

NORTHSTAR CORRIDOR RAIL PROJECT

Findings of Fact and Conclusions/
Final Section 4(f) Evaluation
February 23, 2006



**Minnesota Department of Transportation
in cooperation with the
Northstar Corridor Development Authority
the Metropolitan Council
and the
Federal Transit Administration**

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APPENDICES

- **Comments and Responses**
- **Press Release Distribution List/Legal Notice/EQB Notifications**
- **EA/Draft 4(f) Distribution List**



Updated Tables

Tables included in Appendix (Response to Comments) of the Findings of Fact and Conclusions Document

Table 3.2 of EA/Draft 4(f) (Corrected) — Stations of Revised Preferred Alternative

Table 3.4 of EA/Draft 4(f) — Summary of Proposed Track Improvements under the Revised Preferred Alternative

Table included in Section 6.0 of the Findings of Fact and Conclusions Document

Table 6.1— Agency Approvals and Permits

Updated Figures

Figures included in Section 4.0 of the Findings of Fact and Conclusions Document

Figure 3-7 (corrected) — Big Lake Station Plan

Figure 4.1 — Wetland Mitigation Plan

Figures included in the Final 4(f) Evaluation

Figure 7.1 — Rice Creek Trail

Figure 7.2 — Potential Impacts to Rice Creek Trail

Figure 7.3 — Rice Creek Regional Trail Mitigation During Construction



STATEMENT OF ISSUE

Based on the information in the record, which is comprised of the EA/Draft 4(f) Evaluation, written and verbal comment received, responses to comments, and other supporting documents, the Minnesota Department of Transportation (Mn/DOT), as the Responsible Governmental Unit (RGU) makes the following Findings of Fact and Conclusions.

FINDINGS OF FACT AND CONCLUSIONS

1.0 ADMINISTRATIVE BACKGROUND

An Environmental Assessment (EA)/Draft 4(f) Evaluation has been prepared under 23 CFR 771.129 and 23 CFR 771.130 by Mn/DOT, the Metropolitan Council and the Northstar Corridor Development Authority (NCDA) on behalf of the United States Department of Transportation, Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to update information found in the *Northstar Corridor Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS and FEIS)*, dated October 2000 and March 2002, respectively, and the *Record of Decision (ROD)* dated December 2002. The EA/Draft 4(f) was developed to assess the impacts of changes to the project and other circumstances in order to determine if a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) for the project is needed.

The FTA has the primary responsibility for the Northstar Corridor project. Mn/DOT is the project sponsor and federal grant applicant for the Northstar Corridor Rail project and works in partnership with the NCDA and the Metropolitan Council for the construction and operation of the service.

The EA/Draft 4(f) was filed with the Minnesota Environmental Quality Board (EQB) on December 22, 2005 and circulated for review and comments to the state Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) distribution list (see Appendix for EA/Draft 4(f) Distribution List) and other interested stakeholders within the Northstar Corridor. A "Notice of Availability" was published in the Minnesota *EQB Monitor* on January 2 and January 16, 2006 (correction regarding the address of the Coon Rapids public meeting). Legal notices were run in the following papers in the corridor:

- Becker Citizen
- Big Lake West Sherburne Tribune
- Columbia Heights Focus (Columbia Heights, Fridley)
- Anoka County Union (Coon Rapids)
- Coon Rapids Herald
- Elk River Star News
- Minneapolis Finance & Commerce
- Minneapolis Star Tribune

A notice of availability press release was also submitted to numerous media outlets throughout the corridor (see Appendix for the Press Release Distribution list). These notices provided a brief description of the proposed changes to the project, information on where copies of the EA/Draft 4(f) Evaluation were available, dates and locations of the three public informational meetings/hearings and an invitation to the public to provide comments on the revised preferred alternative evaluated in the EA/Draft 4(f) Evaluation. In addition, a postcard mailing announcing

the three public informational meetings/hearings was sent to approximately 219,000 residents and businesses within the Northstar Corridor. The EA/Draft 4(f) Evaluation was made available for public review at the following locations:

- Minneapolis Northeast Library
- Minneapolis Technology and Science Library
- Columbia Heights Library
- Crooked Lake Branch Library
- Northtown Central Library
- Rum River Branch Library
- Elk River Public Library
- Great River Regional Library – Big Lake and St. Cloud
- State of Minnesota Legislative Reference Library

To afford an opportunity for all interested parties, agencies, and groups to provide comments on the proposed project, Mn/DOT and its local partnering agencies, the NCDA and Met Council, hosted three open house/public hearings: January 25, 2006 in Coon Rapids; January 26, 2006 in Minneapolis; and January 30, 2006 in Big Lake, Minnesota. Each of the meetings included an informal open house period, followed by a presentation and time for official public comments. The presentation and public comments were transcribed (see appendix for each of the public hearing transcripts). Attendance, based on persons who signed in at each meeting, was as follows:

- Coon Rapids (January 25, 2006): 195 attendees
- Minneapolis (January 26, 2006): 55 attendees
- Big Lake (January 30, 2006): 138 attendees

The presentation was the same at each of the meetings, and addressed the following areas:

- Purpose of the Public Hearing
- Project History
- Alternative Evaluated
- EA Analysis
- Overview of Findings
- Next Steps
- How to Provide Comments (both verbal and written)

Comments on the EA/Draft 4(f) Evaluation were received through February 16, 2006. All comments received during the EA/Draft 4(f) comment period, as well as comments received from the public hearings (both written and verbal), were considered in determining the potential for significant new environmental impacts. Section 5.0 of the Findings Document includes a listing of the comments received on the EA/Draft 4(f) Evaluation. Each of the comment letters/cards/e-mails as well as verbal comments received at the public hearings are included in the Appendix, along with responses to comments.

2.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed project consists of two modal elements: commuter rail and light rail transit (LRT). The commuter rail component would begin in downtown Minneapolis and extend northwest through Hennepin, Anoka, and Sherburne counties to Big Lake, Minnesota, a total distance of approximately 40.1 miles. The majority of the route is on the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) Chicago to Seattle transcontinental line.

With the planned capacity improvements, the entire commuter rail route will be double-tracked, allowing commuter trains to run concurrently with 35 to 60 freight trains per day. Signals will be upgraded, with the entire commuter rail route using the centralized train control (CTC) system upon completion. BNSF will dispatch and may also operate the commuter rail trains. The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) Class 4 track will allow passenger speeds up to 79 miles per hour and freight speeds up to 60 miles per hour. The boarding platforms will be located within BNSF right-of-way and, in most locations the commuter trains will stop directly on the BNSF mainline tracks to board passengers. The two terminal stations will include off-line platforms where boarding will occur from siding tracks.

Five trains will run in the peak direction on weekday mornings and afternoons at half-hour intervals. Three trains will run in the reverse-peak direction during those periods. One train will run in each direction during midday. There are a total of 18 trains per weekday, nine in each direction. There will be three trains, in each direction, or six trains per day, on weekends and holidays.

Stations will be located in downtown Minneapolis, Fridley, Coon Rapids-Riverdale, Anoka, Elk River, and Big Lake. All stations, except downtown Minneapolis, will contain park-and-ride lots.

Commuter rail rolling stock obtained for the project will be maintained at a maintenance facility and storage site located adjacent to the end-of-line station in Big Lake. The commuter rail fleet will consist of five locomotives, six cab coaches, and twelve trailer coaches.

The LRT component includes a four-block connection from the Downtown Minneapolis Intermodal Station to the Hiawatha LRT Warehouse District Station. The connection will provide a transit link from the Northstar Corridor to downtown Minneapolis and beyond to the Hubert. H. Humphrey Metrodome, Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport, and the Mall of America. The LRT track would be located on the south side of 5th Street.

The LRT connection will conform to Hiawatha LRT design standards. The intermodal station will offer vertical circulation, with a stairway, escalator, and elevator between the commuter rail platform on the lower level and the LRT platform on the 5th Street Bridge (one level above).

Two light rail vehicles (LRVs) will be procured to maintain desired frequencies over the Hiawatha Line when LRT is extended to the Downtown Minneapolis Intermodal station.



3.0 CHANGES IN THE PROJECT SINCE THE EA/DRAFT 4(F) WAS RELEASED

Since the publication of the EA/Draft 4(f) Evaluation in January 2006, design at the proposed Big Lake maintenance facility has progressed. Through the design process, the overall area required for the Big Lake maintenance facility has been modified to accommodate the drainage channel and stormwater ponding requirements. The current design identifies an overall site area of 38.5 acres required for the Big Lake maintenance facility. The EA/Draft 4(f) Evaluation identified a site area of approximately 37.5 acres for the maintenance facility. The referenced change has been adequately evaluated in the EA/Draft 4(f) and Section 4.0 of this Findings Document.

No other changes to the proposed revised preferred alternative have taken place since the release of the EA/Draft 4(f) Evaluation in January 2006.

4.0 ADDITIONS/CORRECTIONS TO THE EA/DRAFT 4(F) EVALUATION

4.1 Alternative Definition

Figure 3.7 of the EA/Draft 4(f) Evaluation has been corrected to reflect the termination of the commuter rail track east of CR 43. Additionally, the site size for the Big Lake station in Table 3.2 of the EA/Draft 4(f) has been corrected to reflect the following site size for the station: 9.8 acres for the station and 1.8 acres for the access road to CR 43. The 9.8 acres includes the actual station facility (5.9 acres) as well as land required for the proposed drainage channel and access road to the maintenance facility. The EA/Draft 4(f) Evaluation evaluated the impact of the Big Lake station under the corrected acreage presented above.

4.2 Farmlands Section

In response to a comment by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, the following additional information is provided regarding potential severed, triangulated or isolated farmland.

The proposed revised preferred alternative would result in a change in impact previously documented in the Northstar FEIS (March 2002). Specifically, the proposed change in the Big Lake station and the maintenance facility will remove land that is actively farmed at present.

The FEIS documented that 12.3 acres of land would no longer be available for future crop production as a result of the Big Lake Station. Under the revised preferred alternative, the Big Lake station and access road would directly impact 11.6 acres, and the maintenance facility would impact 38.5 acres of land that is currently farmed. Thus, the construction and operation of this facility would remove this acreage from future crop production. Additionally, the 6.3 acres of land between the station site access road and CR 43 is anticipated to be removed from future crop production, and evaluated for transit oriented development. Mn/DOT and its project partners have been working with the current landowners regarding the right of way required to accommodate both the Big Lake station and maintenance facility.

The proposed construction and operation at this location would not isolate or sever other existing farmland.

4.3 Wetland Mitigation Plan

The EA/Draft 4(f) indicated that the MnDNR had been requested to, and was currently in the process of field verifying the Ordinary High Water (OHW) mark for MnDNR Protected Water Wetland 65W. Based on the MnDNR survey, the OHW of said wetland has been determined to be 925.6.

The Wetland Section of the EA/Draft 4(f) (Section 4.9) stated that a wetland mitigation plan will be in place prior to the issuance of a final environmental determination by the FTA. Under the current Northstar Corridor Rail project revised preferred alternative, up to 2.12 acres of wetlands will be impacted. The impacts are associated with the proposed third main track and the Big Lake maintenance facility.

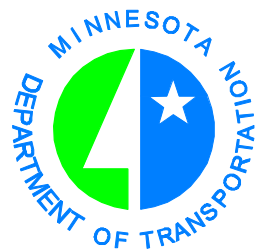
The EA/Draft 4(f) stated that land proposed to be acquired for the vehicle maintenance facility in Big Lake would be pursued as an option to provide on-site wetland mitigation; and if the site



cannot accommodate the total replacement required, that Mn/DOT would pursue utilization of wetland bank credits for the remaining mitigation need.

Since the publication of the EA/Draft 4(f) Evaluation, more detailed design of the vehicle maintenance facility has taken place with regards to potential wetland impacts and mitigation. As a result, the impact to wetland 19 (MnNDR Protected Water Wetland 65W) has increased from 0.13 to 0.16 acre. Current design plans indicate that up to 2.19 acres of public value credit (PVC) associated with the proposed stormwater ponding facility and up to 2.12 acres of new wetland can be accommodated at this site. Figure 4.1 reflects the proposed on-site wetland mitigation in Big Lake.

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ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
NORTHSTAR CORRIDOR DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

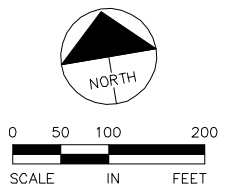
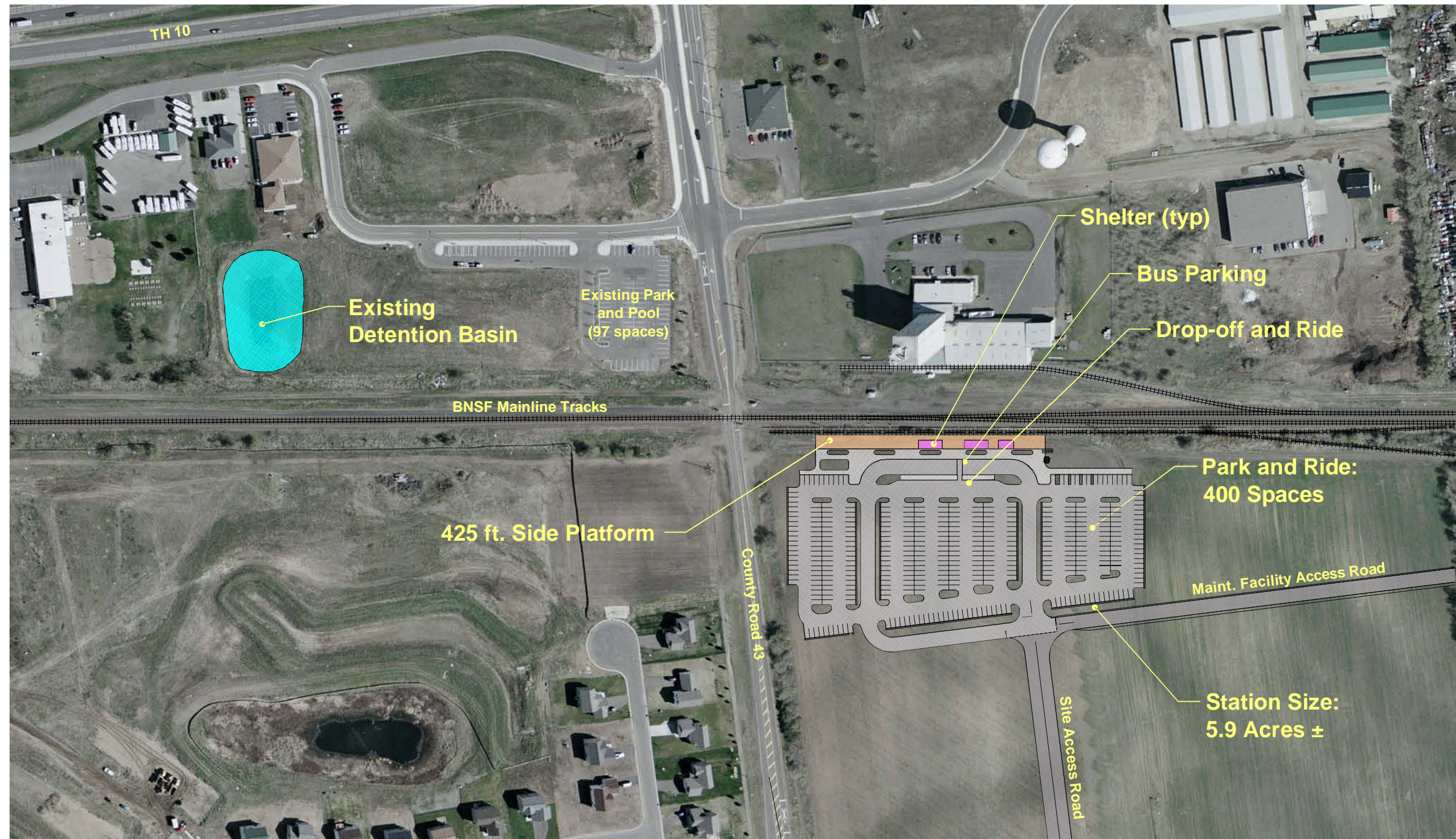


FIGURE 3.7
BIG LAKE STATION PLAN

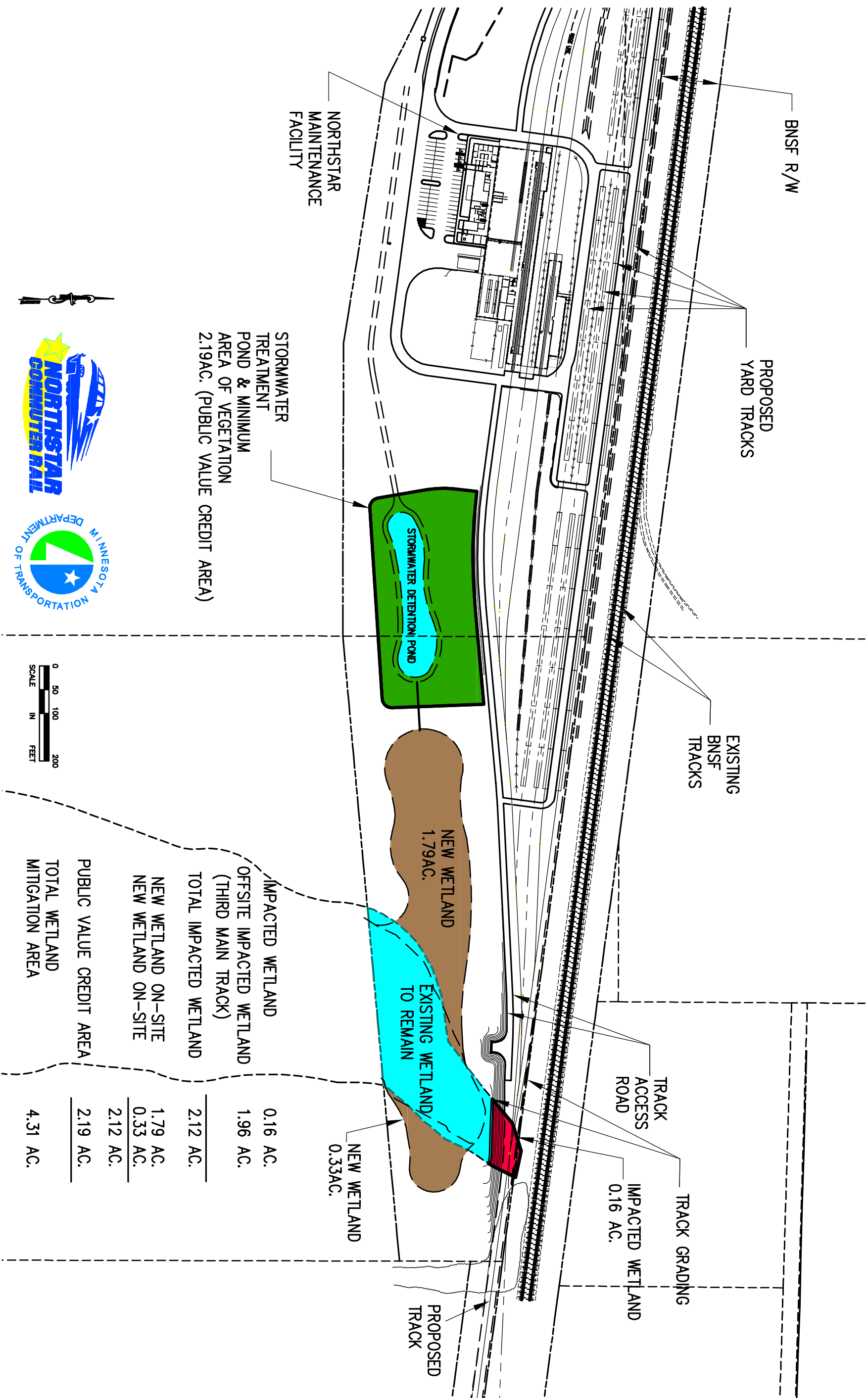


FIGURE 4.1
WETLAND MITIGATION PLAN

5.0 COMMENTS AND RESPONSES

There were a total of 72 written and verbal comments received on the EA/Draft 4(f) Evaluation in various formats. Of those: eight were agency comments; ten were public comments received via letter/card/e-mail; and public hearing verbal or written comments were provided by eighteen people on January 25th, nineteen people on January 26th, and seventeen people on January 30th, 2006. A listing of the comment letters/cards/e-mails is presented below in Sections 5.1 through 5.5. A listing of the verbal comments provided at the public hearings is presented in Sections 5.6 through 5.8. The actual comment letters/card/e-mails, and the transcripts from each of the public hearings are included in the Appendix, along with the responses to the comments.

5.1 Agency Comments

- 5.1.1 United States Environmental Protection Agency (January 10, 2006)
- 5.1.2 Natural Resource Conservation Service (January 5, 2006)
- 5.1.3 Minnesota Department of Agriculture (January 5, 2006)
- 5.1.4 Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (February 2006)
- 5.1.5 Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (February 16, 2006)
- 5.1.6 Metropolitan Council (February 9, 2006)
- 5.1.7 Anoka County, Department of Parks and Recreation (February 14, 2006)
- 5.1.8 City of Fridley (February 16, 2006)

5.2 Public Comments (*presented in order received*)

- 5.2.1 Peter Biorn (January 20, 2006)
- 5.2.2 John and Phyliss Mosby (January 31, 2006)
- 5.2.3 Peg Greshik (January 31, 2006)
- 5.2.4 Robert Anderson (February 1, 2006)
- 5.2.5 Michele and Todd Wilson (February 2, 2006)
- 5.2.6 Shirley Anderson (February 3, 2006)
- 5.2.7 Bob Grevenow (February 6, 2006)
- 5.2.8 Lola Johns (February 8, 2006)
- 5.2.9 Philip Epstein (February 15, 2006)
- 5.2.10 T. and S. Mallon (February 16, 2006)

5.3 Written Comments Received on January 25, 2006

- 5.3.1 Randell Benintende
- 5.3.2 Steve Butler
- 5.3.3 Pam Upton
- 5.3.4 Steve Upton
- 5.3.5 Lynn Linse
- 5.3.6 Don Kjonaas
- 5.3.7 Judy Schaffran
- 5.3.8 Claren Sellner
- 5.3.9 Unnamed Commenter
- 5.3.10 Gene Rafferty

5.4 Written Comments Received on January 26, 2006

- 5.4.1 Frank Broderick
- 5.4.2 Tony Rea
- 5.4.3 David Klopp
- 5.4.4 Ken Shallbetter
- 5.4.5 Jeanne H. Rivard
- 5.4.6 Tim Donovan
- 5.4.7 Brian Benson
- 5.4.8 Vivian Kiyee
- 5.4.9 Andrew Wanbach

5.5 Written Comments Received on January 30, 2006

- 5.5.1 Robert Letendre
- 5.5.2 Cathy Sorensen
- 5.5.3 Stanley Kasal
- 5.5.4 Dan Thiele
- 5.5.5 Jim Stahlmann
- 5.5.6 Bret R. Collier

5.6 Public Hearing, January 25, 2006 (*in order presented at the hearing*)

- 5.6.1 Arthur Nielsen
- 5.6.2 Kris Genck
- 5.6.3 Dan Tveite
- 5.6.4 Steve Butler
- 5.6.5 Becky Fink
- 5.6.6 Mel Aanerud
- 5.6.7 JoEllen Christiansen
- 5.6.8 Michael Iacono

5.7 Public Hearing, January 26, 2006 (*in order presented at the hearing*)

- 5.7.1 Bob Smith
- 5.7.2 Frank Broderick
- 5.7.3 Andrew Wanbach
- 5.7.4 Mary O'Connor
- 5.7.5 Dustin Maddy
- 5.7.6 David Klopp
- 5.7.7 Peter Radford
- 5.7.8 Jim Brannan
- 5.7.9 Henry Kohring
- 5.7.10 Frank Broderick



5.8 Public Hearing, January 30, 2006 (*in order presented at the hearing*)

- 5.8.1 Jim Graere
- 5.8.2 Roland Froyen
- 5.8.3 Gary Locchiarella
- 5.8.4 Brian Knudtson
- 5.8.5 Tom Thompson
- 5.8.6 State Representative Mark Olson
- 5.8.7 Jim Stahlman
- 5.8.8 Phebe Koha
- 5.8.9 Susan Holmes
- 5.8.10 Verna Rankin
- 5.8.11 Laurel Resman

6.0 DECISION REGARDING NEED FOR ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

A Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) is not necessary for the proposed revised preferred alternative based on the following criteria:

6.1 Type, Extent and Reversibility of Impacts

The EA/Draft 4(f) Evaluation described the type and extent of impacts to the natural and human environment anticipated to result from the proposed action. The proposed design for the project includes design features that avoid, minimize and mitigate for the identified impacts. A summary of the impacts and mitigation for the revised preferred alternative is presented below. Reference to the particular EA/Draft 4(f) section is included in parenthesis.

Land Use and Economic Development (EA/Draft 4(f) Section 4.1)

Each of the communities where station locations are proposed has taken action, is planning for transit supportive land use, or has already undergone development activities. The proposed shift in the location of the Downtown Minneapolis Intermodal station would improve the development potential for either mixed-use or a professional baseball stadium. The Big Lake station evaluated in the FEIS would have been located on land which was originally undeveloped. Under the revised location on the south side of the BNSF mainline and to the east of County Road (CR) 43, the commuter rail station/maintenance facility and layover facility would be located on land currently under agricultural use.

In summary, the revised preferred alternative will continue to support transit oriented development (TOD) in the corridor. No significant changes from the FEIS would occur under the revised preferred alternative.

Community Facilities and Services (EA/Draft 4(f) Section 4.2)

Under the revised preferred alternative, improved transit accessibility in the vicinity of the Minneapolis Northeast station would be removed, as the station is not included in the alternative. Since the FEIS, the day care facility in the vicinity of the Big Lake station is no longer operating near the proposed site.

The revised preferred alternative will temporarily impact the Rice Creek West Regional Bike Trail in the vicinity of the Rice Creek/Locke Lake crossing. The trail will be closed during an eight week construction period. Following construction, the trail will be reopened and completely operational in the area.

