

Items for Review for the CIDNA Annual Meeting

May 11th, 2011

The work by the CIDNA Transportation Committee involves staying abreast of what's happening at public meetings concerning the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT)'s contracted study

When public hearings conducted by the Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority (HCRRA) commenced representatives from our CIDNA board's transportation committee, as well as others from adjoining neighborhood associations participated in these meetings and public hearings. The transportation committee chair reported to the board the outcome of these public hearings meetings. The county concluded this process and selected the Kenilworth corridor as "the locally preferred" route.

Suggestions for mitigation of the Cedar Lake Parkway/Light Rail Crossing such as the study by the Charrette conducted by the Cedar Lake Park Association would be to construct a trench under Cedar Lake Parkway, which would be raised as an overpass. Suggestions from other sources such as CIDNA and the Calhoun Isles Association include a "cut and cover" tunnel in the narrower portion of the corridor between Calhoun Isles Condominiums and Cedar Lake Shores Town Homes.

There is concern about the impact that the proposed building of the West Calhoun Lake Street Station would have on the Kenilworth Trail, the residents and the neighborhood.

The Station Area Planning Document that includes the West Lake Street Station was circulated at the January meeting of the Board of Directors The following was adopted as resolutions by the CIDNA Board and forwarded as comments pertaining to the Station Area Planning Document:

Comment Note that north of the proposed station within 1/8 to 1/4 mile along and next to the Kenilworth Trail there are townhouses on both sides of the track as well as the Calhoun Isles high-rise building (constructed from previous grain elevator structures). This immediate area is close to the station and exists at a curved section of the trail and is at the narrowest part of the

Kenilworth trail (approximately 62 feet). In addition, the Cedar Lake Parkway crossing is very close to the north of this section.

As a result there exists a major concern with noise as well as vibration factors. It is anticipated that noise from necessary horns and/or bells as transit cars approach both the station from the north as well as transit cars travelling south towards the Cedar Lake Parkway crossing will create a constant irritation to the population in the adjoining residential area. It has been observed in the past that freight train noise in particular is amplified at higher elevations in the apartments of the Calhoun Isles high-rise.

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

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

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

Comment: Presently the freight train utilizes the Kenilworth trail and Station Area Planning has been conducted with the assumption that the freight train line will be moved and replaced with the light rail transit system.

It is imperative that the freight train be moved and that a tandem system of light rail and freight train system not be included in the Kenilworth Trail system. Such a complex system is untenable for many reasons one of which is the problem entailed with the narrow section of track just north of the West Lake Street Station. Additionally, rail traffic congestion at the station would be difficult with the need to have pedestrian approaches from various directions. Also, future plans to provide Greenway transportation that would couple pedestrian movement with the light rail system would be even more difficult than presently exists. This includes structural considerations as well

as safety considerations realizing that provision would be required for pedestrian traffic to cross the tracks.

Amanda Hall, Chair of the Station Area Planning Project for Hennepin County, announced that her recommendation to City Staff regarding the comprehensive land use plan will be postponed until after the DEIS is released (sometime in the fall of 2011). The delay in issuing the DEIS is attributable to the FTA's simultaneous review with the Interchange consideration as well as uncertainties about awarding money for the project.

SWLRT Stakeholders Group – The Stakeholders Group is comprised of members of the West Calhoun and CIDNA Neighborhood Associations and representatives of the business community from Calhoun Village and the Calhoun Commons Shopping Center. This group sponsored the Capstone Project reported upon at the Annual Meeting.

1. There is no clearly-demonstrated pedestrian access from the North.
2. There needs to be a seamless connection from the SW LRT and the proposed Midtown Greenway streetcar line.
3. It is unworkable for freight rail and light rail to share the Kenilworth corridor.

A joint resolution from the four neighborhood associations surrounding the Kenilworth route was also presented to the CIDNA board. Among other items it recommends no co-location of freight and LRT in the Kenilworth corridor. The Board voted to approve.

The Development Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)

The purpose of a DEIS is to provide a full and open evaluation of the potential environmental impacts of the proposed Southwest LRT line to ensure that decision-makers and the public are aware of the impacts and of reasonable alternatives to avoid or minimize adverse consequences prior to implementing the transit line.

During the DEIS, the public is invited to review and comment on the elements, which include the following:

- **Identify and explain the purpose and need for improved transit to serve the area**
- **Develop and describe the alternatives for the proposed action being considered**
- **Identify the environmental and community effects of the three LRT alternatives and measures to avoid, minimize or mitigate adverse impacts of their implementation**

It is to be noted that The Southwest LRT line will connect to other rail lines (Hiawatha, Central, Northstar) and high-frequency bus routes in downtown Minneapolis, providing access to the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis-St. Paul Airport, Mall of America, the State Capitol, and downtown St. Paul. The Southwest LRT line will serve the Intermodal Station in downtown Minneapolis, where Hiawatha, Central, and Northstar lines will converge.

Depending upon the route selected, there will be an estimated 24,000 to 30,000 rides per day by year 2030, which is comparable to current ridership on the Hiawatha LRT line.

At this time, the Southwest LRT is projected to open in 2017, though project schedule depends on securing federal and local funds. Capital Costs in 2015 dollars are estimated at: \$865 million - \$1.4 billion.

Operating Costs in 2015 dollars: \$12 - 17 million.

Service will be same as on the Hiawatha LRT - every 7 1/2 minutes during peak times (6-9:45am and 3-7:15pm), every 10 minutes during midday and evenings, and every 30 minutes from 4-6am and 9pm-1am. Southwest LRT trains will run 20 hours per day, 7 days per week.

Who will pay for the construction of the Southwest LRT?

At this time, it is assumed that Southwest LRT funding for capital costs will come from four sources: the transit sales tax in the metro area (30 percent), the Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority (10 percent),

the State of Minnesota (10 percent), and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) (up to 50 percent).