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# SECTION 7

## **Public Hearing Transcripts**

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CENTRAL CORRIDOR  
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT  
PUBLIC HEARING

May 22, 2006  
6:30 P.M.

Radisson Hotel Metrodome  
615 Washington Avenue S.E.  
Minneapolis, MN 55414

1 Dennis Probst, Moderator  
Central Corridor Coordinating Committee Chair

2 Steve Morris, Project Manager  
3 Central Corridor Project

4 Kathryn DeSpiegelaere, Director  
5 Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority

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1 (Applause)

2 MR. PROBST: Bob Baker from the University of Minnesota  
3 and also Janet Morlock who preceded Bob on our group from the  
4 University of Minnesota. In addition, we have with us Mary Hill  
5 Smith who is currently the chair of the Metropolitan Council's  
6 Transportation Committee; Russ Susag, also a Met Council member  
7 and Transportation Committee member; Lynette Wittsack from the  
8 Met Council; and Ramsey County Commissioner Jim McDonough, I  
9 believe, is also with us this evening. So thank you all for  
10 being here.

11 Moving on here. The purpose of this meeting is a hearing to  
12 receive public comments, your comments, on the Draft  
13 Environmental Impact Statement that has been conducted for the  
14 corridor. It's an opportunity for the public to express its  
15 wishes for future transit services on the corridor and to  
16 identify issues that need to be addressed in future phases of  
17 project development.

18 In preparation for these hearings, Ramsey County Regional  
19 Rail Authority made presentations and answered questions at a  
20 series of community meetings including those sponsored by the  
21 Central Corridor Equity Coalition, St. Paul City Councilwoman  
22 Debbie Montgomery, and the St. Paul District Councils  
23 Collaborative.

24 Project staff has distributed 1500 postcards, 200 posters  
25 inviting citizens to these public hearings. Fliers were

1 translated into five languages and posted along the corridor.

2 In addition, staff members walked University Avenue to meet with  
3 residents and business owners, answering questions and inviting  
4 people to these hearings.

5 Staff members briefed the press on the status of the Central  
6 Corridor proposal and appeared on a Hmong language public  
7 affairs show on KFAI-FM. Advertisements were placed in the  
8 Pioneer Press, Star Tribune, and 15 other community and ethnic  
9 newspapers and news websites. The Rail Authority created an  
10 e-mail Listserv, sent regular e-mail updates to more than 100  
11 people who have subscribed to that service.

12 The agenda this evening will be brief. First we'll hear a  
13 short presentation on the project from Steve Morris who is the  
14 project manager for the Central Corridor Project and we will  
15 then open the hearing for your comments. I hope you signed in  
16 to speak when you came in and picked up a Citizens Guide to the  
17 project. If you did not and wish to provide comments, please  
18 sign up now at the sign-in table. I do have the list of people  
19 who have signed in before we started here and we'll be running  
20 down through that in the order in which people arrived and  
21 signed up.

22 So with that I'd like to introduce Steve Morris and he'll  
23 give you all some background on the project before we start the  
24 effort. One last housekeeping comment. Cell phones, if you  
25 haven't already, please either turn them off or put them on

1 silence if you would, please. Thank you.

2 MR. MORRIS: Thank you, Mr. Probst. I'd like to echo  
3 Denny's comments and then thank you all for coming tonight.  
4 I'll just spend a couple of minutes talking about the Central  
5 Corridor Project. We'll talk a bit about the study area, the  
6 process itself, the goals and objectives that were developed by  
7 the Coordinating Committee, and a bit about the process that  
8 narrowed down the alignments and modes that got us to the point  
9 where we are this evening.

10 The Central Corridor is generally described as that area  
11 between Downtown Minneapolis and Downtown St. Paul, generally  
12 bordered by Pierce Butler on the North and CP Rail on the south.  
13 As most of us know, it's kind of long served as the spine of the  
14 Twin Cities.

15 The agencies that have been involved in this work include  
16 the Federal Transit Administration, the Central Corridor  
17 Coordinating Committee, and the Ramsey County Regional Rail  
18 Authority along with their partner and agency in Hennepin  
19 County, the Cities of St. Paul and Minneapolis, the University  
20 of Minnesota, the Met Council, and the Minnesota Department of  
21 Transportation.

22 Public involvement has been an important part of the project  
23 since its inception. It started with scoping meetings about  
24 five years ago that involved open hearings and meetings talking  
25 about all the potential alignments and modes that should be

1 considered and then followed that with literally hundreds of  
2 meetings over the last several years with particular focus on  
3 residents near the corridor and businesses along the corridor.

4 The idea behind this project is to investigate alternatives  
5 and ways to improve mobility and capacity in the Twin Cities.  
6 We all know that we have increased our congestion and we plan to  
7 increase our population and we need to have a transportation  
8 system that will serve our needs now and into the future.

9 Project goals that were developed by the Coordinating  
10 Committee include economic opportunity and investment along the  
11 corridor and for the region as a whole and protection of  
12 communities and the environment of the Twin Cities and  
13 improvements to transportation and mobility.

14 The environmental study process is a federal process and  
15 starts with scoping; then moves to a Draft Environmental Impact  
16 Statement which really started here seriously in 2002, brought  
17 us to the point where we are today where the Federal Transit  
18 Administration has authorized release of this Draft  
19 Environmental Impact Statement document; and after public  
20 hearings the Coordinating Committee and the Metropolitan Council  
21 will select a locally-preferred alternative for future work. If  
22 a locally-preferred alternative is selected, it would enter into  
23 the public hearing and Final Environmental Impact Statement  
24 process leading to a decision on meeting all potential  
25 environmental impacts.

1           The options that remain on the table after this work are  
2 Light Rail Transit and Bus Rapid Transit. Light rail  
3 vehicles -- a couple of these pictures are from Hiawatha --  
4 generally operate on tracks with overhead electrical power with  
5 stations at varying intervals.

6           The alignment would mirror the Hiawatha Alignment in  
7 Downtown Minneapolis, then would operate through a tunnel here  
8 at the University of Minnesota and operate then down the center  
9 of University Avenue through Prospect Park in St. Paul, go  
10 behind the Capitol, have a station about a block from Regions  
11 Hospital, and then through Downtown St. Paul terminating at  
12 Union Depot.

13           The other option still on the table is Bus Rapid Transit  
14 which is an effort to provide many of the service quality  
15 features that Light Rail Transit has but do it with buses.  
16 There's some pictures of some vehicles that have been involved  
17 in that kind of effort around the country.

18           The Bus Rapid Transit Alignment has its own right-of-way on  
19 University Avenue much like light rail except at the University  
20 and both downtowns where it operates in mixed traffic. That has  
21 the effect of making it a much cheaper option to build, but it  
22 interferes with the ability to provide quick and convenient  
23 service as well.

24           The areas of potential impact that have to be considered are  
25 defined in the National Environmental Protection Act process and

1 they include social and land use impacts, displacements and  
2 adverse impacts on neighborhoods, potential benefits including  
3 mobility and station enhancements, impacts on parking and  
4 aesthetics, and safety and security issues.