The Fridley station is also being designed to accommodate the Mississippi River Regional Trail. Mn/DOT and its partners are working with the City of Minneapolis to develop a trail alignment for Phase 3 of the Cedar Lake Trail near the proposed Downtown Minneapolis station.

In summary, the revised preferred alternative would not result in significant adverse impacts to community facilities in the corridor. No significant changes from the FEIS would occur under the revised preferred alternative.

Displacements and Relocations (EA/Draft 4(f) Section 4.3)

The minimum operable segment (MOS) of the preferred alternative defined and evaluated in the FEIS identified up to 34 parcels (full and partial takes) impacted by the stations and maintenance facility. Additionally, the proposed Coon Creek siding and third mainline were estimated to impact (full and partial takes) up to 25 and 61 parcels, respectively.

Under the revised preferred alternative, up to 12 partial and 14 full parcels would be acquired. The proposed LRT connection on 5th Street would require closing access to an alley off of 5th Street, located between 1st Avenue North and 2nd Avenue North. The proposed third mainline, from MP 15.1 to 20.1 would be located within the existing BNSF right-of-way. No right-of-way impacts are anticipated in this area. If for some unforeseen reason the proposed track improvements require construction outside the existing BNSF right of way, Mn/DOT and its project partners will work with the affected property owner to restore the impacted site.

In summary, the revised preferred alternative would result in a reduction in the number of parcels to be acquired for the project.

Archaeological and Historic Resources (EA/Draft 4(f) Section 4.4)

A Programmatic Agreement (PA) has been executed between the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), Mn/DOT, and the FTA for the Northstar Corridor. The Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) and the St. Cloud HPC are consulting parties to the agreement.

The Big Lake station and maintenance/layover facility includes land that was not previously surveyed during the EIS. Mn/DOT has determined that the revised project will not impact any historic properties (see EA/Draft 4(f) Appendix A.1 for letter). The Minnesota SHPO has concurred with this determination on December 19, 2005 (see EA/Draft 4(f) Appendix A.1 for letter).

The proposed revised preferred alternative would minimize impacts to surrounding historic resources, as the previously identified and evaluated Minneapolis Northeast and Rice stations are not a part of the revised preferred alternative. Additionally, Mn/DOT, SHPO, and the Minneapolis HPC have been in ongoing consultation regarding the design elements of the LRT alignment, LRT station on 5th Street North, and commuter rail station, as specified in the Northstar PA.

No additional mitigation is required under the revised preferred alternative.

Visual and Aesthetic Conditions (EA/Draft 4(f) Section 4.5)

The MOS of the preferred alternative evaluated in the FEIS identified the Minneapolis Northeast Station at 7th Street NE and the Fridley Station as facilities that would result in “moderate” visual impacts. Additionally, the Section 106 Programmatic Agreement defined specific design considerations at the Minneapolis Downtown Station, Intermodal Connector, and Minneapolis Northeast Station.

The proposed stormwater pond that would serve the Anoka Station was located within the MnDNR scenic easement, and would therefore be within the view shed of the Rum River.

Visual impacts documented in the FEIS for the MOS have been reduced with the proposed revisions to the preferred alternative. Specifically, potential visual impacts at the Minneapolis Northeast station have been eliminated, as well as potential visual impacts to the Rum River.

Environmental Justice (EA/Draft 4(f) Section 4.6)

Benefits and adverse impacts to minority and low-income areas in the corridor are representative of the areas served by the revised preferred alternative. The revised preferred alternative would have several positive impacts on minority and low-income populations at proposed station sites throughout the corridor. These positive impacts include increased mobility and access to system linkages, improved access to educational and business facilities, better access to jobs, improved bicycle and pedestrian connectors, and visual enhancements at station areas. The revised preferred alternative is also expected to encourage redevelopment opportunities in station areas, which could potentially improve and revitalize adjacent communities. Additionally, the revised preferred alternative would provide an additional transit mode for residents in the central city to access job concentrations in the outlying areas (reverse commute).

Safety and Security (EA/Draft 4(f) Section 4.7)

The revised preferred alternative will not significantly change the previously documented safety and security impacts/mitigation measures identified in the FEIS. Additionally, the proposed shift of the Big Lake Station and Maintenance Facility to the east of CR 43 will eliminate the previously required at-grade crossing of CR 43.

Farmlands (EA/Draft 4(f) Section 4.8 and Additions/Corrections to the EA/Draft 4(f))

The FEIS stated that the downtown Minneapolis to Big Lake portion of the preferred alternative would not impact prime or statewide important farmlands, as none of the applicable soils met the definition as set forth by the Farmland Protection and Policy Act (FPPA).

Under the revised preferred alternative, there is only one area of prime farmland in the corridor, and it was present in an area where operations would occur within existing BNSF right-of-way. Therefore, no prime farmland would be affected by the revised preferred alternative.

There are two areas of statewide important farmland that would be intersected by the third main starting near Foley Boulevard. However, this area is zoned urban and is in urban use; therefore it does not meet the criteria of the FPPA for prime/statewide important farmland. No soil types in the corridor were identified as unique or locally important.

In summary, the revised preferred alternative would not result in significant adverse impacts to farmlands in the corridor. No significant changes from the FEIS would occur under the revised preferred alternative.

Wetlands (EA/Draft 4(f) Section 4.9 and Additions/Corrections to the EA/Draft 4(f))

As documented in the FEIS, the MOS would not directly impact any wetland areas.

Under the revised preferred alternative, the Big Lake maintenance facility site, and a third mainline between MPs 15.1 and 21.1 would impact up to 2.12 acres of wetlands.

Wetland impacts that cannot be avoided must be replaced at a minimum ratio, as specified in the Minnesota Wetland Conservation Act (WCA). Provided that the wetland can be replaced in-kind (within the county, within the watershed, or replacing with the same wetland type), the

replacement ratio is anticipated to be 2:1. The first 1:1 must be new wetland credit (restored or created wetland); the second half of the replacement can be public value credit (potentially stormwater ponds and upland buffers).

There is one location within the project corridor that has high potential for providing the wetland replacement requirements for the project. Land that is acquired for the Big Lake maintenance facility appears large enough and has potential to accommodate on-site wetland mitigation adjacent to existing wetland 19 and in conjunction with a proposed storm water pond. (see Figure 4.1 for the wetland mitigation plan).

In summary, the revised preferred alternative would include additional wetland impacts compared to the preferred alternative defined and evaluated in the FEIS. Wetland impacts have been avoided and minimized to the extent possible within the corridor.

Floodplains (EA/Draft 4(f) Section 4.10)

Under the preferred alternative evaluated in the FEIS, impacts to project area floodplains were avoided. Under the revised preferred alternative, the proposed third main would result in approximately 318 cubic yards of fill in the floodplain south of TH 610, and approximately 100 cubic yards of fill in the floodplain near Locke Lake.

Bridge and culvert crossings will be designed to accommodate 100-year flood flows and to minimize backwater conditions. Rail profiles will be designed to minimize overtopping. Site specific flood impacts and mitigation will be prepared during final design, as required by local regulations. The volume of floodplain fill will be restored on-site, to the extent feasible.

Wild and Scenic Rivers and Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area/Mississippi National River and Recreation Area (EA/Draft 4(f) Section 4.11)

The FEIS identifies and evaluates the original preferred alternative's impacts to Wild and Scenic Rivers, the Mississippi River Critical Area, and the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area (MNRRA). The evaluation of impacts remains unchanged from the FEIS, with the exception of the proposed revised stormwater detention pond at the Anoka Station site, where a revised ponding design has been proposed that reduces the encroachment on the scenic easement (see Figure 3.5 of the EA/Draft 4(f)). Mn/DOT will continue to work with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MnDNR) on the final design of the pond to ensure it is designed to minimize impacts to the Rum River.

In summary, the revised preferred alternative would not result in significant adverse impacts to the Rum River. No significant changes from the FEIS would occur under the revised preferred alternative.

Vegetation and Wildlife (EA/Draft 4(f) Section 4.12)

The FEIS analysis indicated that a small amount of farmland, grassland, and woodland habitats in the study area would be impacted. Considering the entire study area, the amount of impact to each habitat type represents a small fraction of the total amount of that habitat type available. Additionally, it identified that a good quality prairie remnant (3.6 acres), located just north of the TH 10 crossing north of Elk River, would be impacted by the proposed track improvements. This remnant is within BNSF right-of-way.

The mitigation measures presented in Section 4.3.5 (page 4-15) of the FEIS remain unchanged for the revised preferred alternative. They are incorporated herein by reference to the EA/Draft 4(f).

The revised preferred alternative would not result in a change in the impacts and mitigation measures described and evaluated in the FEIS.

Rare, Threatened and Endangered Species (EA/Draft 4(f) Section 4.13)

Based on review of both state and federal databases, the FEIS identified potential impacts to the Blanding's turtle.

Under the revised preferred alternative, one species was identified on the request for federally listed threatened and endangered species, the bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*). The eagle nest is 0.46 mile from the proposed construction area. Due to the location and nature of the proposed project, Mn/DOT has concluded that the project will have no effect on federally-listed threatened and endangered species.

According to the MnDNR Natural Heritage Information System (NHIS), impacts under the revised preferred alternative would be limited to the Blanding's turtle. Adhering to erosion and sediment control measures during construction will minimize the risk of impacts to the Blanding's turtle habitat.

In summary, the revised preferred alternative would not result in significant adverse impacts to the rare, threatened and endangered species. No significant changes from the FEIS would occur under the revised preferred alternative.

Water Quality and Utilities (EA/Draft 4(f) Section 4.14)

Since the FEIS, platform drainage has changed at each site. Based on refinement of the station design, the platforms are proposed to be sloped to drain away from the tracks. Additionally, each site will have ballast drain pipes that will drain the water that collects between the platform and the tracks, as well as water that the platform will block from draining downstream.

Since the FEIS, the proposed pond locations at the Fridley stations have been modified for more efficient operation. At the Anoka station, the City of Anoka is proposing zoning changes to increase development densities in the project area. City staff requested that the capacity of the storm water basin be increased to accommodate somewhat larger future flows from the Grant Street basin. The new design of the stormwater basin provides for a reduction of environmental impacts compared to the original design.

A single stormwater conveyance and treatment system will serve both the Big Lake station site and the maintenance facility.

In summary, the revised preferred alternative would not result in significant adverse impacts to water quality and utilities. No significant changes from the FEIS would occur under the revised preferred alternative.

Hazardous Waste and Contaminated Material (EA/Draft 4(f) Section 4.15)

Based on the preliminary impact assessment and mitigation measures defined in the Northstar Corridor FEIS, Phase I Environmental Site Assessments (ESA) were completed at the Fridley and Anoka station sites.

This section of the EA/Draft 4(f) includes updated information along with an assessment of potential impacts associated with the proposed revisions to the preferred alternative (limited to Big Lake station area that was not included in the preferred alternative). Based on analysis at the proposed station sites, the revised preferred alternative would not result in impacts significantly different than those documented in the FEIS. Removal of the Northeast Minneapolis and Coon Rapids-Foley stations from the preferred alternative MOS eliminates the impacts and potential clean up required at both of those proposed station locations.

Air Quality (EA/Draft 4(f) Section 4.16)

As the revised preferred alternative would not significantly increase the number of park-and-ride lot spaces proposed at each of the stations, the findings from the FEIS are considered valid for the revised preferred alternative and incorporated by reference in the EA/Draft 4(f).

Noise and Vibration (EA/Draft 4(f) Section 4.18)

The proposed revised preferred alternative would not significantly change the impacts and/or mitigation presented in the FEIS. The proposed revisions would reduce the potential noise and vibration impacts previously documented in the FEIS for the MOS of the preferred alternative.

Mitigation measures for the proposed changes to the preferred alternative are the same as in the FEIS.

Transportation (EA/Draft 4(f) Section 4.18)

The proposed LRT alignment on the south side of 5th Street allows for the existing operation of the 5th Street Garage entry/exit rather than a costly reconstruction of the internal operation. The alignment also eliminates the need for vehicular traffic on 5th Street North from crossing the LRT tracks at both 6th Avenue North and 2nd Avenue North, as was shown in the FEIS. The need to close 5th Avenue North and the creation of a dead-end street/high retaining wall in front of the Ford Centre were also eliminated with the change to the southerly side.

The City of Anoka is taking the lead in the development of the proposed parking facility near the proposed station. Mn/DOT and its partnering agencies will continue to work with the City to identify and implement appropriate mitigation measures to accommodate future traffic conditions at the proposed station.

The Big Lake station site plan includes an access road (to CR 43) which would be approximately 1,200 feet long. To accommodate the flow of traffic into the Big Lake station, the addition of a striped turn lane from CR 43 into the Big Lake station is proposed.

6.2 Cumulative Potential Effects of Related or Anticipated Future Projects

With regard to potential cumulative effects or related anticipated future projects, Mn/DOT and its local partners have evaluated the full Northstar Commuter Rail system from Downtown Minneapolis to Rice, Minnesota in the Draft and Final EIS (October 2000 and March 2002, respectively). A Record of Decision (ROD) documenting potential impacts and mitigation measures was signed by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) in December 2002. This EA/Draft 4(f) Evaluation evaluates the impacts of Phase I of the full system. As funding becomes available, future phases, as defined in the 2002 Northstar ROD, will be pursued. If at such time additional environmental review is required, to either document the potential impacts associated with the proposed action and/or the changes to the surrounding environment, Mn/DOT will work with the NCDA, the Metropolitan Council, and the FTA to meet applicable state and federal environmental review requirements.

6.3 Extent to Which the Environmental Effects are Subject to Mitigation by Ongoing Public Regulator Authority

There are several federal, state, and local permits required to ensure that specific environmental effects are mitigated. The mitigation of environmental impacts will be designed and implemented in coordination with regulatory agencies, and will be subject to appropriate permitting processes. Permits and approvals that have been or may be required prior to project construction are summarized in the table below.

Table 6-1 — Agency Approvals and Permits

Government Agency	Type of Review, Approval, or Permit
Federal	
Federal Transit Administration	Final Environmental Determination Section 4(f) Determination
Department of Interior	Section 4(f) Determination
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	Section 404 Permit
State	
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources	Work in Protected Waters Permit
	Design Approval of Storm Water Pond Easement
Minnesota Pollution Control Agency	401 Water Quality Certification
	NPDES Permit
	Response Action Plan (to be determined)
State Historic Preservation Office	Design Review Defined in Section 106 Programmatic Agreement (on-going)
Minnesota Department of Transportation	Supplemental EIS Need Decision
	Design Review Defined in Section 106 Programmatic Agreement
	Wetland Conservation Act LGU Authority
Minnesota Department of Health	Abandonment/Capping of Existing Wells

Continued

Government Agency	Type of Review, Approval, or Permit
Local	
Cities in Corridor	Land alteration permits for grading and site activities
	Utility Permits
	Design Review Defined in Section 106 Programmatic Agreement (City of Minneapolis HPC)
	Erosion Control Plan
	Station Area Site Plan Review
	Plat Approval for Station Parcels/Maintenance Facility
	Easement/ROW Vacation Approval
	Utility Plan Reviews

6.4 Extent to Which to Which Environmental Effects Can Be Anticipated and Controlled as a Result of Other Environmental Studies

Mn/DOT, and its local partner agencies the NCDA and Metropolitan Council, have experience constructing transportation projects in the Northstar Corridor Rail project area. Park-and-Ride facilities have been designed and constructed at Coon Rapids-Riverdale, Elk River and Big Lake (each facility underwent separate environmental review). Additionally, the EIS completed for the Northstar Rail Corridor from Downtown Minneapolis to the St. Cloud area studied in detail the full 82 miles system. Mn/DOT and other local partners are also in the process of conducting appropriate environmental review and design for proposed roadway improvements on Trunk Highway (TH) 10, TH 169, TH 101 and I-94/694.

Design and construction team members are familiar with the project area. No problem is anticipated which the staff at Mn/DOT, Met Council, or the NCDA have not encountered or planned for, and have been successfully solved on past projects. Mn/DOT, therefore, finds that the environmental effects of the project can be anticipated and controlled as a result of environmental review and experience on similar projects.

7.0 FINAL SECTION 4(F) EVALUATION

7.1 Introduction

Section 4(f)

Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) Act of 1966 prohibits the use of land from publicly owned parks, recreation areas, wildlife or waterfowl refuges, or historic sites for any federally funded transportation program, unless it is determined that:

- There is no feasible and prudent alternative to using such land; and
- The project includes all possible planning to minimize harm to the land resulting from its use. The word “use” refers to taking or acquiring of land or property for construction of a permanent transportation facility, or if not taken or acquired, the substantial impairment of the land or property for its intended purpose as a publicly owned park, recreation area, refuge, or historic site.

Methodologies and Assumptions

Project History:

The Mn/DOT statewide Geographic Information System (GIS) database, the MnDNR Public Recreation Information Maps (PRIM), on-site field review, and consultation with appropriate municipal and county representatives were used to identify public lands within the Northstar Corridor.

Three sites within the Northstar Corridor were identified in the DEIS/Section 4(f)/6(f) evaluation based on this review. The Springbrook Nature Center and Rice Creek West Regional Trail are both located in the City of Fridley. Phase 3 of the Cedar Lake Trail, a proposed extension, would be located in downtown Minneapolis, adjacent to the BNSF railroad tracks. The appropriate agencies were contacted to determine if the potentially impacted trails/nature center would have either a 4(f) or 6(f) designation.

As stated in Section 2.4-3 of the FEIS, the potential track capacity improvements from MP 15.5 to 20.7, included under the commuter rail alternative in the DEIS/Section 4(f)/6(f) evaluation were not included in the preferred alternative defined and evaluated in the FEIS. With the removal of the track improvement in this area (from the FEIS), the previously documented impacts to the Springbrook Nature Center and Rice Creek West Regional Trail were avoided, and were therefore not included in the Final 4(f)/6(f) evaluation included as a separate section of the FEIS. The 4(f) evaluation included as a separate section of the FEIS was limited to the Proposed Cedar Lake Trail – Phase 3.

As documented in the 4(f)/6(f) evaluation of the FEIS (Section 8.3.1), the proposed stormwater pond at the Anoka station site was located within a scenic easement for the Rum River. As the stormwater pond is identified as a permitted action within the scenic easement, it was not considered a 4(f) resource.

With regards to historic sites, SHPO has concurred that with the implementation of the guidelines set forth in the Northstar programmatic agreement, the project will not adversely affect historic sites listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).

Revised Preferred Alternative:

Since the completion of the FEIS/Final 4(f)/6(f) evaluation, additional information regarding the right-of-way boundaries of the BNSF and the Springbrook Nature Center has been identified. Additionally, the proposed track improvements in the vicinity of the nature center are limited to a third mainline. The original track improvements studied in the DEIS included a third mainline and siding through this area. Based on the design of the third mainline through this area, there will not be encroachment into the Springbrook Nature Center facility. Representatives of Mn/DOT and its partners have coordinated with the Springbrook Nature Center staff and the City of Fridley to confirm the right-of-way boundary information and potential impacts. By avoiding impacts to the Springbrook Nature Center, the revised preferred alternative would not impact any 6(f) resources.

With regards to the Proposed Cedar Lake Trail – Phase 3, the City of Minneapolis has not moved forward with the construction of the proposed trail in the downtown area. At this time, no land has been purchased or set aside for the proposed trail. Hence, it is not considered a 4(f) use at this point. Representatives of Mn/DOT and its partners have been in close coordination with the City of Minneapolis regarding design alternatives to accommodate the proposed trail near the Downtown Minneapolis Intermodal station.

This 4(f) evaluation is limited to the impacts to the Rice Creek Regional Trail in the City of Fridley. Under the revised preferred alternative, there would not be any impacts to 6(f) resources.

7.2 Section 4(f) Evaluation

Public Lands

Site Description:

The Rice Creek West Regional Trail is located in the City of Fridley, crossing under the BNSF railroad tracks where Rice Creek enters Locke Lake, and heads south adjacent and parallel to the east side of the railroad tracks. The Rice Creek Regional Trail continues north, on the east side of the BNSF tracks, until it reaches the Fridley Community Park, where it heads east through the park. South of the Rice Creek/Locke Lake crossing, the trail, referenced as the Mississippi River Regional Trail, parallels the west side of the tracks, and crosses over Mississippi Street Northeast on a newly constructed pedestrian/bikeway structure adjacent to the BNSF bridges. It continues on the west side of the railroad tracks until 61st Street, where it heads west crossing East River Road (See Figure 7.1).

Activities and Use:

The Rice Creek West Regional Trail/Mississippi River Regional Trail is a paved bikeway/pedestrian trail. Based on 2004 statistics compiled by the Metropolitan Council of the Twin Cities, the Anoka County portion of the Rice Creek Regional trail documented 393,900 uses, and the Mississippi River Regional trail documented 134,200 uses.

Relationship to Similar Adjacent Lands:

The Rice Creek West Regional Trail connects with the Mississippi River Regional Trail that combines regional and local trails and facilities. This trail offers a link from Coon Rapids Dam Regional Park through the cities of Coon Rapids, Fridley, and Columbia Heights into Minneapolis.

Access:

Access points to the trail are all along the bikeway/pedestrian trail.

Ownership/Clauses:

The trail was constructed by the Anoka County Department of Parks and Recreation with funding from the Metropolitan Council. The Department has an agreement with the BNSF to lease the land in the vicinity of the potential track improvements (see agreement between Anoka County Department of Parks and Recreation following the text and figures in this section).

Unusual Site Features:

There are no unusual site features.

Location and Amount of Taking:

Potential track improvements under the revised preferred alternative include adding a third mainline on the east side (railroad north) of the existing tracks between MPs 16.6 and 21.1 (within the cities of Fridley and Coon Rapids). A portion of this new track will have temporary right-of-way impacts to the Rice Creek Regional Trail during the construction of the new bridge over Rice Creek/Locke Lake. The potential impacts would be within a section of the trail where an existing lease agreement between the BNSF and Anoka County is in place. Specifically, up to 350 feet of trail would be temporarily closed to allow for construction of the new bridge to accommodate the third main, and construction staging/access (See Figure 7.2). It is anticipated that based on the required construction activities in this location, the trail would be closed in this area for up to 8 weeks. During construction, the trail crossing under the existing BNSF bridges will be closed. Based on the location of the trail in relation to the existing BNSF tracks, including the existing BNSF bridges over Rice Creek/Locke Lake, along with the area required to accommodate construction of the third mainline (including new bridge over Rice Creek/Locke Lake), there are no feasible or prudent alternatives to the temporary closure of the trail in this area. Upon completion of construction, the trail would be reopened.

Alternatives Including Proposed Action and Avoidance Alternatives and Their Impacts

As stated in the methodology section, the proposed third mainline track improvement was eliminated from the DEIS to the FEIS phase of the project. Since the approval of the FEIS, the BNSF has entered into a Capacity Improvements Engineering Agreement with the NCDA that specifically calls for the inclusion of a third mainline from MP 15.1 to 21.1 to provide adequate track capacity for safe and effective rail operations.

The original third mainline alignment was located on the west side (railroad south) of the existing mainline. As presented in the DEIS/Draft 4(f)/6(f) evaluation, a third mainline alignment on the west side (railroad south) would permanently impact up to 540 feet of the trail, all of which is on leased land from the BNSF. The trail was proposed to be relocated onto Rice Creek Way and Ashton Avenue, returning to the existing bike/pedestrian path through the City Park, to maintain continuity with the new bike/pedestrian crossing over Mississippi Street Northeast.

In an effort to avoid permanent impacts to the trail, representatives of Mn/DOT and its partners have worked with the BNSF to develop the proposed third mainline alignment on the east (railroad north) side of the existing mainline. Locating the third main in the area avoids any direct impacts to the Rice Creek Regional Trail, while providing safe and efficient train operations through this area.

Measures to Minimize Harm

As noted above, the impacts to the trail would be temporary in nature, limited to an eight-week construction period. Measures to minimize disruption could include staging construction during low-use periods on the trail. Based on consultation with the Anoka County Parks, during the construction period, trail closure signs will be posted in the Community Park of Fridley (along the trail), and to the south at the Locke Park entrance point of the trail. Trail users to the south (near Locke Park) will be directed onto East River Road (existing trail route). Based on surrounding land uses and conditions on the east side of the trail, a detour to access the west side of the trail is not considered feasible. Hence, the trail closures signs would be posted over a quarter of a mile away from the actual closure site. In effort to provide adequate trail closure information to facility users, advance “closure signs” will also be posted at the following trail locations (see Figure 7.3):

- Trail crossing at University Avenue (east of trail closure)
- Mississippi Street Northeast bridge crossing (south of trail closure)
- East River Road (multiple locations to the north and east of trail closure)

Mn/DOT and its project partners will also work closely with the Anoka County Parks department regarding the issuance of timely and informative press releases regarding upcoming trail closures associated with construction of the Northstar Corridor Rail project in this area.

Coordination

Mn/DOT and other representatives from the Northstar Corridor Rail project have met on an ongoing basis with representatives from the City of Fridley and the Anoka County Department of Parks and Recreation (Anoka County Parks), regarding potential impacts to the trail. As noted above, the measures to minimize harm have been developed in consultation with the Anoka County Parks. Both the City of Fridley and Anoka County Parks have provided comments regarding the identified temporary impact and mitigation measures (see letters at the end of this section). Anoka County Parks, as the land managing agency, stated in its February 14, 2006 letter “we are in agreement with the design solution (for the new third mainline track bridge over Rice Creek) and do not believe that it will have any negative impacts on the future use of the trail.” Additionally, with regards to the mitigation during the construction period, Anoka Parks provided the following “The plan in place to mitigate the impacts of this closure is acceptable and we fully cooperate with the project managers to inform the public of the closure of the trail through news releases and signage.”

The City of Fridley has indicated that importance of early warning signage during the trail closure, as well as appropriate protective barriers surrounding the construction zone. Both of these requested elements will be included in the final design plans. The City also has gone on record emphasizing that Anoka County’s concerns are addressed regarding the trail closure (see above).

