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PUBLIC HEARING ON SOUTHWEST TRANSITWAY
October 20, 2009
Hennepin County Government Center
4:00 p.m.

1 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: I will call to
2 order this meeting of the Hennepin County Regional
3 Railroad Authorities hearing for -- This is a formal
4 public hearing, and all proceedings are going to be
5 transcribed. We are gathered here less than a month
6 away from the opening of the Northstar Corridor, which
7 will be open for business on November the 16th. We are
8 meeting a little bit more than five years after the
9 opening date of Hiawatha, which has been, by all
10 accounts, an enormous success, far exceeding the
11 projected ridership, and the customer acceptance has
12 been very, very enthusiastic. So our main purpose
13 today is to receive public comment about the Southwest
14 Light Rail project. As a general rule, we are not
15 going to be responding to your comments at this
16 hearing, but, rather, we will take your comments under
17 consideration. They will be transcribed, and your --
18 and we're going to take them under consideration as
19 decisions are made about this project as it moves
20 forward.

21 Just a bit of background before we begin, the
22 project has been under study since 2002. There have
23 been enumerable technical analyses and review by
24 technical and policy staff from our project partners,
25 as well as from the state and the federal levels.

1 These things are complicated. There are lots of people
2 who are involved. We are at a point where information
3 on cost ridership, potential environmental impacts and
4 the like, we believe that that information is
5 sufficient to make a determination on what the best
6 route would be for Southwest, so that we can proceed
7 then with the design.

8 The hallmark of the work of this project has
9 been strong, sustained and comprehensive public
10 involvement. We've held more than 25 open houses, five
11 public hearings, made presentations at a hundred
12 neighborhood and business groups and have strived to
13 inform the public with our Web site, newsletters and
14 outreach materials. We consider public involvement to
15 be essential to support good decisions as this project
16 moves forward. This hearing is a part of our effort to
17 involve the public and to make sure that we hear and
18 understand public concerns and viewpoints. Specific to
19 the proposed preferred alternative for the Southwest
20 LRT project on October the 14th, the Southwest Policy
21 Advisory Committee, the PAC, voted to recommend that
22 the LRT 3A option Opus/Golden Triangle/Kenilworth
23 alternative be selected as the locally preferred
24 alternative for the Southwest LRT line. The 3A was
25 recommended by the PAC because it is the alternative

1 that, in its judgment, best meets the purpose and needs
2 of the project as expressed by the goals of improving
3 mobility, providing a cost-effective and efficient
4 travel option and preserving the environment, while
5 protecting the quality of life and supporting economic
6 development. The Southwest PAC recommendation has been
7 forwarded to the Hennepin County Regional Railroad
8 Authority, and we are having this hearing today so that
9 we can hear from the public prior to making a
10 recommendation on the locally preferred alternative,
11 which will then be forwarded to the Metropolitan
12 Council for a final decision here within the Twin
13 Cities region.

14 As we go into the hearing, and I'm going to
15 turn to Commissioner Dorfman for comments before we
16 begin, those --

17 COMMISSIONER DORFMAN: Oh, you are.

18 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: -- those who
19 wish to speak tonight have signed up. We're going to
20 call on those individuals first according to the list
21 that we have here available. And is there a list
22 available?

23 CLERK: I don't have --

24 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Is there a list?
25 Okay, we have a list. Ms. Walker will get that.

1 If you have not signed up but wish to speak,
2 please find one of our staff people. Katie Walker is
3 there or others, and you can get yourself on the list
4 if you wish to speak here today.

5 Finally, in order to make sure we hear from
6 everyone, we're going to limit comments to three
7 minutes. That's been -- that's our usual procedure.
8 We've got a timer on the podium, green, yellow, red;
9 you get the picture. Go ahead with green. At two and
10 a half minutes you're going to see yellow, which means
11 not slow down but speed up, and try to be done at the
12 three-minute point, at which the red light comes on.
13 There is no trapdoor, but we will try to enforce the
14 three-minute limit so that everybody has an equal
15 opportunity to speak today.

16 When you come to the mic, please state your
17 name and address and then offer your comments, so --
18 And with respect to provide respectful hearing of all
19 speakers, we would ask the audience members from -- to
20 refrain from commenting or applause. We want everyone
21 here to feel free to make their comments as they see
22 fit so that -- and to do so in an open environment
23 where everyone is treated fairly and equally.

24 I will turn the podium over to Commissioner
25 Dorfman, who has provided leadership on this project

1 since that first day in 2002 and has -- has provided
2 leadership in bringing us to this moment that we have
3 here today. So Commissioner Dorfman.

4 COMMISSIONER DORFMAN: Thank you,
5 Mr. Chair. I just want to thank everybody for coming.
6 I would note that Commissioner Callison first has --
7 first as a city councilman --

8 MS. CALLISON: Correct.

9 COMMISSIONER DORFMAN: -- has served on
10 the PAC for a long time and then has continued as
11 county commissioner and, you know, this is basically in
12 some ways a continuation of the public hearing we had
13 in Hopkins, which was also sponsored by the Rail
14 Authority, and we heard from many, many people there
15 and it was very helpful, and so this is really our
16 opportunity to hear from you. And then our plan is to
17 take up the policy, both the Technical Advisory
18 Committee and the Policy Advisory Committee
19 recommendations, before the Rail Authority on
20 November 3rd. So thank you all for coming.

21 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Ms. Callison, do
22 you wish to add anything?

23 MS. CALLISON: No. Thank you.

24 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Anyone else?

25 (No response)

1 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: All right. Then
2 we'll proceed with the list of people who have signed
3 up ahead of time. First is Kent Warden representing
4 BOMA.

5 MR. WARDEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

6 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Welcome.

7 MR. WARDEN: Thank you. My name is Kent
8 Warden. I represent Greater Minneapolis BOMA, Building
9 Owners and Managers Association, representing
10 commercial property in downtown Minneapolis and
11 throughout the length of the Southwest Corridor. We're
12 here today to speak very decidedly in favor of the
13 route option 3A. I have been following this process
14 very closely; a number of advantages to that, a number
15 of disadvantages to anything that would bring it down
16 Nicollet and either go on the Nicollet Mall or,
17 alternatively, on 11th and 12th Street. I have
18 submitted a written statement to that effect detailing
19 all of the rationale further, but I just wanted to
20 restate that for emphasis today. Thank you.

21 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: All right.
22 Thank you very much. Any questions?

23 (No response)

24 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Thank you.
25 Next, Russ Adams. Mr. Adams, welcome.

1 MR. ADAMS: Thank you, Mr. Chair, members
2 of the commission. I do have copies of my speech if
3 that's easier for the note taker, and I'll leave those
4 on this table.

5 My name is Russ Adams. I'm the director of
6 the Alliance for Metropolitan Stability. It's a
7 coalition of 25 organizations that work on
8 environmental, economic and social justice issues in
9 our region's growth and development patterns. The
10 alliance is coconvening a table of transit, housing and
11 neighborhood and faith-based groups interested in
12 regional transitways. A number of our partners at that
13 table have actually come out in support of the 3A
14 Kenilworth Corridor alignment. These partners'
15 organizations include -- and you'll be hearing from
16 some of them tonight -- the Harrison Neighborhood
17 Association, ISIAAH, MICAH, and Transit For Livable
18 Communities.

19 As the county and other public agencies
20 review routing options for the Southwest LRT, and down
21 the line as you continue stationary and planning and
22 community engagement efforts, we'd like you to give
23 careful consideration to a couple of core principles.
24 First, there is a remarkable interdependence of people
25 in places along a transitway. Transportation links

1 people to places where they live, work, learn, shop and
2 receive medical care and play and recreate. This means
3 that transit policy has less to do with moving people
4 efficiently from point A to point B than it does with
5 providing people with greater access and more choices.
6 It allows us to erase years of community isolation from
7 transportation improvements and it empowers people to
8 engage in creative placemaking if we have the wisdom to
9 deploy a comprehensive community engagement strategy.
10 And I think the county is on the right track and there
11 are lots of opportunities to do that. One community
12 inclusion example that I would point to would be the
13 opportunity to engage the significant Somali community
14 that lives along the Southwest transitways,
15 particularly out in the suburbs, as well as other
16 communities of color. We have a number of partner
17 groups interested in doing that and working with the
18 county and local cities, particularly as stationary
19 planning proceeds, and we'd be happy to partner with
20 you on that.

21 Another piece that we'd like to point out is
22 infrastructure investment is increasingly being seen as
23 a way to stimulate our economy and to provide access to
24 needed jobs to impacted communities. We have an
25 unprecedented opportunity to ensure that the public

1 investment along the Southwest LRT results in benefits
2 that are distributed equally and equitably, especially
3 in low income communities and communities of color.

4 The alliance has been very active in a
5 campaign called HIRE Minnesota, trying to hold Mn/DOT
6 accountable to their minority and women hiring goals.
7 In 2007 and 2008, they missed 60 percent of their
8 goals. We think we can do better than that on the
9 Southwest LRT. And, in fact, through the leadership of
10 this county we have seen better results on minority and
11 women hiring goals at the Twins ballpark stadium.
12 Let's use the transit hub and the LRT along the
13 Southwest LRT to bridge those efforts and continue
14 that. Thank you.

15 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Thank you,
16 Mr. Adams. Thank you for the comments about the
17 ballpark; those are very much appreciated.

18 I would next call on former mayor of Eden
19 Prairie, Nancy Tyra-Lukens. Mayor, welcome.

20 MS. TYRA-LUKENS: Thank you. Mr. Chair
21 and members of the commission, I've been part of the
22 Policy Advisory Committee since its inception about
23 2002, and the charge of the Policy Advisory Committee
24 was to provide policy direction, to provide information
25 regarding community concerns and issues and to

1 communicate with community groups and governmental
2 organizations, businesses, and other stakeholders.

3 In the past seven years, we've looked at
4 different cities and looked at comparable cities to the
5 Twin Cities and what their transportation systems are.
6 We've looked at different modalities that we could use
7 along the Southwest Corridor, and we also looked at a
8 number of alternative routes, and we discussed at
9 length community concerns regarding the various
10 proposed alignments. We--and by that I mean more the
11 staff to the Policy Advisory Committee--worked hard to
12 communicate with people through Web sites, open houses,
13 visiting city council meetings, going to business
14 organizations and community groups. It's been a very,
15 very open process, and I think evidence of that is seen
16 in two ways.