5 Environmental impacts can run the whole gamut from soils,  
6 geology, topography, air quality, noise and vibration, water  
7 quality and floodplains and wetlands. Most of those are not an  
8 issue in a highly-built environment like the Central Corridor.

9 Economic impacts are most important, of course, from the  
10 ability to affect the local economy and to enhance opportunities  
11 for transit-oriented development and redevelopment along the  
12 corridor.

13 The transportation impacts include modifications to the  
14 existing roadway system and changes to the existing transit  
15 service and potential service quality and other travel time  
16 improvements for the passenger.

17 This chart is in the Citizens Guide that you received when  
18 you signed in and I won't talk about it other than to point out  
19 that the Central Corridor Coordinating Committee, after  
20 developing the goals and objectives, tried to quantify the  
21 impacts of the various alternatives against those goals and  
22 objectives and against the issues of the Draft Environmental  
23 Impact Statement.

24 Funding for the project would typically be one-half federal  
25 and one-half combination of state and local sources of funding.

1 The total project budget for Light Rail Transit is \$840 million  
2 assuming a 2008 opening. So that's probably not achievable,  
3 certainly not achievable today. The Bus Rapid Transit option is  
4 budgeted at \$241 million.

5 Federal Transit Administration will evaluate our selection  
6 based on their criteria and their measures of operating  
7 efficiency and cost-effectiveness, land use, and other factors  
8 as well as the local financial commitment and the capability of  
9 the local area to fund its share of the project.

10 The next steps would be the selection of the locally-  
11 preferred alternative, preliminary engineering which would take  
12 about two years and that would be the Final Environmental Impact  
13 Statement. Then there would be perhaps a year spent on final  
14 design. Construction could begin in 2008, the service beginning  
15 perhaps in 2012.

16 With that I'd like to turn it over to Denny and, again,  
17 welcome and we look forward to hearing from you.

18 MR. PROBST: Thank you, Steve. We are now ready to  
19 receive public testimony, but before we begin I'd like to  
20 recognize Commissioner McLaughlin from Hennepin County who's  
21 joined us who is also a member of the Coordinating Committee for  
22 the project. Thanks for being here, Peter.

23 This hearing is an opportunity to take testimony from the  
24 public. It is not a question-and-answer session. If you have  
25 questions and your reason for being here is to try to get those

1 questions answered, I would ask you to step back out. The  
2 tables will be staffed throughout the public hearing and the  
3 staff out there will do their best to answer any questions that  
4 you have regarding the project.

5 We would ask that you please respect the opinions of others  
6 and refrain from talking or clapping when people are speaking.  
7 We'd ask that you please identify yourself for the court  
8 reporter who is transcribing these hearings. Name and address  
9 would be appreciated. That way you can be contacted if there  
10 are any questions.

11 If you'd like to provide comment without speaking at the  
12 hearing, please see staff or one of these Citizens Guides if you  
13 don't already have one. Written testimony will be received  
14 until, I believe, end of business day on June 5th. Written  
15 testimony has the same weight as any oral testimony given in any  
16 of these public hearings.

17 I would also point out that we want to make sure that  
18 everyone understands that sending an e-mail to a staff member or  
19 a county commissioner or someone at the Met Council does not  
20 assure that that written commentary gets on the record. It's  
21 important that you either mail your comments to Mr. Morris at  
22 the Rail Authority or e-mail it to the address given in the book  
23 here so that it does get on the record of the project. All  
24 comments will be responded to as the EIS process continues. You  
25 can also phone in comment if you would prefer to do that.

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1           So if you do not get a chance or if you're not comfortable  
2 speaking this evening, you still have many other ways to provide  
3 commentary to the project.

4           We have two microphones up front here that are available for  
5 testimony. The project is not recording the testimony or taping  
6 anything. There's media here this evening and some private  
7 citizens who are doing that. The record of this hearing will be  
8 the transcript that the court reporter seated to my far left  
9 over here is taking; and I would ask that you move -- as we  
10 start to call names; I'm going to do several -- if you would  
11 start to move forward to the microphone and speak in the order  
12 in which you're called.

13           There will be a time limit in the interest of fairness  
14 tonight for everyone that's here and over the course of the next  
15 three public hearings. The time limit for comments will be two  
16 minutes. Alicia, who is sitting over to the left here as well,  
17 has two cards, and if you wouldn't mind standing up and showing  
18 them. She'll show you a card at 30 seconds when you have 30  
19 seconds left and then an additional card at two minutes which  
20 means that you need to stop and I will be asking the next  
21 speaker to begin if you have not managed to end your testimony  
22 by then.

23           We will hopefully do this very respectfully and I will  
24 acknowledge up front here if I butcher anyone's name I will  
25 apologize in advance right now for that, but we will begin here

1 momentarily with public comment.

2 We have two other guests that I wish to introduce. One is  
3 an additional Ramsey County Commissioner, Jan Parker, who is  
4 here in back and Fred Gates from Congresswoman Betty McCollum's  
5 office is also with us tonight. So thank you all for being  
6 here.

7 With that I'm going to start and I'll identify four people  
8 and if you would come up in the order in which you're introduced  
9 and we'll alternate microphones and you may begin offering your  
10 testimony.

11 The first speaker will be Arthur Erdman followed by Emily  
12 Cox, Fredda Scobey, and Terry Bock, please. Mr. Erdman.

13 MR. ERDMAN: Hi. I'm Art Erdman. I'm a faculty member  
14 in mechanical engineering at the University and I also chair the  
15 Capital & Campus Planning Committee. I fully support the Light  
16 Rail Transit that will be right outside these walls here. I  
17 think this is vital to the research, teaching, and the mission  
18 of outreach of the University of Minnesota to connect our East  
19 Bank and West Bank Campuses to Downtown Minneapolis, St. Paul,  
20 and to the airport.

21 Let me give you a quick three examples of how this would  
22 make it much easier for me recently. One month ago in this very  
23 room I held a conference that had 700 people that has increased  
24 people from a national audience coming here. One week later we  
25 were in the process of raising hopefully four to \$500,000 from

1 the medical industry and we brought in two members of the  
2 National Science Foundation, one from the FDA, and about ten  
3 companies coming in to campus. In both cases it would have been  
4 really nice to give them simple instructions to get here.

5 Every March we bring in 30 of the brightest students from  
6 around the country to be potential graduate students where we've  
7 offered them fellowships. It sure would have been nice not to  
8 spend \$1400 bringing them to campus, and we sure didn't show  
9 them how easy it was to get in and out of campus.

10 My research brings me to the VA, to HCMC. It also brings me  
11 to Children's Hospital in St. Paul. These are places that are  
12 difficult to get to and just a hassle to go to that light rail  
13 could get me there.

14 So in conclusion I'd like to say that light rail right  
15 outside campus here would make life easy and also a lot more  
16 efficient for thousands of faculty like myself, not to mention  
17 all the students and staff that have to come in to campus every  
18 day. Thank you very much.