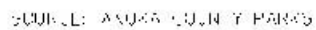
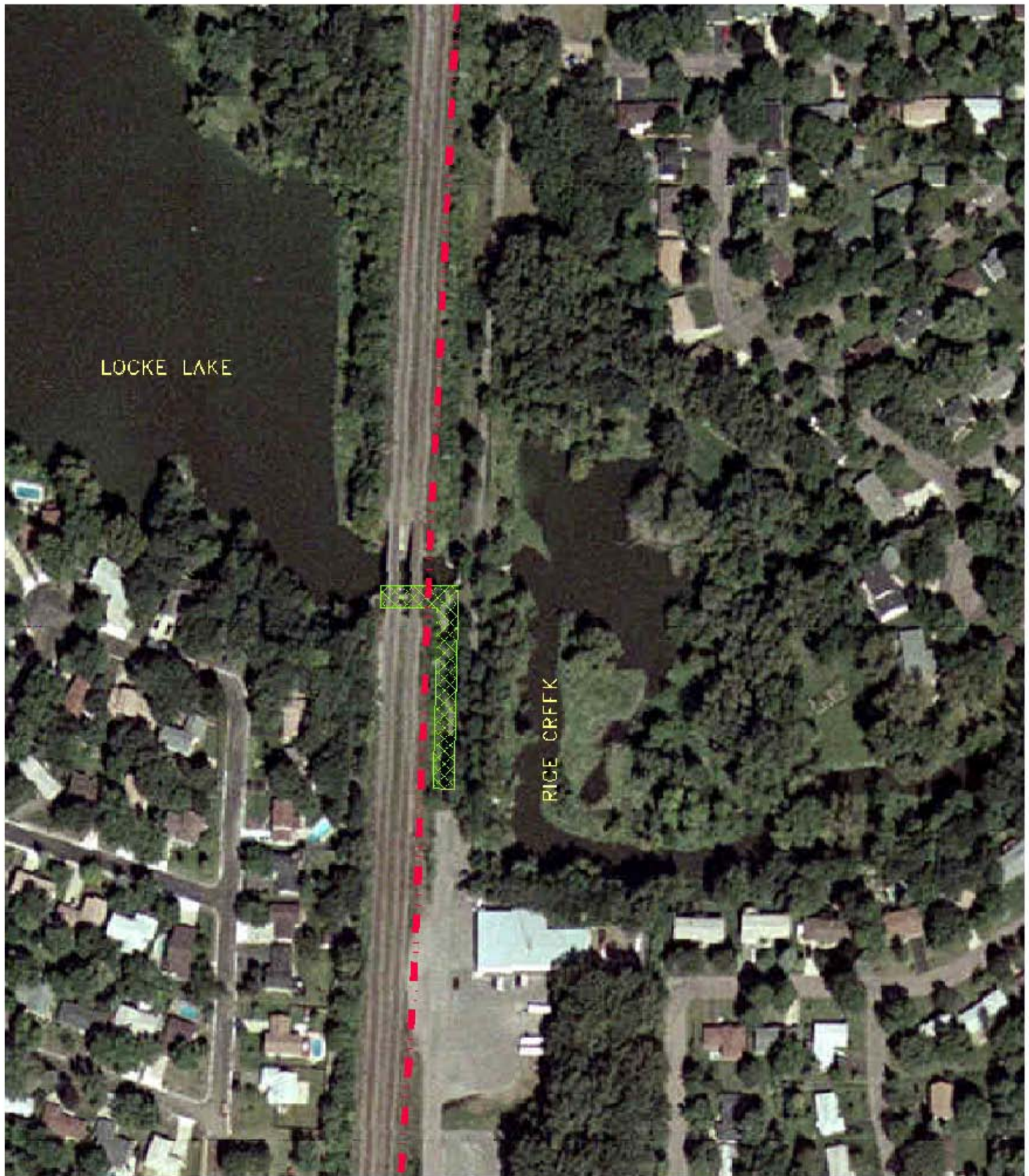


FIGURE 7.1
RICE CREEK WEST REGIONAL TRAIL
MISSISSIPPI RIVER REGIONAL TRAIL IN GENERAL PROJECT AREA



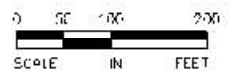
LEGEND



IMPACT AREA



NEW THIRD MAIN



ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

NORTHSTAR CORRIDOR DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY



FIGURE 7.2
POTENTIAL IMPACTS TO RICE CREEK TRAIL



- LEGEND**
- EXISTING RICE CREEK/MISSISSIPPI RIVER REGIONAL TRAIL
 - PROPOSED THIRD MAIN
 - TEMPORARY TRAIL CLOSURE AREA
 - ADVANCE TRAIL CLOSURE SIGNS

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
NORTHSTAR CORRIDOR DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

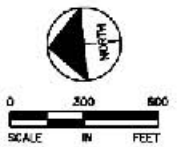


FIGURE 7.3
RICE CREEK REGIONAL TRAIL
MITIGATION DURING CONSTRUCTION

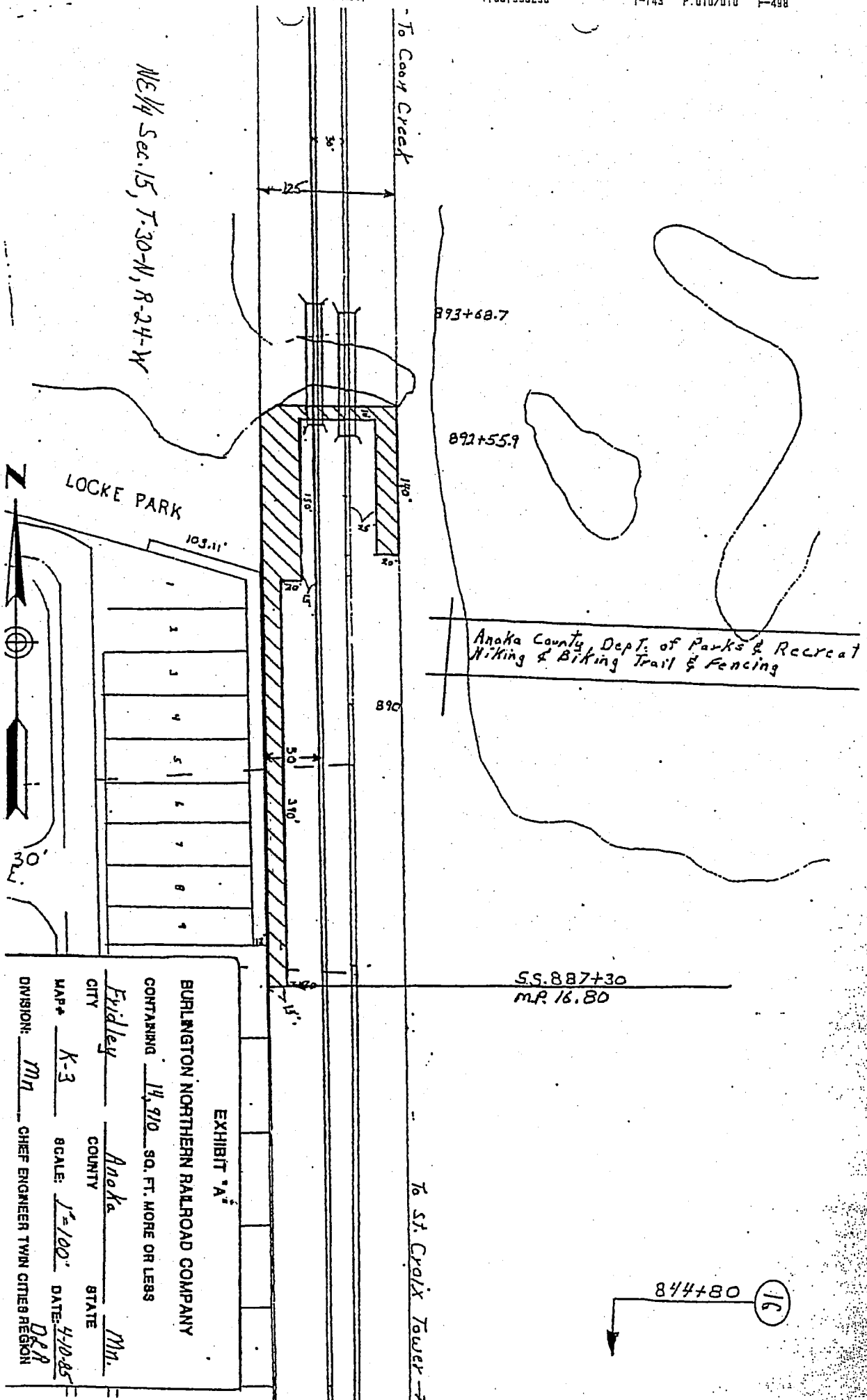


EXHIBIT "A"

BURLINGTON NORTHERN RAILROAD COMPANY

CONTAINING 14,910 SQ. FT. MORE OR LESS

CITY Fridley COUNTY Anoka STATE Mn.

MAP# K-3 SCALE: 1"=100' DATE: 4-10-85

DIVISION: MN CHIEF ENGINEER TWIN CITIES REGION

AGREEMENT made this 1st day of December, 1981,
between ~~BURLINGTON NORTHERN INC.~~ ~~corporation, hereinafter called the "Railroad,"~~
and BURLINGTON NORTHERN RAILROAD COMPANY (formerly BURLINGTON NORTHERN INC.), a Delaware corporation, hereinafter called the "Railroad", and ANOKA COUNTY, DEPARTMENT OF PARKS & RECREATION, whose postoffice address is 550 Bunker Lake Boulevard, Anoka, Minnesota 55303, hereinafter called the "Applicant,"

WITNESSETH;

WHEREAS, the Applicant desires to construct, maintain and use a paved hiking and biking path (hereinafter termed the "facility"), upon the right of way of the Railroad located at Fridley, Anoka County, Minnesota, as shown hatched blue ~~as shown in Red~~ upon the plan which is attached hereto and made a part hereof, marked Exhibit "A," the Railroad consents thereto upon the following terms and conditions: dated September 25, 1981,

1. Applicant shall pay to the Railroad the sum of One Hundred and No/100----- dollars (\$100.00) upon the execution hereof, for the first 5 year period and for each subsequent 5 years that this agreement remains in effect.

2. The Applicant shall construct and maintain the said facility at the Applicant's sole cost and expense and in a manner in all respects satisfactory to the Railroad.

3. Nothing herein contained shall imply or import a covenant on the part of Railroad for quiet enjoyment.

Applicant shall, at its own sole cost and expense and in a manner in all respects satisfactory to Railroad's Minnesota Division Superintendent, construct a chain link fence, on both sides of said hiking and biking path across Railroad property.

4. The Applicant shall and hereby does release and discharge the Railroad of and from any and all liability for damage to or destruction of said facility or any property of the Applicant upon the premises of the Railroad in connection with the construction, maintenance and use thereof, and the Applicant shall and hereby does assume any and all liability for injury to or death of persons or loss of or damage to property in any manner arising from or during the construction, use, maintenance ~~or removal~~ of said facility, however such injury, death, loss, damage or destruction aforesaid may occur or be caused; and the Applicant shall and hereby does indemnify and save harmless the Railroad of and from any and all claims, demands, suits, actions, damages, recoveries, judgments, costs or expenses arising, growing out of or in connection with any such injury, death, loss, damage or destruction aforesaid.

5. Upon the cancellation or termination otherwise of this agreement the Applicant shall at the Applicant's own sole cost and expense and to the satisfaction of the Railroad ~~remove the said facility and restore the premises of the Railroad as near as may be to their now existing condition.~~

~~In the event that the Applicant shall fail to remove or cause to be removed from said premises the said facility prior to the effective date of the cancellation or termination otherwise of this agreement, the Railroad may appropriate the said facility or any part thereof to its own use without compensation to the Applicant or may remove the same at the cost and expense of the Applicant.~~

6. The Applicant shall not assign this agreement ~~or permit any other person or persons to use or occupy any portion of the premises of the Railroad occupied by the said facility~~ without first having obtained the written consent of the Railroad.

7. Either party hereto may cancel and terminate this agreement at any time upon thirty days notice in writing to the other of its intention so to do.

8. All notices to be given by the Railroad to the Applicant hereunder may be effectually given by letter from the Railroad or its agent or attorney deposited postpaid in a United States post office addressed to the Applicant at the Post Office address above stated.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties hereto have executed this agreement the day and year first above written.

In presence of:

BURLINGTON NORTHERN RAILROAD COMPANY

George R. Hennrich
John E. Ellsworth
Brian Gross

By _____
General Manager - Leases

ANOKA COUNTY,
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS & RECREATION

By *William H. Anderson*

Title Chairman of the County Board

DUPLICATE

SUPPLEMENT TO LEASE NO. 239,416

BY MUTUAL AGREEMENT, the description of the property leased to
ANOKA COUNTY, DEPARTMENT OF PARKS & RECREATION, by BURLINGTON NORTHERN RAILROAD
COMPANY (formerly BURLINGTON NORTHERN INC.),

~~BURLINGTON NORTHERN RAILROAD COMPANY~~, at or near Fridley station,
Anoka County, State of Minnesota, under
Lease No. 239,416, dated December 1, 1981, is hereby amended to
read as follows:

All that part of the premises of the said Lessor as shown hatched black
on the print hereto attached, marked Exhibit "A" dated April 10, 1985, and made
a part hereof.

Lessee is hereby allowed to erect and maintain a covered bridge within
the lease site in addition to the paved biking and hiking path.

The rental in said agreement is hereby fixed at One Hundred and No/100
Dollars (\$100.00) per year effective May 1, 1985, and Five Hundred and No/100
Dollars (\$500.00) for each five (5) years thereafter, effective December 1,
1985.

~~The annual rental in said agreement is hereby fixed at~~

~~() per annum, effective~~

~~_____ Dollars,~~

All other terms and conditions of said lease shall remain in full force and effect.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties have executed this agreement as of
this 22nd day of April, 1985.

BURLINGTON NORTHERN
RAILROAD COMPANY

By [Signature]
Manager Leases

In presence of:

[Signature]
[Signature]

FORM 50088 5-74

ANOKA COUNTY,
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS & RECREATION

By [Signature]

Title Director of Parks & Recreation



John K. VonDeLinde
Director

Anoka County Department of Parks and Recreation

550 Bunker Lake Boulevard NW • Andover, Minnesota 55304
Telephone (763) 757-3920 • FAX (763) 755-0230

February 14, 2006

Mr. Bryan Dodds
Northstar Project Office
155 Fifth Avenue South
Suite 755
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55401

Re: Northstar Commuter Rail - Environmental Assessment / Draft 4(f) Evaluation, Rice Creek West and Mississippi River Regional Trails

Dear Mr. Dodds:

This letter is provided in response to the request for comments during the evaluation review period for the above referenced document.

The Anoka County Parks and Recreation Department has reviewed, and is in agreement with, the proposed plans for the Northstar Corridor Rail Project in relation to the Rice Creek West Regional Trail and the Mississippi River Regional Trail.

Based on our review of the Environmental Assessment, and through our meetings with representatives from MnDOT and its partners, we understand that a third mainline rail track will be placed on the east side of the existing line from MP 15.1 to 21.1. This will have the affect of avoiding any impacts to the alignment of the Mississippi River Regional Trail. We appreciate the efforts that were made to avoid permanent impacts to the trail through this change in the project.

Regarding the Rice Creek rail bridge construction associated with this project, we understand that placement of the new bridge may necessitate the shifting of the Rice Creek West Regional Trail and some fill impacts within the 100 year floodplain. We realize that this change is unavoidable. We are in agreement with the design solution and do not believe that it will have any negative impacts on the future use of the trail.

In our meetings with the MnDOT and its partner representatives we were informed that the construction of the Northstar project will result in a temporary closure of the regional trail for up to eight weeks to accommodate the construction of the new bridge and construction staging/access. The plan in place to mitigate the impacts of this closure is acceptable and we will fully cooperate with the project managers to inform the public of the closure of the trail through news releases and signage.

Lastly, I want to also comment positively on the efforts that were made to incorporate the routing of the Mississippi West Regional Trail through the Park and Ride Station in Fridley. The design provides for a safe travel corridor adjacent to the parking lot and the station shelter. It is a well designed interface between the three modes of transportation at that nexus - the rail line, vehicle parking, and the regional trail. It should provide a convenient method of access to the commuter rail line for pedestrians in the area and offer good exposure to the Northstar for the 120,000+ people who use the trail each year.

This concludes the comments of the Anoka County Parks and Recreation Department. We appreciate the opportunity to share our positive views on the efforts that were made to avoid impacts to the regional trail and recreational amenities in the area of the Northstar Commuter Rail project.

If you should need any further assistance from our office, please do not hesitate to contact me at 763.767.2860.

Sincerely,



John K. VonDeLinde
Director of Parks and Recreation

cc: Jon Olson, Public Services Division Manager
Tim Yantos, Project Director, NCDA



RECEIVED - DMC

FEB 17 2006

SEQ. #

FRIDLEY MUNICIPAL CENTER • 6431 UNIVERSITY AVE. N.E. FRIDLEY, MN 55432
(763) 571-3450 • FAX (763) 571-1287 • TTD/TTY (763) 572-3534

February 16, 2006

Bryan Dodds
Northstar Project
Ceresota Building
Suite 755
Mpls., MN 55401

Delivered Via Fax: (612)215-8210, w/Paper to Follow

Dear Mr. Dodds:

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Northstar Corridor plans at this stage of the development. We in Fridley continue to be very excited about the prospect of commuter rail and what it will add to our community. In analyzing the documents for a response at this time, I have spoken with our folks in both the Recreation and Natural Resources Department and our Public Works Engineering staff. Our comments are few. They include: a comment regarding the trail closure between University and the Trestle location near Locke Lake Park, A reminder about the lift station at Mississippi as it relates to the widened overpass, and finally a comment from the Parks and Recreation Director regarding simplicity of east west access for bikers, once the station in Fridley is complete.

Trail Closure

The trail near the proposed 3rd Main trestle may be closed for as much as a year during construction. Our Parks Director has indicated that early warning signage will be essential for the trail users. He also indicated that if acquisition of temporary easements were necessary to assure an alternative trail route exists, he would ask that those easements be acquired by the Authority as opposed to by the City. His final comment on the closure is that the Authority should also request a response from the County Parks Director to make certain that County concerns are addressed regarding the trail closure.

The Public Works Director reiterated our Park's Director's concern regarding the adequacy of trail detour signage and stated that adequate protective barriers should be placed to keep curiosity sockers back a safe distance, if they chose not to take the trail detour, but instead try to use the original trail while the rail construction work is underway.

Bryan Dodds
February 16, 2006
PAGE 2

Lift Station

The Public Works Director wanted to mention the Lift Station relocation that may be necessary for the new overpass over Mississippi Street. Though the City's engineers have spoken with the engineers for the Rail Authority, the Public Works Director simply wanted this comment to serve as a reminder that that relocation will likely be necessary to accommodate the new overpass over Mississippi Street.

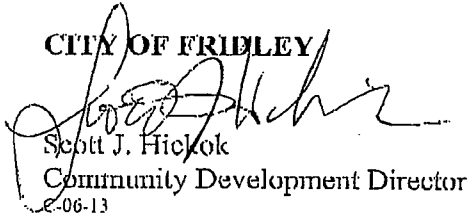
Ease of Crossing Under Rail For Bikers at the 61st Street Alignment

Our Parks and Recreation Director has asked that the Authority consider the best alternative for bikers crossing under the rail at the 61st Street Alignment. By the designs submitted, it is apparent that bikers will have the alternative of taking an elevator or carrying their bikes down the steps. He has asked if a second, open tunnel for bikers has been considered. Though it would be a great asset to the bikers and our east west connections, I recall extensive examination was completed earlier and slope, run distances, space availability and other factors limited the ability for a bike tunnel. Nonetheless, I committed to asking the question.

Thank you again for your ability to comment. If you have questions of me, please call at (763)572-3590.

Sincerely,

CITY OF FRIDLEY



Scott J. Hickok
Community Development Director
C-06-13

8.0 CONCLUSIONS

1. All requirements for environmental review of the proposed project have been met.
2. The EA/Final 4(f) Evaluation and permit processes related to the project have generated information that is sufficient to determine whether the project has the potential for significant effects.
3. Areas where potential environmental effects have been identified are being addressed during the detail design of the project. Mitigation will be provided where impacts are expected to result from project construction, operation, or maintenance. Mitigated measures are incorporated into project design, and have been or will be coordinated with appropriate local and state agencies during the permit process.
4. Based on the criteria in Minnesota Rules part 4410.1700 and 40 CFR 1500, the project does not have the potential for significant environmental effects.



ORDER

Based on the Findings of Fact and Conclusions contained herein and on the entire record:

The Minnesota Department of Transportation, as the state Responsible Governmental Unit, hereby determines that there are no potential significant environmental effects reasonably expected to occur from neither the construction nor the operation of the Northstar Corridor Rail project from downtown Minneapolis to Big Lake, Minnesota. As a result, the Final Environmental Impact Statement remains valid, and no Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement is warranted.

For the Minnesota Department of Transportation

Frank W. Pafko
Chief Environmental Officer
Director, Office of Environmental Services

Date



APPENDICES

Comments and Responses

Section 5.1

Agency Comments Received

JAN 17 2006

SEQ. #



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION V

77 West Jackson Boulevard
Chicago, IL 60604

JAN 10 2006

B-19J

Bryon Dodds
Northstar Project Office
155 Fifth Avenue South
Suite 755
Minneapolis, MN 55401

**Re: Northstar Corridor Rail Project Environmental Assessment/Draft 4(f) Evaluation,
December 22, 2005.**

Dear Mr. Dodds:

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Implementation Section (NIS) has reviewed the above referenced Environmental Assessment (EA) in accordance with our responsibilities under the the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act. The EA was prepared to update information found in the Northstar Corridor Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statements, dated October 2000 and March 2002, respectively.

Based on our review of the information in the EA:

- ☐ The document was not prepared under NEPA.
- ☐ The document was given a cursory review, but other workload priorities precluded us from Detailed review and comment.
- ☒ We determined that there were no significant concerns meriting comment and have no concerns with the updated project, as long as all mitigation measures as identified in the EA are undertaken.
- ☐ We opted to wait for the next level of documentation on this project before deciding whether or not to comment.

We reserve the right to reconsider our determination if significant new data on the project is made available by the sponsoring agency or other interested parties. If you have any questions concerning this letter please call Ms. Laszewski at (312) 886-7501. Thank you for providing us the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Kenneth A. Westlake", is written over a horizontal line.

Kenneth A. Westlake, Chief
NEPA Implementation Section

United States Department of Agriculture



Natural Resources Conservation Service
375 Jackson Street, Suite 600
St. Paul, MN 55101-1854

RECEIVED - DMC

JAN 11 2006

Phone: (651) 602-7900
FAX: (651) 602-7914

SEQ. #

File Code: 190-15-13

January 5, 2006

IN REPLY

REFER TO: Northstar Corridor Rail Project Environmental Assessment/Draft 4(f) Evaluation

Bryan Dodds
Northstar Project Office
155 Fifth Avenue South
Suite 755
Minneapolis, MN 55401


Dear Mr. Dodds:

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has reviewed the above referenced project. The project sponsors are not USDA program benefit recipients, thus the wetland conservation provisions of the 1985 Food Security act, as amended are not applicable. It should be noted, however, that actions by a non-USDA participant third party (project sponsor) which impact agricultural wetlands owned or operated by USDA participants, may jeopardize the owner/operators USDA eligibility. If such impacts are anticipated, the owner/operator should contact the county Farm Service Agency (FSA) office to consider an application for a third party exemption.

Finally, because of the location and type of activity proposed this project does not appear to impact agricultural lands, and a Federal Farmland Policy Protection Act (FPPA) site assessment/land evaluation will not be required.

Thank you for the opportunity to review such a sustainable, community development project. We look forward to continued involvement in the project review process. As the project continues towards development, please feel free to contact us concerning any unique, or prime farmland protection concerns which may arise.

Sincerely



WILLIAM E. LORENZEN
Environmental Review/Justice Coordinator

RECEIVED - DMO

JAN 11 2006

651-201-6369
Becky.balk@state.mn.us

SEQ. #

January 5, 2006

Bryan Dodds
Northstar Project Office
155 Fifth Avenue South
Suite 755
Minneapolis, MN 55401

RE: Northstar Corridor Rail Project Environmental Assessment/Draft 4(f) Evaluation

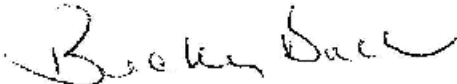
Dear Mr. Dodds:

In 2000 and 2002 the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) commented on the Northstar Corridor Project Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS). The MDA's comments at that time were addressed through mitigation measures under Section 4.1, which satisfied our concerns. However, the latest environmental assessment/draft (4) evaluation with the proposed changes no longer includes or addresses our concerns. The MDA's comments were as follows:

- Section 4.8 in the EA should address the acreage or impact of severed, triangulated or isolated farmland resulting from the alignment alternatives. The impact may be farming remnants that are difficult from a practical standpoint. There may be problems of getting to the field and once there, problems of maneuvering farm equipment on the field. Also, smaller fields that are oddly shaped may be less valuable than fields of typical dimension and size.
- The parcels of farmland should be identified by location and acreage.

Thank you for the opportunity to review the project. Please contact me at (651) 201-6369 if you have any questions regarding this matter.

Sincerely,



Becky Balk, Agricultural Land Use Planner
Agricultural Resources Management and Development Division

cc: Joe Martin
Paul Burns
Bob Patton



Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

February 7, 2006

RECEIVED - DMC

FEB 14 2006

SEQ. #

Mr. Bryan Dodds
Northstar Project Office
155 Fifth Avenue South
Suite 755
Minneapolis, MN 55401

RE: Northstar Corridor Rail Project Environmental Assessment/Draft 4(f) Evaluation

Dear Mr. Dodds:

1 [Thank you for the opportunity to review the Environmental Assessment/Draft 4(f) Evaluation report (Report), dated December 22, 2005, for the Northstar Corridor Rail Project (the Project). Regarding matters for which the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) has regulatory responsibility and other interests, the MPCA Environmental Review Unit staff did not identify any issues that we wish to specifically comment on at this time. It appears that the Report provides an adequate update of the Project conditions described in the Final Environmental Impact Statement previously completed for the Project. This letter does not constitute approval by the MPCA of any or all elements of the Project for the purpose of pending or future permit action(s) by the MPCA. It is the responsibility of the Project proposer to secure any required permits and to comply with any requisite permit conditions. If you have any questions concerning our review of the Report, please contact me at (651) 296-8011.