17 One, we started out -- I think our first
18 meeting was at the Hopkins Depot Coffeehouse, and it
19 was a small group. We eventually grew big enough that
20 we had to move to the Hopkins Police Department. And
21 as more people got interested in attending our
22 meetings, we moved to St. Louis Park to their city
23 council chambers.

24 Another piece of evidence relating to that is
25 the fact that if you were to walk into a recent Policy

1 Advisory Committee meeting, you were as likely to hear
2 somebody speaking who was not actually a policy advisor
3 committee member as you were to hear a policy advisor
4 committee member speaking. It was a very open process.
5 Commissioner Dorfman was very open to having anybody
6 speak that wanted to speak. She was very willing to
7 take the time that we needed to get the answers that we
8 needed. And she and Katie Walker just exhibited a lot
9 of patience and were very accommodating.

10 We took a vote on the locally preferred
11 alternative at our last PAC meeting. We had a
12 recommendation on the 3A alternative from the Technical
13 Advisory Committee that was a unanimous decision. Our
14 vote was unanimous except for one negative vote and one
15 abstention.

16 Before I close, one thing that I would like
17 to say is -- it's a concern that I have regarding the
18 naming of the corridor as the Southwest Transitway.
19 I'm currently chair of the Commission for Southwest
20 Transit, and already we are getting a lot of confusion
21 from the public as to what is Southwest Transit, what
22 is Southwest Transitway, people calling us for
23 information about Southwest Transitway. I think the
24 confusion could only increase in the future. I think
25 there are advantages to having the direction as part of

1 the name, but we do have Bottino and Hiawatha and
2 Central Corridor and Red Rock which really don't tell
3 you what direction those routes go. So we would really
4 love it, it would end confusion, if when this route is
5 started and implemented if the name could be changed.
6 One name that I've heard that would kind of eliminate a
7 little bit of confusion is to call it Prairie to Lakes
8 or the Lakes to Prairie route, but that's just a
9 suggestion. Thank you.

10 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Thank you,
11 Mayor. I would note your testimony--I don't know how
12 many years ago--I recall it very vividly in your
13 description of why the route from the depot south
14 should be along the freeway as opposed to along the
15 rail corridor because of the history of development and
16 how it changed between the first ring suburbs and
17 second ring suburbs, and that actually teed up the
18 issue and defined it very, very well, and I think it
19 has guided the recommendation since you made that
20 testimony back whenever that was --

21 MS. TYRA-LUKENS: Yeah.

22 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: -- a few years
23 ago.

24 MS. TYRA-LUKENS: Thank you very much.

25 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Thank you very

1 much.

2 Next on the list is council member -- city
3 council member Don Sanvels from Minneapolis. Welcome,
4 council member.

5 MR. SANVELS: Good afternoon, Mr. Chair
6 and to the members of your committee. I'm here with
7 maybe a slightly different voice. You will hear many
8 arguments, eloquent and correct, about the logistical
9 and economic feasibility factors of the superiority of
10 the 3A alternative, Kenilworth alternative. I would
11 like to speak a little bit about the -- the aspect of
12 justice that is involved in this decision.

13 And when Martin Luther King talked about the
14 blank check that was issued to members of the American
15 community, he also admonished us to think that we all
16 inherited that obligation and that debt. It is not
17 just a debt created and owned by those who issued the
18 blank check, but it was our collective responsibility
19 to pay on that debt, and I'm convinced that it is a
20 point in times like this that that opportunity stares
21 us in the face. But along with that opportunity comes
22 the nagging reality that when these decisions are made,
23 the connection to that debt is often too diffuse to
24 recall. But I would ask you to remember today that the
25 inequities of our past still haunt us in real

1 geographic, logistical, tangible features. We're
2 divided in north Minneapolis by the freeway and the
3 river and way too few bridges from our neighbors.
4 We're divided by a difficult and arduous path to
5 downtown. We're divided to the south. How do you get
6 to parks in the south? There's no way. And so we are
7 kind of contained and estranged and boxed in, and we
8 cannot deny that these are the features, the geographic
9 and environmental features, which constitute the
10 general picture that truncates the possibilities of our
11 community. And now we have an opportunity to no more
12 let justice roll down in the form of social service
13 payments, but no longer to -- for it to be a handout
14 but a way out, a way out to jobs, a way out to
15 opportunity, a way out to school, a way out to visit
16 family. And let's break with the past trends where the
17 convenience of the well-endowed tramples the
18 opportunities of the disadvantaged, and let's turn it
19 on its head and say today we will make decisions to
20 reverse our national trends of inequity which are
21 inextricable from the day-to-day decisions, and
22 sometimes the poignant decisions that are made at
23 crucial moments in time, when we have to say where does
24 a road go, where does a bridge go, where does the
25 traffic flow? And I -- I can assure you that the

1 thousands of people in north Minneapolis who are hard
2 working, enthusiastically involved in our democratic
3 and our economic system are dying for those jobs in
4 Eden Prairie. They want to get there and they don't
5 want to have to do an obstacle course or a long drive
6 with many transfers or driving a broken-down car and
7 too expensive gas. They can just hop on that rail and
8 find justice in a job down in the garden of Eden
9 Prairie. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

10 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Thank you,
11 council member.

12 Karen Rosar. There she is. Welcome to the
13 Rail Authority.

14 MS. ROSAR: Well, that's an impossible
15 voice to follow, Commissioner McLaughlin, Chairman
16 McLaughlin, commissioners. My name is Karen Lee Rosar,
17 and I represent the North Loop Neighborhood
18 Association, and I'm a devout public transit user. The
19 t's have been crossed and the i's have been dotted.
20 This Southwest Light Rail Transit has been studied for
21 years and years and years. There's reams of data and
22 analysis that's been done which indicates one clear
23 superior alternative, that being 3A. I would ask
24 the -- you as the HCRRA to move that preferred
25 alignment to Met Council so we can expeditiously build

1 out our Metropolitan Transit system, and I would
2 further ask that going forward with all transit options
3 move expeditiously in planning stages, finding new and
4 creative ways, if possible, within guidelines, so that
5 we can avoid 10-year planning for our light rail -- for
6 all transit. We -- somehow we've got to find ways to
7 move that forward a little bit faster than that. The
8 need is strong, and -- that's all I have to say. Thank
9 you very much.

10 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Thank you very
11 much.

12 Next is Frank Lorenz. Welcome to the Rail
13 Authority.

14 MR. LORENZ: Thank you. My name is Frank
15 Lorenz, and I represent the firm of Hulke & Gheer. I
16 live in Commissioner Callison's district, but I'm
17 familiar with Commissioner McLaughlin's role in rail
18 transit, and if I recall correctly, you can't graduate
19 from Princeton without at least taking two math
20 courses, so what I'm saying is hopefully going to ring
21 a bell.

22 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: I'll just warn
23 you I didn't get an A, but I got --

24 MR. LORENZ: Well, but unlike certain
25 other institutions, I don't think they'll let you out

1 unless you at least sit in on the courses.

2 So basically what I have today is a reality
3 check about money. Any route that requires a tunnel
4 will cost an extra 150 to \$250 million dollars and
5 should be rejected out of hand because of that.

6 Number two, the present estimates of
7 ridership for Southwest Transit are not believable
8 regardless of how many years they've been studied.
9 They're based on something between wishful thinking and
10 a cloned carbon copy of Hiawatha light rail. But
11 Southwest is not Hiawatha. Hiawatha has benefited from
12 unplanned usage southbound, unplanned ridership to the
13 thousands of lower paying jobs at the airport, Mall of
14 America and the VA Hospital. It's not clear that Eden
15 Prairie and Minnetonka have anything like that number
16 of jobs for central city residents regardless of how
17 badly they need the jobs, and there's no question about
18 that. But the ridership estimates, assuming there's
19 going to be a flow from central Minneapolis, north
20 Minneapolis, whatever, need to be supported by actual
21 jobs, and I'm not aware of employers importing people
22 from South Dakota or anywhere else to fill this
23 tremendous void where they can't find workers for Eden
24 Prairie.

25 So, in any event, capital construction costs

1 for Southwest Transit will be managed by Met Council,
2 Metro Transit, with some help from Mn/DOT, and so it
3 was with Hiawatha. But in February of 2002, a federal
4 transportation auditor signed off on a so-called final
5 budget of \$675 million for the Hiawatha project. Two
6 and a half years later, the actual cost had increased
7 by 26 percent, \$175 million to \$850 million dollars.
8 So Met Council is not a reliable or a trustworthy
9 construction manager. The feds, the state, the
10 Metropolitan Airports Commission and Hennepin County
11 had to join together to make up that \$175 million cost
12 overrun. If Southwest starts with a budget of a
13 billion dollars, a B, a billion dollars, it's likely
14 that taxpayers will have to come up with another
15 \$260 million, and in a recession with eight and a half
16 percent unemployment, that's really going to be hard
17 cheese for the taxpayers.

18 Hiawatha lost \$15 million a year in 2008, and
19 that was covered by taxes. Hennepin County paid
20 5.3 million; State of Minnesota, 5.3 million in a
21 sharing arrangement, and an emergency unplanned
22 transfer of 4.5 million dollars came from state motor
23 vehicle sales tax, which was authorized by Met Council.
24 So Hennepin County's 50 percent share of the 2009
25 operating loss for Hiawatha should be about 700 -- or,

1 I'm sorry, \$7.5 million. That's per year.

2 Hiawatha is now spending an unplanned
3 \$3 million a year, just two years after they started
4 full operation of the line, to overhaul and rebuild its
5 27 train cars, and apparently they don't feel they need
6 to give any detail. It's none of the public's
7 business. Metro Transit is silent on this overall
8 subject, and no one, not the press, not elected
9 officials, not the state legislative auditor, no one is
10 demanding to know why. This \$3 million a year is a
11 major scandal. Railroad cars aren't supposed to wear
12 out in 24 months, but no one is asking why. No one is
13 saying boo. Halloween is still 11 days off, and maybe
14 that's the reason. But why isn't Met Transit suing the
15 Canadian manufacturer, Bombardier? We don't know.

