

RESOLUTION

By Reich

Submission of comments to the Metropolitan Council on their recent studies related to the Southwest Light Rail Transit Project

Whereas, in 1998, the Twin Cities and Western Railroad and the Soo Railroad, doing business as the Canadian Pacific Railroad, signed a trackage rights agreements with Hennepin County requiring the railroads to move out of the Kenilworth Corridor when provided with a new connection to the MN&S corridor in St. Louis Park; and

Whereas, the City of Minneapolis resolution of support of the Southwest Light Rail Transit (LRT) Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) in 2010 makes it clear that City support for the Kenilworth LRT route is contingent upon implementation of freight rail relocation; and

Whereas, the City of Minneapolis accepted the Kenilworth light rail alignment in the spirit of regional cooperation in a joint effort to keep this important project advancing; and

Whereas, the City of Minneapolis reiterated its position on re-routing freight rail in comments responding to the 2012 Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Southwest LRT project; and

Whereas, in October 2013, the Southwest LRT Corridor Management Committee recommended that the Shallow Tunnels concept move forward for municipal consent; and

Whereas, in October 2013, Governor Mark Dayton subsequently requested that the Metropolitan Council conduct three additional studies; and

Whereas, the Metropolitan Council's independent consultant, TranSystems, has succeeded in putting forward a viable plan for re-routing freight rail via the Minneapolis, Northfield and Southern (MN&S) North corridor; and

Whereas, the TranSystems solution is a more cost effective solution than the previous Brunswick Alignments considered; and

Whereas, the TranSystems solution will have no detrimental impacts to railroad shippers or communities in rural Minnesota; and

Whereas, the TranSystems solution through the MN&S corridor route includes equal or better horizontal curves, vertical curves, and compensated grades when compared with the Kenilworth corridor; and

Whereas, the TranSystems solution includes cutting-edge technology that could make the MN&S the safest stretch of rail in the state; and

Whereas, the TranSystems solution meets American Railway Engineering and Maintenance Right-of-Way Association (AREMA) standards, which is the national standard for freight engineering and is the standard the Metropolitan Council called for in its published scope for the independent freight study; and

Whereas, relocating freight also provides a number of important benefits to St. Louis Park; and

Whereas, the TranSystems solution means there will no longer be any freight switching, sorting, or blocking operations within the St. Louis Park City limits, including the elimination of the Skunk Hollow wye and storage tracks east of Trunk Highway 100; and

Whereas, noise and vibration on the existing MN&S tracks will be reduced by replacing the rails with continuously-welded rail; and

Whereas, the TranSystems solution impacts St. Louis Park neighborhoods far less than the Brunswick concepts advanced by the Metropolitan Council in 2013; and

Whereas, the TranSystem solution eliminates at-grade freight crossings in St. Louis Park at Wooddale Avenue and Belt Line Boulevard, thus reducing vehicular traffic congestion and improving overall safety; and

Whereas, at the planned Wooddale, and Belt Line LRT and Lake Street stations, the elimination of freight rail will better set the stage for full-scale transit-oriented development by improving connectivity, especially by improving conditions for pedestrians accessing the stations; and

Whereas, the TranSystems solution utilizes the Golden Auto site, which was remediated with public dollars to facilitate freight re-location; and

Whereas, the TranSystems solution preserves the 21st Street Station whereas the Shallow Tunnel option does not; and

Whereas, the Shallow Tunnel option includes two shallow tunnels with a 1,000 foot gap that co-locates freight, light rail, and the Kenilworth Trail; and

Whereas, the Kenilworth Corridor runs through the Grand Rounds and the Minneapolis Chain of Lakes, both of which are considered regional and national assets by the City of Minneapolis, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, and the Metropolitan Council Regional Parks Plan; and

Whereas, the TranSystems solution protects the existing character of the Kenilworth Corridor; and

Whereas, the TranSystems solution is the best resolution to this regional dilemma, because it shares the benefits and burdens of LRT across jurisdictions while the Shallow Tunnel option does not;

Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved by the City Council of the City of Minneapolis that the City of Minneapolis supports a municipal consent package containing a physical design component in the preliminary design plans that relocates freight out of the Kenilworth Corridor to allow for LRT to operate at-grade adjacent to the Kenilworth Trail with grade separation at Cedar Lake Road; and

~~**Be It Further Resolved that if the Metropolitan Council submits preliminary design plans to the City of Minneapolis for approval pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, Section 473.3994 that includes a co-location option, including the shallow tunnel design, that the City of Minneapolis will disapprove the plans.**~~

Substitute Resolving Clause for #2 (by Reich):

Be It Further Resolved that the City of Minneapolis reaffirms the same position it has held since 2010, which is that the City of Minneapolis opposes co-location of both freight and LRT together in the Kenilworth Corridor, and this includes the Shallow Tunnels option.