Sincerely,

Jessica Ebertz
Planner Principal
Environmental Review and Operations Section
Regional Division

JE:mbo



Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

500 Lafayette Road
St. Paul, Minnesota 55155-40__

TBD- s/B
#18-5.1-7

RECEIVED - DMC

FEB 21 2006

SEQ. #

February 16, 2006

Bryan Dodds
Northstar Project Office
155 Fifth Avenue South
Suite 755
Minneapolis, MN 55401

Dear Mr Dodds:

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has reviewed the Northstar Corridor Rail Project Environmental Assessment/Draft 4(f) Evaluation. This document evaluates whether there have been significant changes to the proposed action, the affected environment, the anticipated impacts or the proposed mitigation measures required since the ROD was issued for the project.

1 It does not appear that the changes in anticipated impacts are significant enough to warrant a new EIS. However, residential and commercial development around the revised Big Lake Station may impact Public Water Wetland #65 (wetland 19). Establishing a protective buffer around Public Water Wetland #65 could offset impacts of this development. Establishing this buffer could be mitigation in part (public value credit) for the proposed 7.23 acres of wetland impact, as well as mitigation for impacts to prairie remnants as discussed on page 51.

Thank you for the opportunity to review this Environmental Assessment. Please contact me with any questions regarding this letter.

Sincerely,

Dennis Thompson, Principal Planner
Environmental Policy and Review Unit
Division of Ecological Services

C: Wayne Barstad, Steve Colvin, Julie Ekman, Tom Hovey, Mike North, Rebecca Wooden

H:\Environmental Review\Northstar Corridor Review.doc

DNR Information: 651-296-6157 • 1-888-646-6367 • TTY: 651-296-5484 • 1-800-657-3929

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February 9, 2006

FEB 14 2006

SEQ. #

Mr. Brian Dodds
Northstar Project Office
155 Fifth Avenue South
Suite 755
Minneapolis, MN 55401

Re: Metropolitan Council comments on the Northstar Corridor Rail Project
Environmental Assessment/Draft 4(f) Evaluation (Referral No. 19671-1)

Dear Mr. Dodds:

The Metropolitan Council staff has reviewed the Northstar Corridor Rail Project
Environmental Assessment/Draft 4(f) Evaluation (EA/Draft) and is forwarding the
attached comments.

If you have any questions relative to the EA/Draft, the following staff persons should be
contacted:

Jim Barton, Transportation (651) 602-1735
Anna Vouck, Environmental Services (651) 602- 1125

Sincerely,

Arlene Mc Carthy
Acting Director, Metropolitan Transportation Services

Attachments:

Cc: Tim Yantos, Northstar Corridor Development Authority
Tony Pistilli, Council Member, District 2
Annette Meeks, Council Member, District 7
Lynette Wittsack, Council Member, District 8
Natalie Steffen, Council Member, District 9



February 9, 2006

Metropolitan Council comments on the Northstar Corridor Rail Project Environmental Assessment/Draft 4(f) Evaluation

Environmental Services – Anna Vouck (651) 602- 1125

The majority of the changes should not have an impact on the MCES interceptor system. However, the addition of the third mainline track may create an issue. A large stretch of the two existing tracks lies along MCES interceptor 4-NS-521. The construction of a third line could negatively impact the operation of 4-NS-521, depending on the exact placement of the track. A detailed set of plans is necessary to determine the track's proximity to the interceptor.

There are also several points where the current track intersects the MCES sewer system. The following interceptors are of particular concern: 7707 in Anoka, 4-NS-521 in Coon Rapids, 69U1-70U2 in Fridley, 4-FR-440 in Fridley, and 1-MN-303 in Minneapolis. Again, the addition of a third track could affect the operation of the previously mentioned interceptors.

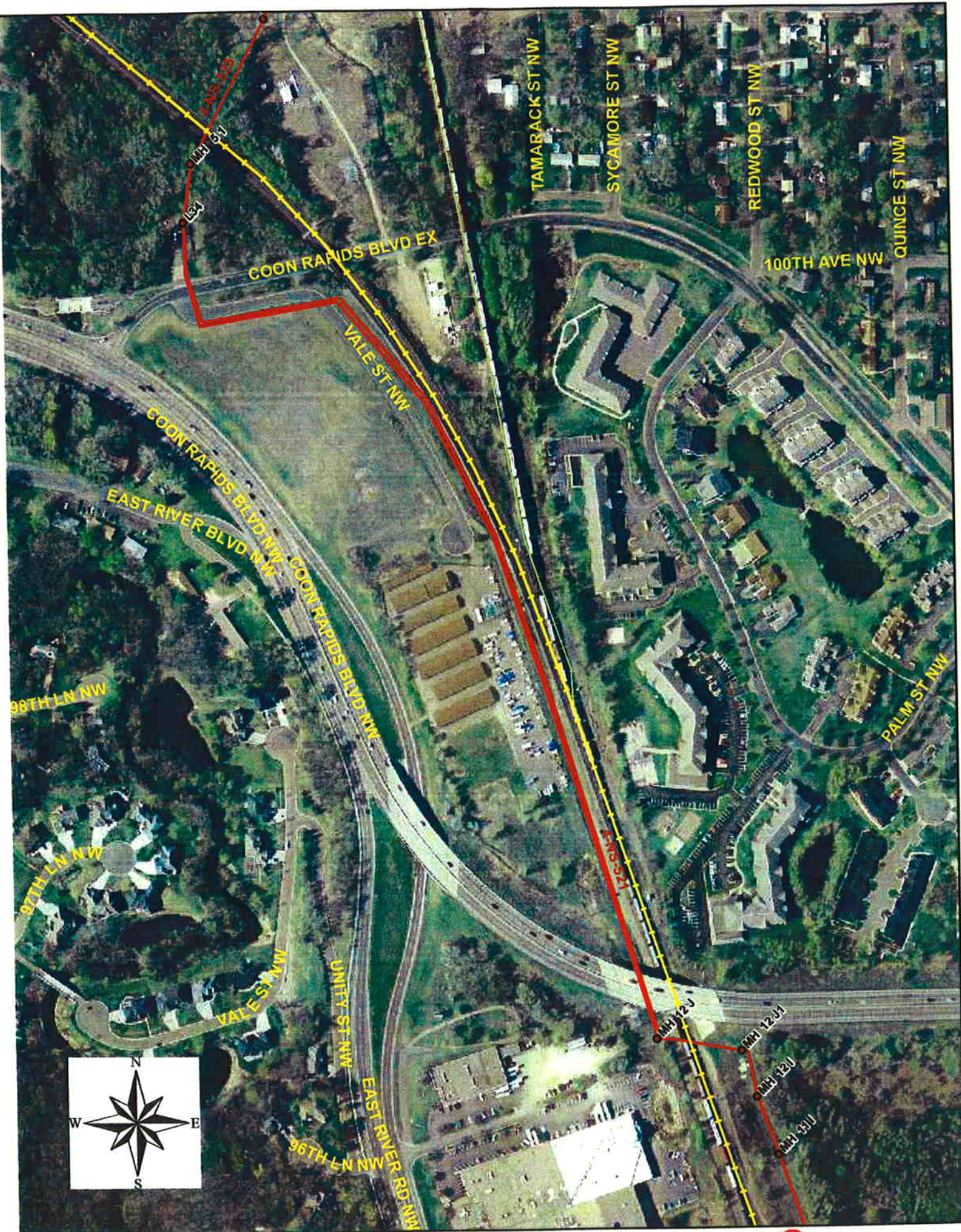
In addition, both the realignment of the light rail line and the construction of the Minneapolis Intermodal Station along 5th Street could pose a problem. The realignment is within close proximity to MCES interceptor 1-MN-320 and should be further investigated. Furthermore, the Minneapolis Intermodal Station is planned for construction over 1-MN-320.

Conclusion/Recommendations

1 The submitted documents do not indicate that the proposed construction will produce any substantial impact to the regional wastewater system. However, plans detailing the construction of the third rail line, the Minneapolis Intermodal Station, and the realignment of the light rail line should be provided to MCES. This information will be needed to ensure that neither the proposed construction nor realignment of the light rail line will interfere with the functionality of the MCES sewer system. A map and six aerial photos detailing the locations where the proposed construction intersects the MCES sewer system are attached. These areas are of particular concern and should be given careful consideration before construction is initiated. Consequently, after preliminary plans pertaining to the project are completed, it is requested that one set be forwarded to Scott Dentz of MCES for review. The plans should be mailed to the following address:

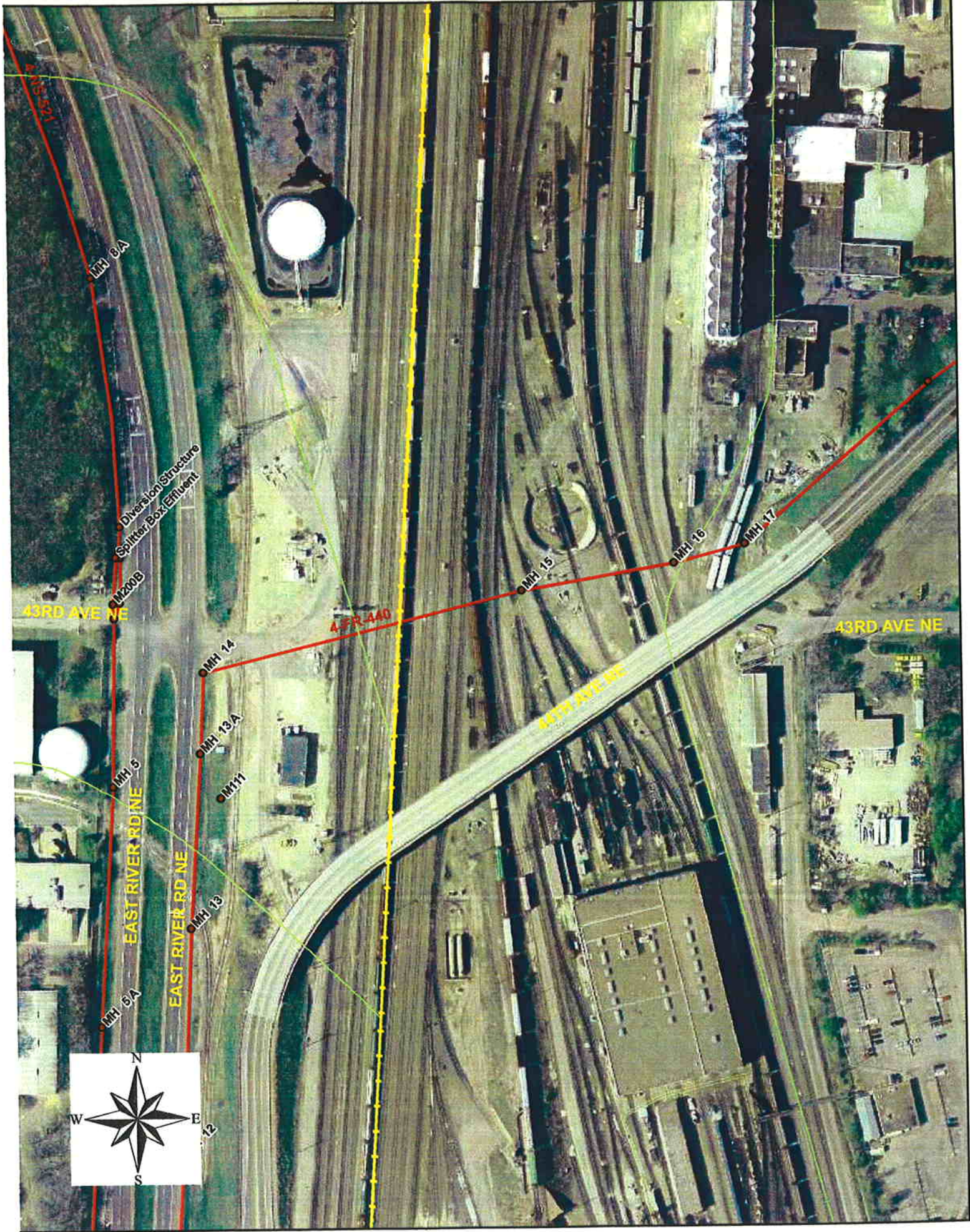
Scott Dentz
3565 Kennebec Drive
Eagan, MN 55122-1058





1A









John K. VonDeLinde
Director

Anoka County Department of Parks and Recreation

550 Bunker Lake Boulevard NW • Andover, Minnesota 55304
Telephone (763) 757-3920 • FAX (763) 755-0230

February 14, 2006

Mr. Bryon Dodds
Northstar Project Office
155 Fifth Avenue South
Suite 755
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55401

Re: Northstar Commuter Rail - Environmental Assessment / Draft 4(f) Evaluation, Rice Creek West and Mississippi River Regional Trails

Dear Mr. Dodds:

This letter is provided in response to the request for comments during the evaluation review period for the above referenced document.

- 1 [The Anoka County Parks and Recreation Department has reviewed, and is in agreement with, the proposed plans for the Northstar Corridor Rail Project in relation to the Rice Creek West Regional Trail and the Mississippi River Regional Trail.

Based on our review of the Environmental Assessment, and through our meetings with representatives from MnDOT and its partners, we understand that a third mainline rail track will be placed on the east side of the existing line from MP 15.1 to 21.1. This will have the affect of avoiding any impacts to the alignment of the Mississippi River Regional Trail. We appreciate the efforts that were made to avoid permanent impacts to the trail through this change in the project.

- 2 [Regarding the Rice Creek rail bridge construction associated with this project, we understand that placement of the new bridge may necessitate the shifting of the Rice Creek West Regional Trail and some fill impacts within the 100 year floodplain. We realize that this change is unavoidable. We are in agreement with the design solution and do not believe that it will have any negative impacts on the future use of the trail.

- 3 [In our meetings with the MnDOT and its partner representatives we were informed that the construction of the Northstar project will result in a temporary closure of the regional trail for up to eight weeks to accommodate the construction of the new bridge and construction staging/access. The plan in place to mitigate the impacts of this closure is acceptable and we will fully cooperate with the project managers to inform the public of the closure of the trail through news releases and signage.

4

Lastly, I want to also comment positively on the efforts that were made to incorporate the routing of the Mississippi West Regional Trail through the Park and Ride Station in Fridley. The design provides for a safe travel corridor adjacent to the parking lot and the station shelter. It is a well designed interface between the three modes of transportation at that nexus - the rail line, vehicle parking, and the regional trail. It should provide a convenient method of access to the commuter rail line for pedestrians in the area and offer good exposure to the Northstar for the 120,000+ people who use the trail each year.

This concludes the comments of the Anoka County Parks and Recreation Department. We appreciate the opportunity to share our positive views on the efforts that were made to avoid impacts to the regional trail and recreational amenities in the area of the Northstar Commuter Rail project.

If you should need any further assistance from our office, please do not hesitate to contact me at 763.767.2860.

Sincerely,



John K. VonDeLinde
Director of Parks and Recreation

cc: Jan Olson, Public Services Division Manager
Tim Yantos, Project Director, NCDA



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FEB 17 2006

SEQ. #

FRIDLEY MUNICIPAL CENTER • 6431 UNIVERSITY AVE. N.E. FRIDLEY, MN 55432
(763) 571-3450 • FAX (763) 571-1287 • TTD/TTY (763) 572-3534

February 16, 2006

Bryan Dodds
Northstar Project
Ceresota Building
Suite 755
Mpls., MN 55401

Delivered Via Fax: (612)215-8210, w/Paper to Follow

Dear Mr. Dodds:

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Northstar Corridor plans at this stage of the development. We in Fridley continue to be very excited about the prospect of commuter rail and what it will add to our community. In analyzing the documents for a response at this time, I have spoken with our folks in both the Recreation and Natural Resources Department and our Public Works Engineering staff. Our comments are few. They include: a comment regarding the trail closure between University and the Trestle location near Locke Lake Park, A reminder about the lift station at Mississippi as it relates to the widened overpass, and finally a comment from the Parks and Recreation Director regarding simplicity of east west access for bikers, once the station in Fridley is complete.

Trail Closure

- The trail near the proposed 3rd Main trestle may be closed for as much as a year during construction. Our Parks Director has indicated that early warning signage will be essential for the trail users. He also indicated that if acquisition of temporary easements were necessary to assure an alternative trail route exists, he would ask that those easements be acquired by the Authority as opposed to by the City. His final comment on the closure is that the Authority should also request a response from the County Parks Director to make certain that County concerns are addressed regarding the trail closure.
- 1
- The Public Works Director reiterated our Park's Director's concern regarding the adequacy of trail detour signage and stated that adequate protective barriers should be placed to keep curiosity seekers back a safe distance, if they chose not to take the trail detour, but instead try to use the original trail while the rail construction work is underway.
- 2
-

Bryan Dodds
February 16, 2006
PAGE 2

Lift Station

3 The Public Works Director wanted to mention the Lift Station relocation that may be necessary for the new overpass over Mississippi Street. Though the City's engineers have spoken with the engineers for the Rail Authority, the Public Works Director simply wanted this comment to serve as a reminder that that relocation will likely be necessary to accommodate the new overpass over Mississippi Street.

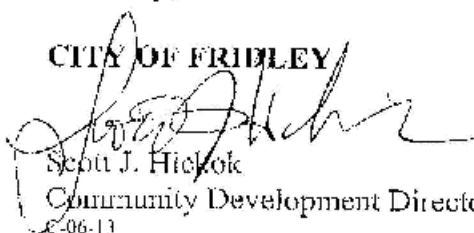
Ease of Crossing Under Rail For Bikers at the 61st Street Alignment

4 Our Parks and Recreation Director has asked that the Authority consider the best alternative for bikers crossing under the rail at the 61st Street Alignment. By the designs submitted, it is apparent that bikers will have the alternative of taking an elevator or carrying their bikes down the steps. He has asked if a second, open tunnel for bikers has been considered. Though it would be a great asset to the bikers and our east west connections, I recall extensive examination was completed earlier and slope, run distances, space availability and other factors limited the ability for a bike tunnel. Nonetheless, I committed to asking the question.

Thank you again for your ability to comment. If you have questions of me, please call at (763)572-3590.

Sincerely,

CITY OF FRIDLEY


Scott J. Hickok

Community Development Director

2-06-17

Section 5.1

Responses to Agency Comments



Section 5.1 - Responses to Agency Comments

5.1.1 United States Environmental Protection Agency

Comment

Response

1. Your comment that there were no significant concerns meriting comment and that you have no concerns with the updated project, as long as all mitigation measures identified in the EA are undertaken is so noted.

5.1.2 Natural Resource Conservation Service

Comment

Response

1. Your comment stating that this project does not appear to impact agricultural lands, and a Federal Farmland Policy Protection Act (FPPA) site assessment/land evaluation is not required is so noted.

5.1.3 Minnesota Department of Agriculture

Comment

Response

1. See the updated Farmlands Section (Section 4.2 of the Findings Document).

5.1.4 Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

Comment

Response

1. Your comment stating the “report provides an adequate update of the project conditions described in the Final Environmental Impact Statement previously completed for the project” is so noted.

5.1.5 Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

Comment

Response

1. Your comment that “it does not appear that the changes in anticipated impacts are significant enough to warrant a new EIS” is so noted.

Section 4.9 of the EA identified 2.09 acres of potential wetland impacts under the revised preferred alternative. It also referenced that the MnDNR was currently field verifying the Ordinary High

Water mark for Wetland 19 (MnDNR Protected Water Wetland 65W). As presented in section 4.3 of this Findings Document, the MnDNR has identified an OHW of 925.6 at the aforementioned wetland in Big Lake. Figure 4.1 of the Findings Document presents the proposed wetland mitigation plan for the identified project impacts. It is anticipated that both the Public Value Credit (PVC) and new wetland credit can be accommodated at the Big Lake site.

5.1.6

Metropolitan Council

Comment

Response

1. Your comment that “the submitted documents do not indicate that the proposed construction will produce any substantial impact to the regional wastewater system” is so noted. In response to your request regarding submittal of design plans, the Northstar Project Office has submitted appropriate copies to the Metropolitan Council, MCES, for review. Mn/DOT and its local partners will continue to work with the MCES to avoid potential impacts to the MCES sewer system associated with the proposed action.

5.1.7

Anoka County, Department of Parks and Recreation

Comment

Response

1. Your statement of agreement with the proposed Northstar Corridor plans is so noted.
2. Your statement of agreement with the design solutions associated with proposed new bridge over Rice Creek, that will temporarily impact the Rice Creek Regional Trail is so noted.
3. Your statement of agreement with the plan to mitigate impacts associated with the temporary closure of the Rice Creek Regional Trail is so noted.
4. Your statement of support for the integration of the Mississippi West Regional Trail through the Fridley station is so noted.

5.1.8

City of Fridley

Comment

Response

1. Current construction plans call for a temporary closure of the Rice Creek Regional Trail at the Locke Lake/Rice Creek crossing for 6 to 8 weeks. At this time, an alternative trail path during the construction period is not proposed; but rather extensive trail closure signs, and routing bike path users to access the trail on East River Road (western side of railroad right of way). If in the future, construction plans call for temporary easements to accommodate an alternative trail path, Mn/DOT will acquire said easements on behalf of the NCDA.

Anoka Parks received a copy of the December 2005 EA/Draft 4(f) Evaluation, and have provided a comment letter (February 14, 2006). The proposed mitigation defined in the Draft (f) Evaluation reflects the mitigation techniques discussed with Anoka Park staff during the preparation of the EA/Draft 4(f) Evaluation.
2. Trail closure signs will be placed at the locations specified in Figure 6.3 of the EA. Final design plans will include these referenced trail closure signs. During construction, barriers such as chain link fencing will be placed around the construction area to prohibit people from entering the construction zone.
3. The City's comment regarding the potential relocation of the existing Lift station to accommodate the new overpass at Mississippi Street is so noted. At this time, Mn/DOT at its project partners are negotiating the need to relocate the lift station with the BNSF. If relocation is required, it will be included in the final design plans for the project.
4. The current design plans for the Fridley station include an underpass to connect the east and west sides of the station. The proposed underpass at this station improves both pedestrian and bicycle safety conditions at this location, as current conditions do not provide a grade separated crossing of the BNSF tracks in this area. In terms of feasibility of constructing a tunnel in this location to accommodate bikers, there are several site conditions that would result in high construction costs and impacts to the surrounding area. More specifically, there is a sanitary sewer interceptor on the west side of the tracks that precludes a straight connection down to a tunnel. On the east side, a tunnel in this area would require a significant amount of right of way acquisition. Maintenance of a tunnel in this area (e.g. snow plowing) would also be of concern.

Section 5.2

Public Comments Received

Please make my comment part of the official record.
Peter Biorn
135 154th Drive NW
Elk River, MN 55330
763 263-1025

----- Original Message -----

From: "Bryan Dodds" <bryan.dodds@dot.state.mn.us>
To: <pb263@sherbtel.net>
Sent: Tuesday, January 31, 2006 3:51 PM
Subject: Re: one track

Thank you for your comment. The official comment period for the Northstar Corridor Rail Project Environmental Assessment (EA)/Draft 4(f) Evaluation is from January 2, 2006 to February 16, 2006. During this time any comments received regarding the EA will be included in the official record. Please clarify to me whether your comment is regarding the EA and should be included in the official record, or if it is a general project question. Comments for the official record will be responded to in the final environmental document in the upcoming months. If you wish to have your comment be a part of the official EA record, please provide your name, address, and phone number so that the final environmental document can be mailed to you when it is completed. General project questions which you do not want as part of the official record will be responded to shortly via email or phone.

Please respond to this email indicating if your comment should be included in the official record for the EA (include name, address, and phone) or if it is a general project question that can be responded to via email or phone.

Thank you for taking time to comment.

Bryan Dodds
Northstar Project Office
155 Fifth Avenue South, Suite 755
Minneapolis, MN 55401
Phone: 612-215-8200
Fax: 612-215-8210
email: bryan.dodds@mnrail.org

>>> "Peter Biorn" <pb263@sherbtel.net> 1/20/2006 6:24 PM >>>

Bryan,

Could you tell me are they going to add a second track between Elk River and Big lake? Currently there are always trains parked behind my house be cause they have to wait for oncomming trains to pass. Look forward to your reply.

Thank you,

Peter Biorn

1

1 [

I spoke to someone over at the Hennepin County office for transportation that told me about the meeting in Minneapolis however I can't make it. I ride the LRT daily and do have some specific feedback about station design. What is the best way if I am unable to attend meetings to provide input? It would be nice to see a survey or feedback form on the website since that would be easy! The rail is a great solution to the increasing congestion and will be well used as the Hiawatha line has been.

1

My email was a casual reaction to a glimmer or hope that Central MN would soon benefit from a possible service extension and for my personal convenience.

Didn't realize I could contribute in an official way but will accept that opportunity. Don't know what an EA is but sounds like an opportunity for citizens who actually see, smell, hear, etc. on a daily basis the proposed improvement can object formally. I on the other hand, living 60+ miles NW of St. Cloud, see a great environmental improvement and advantage with clean, quiet, convenient, dependable light rail transit becoming an option to auto travel to points south rather than the expense, safety risk, traffic frustration and exhaust pollution endured without LRT.

All these factors impact my personal internal environment in addition to the world around me. My wife & I rode the LRT from Fort Snelling to the center city and back to evaluate it and found the experience to be very efficient and economical. Feel free to edit my comments as needed but count us as strong advocates. Thank you.