16 The federal auditor for Hiawatha assumed that
17 property taxes could be raised five percent a year,
18 year after year forever. Hennepin County and several
19 other local counties have added a quarter percent sales
20 tax, a transit tax, to the general sales tax, and in
21 the aggregate that will raise about \$85 million a year.

22 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Mr. Lorenz,
23 you're getting -- you're over time. You'll have to
24 finish up.

25 MR. LORENZ: Okay. Fine. I'll have

1 copies of this on the table at the end. Thank you.

2 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: I have one
3 question, though, for you. You said you were
4 representing the law firm of Hulke & Gheer?

5 MR. LORENZ: Not the law firm. We're
6 management consultants.

7 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Management. And
8 are you -- and this is -- this is the testimony
9 representing that company?

10 MR. LORENZ: That's correct.

11 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: All right.
12 Thank you very much.

13 Next is Loren Aandahl. Welcome to the Rail
14 Authority.

15 MR. AANDAHL: Thank you. Good afternoon.
16 My name is Loren Aandahl, and I live at 2121 Drew
17 Avenue South in Minneapolis.

18 Two centuries ago President Thomas Jefferson
19 showed incredible vision in concluding the Louisiana
20 Purchase. He had envisioned a future for the young
21 republic whose boundaries would not stop at the
22 Mississippi but extend into the Great Plains and
23 ultimately to the Pacific ocean. Sadly, last Wednesday
24 the Southwest LRT PAC voted figuratively to stop at the
25 Mississippi. In selecting the 3A Kenilworth alignment,

1 they voted for a route that did not serve the densely
2 populated south and west Minneapolis, that would not
3 link this vibrant area with the western suburbs, and
4 that would not improve local transit between downtown
5 and southwest Minneapolis, the metro's busiest transit
6 route. The decision was understandable in part. There
7 was only really one credible alternative to vote on.

8 The vast majority of the PAC members are from
9 the western suburbs who just want the line built and
10 don't have much interest in how it gets through
11 Minneapolis to downtown. The city of Minneapolis
12 utterly failed in developing a vibrant -- a viable
13 at-grade alignment between downtown and the Midtown
14 Greenway, in spite of eight years of opportunity to do
15 so. Too late in the process, I suggested a solution
16 utilizing the western side of I-35W. My involvement in
17 this process only happened because of the ridership
18 analysis contained in the evaluation results issued on
19 August 10th.

20 As an airline executive with 22 years of
21 experience, mostly in the network and schedule planning
22 areas, it was inconceivable to me that the Kenilworth
23 alignment would have a ridership forecast equal with
24 the Uptown alignment that passed through a much more
25 densely populated area. My blistering critique of the

1 ridership forecast at the September 17th PAC public
2 hearing pointed out numerous issues I had with this
3 forecast.

4 Last Tuesday, three of us met with the
5 project manager and the consultant who did the
6 forecast. We were told that they had updated the
7 forecast because they had discovered numerous errors
8 with their modeling following my critique. They were
9 not able to provide us with a simple boarding -- a
10 simple station boarding origin and destination grid per
11 my request, but did pass out another summary based on
12 the new forecast. To our embarrassment, and theirs,
13 they were completely unable to explain their own work
14 to us and had to withdraw the summary. Our meeting
15 ended without satisfactory answers to most of our basic
16 questions.

17 The next day, the PAC members were told of
18 the new forecast before their vote. Not one PAC member
19 asked how such egregious errors could have occurred,
20 much less at the end of an eight-year process. Not one
21 PAC member asked a question about the new forecast,
22 even to question if it was accurate. As a taxpayer, I
23 was appalled by this lack of due diligence.

24 Then there is the matter of the relocation of
25 the TC&W railway line through the Kenilworth Corridor.

1 This is a condition of building the LRT on this
2 alignment. The railroad can stay on its turned route
3 for the indefinite future. Yet we were told the two
4 were not interconnected and the cost of the railway
5 relocation has not been costed into the LRT proposal.
6 Furthermore, this relocation has not been finalized,
7 and it will now be grossly unfair to the affected
8 communities to be forced to bare the relocation impact
9 because it's now a done deal that an LRT line will
10 displace the railway through Kenilworth. This is not
11 an issue with an Uptown alignment.

12 In conclusion, I would urge the HCRRA to vote
13 to delay this project until an at-grade alignment
14 between downtown and Uptown, utilizing I-35W and the
15 Midtown Greenway, can be developed in order to bring
16 improved transit to a much larger segment of the west
17 metro population. I'm convinced that this alignment
18 will have a 35 percent higher ridership, and when
19 combined with moderately higher construction costs will
20 produce a better CEI.

21 I urge the HCRRA to vote to delay this
22 project until they themselves understand the ridership
23 forecast and are convinced it's accurate. This is the
24 least we can expect from our public officials who are
25 about to commit over a billion dollars of taxpayer

1 money to this project, and I volunteer to help you in
2 this effort.

3 I would remind the HCRRA that this project is
4 not some electric toy train set that they are building.
5 It will set the footprint for the metro, the western
6 metro area, for the century to come. Like President
7 Jefferson, let's not stop at the Mississippi. Thank
8 you.

9 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Thank you very
10 much. Janet Weivoda. I hope I pronounced that
11 properly. Janet Weivoda?

12 Okay. We'll skip down to Carrie (phonetic)
13 Anderson. Kari? Kari, sorry. Hi.

14 MS. ANDERSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman,
15 and thank you members of the commission. My name is
16 Kari Anderson, and I live in the Harrison neighborhood
17 in north Minneapolis. I'm a member of the board at
18 Harrison, and I'm also a member of the Bassett Creek
19 Valley Redevelopment Oversight Committee. I also think
20 it's important to add that I ride my bike everywhere
21 pretty much and I use the Cedar Lake trail, the
22 Kenilworth alignment trail and the Greenway daily in
23 the summer, and less often when it snows.

24 I'd like you to picture coming out of
25 downtown on Interstate 394, and if you look to the

1 left, you'll see the sculpture garden and you see
2 Dunwoody Institute, Parade Stadium, Walker Art Center;
3 and you look to the left [sic] and there is a manure
4 pile, some city storage, lots of dirt piles and rock
5 crushers and things like that. Zoning policy has
6 clearly favored one side of the freeway over the other
7 side of the freeway. The city has very recently helped
8 rectify this by rezoning that area to include -- to
9 allow for development of housing and corporate uses.
10 This favoritism is not only seen in zoning policy but
11 also in transportation policy. As council member
12 Samuel said, north Minneapolis is very, very isolated
13 by freeways. I mean, just ask yourself this question,
14 How would I drive from north Minneapolis to south
15 Minneapolis? You could do it, but you have to think
16 about it a little bit in order to get there, and it's
17 difficult to do.

18 The city also recently has been addressing
19 this issue by putting Van White Boulevard through that
20 area to help connect north and south Minneapolis in
21 that area, and an LRT stop at Van White Boulevard would
22 do a lot to bridge the current isolation between north
23 and south Minneapolis.

24 Because of this historical zoning and
25 transportation biases, development opportunities on the

1 north side and the south side of that area have -- have
2 also not been equal. The 3A alignment, you might know,
3 goes through an area called Bassett Creek Valley, and
4 for over 10 years a group of local residents,
5 businesses, developers, and people involved in the area
6 have been working to create a vision for that area that
7 was approved by the Minneapolis City Council. It's
8 called the Bassett Creek Area Master Plan. Any
9 development in this area will have an enormous
10 advantage by coming into a situation that has a unified
11 vision among the businesses, the neighbors who live in
12 that area, developers who are interested in the
13 property.

14 I've heard some of the opponents to the 3A
15 alignment say, Why would anybody put a stop in that
16 area? There's nothing there. But there is something
17 very important there, and that is opportunity, the
18 opportunity to develop cutting edge, transit-oriented
19 development, the opportunity to address decades of bias
20 in city zoning and transportation policies, and also
21 the opportunity to help a community's vision for a
22 healthy future become reality, and so I hope that you
23 take the PAC's recommendation and support the 3A
24 alignment. Thank you.

25 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Thank you very

1 much.

2 Jerry Krause. Welcome to the Rail Authority.

3 MR. KRAUSE: Thank you, Commissioner
4 McLaughlin and other members of the Hennepin County
5 Rail Authority. My name is Jerry Krause. I live at
6 417 Oliver Avenue South in Minneapolis, which is the
7 Bryn Mahr neighborhood just west of downtown. And I
8 also provided similar comments a month ago at the
9 public hearing out at the Eisenhower school.

10 Over the last couple of decades I've lived in
11 Minneapolis, Uptown, Lowry Hill, and over the last
12 eight years in Bryn Mahr. I also am an avid user of
13 transit, roughly riding about a thousand different
14 segments on an annual basis. I also use the Cedar Lake
15 trail for running and biking on a continuing basis,
16 probably about two to 300 times on an annual basis.
17 I'm also a member, as some of you may know, of the
18 Citizens Advisory Committee over at Southwest Transit.
19 Like Kari Anderson, who just spoke, I would urge your
20 support of the LRT 3A Kenilworth alignment, which has
21 been recommended by the other two committees. And I
22 think their recommendation is embedded in three ideas
23 that I'd like to briefly address.

24 One, and importantly, I think, is the
25 cost-effective index. I think others who have

1 considered this issue have recognized that only LRT 3A
2 route is actually economically viable under FTA
3 guidelines.

4 There is certainly issues been raised
5 considering ridership projections and whether they're
6 accurate or not. An issue I raised a couple of months
7 ago in a public forum, joint meeting of the committees,
8 is the question of well, to what extent would ridership
9 have to increase through the other alternative coming
10 up Nicollet Avenue; and I think that would probably be
11 somewhere in the neighborhood of 50 percent. Even if
12 the numbers are not accurate, I think there's a huge
13 gap between what currently exists in the numbers and
14 what would have to be projected. And also strikingly,
15 I was looking at my materials from 2006, that these
16 ridership projections are actually very, very similar
17 to what was being proposed at that time.

