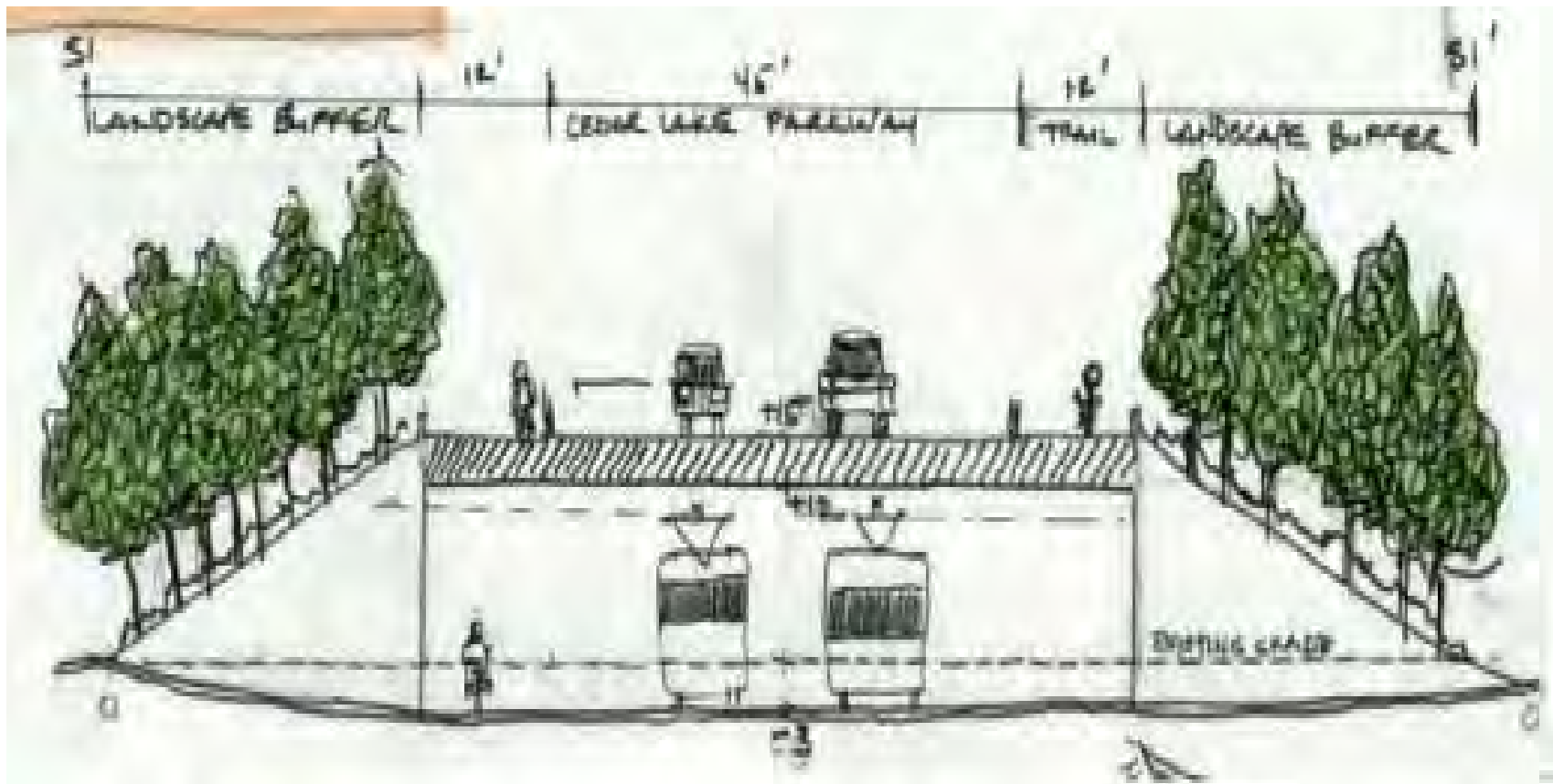
- Grade-separated crossing of LRT and Cedar Lake Parkway/Grand Rounds.

Below is a drawing of what such a grade-separated crossing might look like.