John T. & Phylliss Mosby
22485 Gooseberry Trail
Long Prairie, MN 56347
(320) 732-6494

--- Bryan Dodds <bryan.dodds@dot.state.mn.us> wrote:

>Thank you for your comment. The official comment period for the Northstar Corridor Rail Project Environmental Assessment (EA)/Draft 4(f) Evaluation is from January 2, 2006 to February 16, 2006. During this time any comments received regarding the EA will be included in the official record. Please clarify to me whether your comment is regarding the EA and should be included in the official record, or if it is a general project question. Comments for the official record will be responded to in the final environmental document in the upcoming months. If you wish to have your comment be a part of the official EA record, please provide your name, address, and phone number so that the final environmental document can be mailed to you when it is completed. General project questions which you do not want as part of the official record will be responded to shortly via email or phone.
> Please respond to this email indicating if your comment should be included in the official record for the EA (include name, address, and phone) or if it is a general project question that can be responded to via email or phone.

>

> Thank you for taking time to comment.

>

> Bryan Dodds
> Northstar Project Office
> 155 Fifth Avenue South, Suite 755
> Minneapolis, MN 55401
> Phone: 612-215-8200
> Fax: 612-215-8210
> email: bryan.dodds@mnrail.org

2

> >>> john mosby <jtmosby@yahoo.com> 1/16/2006 11:04
> AM >>>
> Having retired and moved to central MN within the last
> 6 months, today's article in the Startribune about the next
northward leg gets my interest. The original concept drew that
line to the St. Cloud area but my recollection is that money was
the main obstacle plus the BNSF trackage not ready or available
for commuter use. Details aside, does there appear to be hope
for light rail service beyond Big Lake at some point?
Now a resident up here, I can imagine a one hour drive to St.
Cloud, park the car and ride the train to downtown Mpls, the
airport or MoA. Can you give me any hope for the next five years
from your point of view?
>
>
> John T. Mosby
> 22485 Gooseberry Trail
> Long Prairie, MN 56347
> (612) 868-9790

Comment Form
Northstar Corridor Rail Project
Environmental Assessment/Draft 4(f) Evaluation
Public Hearing - January 26, 2006



RECEIVED - DMC

Comments:

JAN 31 2006

I have been excited about mass transit since its inception. I grew up in the Chicago area and am well indoctrinated into its advantages. Not just for workers but also very much for retirees.

SEQ. #

Thank-you

Data Privacy Warning

All "written statements" received prior to the close of the comment period will be included in the public hearing record.

Please include

Your Name:

Peg Lushik

Address:

121 Hartman Circle

Phone:

(if commenter)

763-571-3180

Organization name:

(if applicable)

Please fill out card tonight and drop in the Comment Box, or submit to the address below by February 16, 2006.

Bryan Dodds

Northstar Project Office

155 Fifth Avenue South, Suite 755

Minneapolis, Minnesota 55401

Phone: 612-215-8200

Fax: 612-215-8210

E-mail: bryan.dodds@mnrail.org

31 January 2006

Mr. Bryan Dodds
Northstar Project Office
155 Fifth Avenue South
Suite 755
Minneapolis Minnesota 55401

RECEIVED - DMC

FEB 01 2006

SEQ. #

RE: Public comment on the Northstar Corridor Rail Project EA/Draft 4(f) Evaluation of changes to Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) dated March 2002 and the Record of Decision (ROD) dated December 2002.

1 After a thorough review of all the proposed changes (1) revised minimum operating segment, (2) Big Lake maintenance facility relocation, (3) Big Lake station relocation, (4) addition of third mainline track segment, (5) change in Hiawatha LRT alignment and, (6) repositioning of the Minneapolis Inter-modal Station to the FEIS of March 2002 with ROD of December 2002, I find that all of the above changes along with any proposed mitigation actions IMPROVE the Northstar Commuter Rail project in a POSITIVE manner.

2 One additional enhancement should be considered, especially since the MOS has been truncated and now ends at Big Lake station is the provision of a multi-day parking option for the Big Lake station in addition to or in conjunction with the currently proposed daily parking area.

Because of the truncation now at Big Lake there will be a significant demand for a multi-day parking option at this location.

Many people who would have been able to access the Northstar Commuter rail line at the locations along the Phase II section stations will want multi-day parking now at the Big Lake station.



Robert L. Anderson
12981 251st Avenue
PO Box 175
Staples Minnesota 56479-0175
218.894.3813 blander@staplesnet.com

Dear Bryan,

1 I am writing as a concerned resident of Coon Rapids regarding the Northstar Rail System. I am in favor of the rail system, but my only concern is that it is located right behind my home. Right now it is the current Park & Ride in Riverdale. I am wondering if there are plans to put a sound wall or some type of barrier between the homes and the tracks. I have young children, as do many of my neighbors, and am concerned for their safety and the safety of our neighborhood. It is inevitable that there is going to be unwanted traffic in this area as there has been with the park & ride. I have been able to watch out my window as they have arrested someone breaking into a vehicle. I don't want to have to worry about this. I feel we have a very safe neighborhood and would like to continue living there as I have for the past 15 years. Please put yourself in my position and if lived where I did. I am sure you would do what you could to keep your family safe.

2 From the plans that we received in the mail, it looked as though the platform will be right on our side of the tracks in my backyard. Is it possible for you to send or email me plans so that I can see where exactly what the layout is going to be. I was unable to attend the last meeting in Coon Rapids. Possibly, there will be another one in the near future.

Sincerely,

Michelle & Todd Wilson
3401 121st Avenue NW
Coon Rapids, MN 55433
763-422-8932
wilsonstoddmichelle@msn.com

RECEIVED - DMC

1 February 2006

FEB 03 2006

SEQ. #

Mr. Bryan Dodds
Northstar Project Office
155 Fifth Avenue South
Suite 755
Minneapolis Minnesota 55401

Public comments on Northstar Corridor changes since FEIS

1 [Considering the positive cost effectiveness factors regarding the changes in the MOS from downtown Minneapolis to Big Lake, the deferment of construction of the Northeast Minneapolis and Coon Rapids-Foley stations, and the relocation of the maintenance facility to Big Lake, I believe all of these changes positively impact the overall project without any undesirable consequences.

The shift in the location of the Big Lake station will now allow for the expansion of the parking area and will be a positive change along with the safety improvements due to the relocation.

2 [In addition there should be consideration given to the addition of a multi-day parking option at this station. Due to the shortening of the line that will not now include the East St. Cloud and Rice stations, many potential riders who would have used these stations will need a multi-day parking option available at the new end of the line station at Big Lake.

The addition of the Third Mainline from MP 15.1 to MP 21.1 will also be a positive addition.

The changes involving the Hiawatha Light Rail alignment to the south side of 5th street and the relocation of the Minneapolis Intermodal Station to the area under and north of 5th street North is a very positive move considering the improvements in circulation and connectivity to existing and proposed development in the area. By providing the traveler a user friendly connection between the Hiawatha Light Rail line and the Northstar Commuter Rail Project at the Minneapolis Intermodal Station we will greatly enhance the benefits from these extremely cost effective investments in our areas multi-modal transportation system.



Shirley Anderson
12981 251st Avenue
PO Box 175
Staples MN 56479-0175
2188943813

55401+2141 0011

MINNEAPOLIS, MN 55401
155 FIFTH AVENUE SOUTH - SUITE 7
NORTHSTAR PROJECT OFFICE
BRYAN DODDS
SEQ. #

FEB 06 2006

RECEIVED - D

MINNEAPOLIS MN 554
FEB 06 2006 PM 4

1238 PRAIRIE CREEK LN
MONTICELLO, MN 55362

Comment Form
Northstar Corridor Rail Project
Environmental Assessment/Draft 4(f) Evaluation
Public Hearing - January 30, 2006



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FEB 06 2006

SEQ. #

Comments: MANY of THE PRO COMMENTS AT
THE MEETING WERE RIDICULOUS. TWO
DIFFERENT PROponents SAID IT WOULD MAKE
IT EASIER TO VISIT MY GRANDCHILDREN. THE
MAJOR REASON TO SUPPORT CORRIDOR RAIL IS THE
PRICE OF FUEL. WHEN IT STARTS RISING THOSE
AGAINST THE PROJECT WILL BE CRITICIZING YOU FOR NOT GETTING
IT DONE
SCOOPER.

Please include

Your Name: BOB GREVENOW

Address: | Bob & Mary Grevenow LANE
1238 Prairie Creek lane 55362
Phone: | Monticello, MN 55362
(of comm.) 763-295-4749

Organization name:
(if applicable)

Please fill out card tonight and drop in the Comment Box,
or submit to the address below by February 16, 2006.

Bryan Dodds
Northstar Project Office
155 Fifth Avenue South, Suite 755
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55401
Phone: 612-215-8200
Fax: 612-215-8210
E-mail: bryan.dodds@mnrail.org

Comment Form
Northstar Corridor Rail Project
Environmental Assessment/Draft 4(f) Evaluation
Public Hearing - January 30, 2006



FEB

Comments:

1 I was wondering why there hasn't been a commitment or agreement made with Burlington. SEQ. #

2 I am in favor of Northstar and want it to happen. We need a better, safer, faster way of traveling into Mnpl.

Data Privacy Warning

All 'written statements' received prior to the close of the comment period will be included in the public hearing record.

Please Include

Your Name: Lola Johns

Address: 16675 245th Ave

Phone: Big Lake, MN 55309

(of commenter) 763-263-3166

Organization name: NONE
(if applicable)

Please fill out card tonight and drop in the Comment Box, or submit to the address below by February 16, 2006.

Bryan Dodds
Northstar Project Office
155 Fifth Avenue South, Suite 755
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55401
Phone: 612-215-8200
Fax: 612-215-8210
E-mail: bryan.dodds@mnrail.org

More information on the Northstar Commuter Rail project can be found at: www.mn-GetOnBoard.com

Comment Form
Northstar Corridor Rail Project
Environmental Assessment/Draft 4(f) Evaluation
Public Hearing - January 25, 2006



FEB 1

Comments:

Please call on me to be part of
the opening events as a station
host or something.

612 360 7575

Phil Epstein

SEQ. #

Data Privacy Warning

All 'written statements' received prior to the close of the comment period will be included in the public hearing record.

Please include

Your Name: Philip Epstein

Address: 601 45 Ave NE

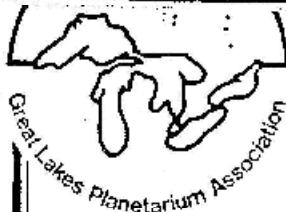
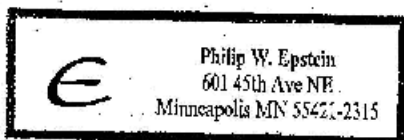
Phone: Columbia Hgts, MN
(of commenter) 763 502 1600 55421

Organization name:
(if applicable) Minnesota Transportation
MUSEUM

Please fill out card tonight and drop in the Comment Box,
or submit to the address below by February 18, 2006.

Bryan Dodds
Northstar Project Office
155 Fifth Avenue South, Suite 755
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55401
Phone: 612-215-8200
Fax: 612-215-8210
E-mail: bryan.dodds@mnrail.org

More information on the Northstar Commuter Rail project can be found at: www.mn-GetOnBoard.com



MINNEAPOLIS MN 554

13 FEB 2006 PM 1 T

Bryan Dodds
Northstar Project Office
155 S 5 Ave Ste 755
MPLS MN 55401

We live in downtown Minneapolis in a development built in late 2001 close to the river and the freight train track i . We hope that all those involved in the NorthStar project will consider ways to reduce the nuisance values created or increased by the passenger trains and subsequent changes in freight train schedules. We hope that you are interested in making the system not just passenger and pedestrian friendly but also house owner friendly.

1

The nuisance values we are referring to are noise, vibration and visual impact. We trust that the passenger trains are designed for quiet operation, that speed limits will be established and monitored, and that the use of the tracks for passenger trains will be seen as a opportunity to improve the appearance of the land alongside the tracks. It is not clear how much thought has been given to the way in which the trackbed is or will be separated from adjacent homes and buildings. The addition of trees, shrubs, grass and some fences would give visual separation, contribute to an attractive city image at the same time and help reduce sound. The B.N.Sante Fe railway company is not currently known for concern for the appearance of the areas around their tracks.

T. and S. Mallon
49 North 4th Ave, #101
Minneapolis

Section 5.2

Responses to Public Comments

Section 5.2 – Responses to Public Comments

5.2.1

Peter Biorn

Comment

Response

1. A summary of the proposed Track Improvements under the revised preferred alternative is presented in table 3.4 of the EA (included below for reference). The stretch of BNSF right-of-way between Elk River and Big Lake is currently a double-track system. The section from Big Lake to Becker (not a part of revised preferred alternative) is not double tracked at this time.

Table 3.4 of the EA — Summary of Proposed Track Improvements under the Revised Preferred Alternative

Item Number¹	Description	Defined in EIS*	New Evaluation Required Based on Design Modification/Change in Surrounding Area
1	Construct Double Track Through Northtown Yard (43 rd Avenue to 35 th Avenue) with Double Crossover at 43 rd . Construct replacement of May Brothers Lead Track	Yes	BNSF ROW limits in this area currently being confirmed
2	Install CTC Signaling System from Elk River to Coon Creek on Staples Subdivision	CTC signal locations not defined/evaluated in EIS as they would be located within existing ROW	No
3	Install CTC Signaling System from Big Lake to Elk River on Staples Subdivision	CTC signal locations not defined/evaluated in EIS as they would be located within existing ROW	No
4	Install CTC Signaling System from Harrison Street to Holden Street on Wayzata Subdivision	CTC signal locations not defined/evaluated in EIS as they would be located within existing ROW	No
5	Construct Double Crossovers at Elk River (MP 39.3) and Ramsey (MP 29.3)	Yes	No
6	Construct Double Crossovers at Big Lake MP 45.1 or MP 43.5	Yes	No
7	Construct Double Crossovers at MP 32.9 on Staples Subdivision	Yes	No
10	Upgrade “Old Main 2” on Midway Subdivision	Yes	No
11	Upgrade Siding from Holden Street to Harrison Street to Mainline and Extend Double Track Through West Leg of the Minneapolis Jct. Wye	Yes	No
12	Construct Crossover at MP 11.3 on Wayzata Subdivision to Allow Eastbound Commuter Trains to Cross Over into the Depot	Yes	No



Item Number ¹	Description	Defined in EIS*	New Evaluation Required Based on Design Modification/Change in Surrounding Area
13	Extend Double Track from Minneapolis Jct. Wye to St. Anthony on Midway Subdivision	Yes	No
14	Upgrade Crossover at MP 11.11 on Midway Subdivision	Yes	No
15	Upgrade Main 3 on Staples Subdivision West of University (MP 11.7 to MP 12.5)	Yes	No
16	Extend Midway Subdivision Main 2 from MP 11.7 to MP 12.3	Yes	No
19	Construct Third Main from Coon Creek to Interstate (just south of I-694) (MP 15.1 to MP 21.1) Third Main on west (railroad south) side from MP 15.1 to approximately MP 16.6. Third Main on east (railroad north) side from approximately MP 16.6 to MP 21.1.	DEIS identified and evaluated the Coon Creek Siding (MP 18.8 to 20.7) on the east (railroad north) side of existing mainline and Third Main Track from MP 15.6 to 20.7 (5.1 miles) on the west (railroad south) side of mainline track. Third Main and siding were not included in the preferred alternative identified and evaluated in the FEIS	Yes
20	Connect South Runner as Continuous Track from Interstate to Main 1 on the St. Paul Subdivision at University	Yes	No
21	Construct Additional Tracks for Lost Capacity on the Wayzata Sub between MP 11.9 and 12.6	No	No — tracks will be located within existing BNSF ROW

* The impact evaluation included in the EIS was limited to proposed improvements that would be located outside the existing BNSF right-of-way. Based on track improvements defined at the time the EIS was prepared, the impact analysis was limited to the proposed third mainline from MP 15.6 to 20.7 and the Coon Creek Siding from MPs 18.8 to 20.7.

¹ Item numbers reflect the BNSF numbering scheme for required capacity improvements per agreement with the NCDA.

5.2.2 John and Phylliss Mosby

Comment

Response

1. Your comment of support for the project is so noted.
2. Construction of Phase I of the Northstar Corridor Rail project will run from 2007 through 2009. Phase I is projected to be operational by 2009. Due to funding availability, transportation system user benefits, ridership and improved cost-effectiveness, the originally defined 82-mile system was reduced to 40.1 miles (Big Lake to Downtown Minneapolis). Phase II of the project extends the system to the St. Cloud area. The timing of Phase II is dependent upon both local and federal funding availability.

5.2.3 Peg Greshik

Comment

Response

1. Your comment of support is so noted.

5.2.4 Robert L. Anderson

Comment

Response

1. Your comment of support for Phase I of the overall Northstar Corridor Rail system is so noted.
2. As stated on page 64 of the EA:

The travel demand model used in the FEIS forecast 502 trips per day starting from the Big Lake station in year 2020, of which 380 arrived by car. (There was no differentiation between those who would either drive alone or drive with others to the station nor between those who would park at the station or be dropped off.) There were 324 parking spaces in the Big Lake station plans at that time. Those figures were for a commuter rail line running through Big Lake to Rice. As noted above, under the MOS, it was expected that more people would use the Big Lake station when it became the northwest terminus and additional parking spaces would be necessary. A ridership forecast for the MOS was never run under that version of the travel demand model.

That travel demand model was later adjusted and FTA approved the use of the new version in 2003. The new version has been used to forecast ridership on the revised preferred alternative. In 2025, 620 trips per day are forecast to start from the Big Lake station. Of these, 490 are expected to arrive by car. Again, this figure includes people being

dropped off or carpooling and parking at the Big Lake station. This is consistent with the approximate number expected under the MOS of the preferred alternative in the FEIS. Therefore, the mitigation measures specified in the FEIS for the MOS of building 400 parking spaces will be adequate.

The local project partners are currently evaluating the need for and logistics of providing a night-only stall(s) at the Big Lake Station as well as the feasibility of providing limited pay-only stalls for park-and-ride users leaving their cars for extended periods of time (over 24 hours).

Your comment requesting extended parking at Big Lake is so noted.

5.2.5

Michelle and Todd Wilson

Comment

Response

1. There is currently no plan to construct sound walls or barriers adjacent to the property. However, there are several safety measures that will be provided. First and foremost, the property between the station and your house is owned by the BNSF. No work can be done in their property without their permission. Secondly, the BNSF has requested that we put in an “intertrack fence” that will extend 150 feet beyond each end of the parking lot between the two tracks. This will make access difficult from one side of the tracks to the other without using the pedestrian overpass. Third, security cameras will be installed within the pedestrian crossing over the tracks with the ability to view at any time the activity on the route from the parking lot to the platform closest to your home. Finally, we will have the ability to lock down the pedestrian crossing when commuter rail operations are not in service to minimize the amount of disturbance on the platform and within the pedestrian crossing enclosure.

5.2.6

Shirley Anderson

Comment

Response

1. Your comment of support for Phase I of the overall Northstar Corridor Rail system is so noted.
2. See response to comment #2 for Robert L. Anderson (No. 5.2.4)

5.2.7

Bob Grevenow



Comment

Response

1. Your comment of support, based on the rising cost of fuel, is so noted.

5.2.8

Lola Johns

Comment

Response

1. The NCDA and the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) Railway entered into a **Rail Passenger Capital Improvements Engineering Agreement (Agreement)** on July 7, 2005. This Agreement identifies the Northstar Corridor Rail Track Improvements based on design developed through March 2004. The NCDA, along with its local partner agencies and the FTA continue to negotiate and coordinate with the BNSF regarding the specific design of the required track improvements to accommodate commuter rail within the existing BNSF railroad right of way.
2. Your comment of support is so noted.

5.2.9

Phillip W. Epstein

Comment

Response

1. Your comment of support and interest in participating in the Opening Events are so noted.

5.2.10

T. and S. Mallon

Comment

Response

1. The planned speed for the commuter rail train in this area of the corridor is 25 miles per hour (mph). Current track capacity improvements call for an upgrade of an existing siding track to a mainline track in this area. This upgrade will improve how the trains ‘ride’ the tracks in this area. In terms of landscaping within BNSF right of way, current design requirements do not allow for “leafy trees” within 25 feet of the track centerline. Landscaping outside of proposed station areas is currently not a part of the proposed system.

As part of the Draft and Final EIS for the Northstar Corridor, noise and vibration analysis were conducted for the full 82-mile system



from downtown Minneapolis to the St. Cloud area. No significant noise and vibration impacts were identified.

Section 5.3

January 25, 2006 Public Hearing (Written Comments)



Comments:

Future Job in Anoka Station during
night time and support as
Northstar Rail smile!

Data Privacy Warning

All 'written statements' received prior to the close of the comment period will be included in the public hearing record.

Please include

Your Name: **Randell Benintende**
Address: **3121 7th Ave Anoka**
MN 55303
Phone:
(of commenter) **763-323-6807**
Organization name:
(if applicable)

Please fill out card tonight and drop in the Comment Box,
or submit to the address below by February 16, 2006.

Bryan Dodds
Northstar Project Office
155 Fifth Avenue South, Suite 755
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55401
Phone: 612-215-8200
Fax: 612-215-8210
E-mail: bryan.dodds@mnrail.org

More information on the Northstar Commuter Rail project can be found at: www.mn-GetOnBoard.com



Comments:

I recently heard that each station
would cost approximately 800,000 dollars
then, also heard that this allotment of
money came from a grant, and if not used
would lose this allotment.

2 Are elevators included in stations that are
required, for cross-over

Data Privacy Warning

All 'written statements' received prior to the close of the comment period will be included in the public hearing record.

Please include

Your Name: **Steve Butler**
Address: **14430 Ormsfords Blvd N.W.**
Andover, MN
Phone:
(of commenter) **763-259-7964**
Organization name:
(if applicable)

Please fill out card tonight and drop in the Comment Box,
or submit to the address below by February 16, 2006.

Bryan Dodds
Northstar Project Office
155 Fifth Avenue South, Suite 755
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55401
Phone: 612-215-8200
Fax: 612-215-8210
E-mail: bryan.dodds@mnrail.org

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#6



Comments:

We are very glad to have Northstar Rail coming to our end of the city. We look forward to taking the rail & hope that weekend service will be extended so we can attend concerts & sporting events downtown in the evenings. We live in Ramsey & hope that station will be added soon.

Data Privacy Warning

All "written statements" received prior to the close of the comment period will be included in the public hearing record.

Please include

Your Name: Pam Upton
Address: 1601 Ramsey Blvd NW
Ramsey MN 55303
Phone: 763-323-1440
(of commenter)
Organization name:
(if applicable)

Please fill out card tonight and drop in the Comment Box, or submit to the address below by February 16, 2006.

Bryan Dodds
Northstar Project Office
155 Fifth Avenue South, Suite 755
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55401
Phone: 612-215-8200
Fax: 612-215-8210
E-mail: bryan.dodds@mnrail.org

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Comments:

So far so good, but we need to:

1. Open the Ramsey station ASAP. The city is growing at a high rate & ~~there~~ there is a real need.
2. Extend the weekend schedule to allow for late night entertainment (movies, concert, sport events etc) ~~to be~~ in Downtown Uptown. ~~in~~ ^{also} the train to & from the Northern suburbs.

Data Privacy Warning

All "written statements" received prior to the close of the comment period will be included in the public hearing record.

Please include

Your Name: Steve Upton
Address: 1601 Ramsey Blvd NW
Phone: 763-323-1440
(of commenter)
Organization name: NA
(if applicable)

Please fill out card tonight and drop in the Comment Box, or submit to the address below by February 16, 2006.

Bryan Dodds
Northstar Project Office
155 Fifth Avenue South, Suite 755
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55401
Phone: 612-215-8200
Fax: 612-215-8210
E-mail: bryan.dodds@mnrail.org

More information on the Northstar Commuter Rail project can be found at: www.mn-GetOnBoard.com



Comments:

FRIDLEY STATION IS JUST WHERE IT
SHOULD BE. Have fun with all
the people who want it moved.

Data Privacy Warning

All 'written statements' received prior to the close of the comment period will be included in the public hearing record.

Please include

Your Name: Lynn Linse

Address:

Phone:
(of commenter)

Organization name:
(if applicable)

Please fill out card tonight and drop in the Comment Box,
or submit to the address below by February 16, 2006.

Bryan Dodds
Northstar Project Office
155 Fifth Avenue South, Suite 755
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55401
Phone: 612-215-8200
Fax: 612-215-8210
E-mail: bryan.dodds@mnrail.org

More information on the Northstar Commuter Rail project can be found at: www.mn-GetOnBoard.com



Comments:

Our Major problem: Should have
been done 10 years ago.

Data Privacy Warning

All 'written statements' received prior to the close of the comment period will be included in the public hearing record.

Please include

Your Name: Don Kjondras

Address: 108 Jefferson St.

Phone:
(of commenter) 763 427 3074

Organization name:
(if applicable) d.kjondras@att.net

Please fill out card tonight and drop in the Comment Box,
or submit to the address below by February 16, 2006.

Bryan Dodds
Northstar Project Office
155 Fifth Avenue South, Suite 755
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55401
Phone: 612-215-8200
Fax: 612-215-8210
E-mail: bryan.dodds@mnrail.org

More information on the Northstar Commuter Rail project can be found at: www.mn-GetOnBoard.com



Comments:

I want the Foley Blvd train station... please

Data Privacy Warning

All 'written statements' received prior to the close of the comment period will be included in the public hearing record.

Please include

Your Name: JUDY SCHAFFRAN

Address: 1102 NW 73 LN

Phone:
(of commenter)

Organization name:
(if applicable)

Please fill out card tonight and drop in the Comment Box, or submit to the address below by February 16, 2006.

Bryan Dodds
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Minneapolis, Minnesota 55401
Phone: 612-215-8200
Fax: 612-215-8210
E-mail: bryan.dodds@mnrail.org

More information on the Northstar Commuter Rail project can be found at: www.mn-GetOnBoard.com



Comments:

Let's do it

Data Privacy Warning

All 'written statements' received prior to the close of the comment period will be included in the public hearing record.

Please include

Your Name: Cheri Sellen

Address:

Phone: 763 862 4345
(of commenter)

Organization name:
(if applicable)

Please fill out card tonight and drop in the Comment Box, or submit to the address below by February 16, 2006.