19 MR. PROBST: Thank you. Emily.

20 MS. COX: My name is Emily Serafy Cox. I am one of the  
21 students that was mentioned. I am the undergraduate student  
22 president here at the University of Minnesota. I do have to say  
23 that our undergraduate student government has no formal position  
24 on the Central Corridor but has a long-standing commitment to  
25 public transportation.

1           Because it is so important to students, many, many students  
2           use public transportation every day as the U-Pass numbers  
3           exemplify. So I urge you to continue to keep the interests of  
4           students in mind as you move forward in these proceedings.  
5           Public transportation really is our lifeblood and I'm kind of  
6           scared of what I'm going to do when my U-Pass goes away when I  
7           graduate.

8           Our campus, as it was said, is going to be greatly affected  
9           by the Central Corridor line and I would like to really  
10          emphasize that I personally think that the tunnel idea is the  
11          best for our campus, specifically for students. Students ride  
12          bikes a lot and Washington Avenue is already extremely congested  
13          and dangerous for bicycling, but students still do it, of  
14          course. So having an aboveground LRT would affect the traffic  
15          on that corridor even more and would make it even more dangerous  
16          than it already is.

17          I also want to encourage everyone in this room and I will do  
18          so myself to encourage proper funding of this vital  
19          infrastructure in the future so that U-Pass prices can be kept  
20          down, so that other prices for using public transportation can  
21          be kept down, and our infrastructure can be maintained. I  
22          also -- have to stop. Thank you.

23                 MR. PROBST: Fredda.

24                 MS. SCOBAY: Hello. I'm Fredda Scobey, executive  
25                 director of Riverside Plaza Tenants Association and I'm here to

---

1 tell you that Riverside Plaza residents represent the greatest  
2 population density in the state -- approximately 4,000 people  
3 live there -- and connecting our population to the University  
4 Corridor and St. Paul with light rail will greatly increase  
5 access to employment and educational opportunities. Our  
6 population needs public transportation, uses public  
7 transportation, and we support Light Rail Transit in the  
8 University Corridor. Thank you.

9 MR. PROBST: Thank you. Mr. Bock.

10 MR. BOCK: Good evening. I'm Terry Bock. I'm  
11 associate vice president for Health Sciences representing the  
12 University of Minnesota's Academic Health Center, and the  
13 University's Academic Health Center supports the development of  
14 Light Rail Transit in the Central Corridor.

15 Just a brief word about the Academic Health Center. We are  
16 the University's six health professional schools: Dentistry,  
17 medicine, nursing, pharmacy, public health, and veterinary  
18 medicine. We have 1400 faculty and 3,000 staff and we educate  
19 6200 students in 62 degree programs and conduct \$300 million in  
20 sponsored health research annually.

21 Our faculty, staff, and students face the same difficult  
22 transportation, parking, and access issues as others at the  
23 University, but we have some particular challenges and they come  
24 because we're so spread out and because we have so many vital  
25 connections with the community.

1           While the four-block area south of Washington Avenue between  
2 Church and Harvard Streets houses our principal facilities, we  
3 also have major education, research, and clinical facilities on  
4 the Fairview Riverside Campus, the West Bank, the Research Park  
5 near the new stadium, and the St. Paul Campus; and we have  
6 faculty, staff, and students who have to travel between these  
7 sites often several times a day for education, research, and  
8 patient care.

9           Furthermore, our faculty, staff, and students have to travel  
10 to the Hennepin County Medical Center, Regions and other St.  
11 Paul hospitals, the Veterans Medical Center and scores of other  
12 clinical sites throughout the Twin Cities daily. So LRT Central  
13 Corridor is central and key to our operation.

14           And what really makes us unique at the University is that we  
15 see over 400,000 patients in our clinics annually. We are a  
16 major health care provider not only in the Twin Cities but in  
17 the state and providing health care is critical to our mission  
18 and access to our clinics is a major frustration and problem for  
19 our patients and visitors.

20           MR. PROBST: Thank you. The next four speakers are  
21 Russ Williams, Gregor Pinney -- I hope I'm pronouncing that  
22 correctly -- Jo Radzwill, and Andrew Wambach. As you're coming  
23 up I'd also like to introduce Councilmember Ken Borden who has  
24 joined us who is also a member of the Coordinating Committee for  
25 the project. Mr. Williams. (Pause) Not here. Gregor Pinney.

---

1 Please, sir.

2 MR. PINNEY: My name is Gregor Pinney and I'm from  
3 Minneapolis and for six years I was a member of Metro Transit's  
4 Advisory Committee, disbanded last year. I thank the committee  
5 for doing an environmental impact on two possible transit  
6 structures, Light Rail and Bus Rapid Transit, for the Central  
7 Corridor.

8 Light rail certainly looks preferable, but as good as it  
9 looks it cannot, in my opinion, be called first class because  
10 for most of its journey it would travel on the surface and that  
11 means that it would be too slow to meet the ultimate needs of  
12 this corridor as well as the whole metropolitan area. It would  
13 interfere with local traffic and even pedestrians trying to  
14 cross the street. It would have a negative impact on daily life  
15 in the local communities and it would limit the number of trains  
16 that you could put on the track just as the Hiawatha's  
17 grade-level structure limits it.

18 It's disappointing you didn't go further and examine the  
19 possibility of a truly first-class line that would run mostly  
20 overhead and in tunnels underground in the downtown areas as  
21 well as the University. That kind of line would move a lot of  
22 people and it would be attractive to a lot of people and every  
23 station along University Avenue could be as good as the Lake  
24 Street Station in Minneapolis which is the best on the Hiawatha  
25 line. A second deck could be added if the day comes, as it

1 surely will, when we believe that we need an express line  
2 between the two cities.

3 How much would this cost? Well, a lot more money, much more  
4 than the 800 million that you have proposed. We don't know how  
5 much and that's what we need is the facts. It should be laid  
6 out so we can decide whether we want to wait until we can round  
7 up that kind of money to build a first-class line or if we  
8 don't, we ought to know how much it's going to cost to tear up  
9 what we have now if 20 years from now we decide that we need an  
10 above- and belowground light rail line. Thank you.

11 MR. PROBST: Thank you. Jo.

12 MS. RADZWILL: My name is Jo Radzwill. I'm speaking as  
13 a private citizen although I also happen to be the chair of the  
14 Marcy-Holmes Neighborhood Association Land Use Committee. The  
15 status quo is simply not acceptable, and I support the LRT.  
16 There are many environmental issues. It would cut down the air  
17 pollution and the depletion of fossil fuels. The success of the  
18 Hiawatha Light Rail indicates that it would decrease congestion  
19 and that many people that do not ride buses will most likely  
20 ride the light rail.

21 Our neighborhood, even though we're on the west side of the  
22 University, has many problems with parking and traffic. I'm not  
23 sure that the light rail will specifically speak to that issue,  
24 but it certainly will help now with the passage of the Gopher  
25 stadium. It will be very essential to have that.

---

1           The goal is to get people to use light rail instead of their  
2 cars and in order to do that we need to have -- also, one of the  
3 considerations needs to be that there needs to be good  
4 connecting routes from the neighborhoods to the light rail line.  
5 All neighborhoods have to have really good access. Thank you.