Here is a cross section of the design.



## Summary

Cedar Lake Park is known as the 'natural' lake within the city's Chain of Lakes. Station area planning in Greater Cedar Lake Park should encompass the entire length of the corridor to ensure that accessibility, safety, and aesthetic along its length is maintained. Careful and creative planning, as well as mitigation, along the Minneapolis' Kenilworth/Cedar Lake Regional Trail corridor will help promote safe, accessible transportation along the transit corridor and ensure that the unique character of this park and parkland is preserved and protected now and for future generations.

Thank you,

*The Cedar Lake Park Association  
Neil Trembley, CLPA Treasurer*

## Appendix: List of Design Charrette Landscape Architects

- Steve Durrant, landscape architect, Alta Planning + Design, Portland
- Chris Carlson, landscape architect, charrette facilitator, Portland
- Roger Martin, landscape architect, professor emeritus, University of Minnesota
- John Koepke, landscape architecture, professor, University of Minnesota
- Antonio Rosell, civil engineer and urban designer, Community Design Group, Minneapolis
- Tony Chevalier, landscape architect, Minneapolis
- Nate Cormier, landscape architect, SvR Design Company, Seattle
- Tom Meyer, architect, Meyer Scherer & Rockcastle, Minneapolis
- Craig Wilson, landscape architect, Sustology, Minneapolis, Lowry Hill
- Rick Carter, architect, LHB, Minneapolis, Bryn Mawr
- Charlie Lazor, architect, Lazor Office, Minneapolis, Kenwood

## Jason Wedel

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February 8, 2011

Attached are my father's comments regarding the potential impact to his property as it relates to one of the alternative locations for the maintenance facility associated with the above-referenced project. If you have any questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

# *Allan* *Mechanical Inc.*

February 8, 2011

Southwest Corridor  
Hennepin County Transit  
417 North 5<sup>th</sup> Street  
Minneapolis, MN 55401

**Re: Southwest LRT Comments**

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Elmer Wedel and I am the owner of the property located at 7875 Fuller Road, Eden Prairie, MN 55344. I was informed by David Lindahl, Economic Development Manager for the City of Eden Prairie, that my property is being considered as one of the alternative locations for the maintenance facility required as part of the proposed Southwest LRT. I have several concerns with this proposed alternative and I am therefore providing my comments to be included as part of the record that will be compiled and attached to the Station Area Strategic Planning Document as an appendix and will be included with submission of the document to Metro Transit and the City of Minneapolis.

My comments and concerns are related primarily to the potential loss of this property and the inability to replace it. It is a very unique parcel and my concerns with losing it are as follows:

1. It will be impossible to duplicate the proximity and access I currently have to the trunk highway system. Fuller road is the first signalized access point on west bound TH 5 when traveling from I-494. As a mechanical contractor my employees and I travel throughout the seven county metropolitan area. Our current location provides immediate access to the highway system which saves significant time and resources as we conduct our business.
2. The current zoning in place on my property is not available anywhere else within the City of Eden Prairie or other adjacent communities. We have the unique right to have outdoor storage. As a mechanical contractor, I receive large HVAC units that cannot be stored inside. Without outdoor storage I would not be able to conduct my business.
3. I currently have the ability to construct an addition to my building. I have incurred costs related to building and site design as well as permitting and entitlement cost associated with receiving municipal approval. Even more important than the costs I have incurred, is my need to be able to expand my business. Smaller companies are failing every day. To stay competitive I need the ability to grow.
4. I purchased my property a number of years ago and have taken great pride in restoring it and maintaining it. I have done so at my own expense and I now have something that both the City and I can be proud of. Finding a building similar in quality and at the same price point is not feasible. Building prices have greatly increased over the years and

Southwest Corridor  
LRT Comments  
February 8, 2011

despite the current state of the real estate market, I would not be able to find a comparable building for the same price.

5. I currently lease a portion of my property for a cell phone tower. This lease provides a continuous revenue stream that I use to subsidize my business. If my business had to be relocated I would lose this income.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the proposed Southwest LRT maintenance facilities alternatives. Please seriously consider my comments as you move forward with identifying your final designs. If you have any questions in regards to my comments, please do not hesitate to contact me at 952-934-3999 or [ewedel@allanmechanical.com](mailto:ewedel@allanmechanical.com).