18 Like Kari just mentioned to you, Bassett
19 Creek Valley is a very important part, I think, of this
20 process. Like Kari, I've been involved with the
21 redevelopment oversight of that part of the community
22 for over eight years. It is a place of tremendous
23 potential. As Kari had mentioned to you, others have
24 said why build a stop at Van White because there's
25 really nothing there. This -- I think rail is as much

1 about the future as it is about the present, and the
2 ridership projections are not about today; it's about
3 2030. And for those who ask why would anything happen
4 in the next 20 years, I point them to the north loop,
5 to the riverfront, and more recently to the Midtown
6 Commons, who might have similar questions concerning
7 the viability of any of those projects.

8 And, lastly, issues have been raised in other
9 public settings about the concern of the compatibility
10 of rail with the Kenilworth alignment, especially
11 between the lakes. As a avid user there, I'm very
12 concerned about it as well, but I also recognize this
13 is an existing heavy rail corridor and that for the
14 eight miles or so extending down to Hopkins, you would
15 have a very similar use.

16 Again, I would urge your favorable
17 consideration of Route 3A, the Kenilworth alignment,
18 the only economically sound choice available. Thank
19 you so much.

20 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Thank you very
21 much.

22 Next we have Art Higinbotham.
23 Mr. Higinbotham, welcome to the Rail Authority.

24 MR. HIGINBOTHAM: Good afternoon, Chairman
25 McLaughlin and commissioners. My name is Art

1 Higinbotham. I'm a Minneapolis resident of 3431
2 St. Louis Avenue. I'm the Cedar-Isles-Dean
3 Neighborhood Association chair. I've been a Southwest
4 Community Advisory Committee representative and a
5 former civil rights commissioner in Minneapolis with an
6 interest in serving minorities. The Southwest locally
7 preferred alternative recommendation before you today
8 is both flawed and mistimed. The ridership for the 3C2
9 Uptown route is underestimated by over 35 percent
10 compared to the 3A Kenilworth line. The capital costs
11 have been overstated by 40 percent for 3C2 by including
12 a tunnel on Nicollet Avenue. These corrections will
13 flip the CEI and favor 3C2 if they're correctly made by
14 staff.

15 The travel time on 3C2 to the first downtown
16 station is 3.6 minutes less on 3A -- on 3C2 than 3A.
17 That's because it stops at 12th and Nicollet and
18 doesn't loop around the incinerator to Fifth and
19 Nicollet. That's 37 hours annually less time on a
20 commuter train for southwest commuters. These are
21 inconvenient truths ignored by HCRRA staff and their
22 consultants. Moreover, 3C2 will serve the numerous
23 Lake Street businesses, the Minneapolis Institute of
24 Arts, Eat Street, the Convention Center, Orchestra
25 Hall, St. Thomas, the State and Orpheum Theatres and

1 the bus station. 3A will only serve the impound lot.
2 Both serve the Target Center and Target Field, and
3 through the Royalston station both serve the north side
4 equally. That's a better connection than the Van White
5 station. Eventually three of four Minneapolis stations
6 on 3A are subject to elimination to cut costs because
7 the capital costs are already questionable with the
8 FTA. It then becomes an express train through
9 Minneapolis, serves only the suburbs.

10 Over 3800 petitions were signed in support of
11 3C2, and most neighborhood boards have signed onto the
12 Uptown route. The LPA decision being requested before
13 any mitigation is costed for either route is not fair.
14 The cart is in front of the horse. Grade separation at
15 Cedar Lake Parkway on Route 3A is not being considered.
16 This is America's only urban scenic byway and part of
17 the Minneapolis ground rounds that is used by cyclists
18 and pedestrians from all over the county. A crossing
19 gate will block one of two east/west routes between
20 I-394 and south of Lake Calhoun, the other being Lake
21 Street. At 3.75 minute intervals, it will cut off a
22 Cedar Lake neighborhood from emergency services. A
23 tunnel has been rejected because of purported high
24 water table. But two light rail lines in this country,
25 in my home town of Pittsburgh, run under rivers. A

1 tunnel has also been rejected, and get this, because
2 Homeland Security objects to tunnels. Maybe we should
3 consider closing the tunnel under the airport, a much
4 greater security threat.

5 Ladies and gentlemen, this is a bad
6 recommendation made prematurely. It will not pass
7 muster with the FTA and the EPA. It is environmentally
8 4-F, unfit for duty, please reject it. Request an
9 objective evaluation of the 3C2 alternative and
10 mitigation studies on both routes before committing to
11 a route that will become another commuter rail line
12 serving only the suburbs.

13 Thank you for consideration.

14 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Thank you very
15 much, Mr. Higinbotham.

16 John DeWitt. Welcome to the Rail Authority
17 again, Mr. Dewitt.

18 MR. DEWITT: Thank you for the opportunity
19 to testify today. I'm John DeWitt. I live at 1531
20 East River Parkway in Minneapolis. I represent the
21 Midtown Community Works Partnership on the Southwest
22 LRT PAC, and I'm cochair of the Land Use &
23 Transportation Committee for the Midtown Greenway
24 Coalition.

25 We were pleased to see that the Southwest

1 Technical -- Southwest LRT Technical and Policy
2 Advisory Committees both recommended further
3 explanation of rail transit in the Midtown Greenway
4 connecting the Southwest and Hiawatha LRT lines. Three
5 years ago, both the coalition and the Midtown Community
6 Works Partnership endorsed what we called the "Network
7 Alignment" for Southwest LRT, the Southwest LRT through
8 the Kenilworth Corridor combined with the streetcar
9 aligning the Midtown Greenway.

10 I'd like to talk briefly about why that
11 network has so much potential. We know that transit
12 ridership is driven by access to jobs. Some 70 to 80
13 percent of all transit trips in the Twin Cities are
14 work related. Last year the Center for Transit
15 Oriented Development produced a map showing employment
16 clusters in our region. There's just one meaningful
17 employment cluster in south Minneapolis, the Wells
18 Fargo/Abbott Northwestern/Allina complex along Midtown
19 Greenway with ten to 12,000 workers. It's important to
20 note that the proposed Nicollet alignment for Southwest
21 LRT would miss that complex by up to three-quarters of
22 a mile, while the Greenway streetcar line serves it
23 directly.

24 Minneapolis has four designated growth
25 centers; downtown Minneapolis, the U of M, the Wells

1 Fargo/Abbott Northwestern/Allina complex and the
2 Bassett Creek Valley. Unknuckled alignment would serve
3 only downtown, while a network alignment serves all but
4 the University of Minnesota.

5 Over the next few years, we'll be piecing
6 together a bus rapid transit, BRT system, on 35-W.
7 Once again, a Nicollet alignment would just miss that
8 station serving Lake Street and the Midtown Greenway,
9 while a Greenway streetcar would serve that important
10 transfer point directly.

11 A Greenway streetcar line is actually a
12 hybrid combining the smaller, lower cost scale of a
13 streetcar with the fast travel times of light rail
14 because it's on a private right-of-way. The
15 four-and-a-half mile line would have no street running
16 and just five street crossings. Feasibility studies
17 show a travel time from end to end of just 14 minutes
18 and just 12 minutes from Uptown to Hiawatha. That's
19 easily twice as fast as today's bus service.

20 Toronto's King and Queen streetcar lines
21 regularly carry 45,000 to 50,000 riders a day, and we
22 don't see capacity being an issue for quite awhile.

23 I believe the Southwest LRT and the
24 Kenilworth Corridor, combined with the Midtown Greenway
25 streetcar line, offers far better service to our region

1 at far less cost than the alternatives.

2 Thank you for attention. I'll be happy to
3 answer any questions.

4 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Thank you,
5 Mr. Dewitt. Thank you.

6 Next, Rick Collins. No? Okay. That was --
7 I'm mistaken. Sorry. Aaron Isaacs.

8 MR. ISAACS: And, Mr. Chairman, thank you
9 for the opportunity to speak today. My name is Aaron
10 Isaacs. I live at 3816 Vincent Avenue South in
11 southwest Minneapolis. I'm retired from Metro Transit,
12 where I was a planner and manager for over 30 years,
13 and I'm here to speak in favor of the Kenilworth
14 Corridor.

15 The problem with the Uptown alignment is that
16 it's too expensive and it's too slow. Now, I -- I
17 think everyone knows about the expense with the tunnel,
18 but I want to talk about the speed, because that drives
19 a whole bunch of other things. Right now if you get on
20 a express bus at Eden Prairie station to go downtown,
21 it takes you 25 minutes to get downtown. As I read the
22 report, it takes 39 minutes to get downtown on option
23 3C. That's a 13 or 14-minute increase. That's a
24 50 percent increase in travel time if you're a commuter
25 coming out of Eden Prairie. And that's the single

1 largest group of express bus riders that we want to
2 transfer over to the LRT.

3 LRT is attractive, more attractive than bus,
4 but I don't think it can stand a 50 percent penalty in
5 ridership, which works out to be almost a half hour
6 added to the daily commute round trip. And my
7 criticism of the consultant's ridership analysis was I
8 think they were far too generous with the Uptown
9 alignment in terms of how many people it will carry in
10 from the suburbs. I think that the ridership loss will
11 be greater.

12 And the people who are currently riding
13 express buses out of southwest, they don't have the
14 alternative. If those express buses are eliminated,
15 their only alternative is to drive. The other end of
16 the corridor where people have said, Why are there not
17 more additional riders created on the city end of it,
18 you have to -- once again, it's too slow. The travel
19 time is 14 minutes on the LRT to the center of downtown
20 from the Uptown station. That's the exact same travel
21 time as the number six bus that stops at every block.
22 And that situation happens at all the other stations in
23 Minneapolis - at Lyndale, at Nicollet, at Franklin.
24 And so what would actually happen is that the LRT will
25 pull away some transit riders who make short trips in

1 the city while dramatically reducing bus riders who
2 make long trips in the suburb.

3 Another thing that you have to consider is --
4 is the operating cost. Being an old transit planner, I
5 roughed out a schedule, and I've talked to the staff
6 and they say I'm pretty close. It's going to take two
7 additional trains all day long to run the Uptown
8 alignment compared to the Kenilworth alignment. That
9 works out to be something like a 25 percent increase in
10 operating expense via the Uptown alignment, and that
11 cost is perpetual.

12 The real way to look at it is not in terms of
13 ridership, it's to look at it in terms of passenger
14 miles carried and the reduction in pollutants, fuel use
15 and congestion. And what you want to do is you want to
16 carry people from the suburbs with 15-mile trips and
17 not peel off a few people from the existing bus system
18 that are making the three-mile trips, and that's the
19 reason I'm for the Kenilworth corridor. And I thank
20 you.