Bryan Dodds
Northstar Project Office
155 Fifth Avenue South, Suite 755
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55401
Phone: 612-215-8200
Fax: 612-215-8210
E-mail: bryan.dodds@mnrail.org

More information on the Northstar Commuter Rail project can be found at: www.mn-GetOnBoard.com



Comments:

Very informative.

What's the timeline?

What happened in the project since 2002

Data Privacy Warning

All 'written statements' received prior to the close of the comment period will be included in the public hearing record.

Please include

Your Name:

Address: kurhajetz@gmail.com

Phone:
(of commenter)

Organization name:
(if applicable)

Please fill out card tonight and drop in the Comment Box,
or submit to the address below by February 16, 2006.

Bryan Dodds
Northstar Project Office
155 Fifth Avenue South, Suite 755
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55401
Phone: 612-215-8200
Fax: 612-215-8210
E-mail: bryan.dodds@mnrail.org

More information on the Northstar Commuter Rail project can be found at: www.mn-GetOnBoard.com

Section 5.3

Responses to Written Comments Received at the January 25, 2006 Public Hearing

Section 5.3 – Responses to Written Comments Received at the January 25, 2006 Public Hearing

5.3.1 Randell Benintende

Comment	Response
----------------	-----------------

- | | |
|----|--------------------------------------|
| 1. | Your comment of support is so noted. |
|----|--------------------------------------|

5.3.2 Steve Butler

Comment	Response
----------------	-----------------

- | | |
|----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. | As presented in Table 3.6 of the EA/Draft 4(f) Evaluation, the capital cost estimate for the stations, stops, terminals and intermodal facilities is \$16.19 million (Year of Expenditure dollars). The revised preferred alternative includes six commuter rail stations and one LRT station. |
|----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

As presented on page 14 of the EA, the non-federal share of the estimated project capital costs is approximately \$144 million. The federal share of total project cost is estimated at 50 percent. The federal funding would come through the Section 5309 New Starts grant program. The New Starts program is a competitive program, on a national level, that ranks major transit programs. The grant program is administered by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA).

- | | |
|----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2. | Elevators will be included at stations requiring vertical accessibility, including the Fridley, Coon Rapids and Downtown Minneapolis stations. |
|----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

5.3.3 Pam Upton

Comment	Response
----------------	-----------------

- | | |
|----|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. | The current operating plan calls for weekend and holiday service consisting of three round trips; with two round trips (morning and evening) between downtown Minneapolis and Big Lake and one round trip (midday) between downtown Minneapolis and Elk River. |
|----|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

At this time, the Ramsey Station is identified as a Potential Future Station in the Corridor. Your comment of support for a station at this location is so noted.

5.3.4

Steve Upton

Comment

Response

1. At this time, the Ramsey Station is identified as a potential future station in the corridor. Your comment of support for a station at this location is so noted.
2. The current operating plan calls for weekend and holiday service consisting of three round trips; with two round trips (morning and evening) between downtown Minneapolis and Big Lake and one round trip (midday) between downtown Minneapolis and Elk River.

5.3.5

Lynn Linse

Comment

Response

1. Your comment of support for the Fridley station location is so noted.

5.3.6

Don Kjonaas

Comment

Response

1. Your comment regarding timing is so noted. At this time, construction of Phase I of the Northstar Corridor Rail system is scheduled for 2007 through 2009.

5.3.7

Judy Schaffran

Comment

Response

1. The Coon-Rapids Foley station was included in the preferred alternative defined in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and Record of Decision (ROD). Due to funding constraints, the need to improve the cost effectiveness of the system, and the fact that transit service already exists near the proposed Foley Boulevard station, it has been deferred to subsequent stage(s) of the system. Your comment of support for a station at this location is so noted.



5.3.8

Claren Sellner

Comment

Response

1.

Your comment of support is so noted.

5.3.9

Unnamed Commenter

Comment

Response

1.

Construction of Phase I is anticipated to begin in 2007 and run through 2009. The overall project schedule has stalled since 2002 due to a lack of local funding support. In May 2005, a Preliminary Engineering (PE) Validation report was prepared that updated and refined the system defined in 2002. The proposed changes to the system defined in the 2002 ROD are evaluated in the EA/Draft 4(f) Evaluation.

5.3.10

Gene Rafferty

Comment

Response

1.

Your comment of support for the Northstar Commuter Rail system, as a veteran and Chairman of the Anoka County Vets is so noted.

Section 5.4

January 26, 2006 Public Hearing (Written Comments)



Comments:

I very much appreciate the
timely notice of these meetings.

F. Broderick

Data Privacy Warning

All 'written statements' received prior to the close of the comment period will be included in the public hearing record.

Please include

Your Name: Frank Broderick

Address: 610-3rd Ave NE

Phone:
(of commenter) 612-379-1230

Organization name:
(if applicable)

Please fill out card tonight and drop in the Comment Box,
or submit to the address below by February 16, 2006.

Bryan Dodds
Northstar Project Office
155 Fifth Avenue South, Suite 755
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55401
Phone: 612-215-8200
Fax: 612-215-8210
E-mail: bryan.dodds@mnrail.org

More information on the Northstar Commuter Rail project can be found at: www.mn-GetOnBoard.com



Comments:

I would appreciate a copy of the Final Environmental
Assessment report when available.
Thankyou.

Data Privacy Warning

All 'written statements' received prior to the close of the comment period will be included in the public hearing record.

Please include

Your Name: Tony Rea

Address: 19404 5th St NE
CEDAR, MN 55011

Phone:
(of commenter) (763) 434-2454

Organization name:
(if applicable)

Please fill out card tonight and drop in the Comment Box,
or submit to the address below by February 16, 2006.

Bryan Dodds
Northstar Project Office
155 Fifth Avenue South, Suite 755
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55401
Phone: 612-215-8200
Fax: 612-215-8210
E-mail: bryan.dodds@mnrail.org

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Comments:

GREAT idea (NORTHSTAR)
lets keep the CEDAR LAKE REGIONAL TRAIL
SEAMLESS and connect it to Mississippi
River from west. Also keep easment open
so trail could be extended over River
Adjacent to R.R. tracks.

Data Privacy Warning

All 'written statements' received prior to the close of the comment period will be included in the public hearing record.

Please Include

Your Name: DAVID KLOPP
Address: 113 PARKVIEW TERRACE
Phone: 612-922-7364
(of commenter)
Organization name: CEDAR LAKE PARK ASSN
(if applicable)

Please fill out card tonight and drop in the Comment Box,
or submit to the address below by February 16, 2006.

Bryan Dodds
Northstar Project Office
155 Fifth Avenue South, Suite 755
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55401
Phone: 612-215-8200
Fax: 612-215-8210
E-mail: bryan.dodds@mnrail.org

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Comments:

I believe this is not only the best thing for
Minnesota, but for our country. The more
people realize that this is the transportation
of the future, the better we will be, especially
as it relates to the availability & cost of
gas. This is a great idea!

Data Privacy Warning

All 'written statements' received prior to the close of the comment period will be included in the public hearing record.

Please Include

Your Name: Ken Shalibetter
Address: 7207 Knox Ave N
55430
Phone: 763-581-7786
(of commenter)
Organization name:
(if applicable)

Please fill out card tonight and drop in the Comment Box,
or submit to the address below by February 16, 2006.

Bryan Dodds
Northstar Project Office
155 Fifth Avenue South, Suite 755
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55401
Phone: 612-215-8200
Fax: 612-215-8210
E-mail: bryan.dodds@mnrail.org

More information on the Northstar Commuter Rail project can be found at: www.mn-GetOnBoard.com



Comments:

I am truly excited by this project. Hopefully, it will alleviate traffic on Highway 10. It's about time we have something of this nature on the north side of the Metro Area.

Data Privacy Warning

All 'written statements' received prior to the close of the comment period will be included in the public hearing record.

Please Include

Your Name: Jeanne H. Rivard
Address: 1826-122nd LN NW
Phone: Coon Rapids, MN 55448
(of commenter) 763-757-8436
Organization name:
(if applicable)

Please fill out card tonight and drop in the Comment Box, or submit to the address below by February 16, 2006.

Bryan Dodds
Northstar Project Office
155 Fifth Avenue South, Suite 755
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55401
Phone: 612-215-8200
Fax: 612-215-8210
E-mail: bryan.dodds@mnrail.org

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Comments:

BUILD IT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE
INCLUDING PHASE 2

Data Privacy Warning

All 'written statements' received prior to the close of the comment period will be included in the public hearing record.

Please Include

Your Name: Tim Donovan
Address: 2014-6th ST NE MPLS 55418
Phone:
(of commenter)
Organization name:
(if applicable)

Please fill out card tonight and drop in the Comment Box, or submit to the address below by February 16, 2006.

Bryan Dodds
Northstar Project Office
155 Fifth Avenue South, Suite 755
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55401
Phone: 612-215-8200
Fax: 612-215-8210
E-mail: bryan.dodds@mnrail.org

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Comments:

1
GREAT SCHEME! DO IT!
NEEDS TO EXTEND WEST TO MAPLE PLAIN, TOO!
OBVIOUSLY THE E.A. SHOULD BE A NO-BRAINER
(GIVEN THE OBVIOUS AVOIDED EMISSIONS....)

Data Privacy Warning

All 'written statements' received prior to the close of the comment period will be included in the public hearing record.

Please Include

Your Name: **BRIAN BENSON**
Address: **8220 W. RIVER RD #230**
Phone: **612-581-8280**
(of commenter)
Organization name:
(If applicable)

Please fill out card tonight and drop in the Comment Box,
or submit to the address below by February 16, 2006.

Bryan Dodds
Northstar Project Office
155 Fifth Avenue South, Suite 755
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55401
Phone: 612-215-8200
Fax: 612-215-8210
E-mail: bryan.dodds@mnrail.org

More information on the Northstar Commuter Rail project can be found at: www.mn-GetOnBoard.com

B.P., MN 55444



Comments:

1
I live and work in the city. I have many co-workers that drives in to the city they would like to commute by public transportation, but it is never user friendly for people that work on shifts. I haven't get home in a timely manner from a long exhausting work day.

Data Privacy Warning

All 'written statements' received prior to the close of the comment period will be included in the public hearing record.

Please Include

Your Name: **Vincent Kiyee**
Address: **5114 James Ave N**
Phone: **612-327-0568**
(of commenter)
Organization name:
(If applicable)

Please fill out card tonight and drop in the Comment Box,
or submit to the address below by February 16, 2006.

Bryan Dodds
Northstar Project Office
155 Fifth Avenue South, Suite 755
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55401
Phone: 612-215-8200
Fax: 612-215-8210
E-mail: bryan.dodds@mnrail.org

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Comments:

GREAT SCHEME! DO IT!
NEEDS TO EXTEND WEST TO MAPLE PLAIN, TOO!
OBVIOUSLY THE E.A. SHOULD BE A NO-BRAINER
(GIVEN THE OBVIOUS AVOIDED EMISSIONS....)

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Please Include

Your Name: **BRIAN BENSON**
Address: **8220 W. RIVER RD #230**
Phone: **612-581-8280**
(of commenter)
Organization name:
(If applicable)

Please fill out card tonight and drop in the Comment Box,
or submit to the address below by February 16, 2006.

Bryan Dodds
Northstar Project Office
155 Fifth Avenue South, Suite 755
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55401
Phone: 612-215-8200
Fax: 612-215-8210
E-mail: bryan.dodds@mnrail.org

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B.P., MN 55444



Comments:

I live and work in the city. I have many co-workers that drives in to the city they would like to commute by public transportation, but it is never user friendly for people that work on shifts. I haven't get home in a timely manner from a long exhausting work day.

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Please Include

Your Name: **Vincent Kiyee**
Address: **5114 James Ave N**
Phone: **612-327-0568**
(of commenter)
Organization name:
(If applicable)

Please fill out card tonight and drop in the Comment Box,
or submit to the address below by February 16, 2006.

Bryan Dodds
Northstar Project Office
155 Fifth Avenue South, Suite 755
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55401
Phone: 612-215-8200
Fax: 612-215-8210
E-mail: bryan.dodds@mnrail.org

More information on the Northstar Commuter Rail project can be found at: www.mn-GetOnBoard.com



Comments:

With all the support from the Federal, State, and Local municipalities Northstar is one of the closest of the projects ready for preliminary engineering in the next Council's 2030 Transportation plans. In light of that, I hope that the completion and success of Northstar will put pressure on projects such as the Central Corridor Light Rail line and the Red Rock Commuter Rail line.

Please keep up the good work and do not let the project be sent to the chopping block. Since development will continue to put more pressure on our already overloaded highways.

All 'written statements' received prior to the close of the comment period will be included in the public hearing record.

Please include

Your Name: Andrew Wambach

Address: 4124 Edinboro Ter

Phone:
(of commenter) 763-442-5540 (cell).

Organization name:
(if applicable) University of Minnesota
Urban Studies - Mpls/St Paul

Please fill out card tonight and drop in the Comment Box,
or submit to the address below by February 16, 2006.

Bryan Dodds
Northstar Project Office
155 Fifth Avenue South, Suite 755
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55401
Phone: 612-215-8200
Fax: 612-215-8210
E-mail: bryan.dodds@mnrail.org

More information on the Northstar Commuter Rail project can be found at: www.mn-GetOnBoard.com

Thank
You

RECEIVED - DMC

FEB 08 2006

SEQ. #

Northstar Corridor Rail Project
Environmental Assessment/Draft 4(f) Evaluation



5.6-12

Request to Speak During the Public Hearing
January 25, 2006

Please provide

Your Name: **GENE RASSETT**

Address: **801-21 STAVENE-SPRING LK PK**

Phone: **763-784-9110**

Organization name:
(If applicable)

More information on the Northstar Commuter Rail project can be found at: www.mn-GetOnBoard.com

1

*As a Veteran and Chairman of the Broken County Vets
Advisory Board we support North Star. It will
give Veterans a way from the North Suburbs to
work in the city and get to work. Also the American
Legion is supporting it. In 2001 - passed a
resolution supporting N.S.*

RECEIVED - DMC

FEB 08 2006

SEQ. #

Section 5.4

Responses to Written Comments Received at the January 26, 2006 Public Hearing



Section 5.4 – Responses to Written Comments Received at the January 26, 2006 Public Hearing

5.4.1

Frank Broderick

Comment

Response

1.

Your comment regarding the timely notice of the meetings is so noted.

5.4.2

Tony Rea

Comment

Response

1.

All persons and agencies who provide comments (both verbal and written) on the EA/Draft 4(f) Evaluation will receive a copy of the final environmental document.

5.4.3

David Klopp

Comment

Response

1.

Your comment of support for Northstar is so noted.

As presented in Figure 3.2 of the EA, and referenced in Section 4.2 of the EA:

“The planned Cedar Lake Trail (Phase 3) identified in the FEIS is not developed at this time, nor has land been purchased for the trail. Under the revised Downtown Minneapolis Intermodal station location; the planned Cedar Lake trail would be shifted to the east and south to accommodate the commuter rail platform. The trail would be parallel and southeast of the station and the existing BNSF track. Mn/DOT and the NCDA have been working closely with the City of Minneapolis in the development of the revised trail alignment through this area.”

5.4.4

Ken Shallbetter

Comment

Response

1.

Your comment of support is so noted.



5.4.5

Jeanne H. Rivard

Comment

Response

1.

Your comment of support is so noted.

5.4.6

Tim Donovan

Comment

Response

1.

Your comment of support for the full system (Downtown Minneapolis to Rice) is so noted.

5.4.7

Brian Benson

Comment

Response

1.

Your comment of support is so noted.

5.4.8

Vivian Kiyee

Comment

Response

1.

Your comment of support for public transportation is so noted. The Northstar Commuter Rail system will include a bus operation plan that feeds buses on a timed basis to the commuter rail stations. The bus operating plan will provide for effective timed-transfers from rail/bus and vice versa.

5.4.9

Andrew Wanbach

Comment

Response

1.

Your comment of support for Northstar and other proposed rail corridors in the Twin Cities metropolitan area is so noted.

Section 5.5

January 30, 2006 Public Hearing (Written Comments)



Comments:

1 THIS PROPOSAL IS LONG OVER DUE.
LET'S GET IT DONE!

Data Privacy Warning

All 'written statements' received prior to the close of the comment period will be included in the public hearing record.

Please include

Your Name: ROBERT LETENDRE
Address: 25780-190NW 55309
Phone:
(of commenter)
Organization name:
(if applicable)

Please fill out card tonight and drop in the Comment Box,
or submit to the address below by February 16, 2006.

Bryan Dodds
Northstar Project Office
155 Fifth Avenue South, Suite 755
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55401
Phone: 612-215-8200
Fax: 612-215-8210
E-mail: bryan.dodds@mnrail.org

More information on the Northstar Commuter Rail project can be found at: www.mn-GetOnBoard.com



Comments:

1 I believe this will work very well for commuters
if shuttle-type transportation is readily available -
Traveler, etc. or if cars are allowed to be parked
overnight. If this doesn't occur you will be losing
many potential riders, so not all commuters work
down town. Thank you.

Data Privacy Warning

All 'written statements' received prior to the close of the comment period will be included in the public hearing record.

Please include

Your Name: Cathy Solansen
Address: 22736-1704 St Bish
MIN 55309
Phone: 763-263-8230
(of commenter)
Organization name:
(if applicable)

Please fill out card tonight and drop in the Comment Box,
or submit to the address below by February 16, 2006.

Bryan Dodds
Northstar Project Office
155 Fifth Avenue South, Suite 755
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55401
Phone: 612-215-8200
Fax: 612-215-8210
E-mail: bryan.dodds@mnrail.org

More information on the Northstar Commuter Rail project can be found at: www.mn-GetOnBoard.com



Comments:

1 *Support Video display. L's extend
directly to Hastings & Ridgely - Rochester and
make it in one fell swoop!
Warmest Regards.*

Data Privacy Warning

All 'written statements' received prior to the close of the comment period will be included in the public hearing record.

Please include

Your Name: *Stanley D. Kasal*

Address: *2801 Silver Lake Rd*

Phone: *612-781-7291 (noon)*
(of commenter)

Organization name:
(if applicable) *Mn Streetcar museum*

Please fill out card tonight and drop in the Comment Box,
or submit to the address below by February 16, 2006.

Bryan Dodds
Northstar Project Office
155 Fifth Avenue South, Suite 755
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55401
Phone: 612-215-8200
Fax: 612-215-8210
E-mail: bryan.dodds@mnrail.org

More information on the Northstar Commuter Rail project can be found at: www.mn-GetOnBoard.com



Comments:

1 *Wonderful!*

Data Privacy Warning

All 'written statements' received prior to the close of the comment period will be included in the public hearing record.

Please include

Your Name: *Don Thiel*

Address: *1575 Grace Dr*

Phone: *763-350-7957*
(of commenter)

Organization name:
(if applicable) *Big Lake H.S.*

Please fill out card tonight and drop in the Comment Box,
or submit to the address below by February 16, 2006.

Bryan Dodds
Northstar Project Office
155 Fifth Avenue South, Suite 755
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55401
Phone: 612-215-8200
Fax: 612-215-8210
E-mail: bryan.dodds@mnrail.org

More information on the Northstar Commuter Rail project can be found at: www.mn-GetOnBoard.com



Comments:

1 [the Northstar Commuter RAIL is a great value compared to the Stillwater Bridge or the 494 expansion - - the per mile value is outstanding.

Data Privacy Warning

All 'written statements' received prior to the close of the comment period will be included in the public hearing record.

Please Include

Your Name:

Jim Stahlmann

Address:

17539 182nd AV
BIG LAKE MN 55309

Phone:

(of commenter)

763 263 2442

Organization name:

(if applicable)

Please fill out card tonight and drop in the Comment Box, or submit to the address below by February 16, 2006.

Bryan Dodds

Northstar Project Office

155 Fifth Avenue South, Suite 755

Minneapolis, Minnesota 55401

Phone: 612-215-8200

Fax: 612-215-8210

E-mail: bryan.dodds@mnrail.org

More information on the Northstar Commuter Rail project can be found at: www.mn-GetOnBoard.com



Comments:

1

2

3

I can not believe that you are still considering trying to put in a commuter rail line between here and the cities. We've already shown that this train will not reduce traffic congestion as projected ridership is less than projected area ~~growth~~ growth. ② This rail is on private right of way, with over a dozen freight trains using, traveling 50 mph. To get any type of coop. from the freight train operators to give the right of way to the slow, stop & go commuter is crazy. ③ Federal ~~money~~ money is not free money. The government does not make money or a profit. The government collects taxes from tax payer like me. To argue that

Data Privacy Warning

All "written statements" received prior to the close of the comment period will be included in the public hearing record.

Please include

Your Name: Bret R. Collier
Address: 22549 172nd St, Big Lake
Phone: 763 263-0841
(of commenter)
Organization name:
(if applicable)

Please fill out card tonight and drop in the Comment Box, or submit to the address below by February 16, 2006.

Bryan Dodds
Northstar Project Office
155 Fifth Avenue South, Suite 755
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55401
Phone: 612-215-8200
Fax: 612-215-8210
E-mail: bryan.dodds@mnrail.org

4

5

That we have to do this now to get the free federal funding is wrong. As I said, it's not free. ④ Back to ridership... wasn't there a study last year on the light rail showing how light rail ridership is essentially the same as the loss of bus ridership? (an under reported study) So now, we are spending more per person to ferry the same people from point A to B than before. How stupid is that? ⑤ Another example, in my home state of Vermont, we had an abandoned track from Shelburne to Burlington, government funds, got a train rolling... lasted less than 3 years cause no body ~~and~~ rode it. (Saw video footage of a single woman riding every day) ⑥ The only people to benefit from this are the hired contractors running to show to push this project, and the construction people who would be involved in building the facilities. They (ie you folks putting this dog and pony show on today) are the only ones making money. What few residents that believe in this bandwaggle don't understand the facts or the math of the matter. They hear what they want to hear from the consultants who are paid to tell them that this is good. I would stop and speak, but it would only be to the crowd who is paid to push the train, so my comments would fall on deaf ears... more than likely ~~as~~ as will this comment card. Once the people in the room are those who have a direct anti

over

I will remain
to be our anti
... bandwaggle
... who have a direct anti

Section 5.5

Responses to Written Comments Received at the January 30, 2006 Public Hearing

Section 5.5 – Responses to Written Comments Received at the January 30, 2006 Public Hearing

5.5.1

Robert Letendre

Comment

Response

1.

Your comment of support is so noted.

5.5.2

Cathy Sorensen

Comment

Response

1.

The proposed park-and-ride facilities proposed at the Fridley, Coon Rapids Riverdale, Anoka Elk River and Big Lake stations are presented below. Please note the site size for the Big Lake Station has been corrected to reflect the land required for the access road to CR 43.

Table 3.2 of EA - Stations of Revised Preferred Alternative (Corrected)

Station Location (Figure #)	Site Size	Park-and-Ride Lot (# of spaces)	Stormwater Ponds
Downtown Minneapolis (Figure 3.2 of EA)	0.7 acre	0	No
Fridley (Figure 3.3 of EA)	3.7 acres (West) 4.8 acres (East)	281 (West) 337 (East)	On-site Stormwater Detention Basin (west and east sides)
Coon Rapids-Riverdale (Figure 3.4 of EA)	9.6 acres 7.0 acres currently developed	460 spaces	Drains to Existing On-Site Pond
Anoka (Figure 3.5 of EA)	The exact configuration of the parking facility is to be determined by the City of Anoka. The site size of 4.95 acres defined and evaluated in the FEIS reflects station facilities on both the north and south sides of the tracks. Figure 3.5 reflects the general site area proposed by the City of Anoka for the parking facility (south side of tracks).	The City of Anoka is taking the lead in the development of a parking structure at this station (up to 450 spaces/ 2 level structure). The Northstar Project is a funding partner for the proposed parking structure at the Anoka Station.	Off-Site Stormwater Detention Basin <i>(to be constructed as part of the Northstar Corridor Rail Project)</i>
Elk River (Figure 3.6 of EA)	13.2 acres 9.5 acres currently developed	754 spaces	On-Site Stormwater Detention Basin
Big Lake Station (Figure 3.7 of EA)	9.8 acres (station) 1.8 acres (roadway connection to County Road 43)	400 spaces	On-site Stormwater Detention Basin

The Northstar Rail System will include a bus operation plan that feeds buses on a timed basis to the commuter rail stations. The bus operating plan will provide for effective timed-transfers from rail/bus and vice versa. The local project partners are currently

evaluating the need for and logistics of providing a night-only stall(s) at the Big Lake Station as well as the feasibility of providing limited pay-only stalls for park-and-ride users leaving their cars for extended periods of time (over 24 hours).

5.5.3

Stanley D. Kasal

Comment

Response

1.

Your comment of support is so noted. Washington County Regional Railroad Authority (WCRRA), in cooperation with the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority (RCRRA) and the Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority (HCRRRA) are currently in the process of conducting an Alternatives Analysis study for the Red Rock Corridor, which includes service to the Hastings, Minnesota area.

5.5.4

Dan Thiele

Comment

Response

1.

Your comment of support is so noted.

5.5.5

Jim Stahlmann

Comment

Response

1.

Your comment of support is so noted.

5.5.6

Bret R. Collier

Comment

Response

1.

The overall goals of the Northstar Project include:

- a. Providing a cost-effective and efficient transportation option
- b. Improving mobility, and
- c. Encouraging transportation-supportive land use

More specifically, Northstar's objective is to transport commuters to work in downtown Minneapolis in a safe, fast and reliable manner.

The Metropolitan Council projects that the region's population will grow by nearly one million by the year 2030, and employment will grow by over one-half million jobs. These new residents will generate an additional four million daily trips and the number of congested highways is expected to double (*Metropolitan Council: 2030 Regional Development Framework*). The Northstar Corridor is one of the fastest growing areas in the Twin Cities metropolitan area, and includes the fully-developed urban core and rapidly developing suburban areas.