Sincerely,  
**Allan Mechanical**



Elmer D. Wedel  
President /Owner

Each Minneapolis station area along the Southwest Corridor Transitway is full of opportunities for new residential development especially affordable housing, job creation, better alignment with the regional trail system, and access to a great new transit service that will serve individuals and communities along this transit corridor. A station area is a place that can have great intensity and vitality that arises from a compact and densely-build neighborhood mixed-use center.

However, the draft of the Southwest Transitway Minneapolis Station Area Strategic plan does not reflect this philosophy in its details. MICAH is concerned with the following.

- The land use sections are so vague that they provide little guidance. There is little definition of use types or desired mix of uses. There is no mention whatsoever of housing affordability goals or standards.
- Proximity issues and difficulty of access to stations has not been satisfactorily addressed. This will contribute to remoteness of the station areas from surrounding neighborhoods and populations, diminished vitality of station area streets and businesses, and lower ridership.
- Intensity of development around the station stops is almost uniformly inadequate in terms of both acreage and density. At some station stops there is no development recommended at all. Meaningful affordable housing requires a critical mass of mixed uses around the station areas.
- The station plans don't live up to their full potential. Little attention is paid to the possible development for affordable housing which is an important part of the federal funding criteria for the Southwest Corridor. Affordable housing is a keystone to economic growth and stability in our metropolitan region. In addition, the demand for affordable housing is great. We can and must do better.

**Royalston.**

MICAH supports the document's recommendation for smaller block sizes and finer-grained development as a nucleus for a mixed-use district around the station. We wish that the sample plan had either shown better accommodation and/or integration of surrounding land-uses. Is the mixed-use area large enough to be sustainable over the long term? Since the area around the station stop is so well-defined by roadway barriers, perhaps the entire defined area should be guided, in the long term, as a residential mixed use node with a defined component of affordable housing.

**Van White.**

The Harrison neighborhood has invested a great deal of time and effort into the planning process for this station. The process has been a model of community involvement. Their findings should be considered and implemented. The site's designated master plan developer has demonstrated the economic and development opportunities presented by this station area. The SW Transitway Station Area document illustrates little development by comparison.

**Penn**

This station area plan represents a lost opportunity to engage the properties on the north and south sides of the station. Roadways and multi-modal vehicular access to the station is possible and highly desirable. If lined with homes and businesses, it could be one of the most desirable areas in the Twin

Cities. Instead, the sample shows a single building project in lieu of a district. MICAH is very disappointed in the failure of imagination in long term planning.

### **21<sup>st</sup> Street Station**

There is a public investment involved in creating any station stop. Especially today, this implies, if not demands, a public benefit in return on this investment. Certainly, a station stop at 21<sup>st</sup> Street will afford metro residents greater access to recreational resources near or connected to this stop. MICAH believes that a small mixed use node serving recreational visitors to Hidden Beach and the trail heads is an appropriate use at this station and would also be a quiet amenity to the residents of the neighborhood similar to the sort of commercial mixed use clusters that dot the shoreline along old excursion rail line that used to run out to Lake Minnetonka 100 years ago.

The planning document states: “Existing neighborhood context and comment do not favor development or redevelopment beyond the minimum amenities needed for providing safe and efficient LRT service at this station. For this reason, no sample transit oriented district and was prepared for this station.”

At this early stage of the planning process lack of imagination, fear of change and leveraging of wealth and privilege should not be allowed to foreclose the possibility of achieving some benefit for the cost of a station stop.

### **West Lake Station**

The study of this station stop exhibits the broadest, most “blue sky” thinking in the report. MICAH applauds the recommendations for connectivity, especially the extension of France Avenue across the rail/trail corridor. MICAH also applauds the recognition of potential for an increased amount of housing in a dense mixed-use setting. MICAH advocates that specific percentages of housing meeting specific affordability standards should be included in any adopted plan.

La Shella Sims, Northside Resident  
MICAH