21 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Thank you very
22 much. Next we have Jan Leesen (phonetic). Lysen?

23 MS. LYSEN: Lysen.

24 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Lysen. Welcome
25 to the Rail Authority.

1 MS. LYSEN: Yeah, thank you. I'm Jan
2 Lysen. I live at 2849 42nd Avenue South in
3 Minneapolis. I'm here today to represent Transit For
4 Livable Communities. I'm currently serving as the
5 interim executive director of TLC, and I've also served
6 on their board.

7 I'm here today to support the 3A alignment.
8 Our board of directors has passed a position statement
9 supporting that alignment. We know that perhaps not
10 all the members of our organization will agree with us,
11 but there's a few principles or concepts we think
12 really support the 3A alignment. First of all, it's
13 really the most cost-effective approach. Secondly,
14 from a service perspective, the 3A alignment best
15 serves both the south and western -- both the north and
16 western portions of Minneapolis. The Royalston bus
17 stop, one of the future LRT stops, actually has as many
18 daily buses as the Uptown transit station. So here we
19 will have an alignment, the 3A alignment, that will
20 serve as many or more transit users as that station,
21 giving them direct access to the employment center of
22 Eden Prairie. Routes through the Uptown area really
23 represent a duplication of the service that exists
24 today.

25 Lastly, one of -- the last reason for our

1 supporting the 3A alignment is that it's really part of
2 building a regional system. We think that there are
3 some other things that need to happen in addition to
4 the 3A alignment. We, along with others, are
5 supportive of a streetcar connection that has been
6 addressed already this evening, and we think that will
7 also serve to meet the ridership base and serve the
8 region.

9 Lastly, there's a few other principles that
10 we would like to see addressed as the work goes ahead.
11 One, is we want to see continued connections for
12 walkers, bicyclists and bus riders to the station. We
13 would like to see compact development in the station
14 areas that also support biking, walking and housing
15 affordability at all levels. And, lastly, we'd like to
16 see station area designs that create people-oriented
17 and not car-oriented public spaces.

18 Thank you very much.

19 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Thank you for
20 your testimony.

21 Next is Jennifer Munt. I do not see Jennifer
22 here.

23 MS. LYSEN: Oh, I did that one.

24 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Okay. Thank you
25 very much. And Todd McIntyre is next.

1 Welcome to the Rail Authority, Mr. McIntyre.

2 MR. McINTYRE: Thank you, Commissioner.
3 Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority, thank you
4 for the opportunity to present testimony to you in
5 regards to the future alignment of the Southwest
6 Transitway. Over the years, various aquatic groups
7 have searched for land to develop a facility for
8 swimming, diving, water polo and synchronized swimming.
9 As infield developments continually consume urban
10 opportunities, site selection becomes more challenging
11 every year. Bassett Creek Valley has been of interest
12 to me for many years. And with the Kenilworth
13 alignment, I believe it is the best site in the
14 metropolitan area for the Great Prairie Sport Center.
15 Great Prairie Sport Center in the city of Minneapolis
16 would not only provide a unique community asset, it
17 will also create strong economic impact opportunities.

18 The Great Prairie Sport Center is a
19 significant community stakeholder offering a multiple
20 season, multiple sport international destination while
21 focusing on the disciplines of aquatics, gymnastics and
22 volleyball. It would also be available to provide
23 training facilities for athletes in private and public
24 schools and from the Courage Center in Golden Valley.
25 Both USA swimming and USA water polo have created

1 programs to reach demographics traditionally not part
2 of the aquatic sports. If the Great Prairie Sport
3 Center is not developed in Bassett Creek Valley, the
4 youth of north Minneapolis may never use this facility.

5 One of the five goals of the Southwest
6 Transitway is to increase economic development, and
7 Bassett Creek Valley has the greatest potential of any
8 site along any route. The projected construction of
9 3,000 housing units and two and a half million square
10 feet of commercial space, all on a tract of land
11 consisting of 56 acres, is not equaled anywhere.
12 Especially with the new Target Field, the Kenilworth
13 Alignment is essential for the future health and
14 vitality of Bassett Creek Valley.

15 For most people, the year 2020 is 11 years
16 away. However, for Minneapolis the year 2020 started
17 on Friday, October 2nd, 2009. With Chicago's failed
18 bid to host the 2016 Summer Olympics, the process to
19 select the 2020 host city will officially begin in less
20 than one year. Since 2003, plans have been developing
21 to best position Minneapolis as the host city for the
22 2020 games. The Kenilworth alignment further
23 establishes Minneapolis as an Olympic city and is
24 essential to link Target Center, Target Field and the
25 Great Prairie Sports Center within a comprehensive

1 transportation plan.

2 The one item most people will agree to this
3 evening is a need for more transportation options. I
4 believe the best alignment for light rail is the
5 Kenilworth plan and that a more flexible, sleek and
6 iconic mode should be planned to connect Uptown to
7 various destinations. If the Southwest Transitway is
8 not developed on the Kenilworth alignment, the next
9 best option for the Great Prairie Sport Center will
10 probably be in the city of St. Paul. However, we
11 desire to train more -- we desire to train and crown
12 more national and international champions near the home
13 of the Breakfast of Champions. The Kenilworth
14 alignment will leverage the value of Bassett Creek
15 Valley and establish an exceptional legacy for Hennepin
16 County.

17 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Thank you very
18 much.

19 Maren McDonnell.

20 MS. McDONNELL: Good afternoon.

21 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Good afternoon.
22 Welcome to the Rail Authority.

23 MS. McDONNELL: Thanks. I'm a little
24 nervous.

25 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Don't be, we're

1 friendly.

2 MS. McDONNELL: Okay. Hi, my name is
3 Maren McDonnell, and I live at 403 Queen Avenue North.
4 I am the board president for the Harrison Neighborhood
5 Association, a neighborhood group located in north
6 Minneapolis. HNA represents 4100 people; 38 percent
7 African American, 30 percent Hmong and Laos, just over
8 20 percent people of European descent, and a 10 percent
9 mix of Somali and Latino households. The median income
10 for a family is a little more than \$21,000 a year,
11 placing 63 percent of our children in poverty.

12 The Harrison Neighborhood Association
13 supports a Kenilworth 3A alignment because we feel it
14 is the most equitable and cost-effective route for the
15 following reasons: One, Kenilworth 3A best serves
16 northsiders currently working along the Southwest
17 Corridor alignment. Our research shows that nearly
18 3500 northsiders commute to jobs in the cities served
19 by the 3A alignment.

20 Number two, Kenilworth 3A best promotes the
21 redevelopment of Bassett Creek Valley, which is a city
22 designated growth center. Hundreds of residents have
23 been engaged in planning the redevelopment of Bassett
24 Creek Valley. The participation was diverse and
25 reflective of our community. The redevelopment of the

1 area surrounding the Van White station stop would
2 create needed tax base, produce hundreds of units of
3 housing, six to 8,000 jobs. I just got to stop 'cause
4 that kind of blew me away right there. Did you guys --
5 that's six to 8,000 jobs that this can create, okay?
6 And that affects me and my family greatly, so this is
7 something that touches base with me. Besides the jobs,
8 it will create office and commercial space. All this
9 can be done without tearing down or displacing
10 households and businesses.

11 Kenilworth 3A connects north Minneapolis to
12 regional opportunity. North Minneapolis has been
13 historically isolated because of past planning
14 practices and underserved by public transportation.
15 Multiple transit coordinators that connect low and
16 moderate income people to job centers throughout the
17 metro area are needed to reduce poverty over a long
18 term.

19 Again, I want the state -- I want to state
20 that HNA support for the Kenilworth 3A alignment is
21 based in years of work to connect north and south
22 Minneapolis. Hundreds of residents, African Americans,
23 European American, Hmong, Laos and Somali attended
24 meetings and voiced their hopes and dreams. Those
25 visions are reflected in the Bassett Creek Valley

1 Master Plan, which was approved by the city council in
2 2007. The plan includes a light rail transit station
3 stop at Van White. Thank you.

4 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Dan Duffy.

5 MR. DUFFY: Good afternoon, Commissioners.
6 I'll try to keep this brief because I have a small
7 cold, so -- my name is Dan Duffy, and I live at 17900
8 Susan Lane in Minnetonka. As some of you know, I'm a
9 member of the Policy Advisory Committee representing
10 the TwinWest Chamber of Commerce. I've been a member
11 of this committee to study transit in the Southwest
12 Corridor since the inception of this study nearly eight
13 years ago. The TwinWest Chamber, along with the
14 Minneapolis, Edina and Eden Prairie Chambers, has sent
15 a letter to you outlining the details for our support
16 for LRT in the Southwest Corridor and the
17 recommendations for alignment 3A.

18 I want to speak to you today about the study
19 process and the public policy initiatives from the
20 perspective of a member of the Policy Advisory
21 Committee. We began our study session years ago before
22 the Hiawatha line was up and operating. The first year
23 of our meetings were met with skepticism and concerns
24 from some members of the public who did not see a need
25 for any rail in this metro region. Eventually as

1 Hiawatha began operating and exceeding projected
2 ridership and other cities began moving forward with
3 their LRT plans, the mood changed from a sort of "not
4 in my backyard" to a "how can we get LRT sooner?" That
5 type of dialogue is what became common at our meetings.
6 Throughout this entire process, the chair of our
7 committee, Commissioner Dorfman, led the effort to make
8 sure that all citizens who wanted to voice their
9 opinions were heard and that this process would be as
10 transparent and fair as possible.

11 I commend you, Commissioner Dorfman, for your
12 leadership and patience and the respectful
13 consideration you have shown to ensure that every
14 reasonable alternative alignment was properly evaluated
15 and discussed in our study meetings. Whenever a public
16 initiative of this magnitude that affects so many of
17 our metro citizens and businesses is undertaken, it
18 seldom happens without some bumps along the way and
19 differences of opinion. And needless to say, we had
20 both. But in the end, I'm confident in our Policy
21 Advisory Committee selection of alignment 3A will
22 provide the best options for ridership to commute --
23 for riders to commute to and from the west metro region
24 to employment and entertainment centers in the most
25 seamless and cost-effective way.