By 2025, TH 10 between Big Lake and Blaine/I-35W will be operating at Level of Service (LOS) F. In addition, three primary routes from TH 10 into downtown Minneapolis will also have major segments operating at LOS F. Increasing the capacity of the highways to meet these growing problems is constrained by geography and existing conditions. The major routes into downtown are at capacity and act as chokepoints for commuters from the north and northwest attempting to get to jobs during peak congestion periods.

As noted above, one of the goals of the Northstar project is to provide a cost-effective way of adding capacity to the transportation system, while successfully avoiding the highway chokepoints that include and surround downtown Minneapolis.

2.

As stated on page 9 of the EA/Draft 4(f) Evaluation:

With the planned capacity improvements, the entire commuter rail route will be double-tracked, allowing commuter trains to run concurrently with 35 to 60 freight trains per day. Signals will be upgraded, with the entire commuter rail route using the CTC system upon completion. BNSF will dispatch and may also operate the commuter rail trains. The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) Class 4 track will allow passenger speeds up to 79 miles per hour and freight speeds up to 60 miles per hour. The boarding platforms will be located within BNSF right-of-way and in most locations, the commuter trains will stop directly on the BNSF mainline tracks to board passengers. The two terminal stations will include off-line platforms where boarding will occur from siding tracks.

The proposed track capacity improvements defined in the Agreement with the BNSF will provide for efficient operations for both existing freight and the proposed commuter rail service between downtown Minneapolis and Big Lake.

3. Minnesota is competing with hundreds of transit projects throughout the country for a limited amount of federal transit dollars. As stated in the EA, the total construction cost for the Northstar Corridor Rail project, from downtown Minneapolis to Big Lake is \$289 million (year of expenditure dollars). These costs will be paid for by the following sources:
 - a. Federal government: 50%
 - b. State of Minnesota: 33%
 - c. Local Governments: 17%
4. Bus and rail ridership increased by 7.2 percent (4.7 million rides) from 2004 to 2005. Bus rides on regular routes grew 1.5 percent to 59.5 million in 2005. Overall, bus ridership was 61.8 million, down by a half percent (275,000 rides), primarily due to reduced shuttle service riders at the airport and a reduction in contract route service. Rail rides reached 7.9 million in 2005 (a 170 percent increase over 2004 statistics).
5. The purpose of the public hearing is to provide an overview regarding the revised alternative, present a summary of the findings, define the process for submitting comments, and to obtain comments from the public regarding the project under study.

Section 5.6

January 25, 2006 Public Hearing (Verbal Comments)

1

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3

PUBLIC HEARING

4

for the

5

NORTHSTAR CORRIDOR RAIL PROJECT

6

Environmental Assessment/Draft 4(f) Evaluation

7

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Held at:

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Coon Rapids Civic Center

11

1155 Robinson Drive

12

Coon Rapids, Minnesota

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January 25, 2006

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7:00 p.m.

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23

Jackie Young, RPR
Adams Court Reporting
320 East Main Street
Anoka, Minnesota 55303
763-421-2486

24

25

1 TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS, taken on
2 Wednesday, January 25, 2006, at the Coon Rapids
3 Civic Center, 1155 Robinson Drive, Coon Rapids,
4 Minnesota, commencing at approximately 7:00 o'clock
5 p.m., before Jackie Young, Professional Registered
6 Reporter and Notary Public, in and for the County
7 of Hennepin, State of Minnesota.

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25

1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 MR. YANTOS: Okay. Now we're going to
3 start the formal and legal process part of tonight,
4 so there's a lot of things that I have to read
5 because this is all something that we have to
6 follow. We're following a legal and state federal
7 process to this meeting, and so let me go through
8 all the different pieces.

9 I want to welcome you to the public
10 hearing on the environmental assessment of the
11 Northstar Corridor Rail Project. Actually we're
12 all glad to see you. It's a very nice turnout and
13 I appreciate you coming. My name is Tim Yantos. I
14 am the executive director of the Northstar project,
15 and I will be the presiding over the public
16 hearing.

17 The purpose of the public hearing is to
18 present an overview of the environmental assessment
19 and provide an opportunity for comments. We
20 completed an environmental impact statement in
21 2002. We completed that. It has been approved by
22 all the different agencies. We have had some
23 changes to the project, and we want to talk about
24 the environmental concerns with that.

25 Shortly Bryan Dodds will be presenting a

1 short Power Point presentation on the environmental
2 assessment, but I need to go over for you the
3 rules. Again, we have to do this as a part of the
4 process.

5 The presentation and comments tonight are
6 being transcribed by a court reporter. There will
7 be an opportunity to comment following. We have
8 about a 15 to 20 minute presentation on the
9 environmental changes. If you wish to make a
10 verbal comment tonight, we request that you will
11 fill out a request to speak card found on the
12 signup table, and we have people that will pass
13 those out to you.

14 Jeannie, do you want to raise your hand,
15 and others if you would like to -- if you would
16 like to sign up to speak.

17 This will help ensure that we take
18 comments in an orderly manner and that the court
19 reporter spells your name correctly. That's very
20 important. So when you provide -- Let's see. So
21 we can provide everybody who wishes a time to
22 speak, we're going to try to limit the -- your
23 comments to three to five minutes.

24 We request by that, when you want to give
25 your testimony, that you start by giving us your

1 name and the spelling and the address so the court
2 reporter has all that information; again, because
3 we're following a very legal process. Comments
4 will not be responded to. So if you ask us a
5 question, because this is a legal process, we
6 cannot give you an answer right here. But if you
7 wish to get up and go talk to anybody in the yellow
8 shirt or the gentleman with the blue shirt and the
9 tie, you can get your question answered. But
10 because, again, we're following a process, we
11 cannot give you an answer as part of this hearing.

12 But your question will become part of a
13 final environmental document that will be prepared
14 and distributed following the close of the comment
15 period of February 16th. So you have an
16 opportunity to comment now or up to February 16th
17 of 2006.

18 If you have a specific question about the
19 Northstar commuter route, you're invited to discuss
20 the project informally, as I mentioned, with any of
21 those folks that have a yellow shirt on.

22 Verbal and written comments are
23 considered of equal value. If you do not wish to
24 make a verbal comment, you may make a comment on
25 the cards and they will be entered into the

1 documents. You may deposit your written comments.
2 We have a box at the sign-in table or give it to
3 somebody with a yellow shirt and they will make
4 sure that -- that they get into the record. Again,
5 we need to have that done by February 16th.

6 Let's see. A couple of other things.
7 There are two public hearings for this project.
8 One on January 27th, which is tomorrow, and that
9 will be in Minneapolis; and then January 30th in
10 Big Lake. Information about these meetings can be
11 found on the signup table.

12 Anybody have any questions regarding the
13 rules of what we're doing here? So again, if you
14 have a particular question, we won't be able to
15 answer, but if you want to make a comment, it will
16 be recorded. Again, if you have a particular
17 question, one of the people in the yellow shirts
18 can do that.

19 So I'm going to have Bryan Dodds, he's
20 with the Northstar project office and with the
21 Minnesota Department of Transportation, he will
22 come and now give you the 15, 20 minute overview.
23 And then I will come back and then proceed with the
24 official meeting.

25 Bryan.

1 MR. DODDS: Thank you, Tim. Well, we're
2 here for the public hearing and this is the first
3 night of three.

4 So the agenda for the hearing. The
5 purpose of this public hearing, we'll go over that;
6 touch on the project history; go through the
7 alternative we evaluated and the impacts assessed;
8 overview of the findings; our next steps; and how
9 to provide comments.

10 So the purpose of this public hearing:
11 We're going to present the findings of our
12 environmental assessment, which is a document which
13 goes through basically the changes we've had in the
14 last few years of the project. It presents our
15 current preferred alternative and the decision at
16 hand, and describe the accommodating process and
17 secure any input.

18 So who are the agencies involved in this
19 process? The federal agency involved is the
20 Federal Transit Administration and we're following
21 their environmental process. Our local partners
22 are the Minnesota Department of Transportation,
23 Northstar Corridor Development Authority, and
24 Metropolitan Council.

25 What is commuter rail? Well, the Twin

1 Cities currently has a light rail system, and our
2 commuter rail system operates on existing track,
3 the Burlington Northern Santa Fe, whereas the light
4 rail system operates on its own track without
5 sharing with other freight vehicles. The commuter
6 train is 30 miles one way. Light rail will be
7 shorter. Our stations, optimally five miles, give
8 or take, apart. The light system will be about a
9 mile or so apart, and Hiawatha is less than a mile
10 or so. And we're moving people to work. We're
11 commuting.

12 So our project. Forty miles in length
13 going from downtown Minneapolis to Big Lake. We
14 have a maintenance facility in Big Lake. We have
15 18 train cars, five locomotives. We're doing
16 improvements to the Burlington Northern Santa Fe
17 for capacity improvement, and we include a four
18 block extension of the LRT so we can have a
19 connection in downtown Minneapolis.

20 Our project history. As many of you
21 know, we've been at this since about 1999,
22 having other public hearings, and working our
23 initial -- our environmental impact statement,
24 which we had back then. And the environmental
25 impact statement, or EIS, is a pretty comprehensive

1 federally mandated document for larger projects,
2 and it was also done in conjunction with our
3 preliminary engineering effort, which is about a 30
4 percent plan for the project.

5 We got the approval to go forward and
6 basically improved our -- our environmental
7 document at the federal and the state level, and
8 that's for the ROD or record of decision, adequacy
9 determination did.

10 Funding stalled for the project. We kind
11 of put it on the shelf for a couple of years and
12 now it's gaining momentum again so we need to go
13 back and re-evaluate how the project has changed
14 and see how we can move forward. So we looked at
15 our key validation report, we looked at our 30
16 percent plan, updated those, and started on the
17 environmental assessment for this project.

18 So the project history, what did we look
19 at before. We had the commuter rail system that
20 went from downtown Minneapolis all the way to Rice
21 or about 82 miles. We had 11 commuter rail
22 stations and we had a vehicle maintenance facility
23 in Elk River. We had a layover facility in Rice.
24 We had a connection that was on Fifth Street in
25 downtown Minneapolis that was on the north side and

1 not the south side, like we are looking at now.
2 And we had other traffic improvements, but we did
3 not include the third main line, which we looked at
4 in the EIS.

5 So as you can see, we go from the bottom
6 part of the page, Minneapolis all the way up to
7 St. Cloud and Rice. And that was the EIS project.

8 So what are we looking at today. We're
9 looking at a 40-mile system that starts in
10 Minneapolis and goes to Big Lake. We have stations
11 in Minneapolis, Fridley, Coon Rapids, Anoka, Elk
12 River, and Big Lake. Our maintenance facility and
13 layover facilities were combined for efficiencies
14 at the end of our line in Big Lake.

15 The Big Lake station has changed
16 locations, which has increased our safety, and I'll
17 go through that when we look at the Big Lake
18 station. Our LRT connection has changed sides of
19 the road. We're now on the south side of Fifth
20 Street, and we're looking at a third main for
21 improvements.

22 So why the change. We had funding
23 availability difficulties. The FTA has changed
24 their cost effectiveness. We need a leaner, meaner
25 project, one that is more cost effective. We've

1 tried to improve safety through reducing grade
2 crossings and moving our -- our layouts around.
3 There's been surrounding development. We have a
4 twin stadium proposed and other developments in
5 downtown Minneapolis that we have been working
6 through and around. We have an BNSF agreement for
7 designing certain track improvements, and that's
8 where the third main was added into our project.
9 And we have improved vehicle circulation, revising
10 the side of Fifth Street that the LRT is on.

11 So as you can see here, we have
12 Minneapolis to Big Lake as kind of a Phase 1, and
13 then the rest of the corridor up to Rice as
14 Phase 2.

15 So I want to quickly summarize what's
16 going on at each station. Here's downtown
17 Minneapolis. You can see our commuter rail
18 platform. It meets the BNSF tracks from downtown,
19 meeting up with LRT, connecting through here. The
20 Target Center is just off the screen here.

21 The Fridley station, kind of a more
22 unique station. We have parking lots on both sides
23 of the BNSF and we have a tunnel connecting them so
24 it's providing a good connection between the
25 neighborhoods on each side of the track and be a

1 safe crossing for pedestrians and bikes as well as
2 by our users.

3 The Coon Rapids station, this is an
4 existing Northstar commuter coach facility, and we
5 are going to modify it for our use. We're having a
6 platform here, and there will be a pedestrian
7 overpass over the BNSF tracks in this location.

8 The Anoka station, we have revised the
9 pond, which is up in the upper left. There's a DNR
10 scenic easement that we were, with the EIS,
11 encroaching upon more, and now, through further
12 design process, we have been able to pull out and
13 mostly get -- get away from being inside that
14 easement.

15 The Elk River station is also an existing
16 commuter coach facility. We're expanding this a
17 lot, which is almost at capacity now, with commuter
18 coach. This is -- Again, we'll have a pond and
19 this is in the neighborhood of existing transit
20 oriented development right now.

21 Big Lake, we did have and was planned
22 with the EIS to have the station on this side of
23 County Road 43, Highway 10, which is across the top
24 but now moved it down here. This will prevent
25 us -- You can load without having to cross. We're

1 going to have a station platform on either side of
2 the -- of the BNSF, and so you will not have to
3 cross the BNSF main line to load onto the track.
4 We just have our own siding connected to the
5 maintenance facility.

6 And so our maintenance facility, as you
7 can see on the left-hand side there, is the
8 proposed station and our maintenance facility has a
9 core building, train wash facilities, and storage
10 transfer of the trains.

11 Track improvements looked at with the
12 third main. To orient you, to the left is north,
13 here is 694, and so we start and we head north from
14 694. Just south of here, here's the Northtown
15 Yards -- Yard for the BNSF, and it heads north from
16 mile point 15.1 north past Mississippi, Osborn, and
17 we continue here up past 610, and it's just north
18 of Coon Creek Boulevard where the third main will
19 end.

20 Hiawatha LRT connection. This is -- The
21 blue on the left-hand side of the screen is where
22 the existing LRT ends at First Street, along First
23 Avenue, along Fifth Street, and we are extending it
24 four blocks to meet up with the commuter rail
25 station platform here. And again, we are on the

1 south side now, it was on the north, and there
2 needed to be a retaining wall here on Fifth. And
3 since we have moved it to the -- to the south, we
4 can -- we can keep access through here and keep
5 mobility downtown better.

6 So what did we look at with the EA. We
7 had very social impacts, land use, parking lot,
8 historical stuff that we looked at.

9 Go ahead.

10 Environmental impacts, farm lands,
11 wetlands, wild scenic areas, and hazardous waste,
12 noise, transportation.

13 So what did we find. We found that the
14 existing project, as it is now, is consistent with
15 local plans. We've had a reduction in property
16 acquisition, mainly just shorting the line. We are
17 following provision in our programmatic agreement,
18 which is an agreement with historical -- the State
19 Historical Society and -- State Preservation
20 Office, rather, and basically that we will, you
21 know, protect our historic resources.

22 We have improved safety by moving the Big
23 Lake station and not having that extra crossing.
24 We have identified 2.09 acres of wetland impacts
25 and floodplain impacts due to the third main near

1 the Rice Creek area. And we have a reduction of
2 impact to the Rum River scenic easement, that DNR
3 easement in Anoka.

4 We've also found a potential impact to
5 landing turtle, which was also identified in the
6 EIS process back in 2002, and we will be working to
7 mitigate that in construction and keep the turtles
8 away from our construction sites.

9 We have storm water ponding
10 modifications, and we will be working on a Phase 2
11 environmental site assessment, which is basically
12 an increased investigation into hazardous materials
13 or possible hazardous materials at the station
14 sites.

15 We've been doing traffic improvements,
16 like I said, with that Fifth Street and Fifth
17 Avenue connection in downtown Minneapolis, and we
18 will be having a temporary closure at Regional
19 Trail up at Rice Creek, which is a 4(f) impact,
20 basically a park impact. And so that's where you
21 see environmental assessment/draft 4(f) evaluation.

22 So we will be having a temporary impact
23 of about six to eight weeks of -- of that
24 connection there being closed. It will be
25 completely restored to its existing functionality

1 after construction is complete. We have it
2 coordinated with the park department and we will be
3 posting trail closing signs.

4 So here's a short map of our trail
5 closing. And so this is the Mississippi, this way
6 is north, and these are going to be our trail
7 closing signs. And here's the impact right here,
8 the trail that comes around and under where we need
9 to add additional bridge for the third main.

10 Next steps. We have our public meetings
11 here in Coon Rapids, Minneapolis tomorrow night,
12 and Big Lake on Monday night. Our comment period
13 closes the 16th of February. After that we'll have
14 our environmental determination and we'll respond
15 to all of your comments in the environmental
16 document this spring and shoot for construction
17 between 2007 and 2009.

18 So for providing comments, we'll be
19 taking written and verbal comments this evening.
20 If you have comments beyond this, please submit
21 them to me at our office by February 16th. We have
22 them in various places, various postings, and
23 comment cards.

24 Verbal comments this evening. As Tim
25 said, for elected officials, we'll try to contain

1 it to five minutes; individuals, three minutes.
2 And the public hearing is being transcribed by a
3 court reporter and the questions will be responded
4 to, not this evening, but in our final
5 environmental document. Okay.

6 MR. YANTOS: Again, thank you for coming
7 out. I think we've had over 50 public
8 information/public hearings over the period of time
9 since 1997, so it's nice to see so many familiar
10 faces continue to follow the project.

11 Again, if you wish to have a specific
12 question answered right away, the folks with the
13 yellow shirt can answer you.

14 I have four cards now that people wish to
15 make comments. We have folks, Jan and others, if
16 you wish to -- to comment, please get the
17 information. When you stand up, again, we ask that
18 you please give your name and the spelling and the
19 address to the court reporter so that we can get
20 all that into the record.

21 And I will probably just do first names,
22 not to butcher the last name and embarrass you, but
23 this is an easier one for me. Arthur Nielsen.
24 Arthur Nielsen.

25 MR. NIELSEN: My name is Arthur Nielsen,

1 spelled N-i-e-l-s-e-n. I live on 1254 Large Creek
2 in Coon Rapids.

3 My subject matter is, what was the total
4 cost of the light rail system from downtown
5 Minneapolis to the airport? That's one. Okay.
6 Compared to that what we're going to do -- I'm not
7 against it now. From the existing area, from
8 downtown to Big Lake, I want to know the difference
9 in price, because there you're involved with all
10 the utilities. Here we're got easements that are
11 open to us and flat land.

12 And I believe the money we spent from
13 downtown to the airport we could have put the whole
14 line in from here to St. Cloud or Rice, and we
15 would have had money coming in from that area into
16 Minneapolis, and then take that monies and resolve
17 the problems that they're already into from
18 downtown to the airport. At least we'd have money
19 coming in. Now we're spending it -- now we're
20 spending it for repairs.

21 There, for the amount of money invested
22 in the terrain, for the track, the travel from here
23 to St. Cloud, if it would have been initially done,
24 would have been all money coming in both ways.

25 MR. YANTOS: Okay. Thank you. Randall,

1 last name is -- it looks like B-e-n-i-n-t-e-n-k-e.

2 Would Randall like to speak?

3 (No response).

4 MR. YANTOS: Okay. Then we have David,
5 B-o-n-t-h-n-i-s.

6 MR. BONTHNIS: I'll pass.

7 MR. YANTOS: Okay. Kris. It looks like
8 G-r-n-c-k.

9 MS. GENCK: Hi. My name is Kris Genck.
10 That's G-e-n-c-k. My address is 720 West Main
11 Street, Anoka, Minnesota, which is the McDonald's
12 Restaurant there on Fair Oaks and Highway 10.

13 My comment is to let you know that the
14 group of owners there on Highway 10 are -- have
15 formed a working group and are vitally interested
16 and very concerned regarding this initiative and
17 how it affects our businesses. Thank you.

3

18 MR. YANTOS: Thank you. Dan. It's T --
19 It looks like T-r-e-i-t-e.

20 MR. TVEITE: Hi, I'm Dan Tveite. That's
21 T, v as in Victor, e-i-t-e. I live at
22 13275-192-1/2 Avenue Northwest in Elk River.

23 I've commuted downtown for sixteen years,
24 and I currently take the Northstar commuter bus two
25 or three times a week. And I guess what I'd like

4

1 to express is just an unqualified support for the
2 commuter rail.

4
(cont.)

3 You know, from an environmental
4 standpoint, I can't see how this is anything but a
5 positive environmental impact when you consider the
6 number of cars that are going to be taken off the
7 road, potentially eliminating some of the
8 development that will have to happen on Highway 10.
9 It just has to be a positive impact
10 environmentally.

11 I also want to emphasize that while this
12 is obviously going to help our commuting from the
13 northwest down to downtown Minneapolis, this can't
14 be our total solution. There's also -- we still
15 have to deal with, you know, Highway 101, 169,
16 Highway 10, Highway 65. All of those are still
17 going to require some -- some efforts, some
18 improvements.

5

19 I guess I just want to encourage everyone
20 who is in favor of this to contact your
21 legislators. We have an important bonding issue
22 coming up this year where we still have to provide
23 some funding from the State of Minnesota, so
24 contact your legislators if you're in support of
25 this and make sure that they know that you support

1 the Northstar commuter rail. Thank you.

2 MR. YANTOS: All right. Steve Butler.

3 You also have it in writing. Steve.

4 MR. BUTLER: I'm Steve Butler. I live in
5 Andover. My address is 14430 Crosstown Boulevard
6 Northwest.

7 Recently I heard that these stations cost
8 \$800,000 apiece, and I also heard that this was
9 federal grant money and if you didn't use it, you
10 would lose it. And I just think that it would be
11 more appropriate that -- The cost, I've heard, is
12 outrageous, as far as the cost of each station.

6

13 And then is there an elevator in the --
14 either stations where you're going to crossover?
15 Like the Coon Rapids one, I think it said, where
16 you had to walk up and crossover.

7

17 MR. YANTOS: Again, we can't answer the
18 question here, but if you ask any of those folks,
19 the gentleman right in back of you, he'll be able
20 to answer your questions.

21 MR. BUTLER: What I'm saying about the
22 grant money is, I called up -- I'm handicapped. I
23 called up about how it's handicap accessible, and
24 they said that I wasn't available for any of this
25 money because of the -- because I was not with a

8

1 nonprofitable organization. So that's my concern
2 on the cost of each station.

3 MR. YANTOS: Thank you. Becky Fink.

4 MS. FINK: Good evening. My name is
5 Becky Fink. My address 12061 Magnolia in Coon
6 Rapids. And I am associated with the Anoka County
7 Affordable Housing Coalition, but I'm speaking also
8 as a private citizen. I'm just wondering when we
9 would hear more about the plans for the inclusion
10 of affordable working family housing associated
11 with the Northstar. We would like very much to
12 have some direction on when we can look forward to
13 something definitive on that.

9

14 MR. YANTOS: Thank you. A lot of
15 questions. Do we have questions from other folks?

16 Okay.

17 MR. AANERUD: I'm Mel Aanerud. Mel
18 Annerud, spelled A-a-n-e-r-u-d. I'm on the Ham
19 Lake Park Board. One of the things that I've been
20 involved with is the county-wide -- at least Anoka
21 County county-wide path, bike and path system, and
22 the different communities that try to coordinate to
23 make sure that path system works between community
24 to community.

25 I'm assuming that within the -- that

10

1 within your plan there's -- there's something --
 2 something within it to -- to be able to get to
 3 these locations by bike or by walking as well as
 4 any other way, and I just want to see how you're
 5 coordinating with that bike and trail plan that the
 6 county has.

10
 (cont.)

7 MR. YANTOS: Okay. Other questions?
 8 Other questions? Other questions?

9 Do you have it in writing? Do you want
 10 to get a --

11 Jo Ellen Christiansen.

12 MS. CHRISTIANSEN: Jo Ellen Christiansen,
 13 38-107th Lane Northwest in Coon Rapids. I'm
 14 interested in knowing what kinds of arrangements
 15 would be made for connections for people who want
 16 to take the Northstar downtown but don't work
 17 downtown and work in some of the other suburbs and
 18 what kinds of connections would be made to
 19 encourage people to take it.

11

20 MR. YANTOS: Michael.

21 MR. IACONS: Yes. My question was
 22 related to the environmental documents. It was my
 23 understanding that the purpose of the meeting
 24 tonight was to solicit comments on the
 25 environmental view, the environmental assessment

1 that has been done so far. How can one get ahold
2 of these documents? I don't think anyone here has
3 reviewed it, so it's kind of hard to comment on
4 them.

5 MR. YANTOS: I know that we can't comment
6 on it, but I know the gentleman with the yellow
7 shirt is going to be able to give you the quick
8 answer.

9 Okay. Are there any other questions?
10 Are there any further questions? Are there any
11 further questions?

12 If not, I can -- I will close the public
13 hearing.

14 (Public hearing closed at 7:26 p.m.)

15 * * *

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1 STATE OF MINNESOTA)

2 COUNTY OF HENNEPIN)

3

4 I, JACKIE YOUNG, Certified Court Reporter,
5 do hereby certify that the foregoing transcript
6 consisting of twenty-four pages is a true and
7 correct reproduction of my steno notes taken in
8 said matter.

9 Dated this 28th day of January, 2006.

10

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12 _____
Jackie Young, Court Reporter

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Section 5.6

Responses to Verbal Comments Received at the January 25, 2006 Public Hearing



Section 5.6 – Responses to Verbal Comments Received at the January 25, 2006 Public Hearing

5.6.1

Arthur Nielsen

Comment

Response

1. The total cost for the Hiawatha LRT system from downtown Minneapolis to Mall of America was \$715 million.
2. The total capital cost for the Northstar Commuter Rail system, from Downtown Minneapolis to Big Lake (40.1 miles), is estimated at \$289 million (Year of Expenditure dollars).

5.6.2

Kris Genck

Comment

Response

3. Your comment regarding concern about current business impacts is so noted. During the construction phase of the project, Mn/DOT, the NCDA and Met Council will work closely with local communities to minimize potential disruption to surrounding residents and businesses.