6           MR. PROBST: Thank you. Les Everett.

7           MR. EVERETT: Hello. My name's Leslie Everett. I work  
8 at the University of Minnesota. I'm a graduate of the  
9 University of Minnesota. I've spent some time here. I support  
10 light rail as the high-volume and rapid backbone of a transit  
11 system and I've had experience in other cities with these type  
12 of systems and I highly support it, but I think we should use  
13 this golden opportunity to restore pedestrian safety and air  
14 quality to the University of Minnesota Campus by diverting  
15 through-traffic around campus.

16           The Coffman Union and the medical school and the mall are  
17 separated by four lanes of high-volume traffic, a very poor  
18 design for a major campus. One lane for local traffic and one  
19 for light rail in each direction, I believe, is the appropriate  
20 solution. Let's please develop plans for rerouting that  
21 through-traffic around campus, plans that all of us can see and  
22 review. Thank you very much.

23           MR. PROBST: Thank you. Now, the next two speakers are  
24 Kathleen O'Brien and Terry Olsen, please.

25           MS. O'BRIEN: Good evening. My name is Kathleen

1 O'Brien, vice president for University Services here at the  
2 University of Minnesota. My remarks are on behalf of the  
3 administration of the University.

4 The University of Minnesota supports the development of  
5 Light Rail Transit in the Central Corridor. A highly effective  
6 transit system is essential to our campus. The University has  
7 invested heavily to enhance service and accessibility. Already  
8 66 percent of the trips to and from our campus are made via  
9 something other than a single-occupancy vehicle. Over 18,000  
10 students and employees use transit as their primary means of  
11 commuting daily.

12 About one-fourth of the projected ridership on the Central  
13 Corridor will be to or from the University of Minnesota. The  
14 Central Corridor will pass through a campus that attracts 80,000  
15 people on a typical day. Washington Avenue is a hub for  
16 University Residence Halls, Coffman Memorial Union, the graduate  
17 and professional schools, the Institute of Technology,  
18 University libraries, and scores of heavily used classrooms. It  
19 is a 24/7 environment. The University's Academic Health Center,  
20 hospital, and major new biomedical research facilities are on  
21 the corridor. Over 400,000 people each year visit the  
22 outpatient health clinics alone.

23 On Washington Avenue rush hour happens ten times a day, at  
24 the beginning of every class period. Washington Avenue is one  
25 of the densest, liveliest pedestrian environments of any street

---

1 in Minnesota. The Draft EIS provides for a tunnel to separate  
2 light rail from the bus, out of pedestrian and bicycle traffic.  
3 This is essential to optimizing the operation of the Central  
4 Corridor line, thus ensuring optimal and predictable transit  
5 times along the avenue.

6 In addition, the proposed tunnel will promote the safety of  
7 riders and nonriders alike and the functionality of the  
8 University of Minnesota Campus. Thank you.

9 MR. PROBST: Thank you. Terry.

10 MS. OLSEN: Good evening. My name is Terry Olsen. I'm  
11 at 542 Pelham Boulevard. I live near Raymond and University,  
12 and I work for TKDA Architects & Engineers in Downtown St. Paul.  
13 I frequently ride the 50 and I'm an advocate for the  
14 environment. LRT eliminates or I should say emits less air  
15 pollution than single-occupant vehicles and even less than BRT.  
16 I see light rail enhancing my communities.

17 I'm surprised that BRT is still being considered as it is  
18 expected to reach maximum capacity in 2017 or sooner as the cost  
19 of gas skyrockets. I am personally looking forward to -- no.  
20 I'm excited to become one of light rail riders to climb aboard.  
21 Thank you.

22 MR. PROBST: Thank you. The next speakers are Warren  
23 Anderson and Barb Smith, please.

24 MR. ANDERSON: Hello. I'm Warren Anderson from St.  
25 Paul. I support mass transit in the corridor, I support mass

1 transit in both of our cities, and I believe that \$800 million  
2 for 11 miles of light rail is not economically sound. What I  
3 would suggest is that we look again at a different mode,  
4 Personal Rapid Transit, where you can get 70 to 80 miles of  
5 transportation for the same 800 million.

6 Personal Rapid Transit or PRT is an elevated monorail system  
7 with many three-person driverless electric vehicles. PRT  
8 provides nonstop no-wait 30-mile-per-hour service. This is your  
9 service, you know, straight from Downtown St. Paul all the way  
10 to Downtown Minneapolis either by yourself or with two others.  
11 Straight. No stopping.

12 Vehicles travel aboveground on 16-foot elevated guideways.  
13 Stations are located near building entrances every half-mile.  
14 Many stations are situated along the route to minimize walking  
15 once the trip ends. Vehicles travel nonstop to their  
16 destination along the main guideway at 30 miles per hour,  
17 speeding at twice the errant speed of autos or buses on  
18 congested streets below. Stations are not located on the main  
19 guideway. Instead stations are located on a separate station  
20 guideway that branches off from the main guideway, thus the  
21 stations are described as off-line meaning not on the main line.  
22 Passengers travel alone or with people of their choosing. They  
23 travel 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year on  
24 PRT. I think we need to start looking again at Personal Rapid  
25 Transit. Thank you.

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1 MR. PROBST: Thank you, Mr. Anderson. Barb.

2 MS. SMITH: Good evening. I'm Barb Smith. I'm  
3 speaking impromptu in regard to the poor and underprivileged  
4 that live basically between Fairview and the Capitol, that  
5 University section. I've lived there 25 years, had to go  
6 between the two downtowns and transfer. Wow. We are crowded on  
7 16, but when I try 50 it's an underutilized system. How are we  
8 going to pay for this? How if it's underutilized? Please think  
9 about it. Thank you.

10 MR. PROBST: Thank you. The next speakers are Sharon  
11 Fischer, Keith Downey, and Jon Buggy, please.

12 MS. FISCHER: Good evening. My name is Sharon Fischer.  
13 I am the chair of the City of Lakes Chamber of Commerce. As an  
14 affiliate of the Minnesota Regional Chamber of Commerce, the  
15 City of Lakes Chamber is committed to addressing the needs and  
16 concerns of businesses in the City of Minneapolis and leading a  
17 focused effort to attract and retain talented, qualified workers  
18 and an advocate for upgrading workers' skills.

19 Now, that last statement may seem a bit out of context, but  
20 let me explain the other hat I wear. I am an employee at the  
21 University of St. Thomas in Downtown Minneapolis and  
22 transportation second only to education is the greatest impact  
23 to upward mobility of this state. I would venture to say that  
24 getting to and from work is more difficult right now than it is  
25 to get a college education.

1 Failure to invest in a comprehensive metro-wide transit  
2 system undercuts the state's ability to assert leadership  
3 against national competition. We strongly support the Light  
4 Rail Alternative for the Central Corridor.