1 Alignment 3A meets the goals set forth by the
2 Policy Advisory Committee of providing a transit
3 alternative that meets the federal cost-effectiveness
4 index scoring guidelines that is efficient, that will
5 provide for economic development and minimize the
6 environmental impact.

7 Thank you, Commissioner Dorfman, for your
8 leadership of the Southwest Corridor Study and to Katie
9 Walker, Kathie Doty and all the staff members who have
10 given so much of your time and effort in countless
11 public hearings and open houses. It's been a pleasure
12 for me to serve on the Policy Advisory Committee with
13 so many staff and volunteers committed to providing the
14 best alternative for commuting in this metro-wide
15 region. Thank you.

16 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Thank you very
17 much.

18 Next is Lennie Chism. Welcome to the Rail
19 Authority.

20 MR. CHISM: Well, thank you for having me.
21 I want to tell you a story that's really unique. I
22 want to put a hot dog stand wherever that rail stops.
23 I want to put a bike stand wherever that rail stops,
24 because in my eyes that's what we're really talking
25 about here. We're talking about creating the velocity

1 of money that's coming out of the suburbs to stop in
2 north Minneapolis. That's one thing we've been working
3 on for years, trying to put some money in north
4 Minneapolis. I think this brings the greatest
5 opportunity for us to do that. There are a lot of
6 young men and a lot of young women, adults who will
7 come to north Minneapolis with the 3A alignment. With
8 that hot dog stand, we will put people to work, not in
9 reentry programs, but we'll put them to work as
10 business people. North Minneapolis was based upon a
11 concept of small business owners; that's how it was
12 created under the Jewish community. We have to take
13 this in consideration.

14 At one point, Harrison neighborhood was
15 considered on a map the Negro slums. We need to stop
16 this disinvestment. We need to make it so that that
17 area is not someplace that people try to avoid. At the
18 10:30 news we hear about crime, but yet we see no
19 walking patrolman over there. We have to change that
20 attitude. We have to make north Minneapolis the
21 Uptown, where there's outdoor cafes, there's places for
22 people to go and sit and gather, have a good
23 conversation. This offers an opportunity. We often
24 talk about the riders that will come from the other
25 areas of town, which is definitely right. But we also

1 want to talk about the retention that could take place
2 if north Minneapolis gets this. A lot of people leave
3 because they don't have the opportunity of good
4 transit. We talk about the jobs that other people go
5 to. What about the jobs that are going to be created
6 right there, the small jobs.

7 I'm at 1901 Glenwood. There has been a
8 vacant building across from me since I moved there.
9 I've watched two businesses disappear. We have to stop
10 the disinvestment in order to increase the investment.

11 This brings us an excellent opportunity.
12 Uptown has enough. North Minneapolis needs a little
13 bit. And I'm hoping that this will be the start, the
14 catalyst, not just a pass-through for developers to
15 pick up some money, but for an opportunity for the
16 workers in north Minneapolis, 'cause this does contain
17 federal dollars to get jobs and opportunity. That's
18 what we're really talking about here. The velocity of
19 money can stop and start with the 3A -- with this 3A
20 alignment.

21 Thank you for taking the time to listen to my
22 thoughts.

23 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Thank you very
24 much.

25 Next we have Peter Rickmyer. Peter Rickmyer?

1 Oh, here he comes.

2 Welcome to the Rail Authority.

3 MR. RICKMYER: Thank you, Commissioner. I
4 appreciate your time.

5 I'm here to speak about what the purpose is
6 for the LRT, at least for what my understanding was, is
7 to eliminate exhaust in the community. Exhaust causes
8 cancer and other health issues. Whether we spend an
9 extra \$50 million bringing it one way versus another
10 way which decreases people catching cancer is well
11 worth the money. As Commissioner Stenglein knows, that
12 I've been working on a couple stop signs in north
13 Minneapolis to reduce the exhaust. So many people are
14 catching cancer now and related health issues.

15 The other thing that I would like to see with
16 the LRT that's now in existence, the Northstar Rail and
17 the one that's proposed, is to see a lot of -- see a
18 lot of plants, which produces lots and lots of oxygen,
19 because light rail is not going to get rid of the
20 exhaust fumes from the freeways. And so to counteract
21 the exhaust fumes, we must produce plants. And if we
22 work together with the environmental groups, we could
23 get a healthier metropolitan area.

24 Thank you for your time.

25 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Thank you, sir.

1 Neil Trembley. Welcome to the Rail
2 Authority.

3 MR. TREMBLEY: Thank you, Commissioner.
4 Commissioner McLaughlin, Commissioners, my name is Neil
5 Trembley. I live at 37 Oliver Avenue South in
6 Minneapolis. I'm a member of the Cedar Lake Park
7 Association. I'm also Commissioner Stenglein's
8 delegate to the Hennepin County Bicycle Advisory
9 Committee. But in this instance, I'm here as an
10 observer in terms of the bicycle advisory committee.

11 I want to talk about four issues. The Cedar
12 Lake Park Association is in favor of the best route for
13 LRT. If the 3A route is the best route and is chosen,
14 I want to bring up three issues -- or four issues,
15 which is parks, trails, bicycles and history.

16 North of the Cedar Lake Parkway and to the
17 I-394 bridge is a really unique area. The Cedar Lake
18 Park Association considers it basically greater Cedar
19 Lake Park, even though some of it is, of course, county
20 land. We consider it a stewardship of that entire
21 area. Historically, as some of you may know, it was
22 part of Cedar Lake, the bottom of Cedar Lake, was -- is
23 most of that. So when it -- so if the 3A alignment is
24 chosen and transit goes through there, we want to make
25 sure that the parklike atmosphere that's there now

1 continues and it is maintained. So that's one issue
2 that I think we want to bring up on the table.

3 Second, of course, is trails. I'm an avid
4 bicyclist and just used Kenilworth trail, as well as
5 the north and -- the north Cedar Lake trail, the
6 Midtown Greenway. I had a great ride today. And as I
7 was going up the Kenilworth trail, there's some really
8 tight spots there, and I just want to make sure that
9 there still continues to be a trail there if the 3A
10 alignment does go through and that it's a trail that
11 can service both pedestrians, bicyclists and any other
12 users and that it's a real amenity, which brings us, of
13 course to bicycles.

14 The one thing that the Hennepin County
15 Bicycle Committee was a little -- or did talk about
16 yesterday was, of course, with any alignment would be
17 availability for bike lockers, any kind of bike usage
18 that would go on, the ability for -- like, on the
19 Hiawatha line for bikes to be able to go on the LRT.
20 So that's -- that is one issue.

21 And the fourth is -- is history. I'm kind of
22 an amateur historian of the Cedar Lake Park area, and
23 there is a lot of history in that area between the --
24 north of the Cedar Lake Parkway and I-394. That's
25 where the Minneapolis and St. Louis rail line --

1 railway had their yards and facilities. And I think
2 wherever there is a stop, whether it be at 21st and
3 Uptown or Penn Avenue, that the history of the area, I
4 think it would be great to be able to see some of that
5 history illustrated at those stops.

6 So that's all. Thank you.

7 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Thank you very
8 much.

9 Bob Day.

10 MR. DAY: Mr. Chair, I'll pass on my
11 comments.

12 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: All right.
13 Thank you.

14 David Greene.

15 MR. GREENE: Thank you, Mr. Chair and
16 members. My name is David Greene. I live at 2724
17 Emerson Avenue South, in The Wedge, and for more than a
18 half a decade I've led transit campaigns with ISAIHAH,
19 an organization of a hundred churches and congregations
20 dedicated to racial and economic justice in Minnesota.
21 One of the things we did was help secure the local
22 sales tax that's going to fund the large portion of
23 this line.

24 I live in Uptown and I'm tired of being cut
25 off from north Minneapolis. That's where my dad grew

1 up, and I have roots there. That's why I support the
2 3A Kenilworth route for Southwest LRT, and so does
3 ISAIAH.

4 There are all sorts of technical reasons to
5 prefer the 3A alignment, including cost, engineering,
6 logistics and ridership, but I want to focus on people.
7 Who's this line going to serve? It's going to serve
8 suburban commuters, and it should. It's going to serve
9 downtown Minneapolis, and it should. But let's think
10 about our transportation history for a moment. Over
11 the years we've constructed freeways and other barriers
12 that have led to a reality where a person living in
13 north Minneapolis does not have a viable transit option
14 to get to a job in the southwest suburbs. That's a
15 whole lot of people cut off from a whole lot of
16 opportunity. The 3A alignment restores that link, and
17 with connecting bus service will be a vital artery for
18 the whole north side. 3A is also a link for people in
19 Minneapolis and the suburbs to visit north Minneapolis
20 and connect to the people and places there. The
21 discussion around this project has made it plain to me
22 how much more we need to be connected to each other so
23 we can start throwing away all of the assumptions we
24 make about the city, the suburbs, the neighborhoods,
25 and the people who live there.

1 This is a racial justice issue. If we're
2 going to spend a billion dollars on this project, we
3 should get significantly improved transit service for
4 those who need it the most. 3C and 3C2 do not have all
5 of the stations that connect north Minneapolis. 3A
6 provides those links. If we choose to spend
7 \$500 million more on a 3C route to serve an area of
8 Minneapolis already served by the best transit network
9 in the state and we keep people in north Minneapolis
10 cut off from schools and jobs, what are we saying? We
11 want to say we're going to spend \$500 million to keep
12 transportation inequity in place? Shame on us if we
13 do. If we don't route along 3A, it's not
14 transportation, it's amputation. And what of that \$500
15 million dollars? That's funding for another commuter
16 rail line at least, maybe two, not to mention
17 streetcars and an enhanced bus service. This is a
18 decision that affects the entire Twin Cities metro
19 area.

20 Furthermore, we must keep the Penn, Van White
21 and Royalston stations going forward as these are the
22 opportunity links for north Minneapolis. 3A makes our
23 community more healthy. Thank you all for your work on
24 this project.

25 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Thank you very

1 much.