5 I-94 is landlocked and will exceed capacity in 2020. Over  
6 one-third of the residents in the Central Corridor do not own a  
7 car. The electric-powered LRT cars are more environmentally  
8 friendly than any Bus Rapid Transit. One railcar can transport  
9 130 passengers. It takes 100 automobiles to move those same 130  
10 passengers, and also LRT will reduce air pollution in heavily  
11 trafficked areas and will serve as an environmental benefit to  
12 area businesses and residents.

13 And as an employee of the University of St. Thomas, which  
14 has campuses in both St. Paul and Minneapolis, it means that I  
15 can easily travel between the two campuses since my boss is in  
16 St. Paul. Our faculty, staff, and students who now depend upon  
17 the University shuttle buses or their own personal  
18 transportation vehicle when traveling between the two campuses  
19 could so easily use light rail to save time and eliminate the  
20 number of vehicles on the road and in Downtown Minneapolis.

21 I fully support the construction of Light Rail Transit on  
22 University Avenue both as a representative of the City of Lakes  
23 Chamber and as a member of the St. Paul and Minneapolis  
24 communities. Thank you.

25 MR. PROBST: Thank you. Keith.

1           MR. DOWNEY: Thank you very much. My name is Keith  
2 Downey and I am here officially as the chair of the Public  
3 Policy Committee for the Minneapolis Regional Chamber of  
4 Commerce and I represent over thousands of businesses here in  
5 the metro area.

6           I also unofficially stand before you as a member of the  
7 Southwest Transportation Corridor Policy Advisory Committee. We  
8 are on the very front end of your process and I understand what  
9 you have been going through here the past couple of years.

10          Unofficially I am with Virchow Krause & Company, a business  
11 located in Bloomington, and unofficially I come as a citizen who  
12 just attempted to drive into town from the south on 35W this  
13 evening.

14          Let me say that in all those capacities, official and  
15 unofficial, that I support strongly the construction of Light  
16 Rail Transit on University Avenue. Overall our chamber supports  
17 multimodal solutions to our regional transportation problems,  
18 those that are based on solid analysis looking at congestion  
19 relief; the economic, environmental, and community costs and  
20 benefits.

21          Passing the FTA's New Starts bar for new Light Rail Transit  
22 initiatives is very high and it's a rigorous process and Central  
23 Corridor will meet that rigor and pass those standards from what  
24 I have seen.

25          The Central Corridor LRT initiative is a major connective

1 for the Twin Cities and will stimulate growth and economic  
2 development. Improved transit along the Central Corridor will  
3 contribute to the future prosperity not only of the two  
4 downtowns, but the Midway area and other communities and  
5 businesses along the corridor, the greater Twin Cities region,  
6 and overall economic growth of the state.

7 Transit is not just about moving people from place to place  
8 any longer. It is now about strategically transporting people  
9 to fill business needs for employees and to foster new economic  
10 development around jobs, housing, and infrastructure. We are  
11 the last major metro area to implement an LRT line. We now have  
12 Hiawatha, Northstar coming on-line, and potentially the Central  
13 Corridor. We have the makings of a fully-integrated transit  
14 system in the next century. Let's capitalize on that. Thank  
15 you.

16 MR. PROBST: Thank you. Jon.

17 MR. BUGGY: Good evening. My name is Jon Buggy. I am  
18 the managing principal of Ellerbe Becket. We're an  
19 international architecture, engineering, design firm located in  
20 Downtown Minneapolis. I have come here speaking as a business  
21 owner in Downtown Minneapolis and also as an architect, and I'm  
22 also here to enthusiastically support LRT along the Central  
23 Corridor. Not BRT. LRT.

24 Livable communities are what the architecture community is  
25 all about in the Twin Cities. We've got a great Twin Cities

1 metropolitan area that will only become stronger as LRT happens  
2 in the Central Corridor. I believe firmly it will reinforce  
3 existing neighborhoods and development in many neighborhoods  
4 that will benefit from investment. It's good for our  
5 environment. Fewer cars we know is good for the environment.

6 My business depends upon workers being able to get to our  
7 offices in Downtown Minneapolis. Our employees use transit and  
8 light rail quite often. Even the Hiawatha line many of my  
9 employees use and they found it's wonderful.

10 Another reason is the connections that it will make from  
11 Downtown Minneapolis to the University that's been already  
12 commented about to the neighborhoods and then down to Downtown  
13 St. Paul we believe will be terrific for our business community.

14 And, lastly, it works. We've seen with the Hiawatha line  
15 great success. I spent my first five years as a professional in  
16 Downtown Chicago living just north of Downtown Chicago, used  
17 transit all the time, and I've seen how wonderful transit can  
18 be. Thank you very much for your hard work.

19 MR. PROBST: Thank you. The next three speakers are  
20 Jim Forsyth, Julia Wallace, and David Markle.

21 MS. WALLACE: Hello. I'm Julia Wallace. I live in the  
22 Prospect Park neighborhood and having been active in  
23 neighborhood participation and LRT planning for about -- well,  
24 20 years. Is that how long you've been asking for public  
25 participation? And I and many of my neighbors are ready to

1 continue to work with you in developing the LRT and looking at  
2 the next steps and the details of designing it as it comes  
3 pushing through our community, and we look forward to that in a  
4 hurry.

5 A couple of just short things I wanted to say. One is that  
6 I, too, travel on business. I love going to cities that have  
7 LRT. It's so much better in a strange city to ride on LRT where  
8 you can figure it out than to try to interpret bus systems and  
9 things, and I'm glad that we will soon be one of those cities  
10 that has LRT also.

11 Despite the fact that I have to use a bus to get to it, I  
12 use the current LRT to go to the airport, but I have to tell you  
13 I hate that bus section of getting from my house to the LRT  
14 because I have to lug my suitcase up the stairs of the bus, but  
15 I ride the Number 8 bus and then take the LRT and I love it.

16 Since I've been on these committees for such a long time, I  
17 have been getting older and I will be even older by the time LRT  
18 goes in; and I have to say one of the things that I think about  
19 as I think where I will continue to live or where I will need to  
20 move is that I need to be somewhere where I will have good  
21 transit and won't have to use a car. So I think this is one  
22 thing that hasn't been mentioned yet. LRT is wonderful for  
23 people as they are aging. It's so much easier to use and  
24 provides more alternatives not only for folks who don't have  
25 cars for economic reasons but also for senior citizens. Thank

1 you.

2 MR. PROBST: Thank you. David.

3 MR. MARKLE: David Markle, 303 Cedar Avenue,  
4 Minneapolis. Three points. First, I'm strongly in favor of  
5 rapid transit whether it's light rail, heavy rail, or PRT.  
6 Second, I think the appropriate place for a station on the West  
7 Bank in Minneapolis would be on Cedar Avenue. Third, and this  
8 is the difficult point, I think it's a foolish, shortsighted  
9 mistake to put the proposed line on the street at grade on  
10 University Avenue. It will not be rapid transit. The planners  
11 admit this, that it will be about the speed of a Number 50 bus.

12 There's a profound difference between Hiawatha Avenue and  
13 University Avenue. Hiawatha line is rapid transit. It causes  
14 problems for cross traffic and automobiles at intersections, but  
15 in the distance between Lake Street and Highway 62 there are  
16 eight stoplights. On University, which is a busy city street  
17 unlike Hiawatha, there are 25 stoplights in between Huron and  
18 Rice Street and there are many additional intersections without  
19 lights, at least that many more.