2 Next is Cameron Slick.

3 MR. SLICK: Good day, Commissioners of the
4 Hennepin County Regional Rail Authority. My name is
5 Cameron Slick. I am an avid bus rider, and I live at
6 2312 Lyndale Avenue South, and I wanted to start with
7 that choosing alignment 3A will be setting a terrible
8 precedent for the Twin Cities light rail program. The
9 county would prefer to build transitways and railroad
10 corridor through low-density communities instead of
11 serving denser neighborhoods that are conducive to
12 transit-oriented development is a terrible mistake.
13 Now, it is understandable, a little, from a cost
14 perspective because railroad corridors typically are
15 cheaper to build light rail in. At the same time, they
16 usually are not by very dense pieces of -- of
17 neighborhoods. And I just want to let you know that
18 this is a bad precedent for the next line, the Bottino
19 Line, to which there are three possible light rail
20 alternatives, two of which involve using a railroad
21 corridor that would also have far less service for
22 people in north Minneapolis.

23 And I also feel that there is a great
24 inequity being shown to the city of Minneapolis here on
25 the Policy Advisory Committee. There are only two

1 elected officials from the city of Minneapolis. I feel
2 the county has bent over backwards to serve the third
3 ring suburbs of Minnetonka and Eden Prairie and their
4 business parks. Such an act was not done for
5 Minneapolis and one of its largest business centers and
6 community centers, Uptown and Eat Street. I ask of you
7 trying -- I'm sorry.

8 I'll just finish that north Minneapolis is
9 not going to be served by 3A because the stations of
10 Penn Avenue and Van White Boulevard will get engineered
11 out. Now, you can always do in-fill stations when
12 there may be some speculative development there 20 or
13 30 years out. The Bottino corridor, if we're lucky,
14 will serve north Minneapolis. Thanks.

15 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Thank you very
16 much.

17 Next is Tim Springer. Welcome to the Rail
18 Authority, Mr. Springer.

19 MR. SPRINGER: Thank you.

20 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: You're dressed
21 for the weather out there.

22 MR. SPRINGER: Dressed for biking.

23 Good afternoon, Chairman McLaughlin and
24 Commissioners. My name is Tim Springer. I'm executive
25 director for the Midtown Greenway Coalition. Our

1 address is 2834 10th Avenue South, Greenway Level,
2 Suite 2 in Minneapolis. We're a grassroots nonprofit
3 with a mission of empowering communities to develop,
4 improve, protect and enjoy the Midtown Greenway as a
5 green urban pathway to improve people's lives.

6 The Southwest LRT 3A alignment as recommended
7 by the Southwest Corridor PAC is consistent with the
8 Midtown Greenway Coalition's position. The Midtown
9 Greenway Coalition is atypical from most -- as compared
10 to most trails organizations across the country in that
11 we agree that there should be transit trains operating
12 alongside the trails in the Midtown Greenway. We have
13 long advocated for what we call the Network Alignment,
14 which includes trains coming up from Eden Prairie to
15 downtown through the Southwest Corridor and from the
16 mall and the airport through the Hiawatha line, and the
17 Midtown Greenway cutting across the middle of
18 Minneapolis to connect those two important lines, being
19 an important system altogether. The Network Alignment
20 would serve all of the neighborhoods along the Midtown
21 Greenway/Lake Street Corridor from the western border
22 of Minneapolis east to Hiawatha, including the
23 transit-dependent communities of Phillips.

24 The city of Minneapolis has also adopted a
25 number of land use plans that anticipate the Midtown

1 Greenway/Lake Street Corridor as being served by rail
2 transit, and is already planning ahead for this
3 eventuality. The Midtown Greenway Coalition does also
4 recommend that transit planners work with stakeholders
5 along the Kenilworth Corridor to plan and secure
6 funding for adequate mitigation measures, especially
7 between Lake Street and Franklin Avenue.

8 Thank you very much for hearing our testimony
9 today and for your long-time support of the Midtown
10 Greenway, what has become Minnesota's busiest bikeway.

11 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Thank you very
12 much.

13 Next is Thatcher Imboden. There he is.

14 MR. IMBODEN: Thank you, Commissioners.

15 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Welcome.

16 MR. IMBODEN: Thanks. My name is Thatcher
17 Imboden. I live in south Minneapolis, grew up in
18 Uptown, am president of the Uptown Association and
19 have -- and I work for a commercial real estate firm
20 located in Uptown and some other various activities. I
21 started going to meetings on the Southwest Transitway
22 many years ago, not in any official capacity on
23 those organizations -- or on the PAC or the CAC, but I
24 was interested and wanted to see what was going on and
25 try to understand the impacts and opportunities.

1 There's a couple things that have been said
2 over the course of the last number of months about
3 transit in Uptown that I wanted to just clarify and
4 maybe elaborate on. The Uptown area is a small city.
5 Uptown within one mile of Hennepin and Lake has over
6 30,000 residents. When you take the 3C areas, when you
7 talk about Eat Street and Uptown and Lyn-Lake, we have
8 more population, more people living, than St. Louis
9 Park, than Hopkins, and than Minnetonka. So, I mean,
10 this is not just a small community. This is a regional
11 location. We have some -- we have a very large
12 business district. We have restaurants that people
13 come from. We have the lakes that people come and
14 recreate at. We have bars, we have great neighborhoods
15 to live in, so we have -- we have some housing that's
16 available--we'd encourage people to come over--and we
17 have great shopping. These are all places that people
18 are coming to.

19 And there's some challenges with that. Like
20 all cities that have major destinations, we have
21 traffic problems. We have traffic problems that affect
22 both people who are driving, that are biking, that are
23 taking the bus. For instance, I just took the bus here
24 from where the west Lake station area is down here, and
25 it took me 35 minutes; that's -- well, with some

1 walking time. That was pretty crazy.

2 We have parking issues. Uptown has a very
3 substantial problem between the businesses and the
4 residents because of the great amount of people who are
5 coming to the Uptown area. And there's perception and,
6 to some degree, a real issue of having inadequate
7 parking facilities.

8 So when we talk about the Southwest Light
9 Rail project, we're talking about an opportunity to
10 help us deal with some of these local issues because
11 we're a regional destination and an origin, and so the
12 fact that we're a regional place is creating some of
13 these issues, and so the ability of Hennepin County to
14 help us with that would be greatly appreciated.

15 During the process we had some issues with
16 the ridership forecasts. This is not a minor issue.
17 During the alternatives analysis, there were a lot of
18 red flags that were raised by myself and some others,
19 specifically about the -- the rider forecasting for
20 station boardings in the Uptown area, Uptown and
21 Lyn-Lake and the Eat Street stations. For example,
22 back then when the -- in the alternatives analysis,
23 they identified how many people would walk to the
24 stations. In Uptown, 250 people a day would walk to
25 the Uptown station to get on. You go out to the

1 suburbs, and there would be way more people walking to
2 the stations than Uptown. The only -- the stations on
3 the entire line that had fewer people walking to the
4 station was City West, Golden Triangle, Southwest Metro
5 Transit and Mitchell. But all the ones in St. Louis
6 Park, all the ones in Hopkins, and many of them out
7 further west actually had a lot more people walking to
8 them, so that just raised some fundamental questions
9 about the study.

10 Needless to say, we were told and promised
11 that they were going to continue to look into these
12 things during this next process, during the DEIS
13 process. Unfortunately, there are still red flags and
14 we still haven't gotten answers. Very briefly--and I'm
15 just trying to elaborate that there's some issues--
16 there's a thousand people projected to board a day at
17 21st Street Station and Kenwood; in Uptown, 1100. It
18 raises some questions. Also, in the alternatives
19 analysis, they had 1800 more people boarding between
20 Uptown and Fourth Street on the 3C alignment, but if
21 you go back to today's thing -- or I should say, if you
22 look at the alternatives analysis versus the current
23 study, there were 1800 more people boarding for that
24 same segment if you try to balance it. And so, again,
25 it's why did those things change? We don't know. And

1 so I'm just raising these because there's been comments
2 since then that the Uptown transit market is saturated.
3 That was some of the justification, it seemed, to --
4 that was used to suggest that the Uptown area's
5 ridership numbers weren't very high, that our market
6 was saturated. That poses a very big problem for us in
7 Uptown because if we want to have improvements in the
8 future -- and I'll really be quick here. If we want to
9 have improvements -- 'cause 3A is going to be selected,
10 I know it, we all know it. When you have the two equal
11 riderships and \$600 million difference, it's a
12 no-brainer to pick 3A. However, we need to look at how
13 are we going to improve transit for this very regional
14 destination. And it's not just an east/west
15 connection. We're talking about north/south between
16 downtown and Uptown and Lyn-Lake and Nicollet and Lake,
17 and so I urge you guys not to forget about the regional
18 significance of our communities and will work with us
19 and the city of Minneapolis and try to improve our
20 transportation. Thank you.

21 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Thank you very
22 much. Thank you.

23 Next is Vicki Moore. Welcome.

24 MS. MOORE: Thank you so much for this
25 opportunity. I am Vicki Moore. I live in the Harrison

1 neighborhood, and I have been on the citizen advisory
2 committee. I really want to thank the board for having
3 an open and objective process, and I very much want to
4 thank the staff. This has been an extraordinarily
5 educational experience for me. I know much more about
6 light rail than I thought I ever would know about light
7 rail. And one of the things that the staff did that
8 was extremely helpful to me is that they made the
9 information available. They got the information up
10 online really fast when it was there, they took the
11 time to explain what it meant to someone like myself,
12 who I know nothing about engineering, and it gave me
13 the opportunity to share this information with my
14 neighbors so that they could look at it in their homes,
15 in their communities, in their groups, and have a
16 better understanding about what -- what this was about.

17 One line cannot be all things to all people.
18 I mean, the one thing that I really have come to
19 understand is that there is a tremendous interest in
20 transit in this area, and I hope that this is a jumping
21 off point for a regional network. Of course, I do
22 support the Kenilworth alignment. I am a Harrison
23 resident. I'm also a -- you know, I'm also a resident
24 of the city of Minneapolis. And what's really
25 important to me is that we make a start, that we have

1 something that's viable, something that will meet the
2 federal requirements and that we don't say this is the
3 end here; that this is the beginning, that we're going
4 to get some sort of like LRT, BRT, you know, light
5 rail, buses, whatever, but we're going to have better
6 transit opportunities.