20 I urge you to consider elevating this line, tunneling it, or  
21 else placing the line in the I-94 trench, elevating it there  
22 possibly or running it parallel to I-94 perhaps on the south  
23 side of the I-94 trench.

24 MR. PROBST: Thank you. Next two speakers are Connie  
25 Singleton and Larry Morgan.

1           MR. SINGLETON: Hi. My name is Connie Singleton and I  
2 spoke for the Southwest Corridor which I really truly believe  
3 that it should go forth, but I also would like to speak at this  
4 thing because I think light rail would be the most appropriate  
5 form of transportation down this line, but I think it's  
6 important that we get it right and that we get it right so --  
7 because in looking at this line, it would connect the north, the  
8 south, the east, and points in between; and what I would like to  
9 see happen is that each station be able to handle at least three  
10 cars, not the two that is designated down the Hiawatha location  
11 for several of the stations, but I also would like to see some  
12 of the stations go underneath the major intersections like  
13 Snelling, Lexington, Dale, and Rice Streets. This would improve  
14 the speed-up time as well for those areas.

15           I also truly believe in the tunneling section under the  
16 University because it would keep safety number one in mind, but  
17 I believe that that tunnel should start maybe on the West Bank  
18 side and go tunnel, bridge, tunnel so that the Washington Avenue  
19 Bridge and Washington Street would not be closed during  
20 construction and that it would also keep the four lanes open.

21           I also believe that along the University Corridor that curbs  
22 be built to six inches because I've seen it down Fifth Street  
23 where cars would travel along and accidentally go over that. So  
24 I believe also in the six-inch curbs. I also believe that  
25 instead of the Union Depot being the last stop I think Kellogg

1 should be the last stop right where that park-and-ride is  
2 because it would open the corridor up for possible extension  
3 east. Thank you.

4 MR. PROBST: Thank you. Mr. Morgan.

5 MR. MORGAN: My name is Larry Morgan. I reside in  
6 Woodbury and I work in Downtown St. Paul. I'm here to strongly  
7 support the LRT Alternative for the Central Corridor and my  
8 reasoning for that is several.

9 First of all, failure of BRT to respond to the  
10 transportation needs after 2020 in my opinion is unacceptable.  
11 We need to have a long-term planning horizon here as they did  
12 when they built the interstate highway systems. Their plan was  
13 a 50-year life span and any major transportation system should  
14 have at least a 50-year span as well.

15 Also, because of the great success of Hiawatha. That had  
16 initially started out with a lot of naysayers and now it carries  
17 more people than was ever projected to carry.

18 The other reason is because the LRT has a much greater  
19 potential to spur development. Bus systems just don't create  
20 the interest of developers and property owners to improve their  
21 property.

22 I reviewed the Summary portion of the Draft EIS and I  
23 recognize there are impacts that have been identified and  
24 reviewed and brought forth. I don't see any of these as  
25 insurmountable. As a Downtown St. Paul employee by a Downtown

1 St. Paul firm, the construction impacts will be those that  
2 impact me most; and I feel that those can be mitigated properly;  
3 and personally I'm ready to put up with a little inconvenience  
4 during construction in order to bring this long overdue project  
5 into being.

6 Personally, I am interested in seeing the Central Corridor  
7 built because, as the gentleman just mentioned, it's a  
8 connection with many other systems. I have always been taught  
9 to look forward and I see that when I'm 86 and my children take  
10 my car keys away I'll need a way to get downtown. My hope is  
11 that the Central Corridor gets built and then likewise after  
12 that the Red Rock Corridor gets built and I can grab the Red  
13 Rock train from there and get into downtown to do whatever I  
14 like to do. Thank you and please move this project forward as  
15 fast as possible.

16 MR. PROBST: Thanks, Larry. Next two speakers are  
17 Gilbert Ward and Jay Cowles.

18 MR. WARD: I'm Gilbert Ward. I live in Shoreview. I'm  
19 opposed to the light rail. I think it's too little, too late  
20 and will not really serve very many people. It's going to be  
21 too slow. It's going to be unsafe. It's going to contribute to  
22 crime. It has very little flexibility and it will serve very  
23 few of the passengers who need to go places around the Twin  
24 Cities.

25 Instead I propose a robotic transportation system. We're

1 now in the 21st Century. We're in the 21st Century. The  
2 computers are coming along. By the time this is completed, four  
3 more generations. Doubling of the computer size and capacity  
4 and speed will be achieved. Robotic vehicles can travel between  
5 the two cities at 100 miles an hour. They can travel to  
6 Rochester 200 miles an hour. They can be made to connect every  
7 home and every business in the state. They can be put on tracks  
8 that are much cheaper than the light rail tracks and serve  
9 everybody in the state; young, old, and handicapped. I have my  
10 proposal here. I'd like to leave it here and you can throw it  
11 away right away.

12 (Laughter)

13 MR. PROBST: Thank you, Mr. Ward.

14 MR. COWLES: My name is Jay Cowles. I am a resident of  
15 St. Paul. I work in Downtown Minneapolis, and I frequently  
16 drive between the two downtowns as well as throughout the Twin  
17 Cities. Speaking as an individual, I am strongly in favor of  
18 light rail in the Central Corridor and I have three main  
19 reasons.

20 One: Light rail provides the capacity to match the  
21 corridor's growth and transit usage. Building dedicated transit  
22 is a difficult, expensive proposition and we need to match the  
23 technology to our long-term projections for ridership. Let's  
24 build just once.

25 Two: Light rail provides ease of access, comfort, and

1 reliability to its users whether carrying bags, using  
2 wheelchairs, or riding bikes. The quality experience of LRT  
3 will attract ridership.

4 And third, light rail, by attracting the greatest ridership  
5 and accompanying new development to the corridor, will  
6 strengthen our urban core and offer an alternative to suburban  
7 sprawl. Combined with the growing system of transit and  
8 transportation options throughout the Twin Cities, LRT in the  
9 Central Corridor will help provide the greatest access for its  
10 riders to jobs, housing, education, and recreation in an  
11 efficient manner throughout the metro area.

12 As a resident living a mile or so south of University  
13 Avenue, I would also encourage the planning efforts include  
14 enhanced north-south bus routes in order to extend the  
15 usefulness of the Central Corridor LRT to other nearby  
16 attractions such as the U of M St. Paul Campus, the State  
17 Fairgrounds, Como Park, Grand Avenue, and the many nearby  
18 college campuses. Thank you.

19 MR. PROBST: Thank you. Next two speakers are Sheldon  
20 Gitis and Paul Staloch, please.

21 MR. GITIS: My name is Sheldon Gitis. I live at 1030  
22 Manvel Street, Number 2 in St. Paul. I'm about a half-mile  
23 north of University Avenue where there is no public transit.  
24 After this project gets built, if it gets built, there will  
25 still be no public transit there.