7 I wish that Art was still here, 'cause we've
8 had some really spirited discussions over the last
9 year. My house is not in the impound lot. I will say
10 that 19 years ago there wasn't a Second Avenue North;
11 it was a mud street. Someone had left a pile of, like,
12 scrap metal. There was a front-end loader, tow trucks
13 ran wild all over the place. So we came from some very
14 humble beginnings in term of corralling the tow trucks,
15 getting Second Avenue North paved, you know,
16 galvanizing our community and realizing that we have a
17 community and we have 250 acres of undeveloped land.
18 I'm very much supportive of transit-oriented
19 development. I think we provide an excellent
20 opportunity in that area, so I hope you support 3A for
21 a variety of reasons, and I hope that this kind of open
22 process continues, so that we will have a really good
23 network in our area.

24 One evening when I was going off to the CAC
25 meeting, one of my neighbors, and I would say the

1 garage guys who live in my alley, were gathered around
2 at my neighbor's car; you know, they were putting her
3 car back together basically with staples and string and
4 duct tape because she needed to get up to get to work
5 in the southwest part of our area the next morning.
6 I've been in that position. You know, I wished that
7 I'd had transit. I wished that I didn't have to
8 walk -- you know, take three different buses to get my
9 son to daycare, to get myself to work. That was many
10 decades ago. So I really applaud the efforts that
11 we're making in terms of having really good transit for
12 all of our citizens.

13 So thank you and thank you to the staff.
14 Again, I'm going to keep learning about LRT.

15 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Thank you very
16 much.

17 Rick Dorsey. Rick Dorsey? Here he comes.
18 Got it. Take your time.

19 Mr. Dorsey, welcome.

20 MR. DORSEY: Good evening, Commissioners.
21 Thank you for having me -- letting me speak. I'm here
22 tonight really to -- I appreciate all the efforts
23 that's done by everybody in getting to this point, but
24 what I'm really here to do is to suggest another option
25 in that you don't have to look at the options you're

1 looking at tonight, and that's something maybe has been
2 foregone. And the reason for wanting to do that is --
3 it stems from wanting to put together the best
4 long-term network and looking at it from a visionary
5 standpoint, not just this one particular line.

6 I've been looking at more than -- looking at
7 the whole system, what you want to be doing is creating
8 mobility for the whole community, not just Minneapolis,
9 not just Minnetonka, wherever. You want to create
10 mobility for everything.

11 If you look at what's worked in the past, we
12 have the best model that there is, and that's the
13 highway system. Why are those big roads built the way
14 they are? They didn't start that small. But they're
15 built because of demand. They're built by growth,
16 they're built by congestion, reasons of congestion, and
17 because of that they've grown to where they are today.
18 And that's where -- the reason why they're there is
19 because they bring people to where they have to get to.
20 And that's where the problems are, that's where the
21 congestion is, and that's the first concern that was to
22 be looked at with the idea of light rail; the primary
23 issue was to deal with some of the congestion issues.

24 And where the money is going to come from to
25 pay for it is by the people out there being convinced

1 that we're going to solve our congestion problem. Yes,
2 there are a lot of other issues there, but when you
3 look at -- look at what we have, this is something
4 that's going to be a long-term -- placed into -- or put
5 into place for a long term and can't be changed. We're
6 looking at billions of dollars between the systems that
7 are being proposed, the different lines. Five to
8 \$6 billion is what we're looking at. That's a lot of
9 money. On an annual basis, we're looking at combining
10 all the losses for all the different lines of probably
11 somewhere 80 to 100 million dollars annually. That's
12 a lot of money. That's based on just taking what we
13 know about the Hiawatha and the projection for the --
14 for the Southwest Corridor.

15 I'm proposing looking at something else, and
16 that's to connect up to what we already have in place
17 and build off of it, perhaps taking that Hiawatha line,
18 coming across to Eden Prairie from the east and going
19 across, paralleling 494, be it on it or parallel to it,
20 then moving around to Ridgedale area and coming in 394,
21 creating a loop. You're still focusing on the major
22 corridors being the downtown, you're tying into it, the
23 airport areas, you're tying into it, the areas around
24 the mega mall, Southdale, Eden Prairie mall, all areas
25 where people want to go and need to get to, not just

1 during rush hours but during the weekends, at nights,
2 times when they'll be using those modes of
3 transportation. There's lots of ways that this can be
4 funded in terms of public and private opportunities if
5 you connect those dots, because those are the
6 businesses that are out there and they want the people
7 coming to them. So to create new corridors where we're
8 competing with the regional goal of trying to build
9 regional centers and -- and use -- utilize our
10 infrastructure to the maximum and to the best of our
11 capacity would be best suited by trying to follow
12 what's already there and why it's there.

13 I guess my time is up, but I'd be more than
14 happy to come back in a work session and talk with you.
15 And I hope that you recognize that you do have an
16 option tonight as well, and that's to not vote for any
17 of the options and to look for more time to really look
18 at perhaps out of the box that we've been looking at at
19 this point in time and look at the public and private
20 opportunities that are there that will potentially save
21 that 80 to 100 million dollars a year annually that I
22 know we can't afford. Thank you.

23 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Thank you very
24 much.

25 Steve Haggar or Hager (phonetic), I'm not

1 sure which. Welcome.

2 MR. HAGGAR: How are you doing today?

3 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Okay. How about
4 you?

5 MR. HAGGAR: I'm doing real good.

6 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Okay.

7 MR. HAGGAR: Okay. My name is Steve
8 Hagggar. I grew up in St. Louis Park, Minnesota. I
9 have a lot of friends who live in north Minneapolis.
10 There's a term I'd like to define for you today. That
11 term is racial justice. Racial justice is the
12 proactive reinforcement of policies, practices,
13 attitudes and actions that produce equitable power,
14 opportunities, treatment, impacts and outcomes for all.
15 Equitable impacts and outcomes across race are the key
16 indicators of racial justice.

17 When I look at the 3A and 3C proposals, I
18 think about people and opportunities. I support the
19 Kenilworth 3A alignment because I believe this route
20 would do a lot along the lines of racial justice.
21 Thank you.

22 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Thank you very
23 much.

24 Steve Faber. Welcome to the Rail Authority.

25 MR. FABER: Thank you, Commissioners.

1 I'm Steve Faber. I own a business in Bassett Creek
2 Valley, and I've been in the commercial real estate
3 business for the last 30 years. I think there have
4 been a number of points that have been brought up in
5 favor of the Kenilworth alignment, which I am. I just
6 want to touch on two things. One, I want you to know
7 that the Bassett Valley Creek Master Plan is not a pipe
8 dream. I mean, that will happen. Kenilworth alignment
9 is the catalyst for that. It's probably the least
10 developed land in the city of Minneapolis with the most
11 potential, so you'll get -- you'll get a bang for your
12 buck there by putting the Kenilworth alignment there.
13 There will be a significant development and density
14 that will happen there and -- and so that's point one.

15 Two, I've been involved for the last five
16 years. I'm on the ROC as it's affectionately known,
17 the Redevelopment Oversight Committee, which is those
18 neighborhoods Bryn Mahr and Harrison that are in that
19 area. This is a remarkable group of people that have
20 been dedicated for a lot of years longer than I have to
21 this -- to that neighborhood and this cause. I mean,
22 there have been people that have been -- you know, that
23 are sitting here in this audience that have been for 10
24 or 12 years kind of a groundswell neighborhood group
25 coming and saying this is what we want in the

1 neighborhood. What I can assure you is that they will
2 embrace what you're doing there. They've come to
3 realize that, you know, compromise is what's needed to
4 get from A to Z. They're willing to do that, and you
5 won't have any problems with that neighborhood should
6 you vote to pass the Kenilworth alignment. They will
7 work with you for the betterment of everybody. They
8 have -- For whatever reason, policy over the years has
9 kind of abandoned the near north, and I think it's time
10 that these folks have a win. Thank you.

11 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Thank you very
12 much.

13 Let me go back to Janet Weivoda. Janet
14 Weivoda?

15 (No response)

16 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: Is there any
17 other -- has anyone else signed up to speak, or is
18 there anyone else who would like to speak who has not
19 signed up? Anybody else? Second time here. Third
20 time, anybody else who wishes to testify?

21 (No response)

22 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: All right. Are
23 there any comments from board members before we close
24 the public hearing? We're going to have -- we have one
25 technicality here that we have to deal with, and that

1 is that the Resolution establishing this hearing said
2 it was going to be from 4 to 7 p.m. Commissioner
3 Dorfman has volunteered to remain until 7:00, along
4 with staff, to make sure that we don't miss anyone who
5 is trying to come at the tail end of this. We don't
6 want to violate the promise that we made. But -- and
7 anybody else is welcome to stay as well. But I
8 appreciate Commissioner Dorfman being willing to do
9 that.

10 But I want to thank everybody who
11 participated tonight. We've seen on television some
12 public hearings over the last three or four months on
13 other topics that have not been particularly orderly,
14 and I thought this was.

15 MR. RANDY JOHNSON: They call it a
16 townhall meeting.

17 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: This was very
18 orderly, very productive, I thought. And I think
19 people were very respectful of one another and one
20 another's opinions, so for that I thank you as Chair of
21 the Hennepin County Rail Authority, and I turn it back
22 to Commissioner Dorfman.

23 COMMISSIONER DORFMAN: I would just say
24 for the earlier public hearing, the most recent public
25 hearing that we had with Hopkins--and I'm kind of

1 looking at Kathie Doty--we also -- a number of people
2 who couldn't attend the public hearing sent in
3 comments, either email or others, and they became part
4 of the formal record, and I think we will continue to
5 do that if we -- you know, if people want to
6 communicate in some other way, we'll certainly add that
7 to the record. Okay.

8 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: And, again, the
9 schedule for consideration of the locally preferred
10 alternative by the Hennepin County Regional Railroad
11 Authority has this item on the agenda at our next Rail
12 Authority meeting on November the 3rd, which is a
13 Tuesday, at our regular time after the County Board
14 meeting.

15 Is there any other information or comments
16 anyone would like to make?

17 (No response)

18 COMMISSIONER McLAUGHLIN: All right. Then
19 I will recess this public hearing and hand the chair
20 position over to Commissioner Dorfman to see if anyone
21 else arrives between now and the appointed closing time
22 at 7 p.m. Thank you all very, very much.

23 COMMISSIONER DORFMAN: Thank you.

24 (No other comments were received and the
25 hearing closed at 7 p.m.)