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1 I brought along two of my documents that I'd like to present  
2 as testimony and I have extras available if anyone would like  
3 them. The first document is called "A \$740 Million Hood  
4 Ornament for a \$100,000 Road Construction Project" and the other  
5 document is called "No Transit Money for Another Bulldozer of a  
6 Business Deal."

7 MR. PROBST: Thank you. Peter Staloch.

8 MR. STALOCH: Yes. Thank you. Hi. My name is Peter  
9 Staloch. I live and work in Downtown Minneapolis and also a  
10 grad student at the U of M and I fully support the LRT, Light  
11 Rail Transit, through the Central Corridor and I support this  
12 for three main reasons.

13 First: Long-term capacity. As we've heard, the Bus Rapid  
14 Transit system will not be able to support capacity just a few  
15 years down the road after completion by about 2020. Why invest  
16 in something that is outdated just a few years after we're done?  
17 We should do it right right away the first time.

18 Number two, reliable, convenient, and faster. I ride the  
19 bus and it can be quite a frustrating experience at times  
20 wondering where the bus is five, ten minutes later. As we know,  
21 light rail is very on-time and you don't have to worry about  
22 that. So the frustration is gone, which does affect people and  
23 their decisions to use transit, and that's why light rail is a  
24 much better alternative.

25 And third, light rail also attracts more investment and

1 development onto the area. The fixed lines are a commitment by  
2 the region and they're not very easily changed so businesses and  
3 developers see that commitment and are able to move in and spend  
4 the money in the area, and this is primary for that investment  
5 and development between both of the main cities here of  
6 Minneapolis and St. Paul. Again, I fully support Light Rail  
7 Transit. Thank you.

8 MR. PROBST: Thank you. Next speaker is Andrew Lee and  
9 then, if I'm doing this close, it's Todd Klingel.

10 MR. LEE: My name is Andrew Lee. I've lived in  
11 Prospect Park all my life and in Middlebrook Hall during the  
12 school year. I've worked for City Councilmen Paul Zerby and  
13 Larry Pogemiller. You might have heard of them. I've ridden  
14 the 16, 50, and 94 bus all my life.

15 I strongly support LRT as the DEIS states that plan as the  
16 best alternative. I believe that Met Council should continue to  
17 look into rail alternatives such as the Southwest Corridor LRT  
18 and the Greenway Streetcar. I believe Americans see LRT as  
19 attractive transit for all and buses as welfare.

20 Unfortunately, the Met Council has seen its job or Metro  
21 Transit's job as welfare until very recently and Hiawatha was a  
22 Hennepin County and City of Minneapolis project. Perhaps the  
23 Met Council should be elected to be better accountable to  
24 people, but that's politics. Thanks for your time.

25 MR. PROBST: Thank you. Todd.

1           MR. KLINGEL: Good evening. I'm Todd Klingel. I'm the  
2 president and CEO of the Minneapolis Regional Chamber of  
3 Commerce and I'm here on behalf of those 1100 businesses as well  
4 as the Minneapolis Downtown Council which represents about 400  
5 businesses in Downtown Minneapolis. Both of our organizations,  
6 as you've already heard from a few of the speakers, are very  
7 enthusiastic about LRT for this corridor.

8           A couple of things that have not been mentioned are the Met  
9 Council's anticipation of between 2000 and 2030 a million more  
10 people in our community or 500,000 households. If you think of  
11 the congestion we have now, what is it like when we have all  
12 those other households on the line.

13           I also want to thank you for holding the first hearing here  
14 in Minneapolis because it's important that people recognize this  
15 is not just about St. Paul. This is about the entire region,  
16 and Minneapolis is very pleased to support that. We are  
17 founding members of the Central Corridor Partnership and are  
18 working closely with St. Paul on this regional effort for LRT in  
19 that district.

20           Another point is people will ride LRT that will not ride a  
21 bus. We found on Hiawatha that more than 40 percent of the  
22 people riding LRT there were not bus riders. That same thing I  
23 am certain will happen along the Central line and that gives us  
24 just that many more people off the roads and into transit.

25           So on behalf of those organizations thank you for being here

1 this evening.

2 MR. PROBST: Thank you for your comments. The next two  
3 speakers are Leslie Davis and John Schmit, please.

4 MR. DAVIS: Good evening. My name is Leslie Davis.  
5 I'm the founder and president of the Architect Environmental  
6 Group and I am the Independent candidate for Governor for this  
7 coming election. When you get Leslie Davis you'll stop this  
8 borrowing, borrowing, borrowing increasing the debt, debt, debt.  
9 There's no money for this.

10 When I look through your literature it talks about there are  
11 no funding sources. So what are you going to do? Borrow more  
12 money and pay more interest? I have a chart that I'm going to  
13 make available to you in the days ahead that show by the year  
14 2016, ten short years from today, all the income of all the wage  
15 earners will not be sufficient to service the debt; city,  
16 county, state, federal, and consumer debt. It will not be able  
17 to be serviced by 2016.

18 I read here that the Council's 2004 survey of metro  
19 residents rank traffic congestion as the number one concern.  
20 Well, if you lived at Lowry and Lyndale in Minneapolis where I  
21 live you wouldn't think that. You would be concerned about  
22 crime, being able to get home safely from the bus stop to your  
23 residence; and if you had kids wanting to go to college,  
24 education would be more important than light rail; and if you  
25 needed a place to live, housing would be more important. So in

1 the days ahead I'm going to find out who did the survey and how  
2 it was done.

3 Where is my little notepad? Just a second. (Pause) You  
4 know, the light rail on Hiawatha was supposed to be  
5 aesthetically pleasing until you ride one of these trains that  
6 have the windows covered so you could sell advertising in order  
7 to pay for the expenses of the rail. That's a pretty disgusting  
8 operation to sit on one of those trains with the big giant  
9 beautiful windows and you can't see anything out of that.

10 So I'm pretty annoyed about the way you folks are going  
11 ahead and spending money that we don't have and borrowing money  
12 that future generations are going to pay and pay in interest,  
13 interest, interest on the debt, debt, debt. Davis for Governor  
14 will put an end to this kind of activity and thank you very  
15 much.

16 MR. PROBST: Thank you. Mr. Schmit.

17 MR. SCHMIT: Good evening. My name is John Schmit. I  
18 stand here as a private citizen. I am an alumni of the  
19 University of Minnesota. I'm here to voice strong support for  
20 Light Rail Transit in the Central Corridor.

21 There are numerous reasons that make Light Rail Transit a  
22 better option as compared to Bus Rapid Transit. Many of them  
23 have already been discussed so I won't bother reiterating those  
24 points, but one is being one of those intangible measures that's  
25 hard to measure.

1           And basically that is the cachet of riding the bus and --  
2           well, excuse me. The cachet of riding light rail and a great  
3           example would be to the individuals that visited numerous other  
4           international and metropolitan communities. How many of those  
5           individuals can say that they have ridden the 50-S Bus Rapid  
6           Transit to get around in that community? For example, in  
7           Chicago how many individuals can say that they have ridden that  
8           Bus Rapid Transit route in Chicago versus riding the 'L' and the  
9           answer is probably quite a few have ridden the 'L' and not that  
10          many individuals have ridden Bus Rapid Transit, and I think  
11          there are a lot of reasons for that. One being reliability.  
12          One being timeliness. One being assurances that you know where  
13          the route is going.

14          And then the last point is unfortunately in the United  
15          States there are certain social stigmas associated with riding  
16          the bus which has been kind of mentioned here this evening; and  
17          I think that that should not go without saying is that the light  
18          rail system in the Central Corridor, cachet is an important  
19          thing to consider because it does affect ridership numbers. And  
20          so with that being said, the light rail system is the better  
21          option. Thank you.

22                 MR. PROBST: Thank you. Diane Thormodsgard and Lee  
23                 Sheehy. Diane.

24                 MS. THORMODSGARD: I'm Diane Thormodsgard. I live in  
25                 Plymouth, Minnesota. I work for US Bank managing a couple of

1 their businesses. I'm also the chair of the Transportation  
2 Committee for the St. Paul Chamber of Commerce and on the  
3 Central Corridor Partnership.

4 I strongly support the construction of the Light Rail  
5 Transit on University Avenue. The Central Corridor Light Rail  
6 would be the major connector of our two Twin Cities which would  
7 stimulate growth and economic development. This has become very  
8 obvious with the Hiawatha line.

9 I'm a businessperson. I work Downtown Minneapolis. I  
10 manage groups in St. Paul as well as outside the Twin Cities  
11 area so, therefore, I frequently travel between the two cities  
12 as well as outside of the Twin Cities area.

13 Interstate 94 and University Avenue have become increasingly  
14 congested and trips between the two cities can be very  
15 undependable and vary in time depending upon what the traffic is  
16 of the day. I should know. I've missed meetings or I've been  
17 late just because of it.

18 I currently use the Hiawatha line every time I travel to and  
19 from the airport even though I live in Plymouth. I drive  
20 downtown, park in my parking place, walk the three blocks to the  
21 end of Nicollet Mall, wait. I have never waited more than nine  
22 minutes for the train. It takes 23 minutes to take it out to  
23 the airport. Very conveniently you can get up to your gate  
24 especially if you go in the far entrance. Extremely dependable.  
25 A bus system will never be that dependable or environmentally

1 friendly.

2       So, therefore, I definitely prefer the Light Rail Transit;  
3 will use it. Otherwise I will drive my car out to the airport  
4 like everyone else has to do. It's very essential for highway  
5 congestion and reducing air pollution. We're one of the last  
6 metro areas to have an important Light Rail Transit line. With  
7 the Northstar development and the Hiawatha it's on the way to  
8 having a fully-integrated transit system. We are in line to get  
9 federal funding. A lot of other cities are competing for it as  
10 well. So I strongly encourage you to develop Light Rail Transit  
11 along the Central Corridor.

12           MR. PROBST: Thank you. Mr. Sheehy.

13           MR. SHEEHY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Lee Sheehy, the  
14 director of the City of Minneapolis Department of Community  
15 Planning & Economic Development. Mr. Chairman and members of  
16 the audience, it is the City staff's expectation that a  
17 recommendation will be made to the City's Transportation Public  
18 Works Committee on June 6th for consideration by the full  
19 Council and the Mayor on June 16th. So I speak this evening  
20 just on behalf of the Department of Community Planning &  
21 Economic Development.

22       I'll limit my remarks to our enthusiastic support for the  
23 mode of Light Rail Transit, leave the details and the City's  
24 comments on the other exciting opportunities.

25       I think the speakers before me have covered well the

1 regional needs and opportunities as well as the environmental  
2 and transit-oriented development. So I'll just make a record on  
3 that question and wanted the committee and the members of the  
4 public to know the intended process that the City will follow to  
5 establish the formal City comments as part of this process.  
6 Thank you for your time.

7 MR. PROBST: Thank you. The last speaker that I have  
8 signed up is Abia Ali.

9 MS. ALI: Hi. My name is Abia Ali. I live Cedar  
10 Riverside and I use LRT to downtown. I work Hennepin County  
11 Economic Assistance. It's about two minute to reaching  
12 downtown. So if the light rail go to Ramsey County, I mean in  
13 St. Paul, it will be also another asset to our neighborhood. So  
14 in that case it would be quick to go either way.

15 And when I move first into Minnesota, especially back in  
16 '96, I move from Toronto where we have subway, light rail, and  
17 other transportation. I used to have a hard time saying how  
18 come it's a big city, two Twin Cities, and they don't have even  
19 a subway or something like that.

20 So this was the first line been established is really great  
21 and I look forward the other one goes to Ramsey County. Might  
22 be other area in the city can grab it or whatever, those other  
23 which I never been there. So I really support this as a  
24 resident in Cedar Riverside and I'm looking forward that there  
25 will be bus just stop near the Cedar Riverside. Thank you.

1           MR. PROBST: Thank you. Is there anyone else that  
2 wishes to speak? If I could get you to -- Kathy, do we have a  
3 sign-up sheet so I can get names, please?

4           MR. LAMBERT: Good evening. My name is Clay Lambert  
5 and I own a business on University Avenue, in particular a gas  
6 station. We are in support of the Light Rail Transit. We  
7 believe it's good for business along the University Corridor. I  
8 can say not all businesses are in support of it, but I think  
9 it's more of a concern of the construction in itself and some of  
10 the problems that happened on the Hiawatha. Me in particular,  
11 I'm all right with that. I think we can deal with it and  
12 overcome it.

13           It's very good for my employees. It's an opportunity for my  
14 employees to get to work. Because of the type of business I'm  
15 in our customers, I believe, also will come to the area. More  
16 customers will come to the area using the light rail. I think,  
17 just to be real honest, folks will come to the area, go to the  
18 restaurants, go to the bars, and go home safely. Drinking and  
19 driving on University Avenue happens every night. It's kind of  
20 a dangerous corridor for that. So that would be very  
21 beneficial.

22           I think what could happen -- and I heard it just in  
23 comments -- it would be nice or useful to local businesses if  
24 some of this \$800 million could be disbursed to local businesses  
25 along that line and a real effort was made towards that. That

1 would help us out a lot, and that's my comments.

2 MR. PROBST: Thank you. Anyone else who cares to  
3 comment this evening? Seeing none, let me close here. First of  
4 all, I've been asked to point out -- not to pick on our friends  
5 at the Star Tribune, but there was an article that appeared  
6 regarding funding and the bonding bill that was in error, as I  
7 understand it. The project is slated to receive \$7.8 million.  
8 So there is funding that is flowing from the State for the  
9 project.

10 If anyone wishes to provide additional comments, you can  
11 provide written comments until the close of business day on June  
12 5th and if you haven't picked one up, before you leave please  
13 grab one of these (indicating). On the last page is a way to  
14 provide written comments as well as it has a phone number and  
15 e-mail if you wish to comment in that fashion. And with that I  
16 want to thank all of you for coming and have a pleasant evening.  
17 Thanks.

18 (Hearing concluded at 7:45 p.m.)

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Court Reporter: Linda G. Oman