5.6.3

Dan Tveite

Comment

Response

4. Your comment of support is so noted.
5. The Major Investment Study (MIS) that was completed for the Northstar Corridor identified other transportation improvements recommended in the Northstar Corridor. Mn/DOT and area counties/cities are currently studying potential transportation improvements in the Corridor. These studies include, but are not limited to: TH 10, TH 47, TH 65, TH 101, TH 160, and I-94. As each of the above mentioned improvements could result in significant impacts, they will undergo separate environmental and design reviews under state and federal (where applicable) requirements.

5.6.4

Steve Butler



Comment

Response

6. As presented in Table 3.6 of the EA/Draft 4(f) Evaluation, the capital cost estimate for the stations, stops, terminals and intermodal facilities is \$16.19 million (Year of Expenditure dollars). The revised preferred alternative includes six commuter rail stations.
- As presented on page 14 of the EA, the non-federal share of the estimated project capital costs is approximately \$144 million. The federal share of total project cost is estimated at 50 percent. The federal funding would come through the Section 5309 New Starts grant program. The New Starts program is a competitive program, on a national level, that ranks major transit programs. The grant program is administered by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA).
7. Elevators will be included at stations requiring vertical accessibility, including the Fridley, Coon Rapids and Downtown Minneapolis stations.
8. All stations and vehicles will provide for the accessibility of commuter rail and light rail patrons with disabilities.

5.6.5

Becky Fink

Comment

Response

9. The overall goals of the Northstar project are presented in the EA (Section 2.0), and summarized in the response to comment 5.5.6 (response #1). Additionally, Section 4.1 of the EA provides a summary of local land use planning activities that have been and are occurring throughout the Northstar Corridor. The Northstar project is about providing an alternative mode of transportation. The Northstar Project therefore, does not include funding for any development beyond transportation improvements. Property development/redevelopment, including housing, around the proposed transit stations will be based on market conditions, local land use/zoning regulations and respective City approvals.

Your comment of interest regarding affordable housing in the corridor is so noted.

5.6.6

Mel Aanerud

Comment

Response

10. As stated in the EA (Section 4.2):

Commuter rail stations have been designed to provide a variety of amenities for the storage and safe use of bicycles in station areas. Bicycle storage facilities will provide secure, sturdy, and convenient equipment for locking bicycles. The number of bicycle storage facilities varies by station, according to the anticipated ridership and space constraints. The minimum will be five lockers and ten bicycle rack spaces per station.

Several provisions are included in station design for accessibility of pedestrians and bicyclists, including a network of paved paths. The paths will connect major on-site and off-site pedestrian origination points to the station and platform. All paths will be as short and direct as possible, with a clear line-of-site to the platform. Pedestrian paths will be visible from on-site access drives and parking areas, as well as from adjacent streets. Regular pedestrian paths have been designed to be six to eight feet wide. Crosswalks, walkways adjacent to parking and drop-off facilities, and pedestrian track crossings will be wider and have been designed in accordance with level of service capacity standards.

The Fridley station includes a pedestrian/bicycle underpass, which will provide improved safety conditions for bicyclists traveling from east/west. Additionally, the Mississippi River Regional Trail will be maintained through the Fridley station area. As noted in the 4(f) Evaluation, the Rice Creek Regional Trail will be temporarily closed during a 6-8 week construction period. The trail will be fully operational when the construction is complete in the area of the Rice Creek/Locke Lake bridge. The Downtown Minneapolis Intermodal station has been designed to accommodate the planned extension of the Cedar Avenue trail.

5.6.7

Jo Ellen Christiansen

Comment

Response

11. The Northstar system will connect with the Hiawatha LRT in downtown Minneapolis at a transit hub that will also allow commuters to connect with bus service to other parts of the metropolitan area. Bus operations will also be revised throughout the corridor to provide efficient bus service (timed-transfers with commuter rail) to stations along the route.

5.6.8

Michael Iacono

Comment

Response

12.

The EA/Draft 4(f) Evaluation was distributed to 90 agencies/organizations in December 2005. Copies of the document are also available for public review at the following libraries within the overall Northstar Corridor, including:

Minneapolis Northeast Library
Minneapolis Technology and Science Library
Columbia Heights Library
Crooked Lake Branch Library
Northtown Central Library
Rum River Branch Library
Elk River Public Library
Great River Regional Library – Big Lake and St. Cloud
Minnesota Legislative Reference Library

The Northstar project website, www.mn-GetOnBoard.com also provides a summary of the locations where the document is available for review. It also provides the EA document in electronic format for downloading.

Section 5.7

January 26, 2006 Public Hearing (Verbal Comments)

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NORTHSTAR CORRIDOR RAIL PROJECT
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT/DRAFT 4(f)
EVALUATION
PUBLIC HEARING

HEYWOOD FACILITY
MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA

JANUARY 26, 2006
6:35 P.M.

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TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS, taken on
January 26, 2006, at 560 Sixth Avenue North,
Minneapolis, Minnesota, before Vikki L. Thompson,
Professional Reporter and Notary Public in and for
the County of Washington, State of Minnesota.

APPEARANCES: Bryan Dodds (Presenter)
 Mark Fuhrmann

 Frank Broderick
 Jim Brennan
 Bob Smith
 Andrew Wanbach
 Mary O'Connor
 Dustin Maddy
 David Klopp
 Peter Radford
 Henry Kohring

1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2

3 MARK FUHRMANN: Good evening,
4 everybody. I'd like to welcome everyone
5 tonight to the Northstar public meeting and
6 public hearing here at Metro Transit. My
7 name is Mark Fuhrmann, and I'm the project
8 director of the Northstar project. My parent
9 agency is Metro Transit and the project is a
10 joint project between Metro Transit,
11 Minnesota Department of Transportation, and
12 the Northstar Corridor Development Authority.

13 And as you can see, all of the staff
14 persons who are in our requisite Northstar
15 yellow and blue you'll see around the room
16 and we are available for questions after the
17 formal presentation tonight.

18 The purpose of this public meeting
19 and now as we enter the formal public hearing
20 stage for this next half hour is to present
21 an overview of the environmental assessment
22 document and provide some opportunity for any
23 of you to comment on them. Shortly I'll
24 introduce my colleague Bryan Dodds right here

25 to my right and he will be presenting a short

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1 Power Point overview of the project and
2 highlighting those environmental items that
3 we would like for you to comment on if you
4 wish.

5 Before I turn it over to Bryan I'd
6 like to just talk briefly about the proper
7 public rules of the public hearing here so
8 everybody has a fair chance to speak and
9 comment as they wish. First of all, we do
10 our -- we do require a court reporter and so
11 she will be transcribing everything that is
12 said tonight during this formal part of the
13 hearing. There will be an opportunity for
14 your comments and I've got a half dozen or so
15 comment cards already, people expressing an
16 interest to comment after we do the formal
17 overview by Mr. Dodds. For anybody who would
18 like to speak who has not filled out a blue
19 comment request card, please do so. Who has
20 comment cards? Carissa has those and Jody
21 has those, so please see either of them to
22 fill out a card and we will add you to the
23 list of commentators in the order that you

24 submit those.

25 So that everyone can have a fair

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5

1 chance to speak, we are going to monitor the
2 time. Time is important to all of us as
3 we're busy people and we know your time is
4 important taking it out of your busy
5 schedules to come and visit with us tonight.
6 So we will limit comments to five minutes for
7 elected officials and folks that are
8 representing organized groups, and we will
9 limit your presentation time to three minutes
10 if you're speaking as an individual.

11 The comments tonight that we receive
12 from you we greatly appreciate, but the
13 format of these hearings are that we will not
14 be responding to those comments. If you have
15 them in a form of a question, fine, we
16 welcome those, but we will not be responding
17 to those during the course of your
18 commentary. We will be transcribing those
19 comments or questions that you make and then
20 we will be responding to all of those in the
21 formal environmental assessment document that
22 we will be publishing coming up in mid

23 February.

24 I want to stress to everybody
25 tonight that we welcome your verbal comments,

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1 but we will welcome your written comments.
2 The public comment period is now open and
3 will continue to be open until February 16,
4 2006. If you have a specific question about
5 the Corridor project that you do want
6 answered and it's just a burning question
7 tonight, again, see any of us in the yellow
8 staff shirts afterwards and we'll do our best
9 to help answer your questions. Also verbal
10 comments tonight or your written comments
11 after tonight have equal value, all comments
12 are important to us. You may deposit your
13 written comments if you wish if you want to
14 do those tonight on one of the comment cards
15 and we will be taking those back to the
16 office with us tomorrow to begin developing
17 our responses.

18 This is the second of three public
19 hearings that we are conducting tonight. We
20 had one last night up in Coon Rapids, a very
21 well attended meeting, and tonight here at

22 the downtown end of the corridor and then
23 we'll go to the opposite end, the northwest
24 end of the corridor at Big Lake for the third
25 and final public meeting and public hearing

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7

1 Monday night. So you're all welcome to come
2 Monday night if you like as well.
3 Information about these, if you want to sign
4 up for Monday night's hearing are also out in
5 the foyer for your availability.

6 So with that are there any questions
7 regarding the rules of tonight's meeting
8 before we proceed to the formal presentation?

9 (No response.)

10 MARK FUHRMANN: Okay. I see none,
11 so I'd like to introduce any colleague
12 Mr. Bryan Dodds from the Minnesota Department
13 of Transportation, he is he our environmental
14 expert on the project and so he is going to
15 walk us through the kind of project overview
16 and then with the focus on the environmental
17 changes that are incorporated in the
18 environmental assessment. So, Bryan, it's
19 all yours.

20 BRYAN DODDS: Well, I'd just like

21 to say welcome. I hope you've gotten to know
22 a little bit more about the project and our
23 agenda. The purpose of this public hearing
24 is to learn more about a project, learn a
25 little bit about what we have done in the

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1 past for our environmental documentation,
2 learn about the alternative we have right now
3 and the analysis we performed with our
4 environmental assessment and the reason we're
5 here tonight, the overview of the findings,
6 the next steps and how you can provide
7 comments. So the purpose of these hearings,
8 present our findings over the last few months
9 of working through our environmental process;
10 presenting our decision at hand; describe,
11 again, the commenting process; and seek your
12 input.

13 The agencies involved, the lead
14 federal agency for this project is the
15 Federal Transit Administration and our local
16 partners are MN/DOT, Northstar Corridor
17 Development Authority, and the Metropolitan
18 Council. We are following the FTA's process
19 for the environmental document.

20 So what is commuter rail? Commuter
21 rail it operates on existing railroad track
22 which is different than the light rail we
23 have now which is on it's own right of ways,
24 own track that no other freight service can
25 use. It's a longer system, 30 miles or more

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9

1 in length as compared to light rail which is
2 shorter and stations are about five miles
3 apart, light rail one or less and we're
4 moving people to work, we're a commuting
5 system.

6 Northstar's description, it's a
7 40-mile corridor, starts in downtown
8 Minneapolis and goes to Big Lake. We have a
9 maintenance facility at the end of the line
10 in Big Lake, six stations. We have eighteen
11 actual train cars and five locomotives which
12 makes five different train consists. We're
13 doing improvements to the Burlington Northern
14 Santa Fe mainline track and it also includes
15 light rail connection, we're extending the
16 light rail four blocks in downtown
17 Minneapolis.

18 Our project history, many of you

19 were around for this part of the history.
20 We've been working on this since 1999 with
21 design and the environmental process started
22 with the environmental impact statement
23 and -- 2000 to 2002 and that's more of --
24 it's a larger document, more comprehensive in
25 the federal process. We're updating that

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10

1 document with our environmental assessment.
2 We've also gone through PE which is our
3 preliminary engineering or approximately 30
4 percent design for the project and when the
5 project stalled due to lack of state funding
6 in 2002 and beyond we put the project on the
7 shelf and now we're reevaluating again now
8 that we're gaining momentum again with the
9 project and so we did our preliminary
10 engineering validation where we relooked at
11 what we had done and updated the project with
12 the changes over the time.

13 So our project history, what did we
14 look at with our final environmental impact
15 statement back in 2002? We had a larger
16 system, it went from Minneapolis to Rice,
17 about 82 miles. We had 11 commuter rail

18 stations, we had a vehicle maintenance
19 facility in Elk River and a layover facility
20 at the end of the line in Rice. We had an
21 LRT connection on Fifth Street, which I'll
22 describe more fully later, but it was on the
23 north side of Fifth Street. BNSF track
24 improvements did not include the third main
25 which we have looked at in the environmental

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11

1 assessment and it also included a bus
2 operation plan to change bus service in the
3 corridor because of this increased service
4 with commuter rail.

5 So this is a graphic of the corridor
6 starting in Minneapolis here and showing the
7 LRT connection down to the airport and the
8 Mall of America and then headed up northwest
9 through the corridor all the way through St.
10 Cloud and to Rice.

11 What have we looked at for the
12 environmental assessment, commuter rail
13 corridor between Minneapolis and Big Lake, 40
14 miles? A smaller system, more cost
15 effective, meaner, leaner; stations downtown
16 Minneapolis, Fridley, Coon Rapids, Anoka, Elk

17 River, and Big Lake. Our maintenance
18 facility and layover facility have been
19 combined at the end of our route in Big Lake.
20 And our Big Lake station has changed
21 locations slightly to improve safety, and
22 I'll go over that in the next slide. The LRT
23 connection has changed sides of the road on
24 Fifth Street, it's gone from the north side
25 to the south side and we have added due to

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1 our BNSF design agreement a third mainline
2 track, so we're adding an additional track to
3 the double track that's already there through
4 Fridley and Coon Rapids.

5 So why have we changed? Funding
6 availability is one issue. We have gone back
7 and forth with state funding issues and the
8 FTA throughout this time has increased their
9 measures for cost effectiveness, so we need
10 to meet those. And through additional
11 engineering we've been able to improve
12 safety. Surrounding development has been
13 occurring in these sites and there is a
14 proposed Twins stadium downtown Minneapolis
15 so we've slid our commuter rail platform to

16 better accommodate that. We have our BNSF
17 agreement which we've entered into to look at
18 the third main and we've improved vehicle
19 circulation.

20 So here is our system now, starting
21 downtown Minneapolis again with the existing
22 light rail and we're connecting extending
23 four blocks and then it goes up to Big Lake
24 and future system all the way up to Rice.

25 So downtown Minneapolis -- I'm just

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1 going to go through and describe shortly what
2 happens at each of these stations. So north,
3 it's to the upper right of the screen that
4 way, and so the river is over here, BNSF
5 mainline comes in and the Target Center is
6 down over here and here is the LRT connection
7 which will be extended from down here on
8 First up to meet up with us and we'll have
9 vertical circulation or stairs, elevator,
10 escalator between the two.

11 Fridley, kind of a unique station
12 for us, we have parking on both sides of the
13 mainline track and there is a tunnel
14 connecting those. This will also provide an

15 important bicycle and pediatrician link under
16 the tracks so that helps improve safety in
17 the area.

18 Coon Rapids, this is one of our
19 existing commuter coach park-and-ride
20 facilities in this location. Highway 10 is
21 to the north of it and also another unique
22 station we have a pedestrian overpass to get
23 at the inbound platform.

24 The Anoka station, here is where --
25 one of the areas where we've reduced impacts.

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14

1 There is a DNR scenic easement along the Rum
2 River and we've been able to engineer this
3 pond from being mostly in this easement to
4 just partially infringing on the edge. And,
5 again, we have platforms on both sides and
6 proposed parking structure or parking by the
7 City of Anoka.

8 Elk River, the other commuter coach
9 site which is existing right here, Highway 10
10 is to the south and we will be expanding this
11 parking lot to the west.

12 The Big Lake station, we have an
13 existing park-and-pool lot which is on the

14 northwest quadrant of County Road 43 and
15 Highway 10 to the north and in the -- under
16 the FEIS and the initial preliminary
17 engineering of the project we had the station
18 on either side of the mainline Burlington
19 Northern tracks here and so when you got out
20 of your car you would have to cross the
21 mainline to access this station to go into
22 Minneapolis. What we've done now is we've
23 moved the station location over here and
24 there is a siding so you will not have to
25 cross BNSF mainline to get onto the platform.

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1 The maintenance facility, this is
2 just to the east of the Big Lake Station. We
3 have -- here is County 43 and Highway 10 and
4 there is a road connecting the two. It
5 includes a large main building, train washing
6 facility, and storage tracks. The track
7 capacity improvements that we were talking
8 about for the third main on the Burlington
9 Northern mainline, this is a hard-to-read
10 graphic, but to the left of the screen is
11 north and we do have this on our board over
12 there on the other side of the room. This is

13 694 and here is the Northtown yard, big
14 switching yard of the Burlington Northern and
15 we head north past the Mississippi, Osborne,
16 85th, and here is Highway 610 and Coon Rapids
17 Boulevard just ends north of that.

18 The LRT connection, so we're
19 extending Hiawatha light rail project four
20 blocks. Here is where the existing system
21 ends on Fifth Street and First Avenue in
22 downtown Minneapolis. Again, here is the
23 Target Center kind of around you. We are in
24 this building right here tonight. So we
25 extended and we've switched to the south side

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16

1 of the track or of the road along here. And
2 so one of the benefits of this design it was
3 on the north side and it cut off access to
4 Fifth Avenue here and there was going to be a
5 retaining wall so now we've been able to open
6 that up and keep traffic moving in here so it
7 helps with circulation downtown.

8 EA analysis, what have we've looked
9 at through this environmental process? We've
10 looked at social impact; land use; community
11 displacement; archaeological and historical

12 resources; visual and aesthetics;
13 environmental justice; safety and security;
14 also environmental impacts relating to
15 farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers,
16 vegetation and wildlife; rare, threatened and
17 endangered species; as well as water quality
18 utilities; hazardous waste; air quality;
19 noise and vibration; and transportation. So
20 what did we find? We found that the project
21 as it is now is consistent with the local
22 land use plans. We have a reduction in the
23 property acquisition requirements, so we
24 don't need as much property for this project.
25 We are following provisions in our

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17

1 programmatic agreement which is an agreement
2 with us and the state historic preservation
3 offices basically to say that we're
4 respecting the historical properties around
5 the site and will not negatively impact them.
6 We're improving safety by moving the Big Lake
7 station. With the third main we do have 2.09
8 acres of wetland impacts and floodplain
9 impacts near the Rice Creek crossing of the
10 third mainline, but we do have the reduction

11 of the impact at the Rum River scenic
12 easement where that pond was. Also we do
13 have potential impact to Blandings turtles
14 which was part of the FEIS as well and we
15 will do our best to mitigate that during
16 construction. We're doing stone water
17 ponding modifications and doing additional
18 ESAs or environmental site assessments which
19 is basically looking at possible hazardous
20 materials and putting together a plan to
21 mitigate those during construction. We're
22 doing traffic improvements with the Fifth
23 Street alignment, better circulation
24 downtown. We do have a temporary closure of
25 the Rice Creek Regional Trail. This is a

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1 4(f) impact, it's basically a park land
2 impact. I'll talk about that a little bit.
3 So -- and if you look at the title of our
4 environmental document it says:
5 Environmental Assessment EA slash Draft 4(f)
6 Evaluation. And the 4(f) evaluation is just
7 looking at how we are impacting park lands.
8 So it's a temporary impact, it will be a
9 trail closure for about six to eight weeks

10 during construction. We will fully restore
11 it to its full functional -- full
12 functionality after we're done with
13 construction. We've been coordinating with
14 Anoka County Parks and we will be posting
15 trail closure signs to keep the public
16 informed. As you can see on this map, trail
17 systems in red, here is Highway 47 or
18 University and here is Mississippi Street and
19 there is a connection that goes underneath
20 the BNSF bridges along Rice Creek. So to
21 construct a bridge for the third mainline
22 over Rice Creek we'll need to temporarily
23 close this. So these yellow triangles are
24 where we're posting the trail closed sign.

25 What are the next steps? Well, this

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19

1 is our second of three public meetings. We
2 have our next one is up in Big Lake on
3 Monday. Our comment period for the
4 environmental assessment closes on February
5 16th and after that we will have our
6 environmental determination with the federal
7 transit administration as well as MN/DOT in
8 the spring and we're shooting for

9 construction period of 2007 to 2009.

10 So we welcome your comments either
11 written or verbal. If it's beyond this
12 evening you can feel free to send them to me,
13 my address is on the comment cards. I will
14 just go over quickly the format for giving
15 comments verbally this evening. Like Mark
16 said, for elected officials or representative
17 groups it's five minutes. Individuals it's
18 three minutes. The public hearing is being
19 transcribed by the court reporter and the
20 questions will not be responded to this
21 evening but will be responded to in the final
22 environmental document.

23 So I will turn the reins over to
24 Mark.

25 MARK FUHRMANN: Thank you very much,

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20

1 Bryan, for that 20-minute overview of many
2 years of effort into the Northstar Project.

3 What we would like to do now is open
4 it up for public comments. So I've got about
5 a half dozen who signed up before the
6 presentation and if there is any more they
7 will be coming my way. So in the order of

8 sign-ups the first sign up is Mr. Bob Smith.

9 BOB SMITH: So at this time we
10 hope it will be running by '09 we hope as the
11 target date in the spring, right?

12 MARK FUHRMANN: Remember, we can't
13 answer questions. We'll take your comments.

14 BOB SMITH: Okay. That and also I
15 hope some day we get it all the way up to St.
16 Cloud in the next few years on this line.
17 Thanks.

18 MARK FUHRMANN: Thank you,
19 Mr. Smith. The next person signed up is Mr.
20 Frank Broderick. Is he in the room?

21 FRANK BRODERICK: Yes. Our town
22 house unit is just off downtown here, and I
23 think one concern that our people in there
24 have had, particularly those people that are
25 just 60 feet from the track was the

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21

1 environmental impact of fumes from the train.
2 And in those days they were talking about a
3 station there so that was even doubly -- of a
4 double concern. It's not as much of a
5 concern now, obviously, with that station not
6 being put on the line, but we would still

7 have concerns about what is the environmental
8 impact of 18 more trains in our block.
9 That's it.

10 MARK FUHRMANN: Okay. Thank you
11 very much. Next signed up is Mr. Andrew
12 Wanbach. Would you also -- I forgot to
13 mention this -- identify your address,
14 residence for the record, please, Andrew.

15 ANDREW WANBACH: Sure. I'm a
16 resident of Brooklyn Park, Minnesota, 4124
17 Edinbrook Terrace. That's where my parents
18 live, but I'm actually living at the
19 University of Minnesota, St. Paul campus as a
20 student. I'm a junior there and with a major
21 in urban studies and urban and regional
22 development plus mass transit infrastructure.
23 I'm really excited to see that the State has
24 put such a high priority on transit and
25 commuter rail. I really hope that this

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22

1 project can put more pressure on projects
2 such as Red Rock and the Central Corridor
3 Light Rail Line. These are two other crucial
4 projects for the State of Minnesota. And if
5 we can get these built we can become even

3
(cont.)

4

6 more competitive in the state and in the
7 nation and in the global economy. Thank you
8 very much for having me.

9 MARK FUHRMANN: Thanks. Next we
10 have Ms. Mary O'Connor representing the
11 Brooklyn Center City Council. Welcome.

12 MARY O'CONNOR: Thank you. I'm
13 not representing the council. This is my own
14 opinions.

15 MARK FUHRMAN: Okay. Well, thank
16 you.

17 MARY O'CONNOR: This system is
18 going to cost 289 million and then I've heard
19 that it's going to cost 13 million per year
20 after that to keep it going. 30 percent of
21 that 13 million will be covered by fares,
22 that means about 9 million every year will
23 not be covered by fares, so that's going to
24 have to be paid for by the county or state or
25 local governments. I think that's too much

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23

1 money for this. I wonder how many people are
2 really going to fit in these 18 trains every
3 day, how many are we really helping to bring
4 back and forth to work. I read in the Star

5

6

5 Tribune this week that the fastest rate of
6 employment growth is in the Central Lakes
7 area which is north of St. Cloud and it says
8 that that area is going to outstrip the metro
9 area in work force growth from 2005 to 2015,
10 so I think, you know, if we move some of the
11 building and businesses away from the Twin
12 Cities that our current roads will take
13 people to their business. They can take
14 Highway 10 north to St. Cloud to go to work.
15 We won't need this train to bring people into
16 the metro area.

17 MARK FUHRMANN: Thank you for your
18 comments. Next is Mr. Dustin Maddy. Have I
19 got the last name right?

20 DUSTIN MADDY: That's close
21 enough.

22 MARK FUHRMANN: Welcome. Please
23 identify yourself with the correct
24 enunciation of your last name and who you're
25 representing.

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1 DUSTIN MADDY: My name is Dustin
2 Maddy, I am representing the North Loop
3 Neighborhood Association. I live at 700

4 Washington Avenue North, Unit 603, about
5 three blocks that way. We as the North Loop
6 Neighborhood Organization are happy that the
7 multi mobile station will be placed within
8 our neighborhood boundaries and we would like
9 the name of that station to be the North Loop
10 Station. That is all I have to say.

7

11 MARK FUHRMANN: A little early
12 campaigning to name the new station. Thanks
13 for coming out. Mr. David Klopp?

14 DAVID KLOPP: That's me.

15 MARK FUHRMANN: Would you also
16 identify yourself for the court reporter.

17 DAVID KLOPP: David Klopp, 113
18 Parkview Terrace, Golden Valley. I'm
19 representing the Cedar Lake Park Association.
20 And Cedar Lake Park Association has a mutual
21 interest in this corridor too which I hope we
22 could all get along with and our goal at the
23 Cedar Lake Park Association is to continue
24 the Cedar Lake Trail eastward to the
25 Mississippi River and hopefully beyond that

8

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25

1 too. We would like to -- those of you that
2 are not familiar with the Cedar Lake Trail,

3 one of the reasons that Minneapolis is the
4 number one bicycle commuting city in the
5 nation, it is the trunk line going from the
6 loose line, the southwest LRT, it all comes
7 down into the corridor between Washington
8 Avenue and the Mississippi River. And just
9 to fill in some people that don't know that
10 we just acquired 3 million dollars out of the
11 federal transportation budget with the same
12 gentlemen that was helping you all,
13 Congressman Oberstar and Congressman Martin
14 Sabo. So our goal is the same as your goal,
15 we don't want a transportation system modeled
16 after like Houston, Texas. We want a
17 transportation system that handicapped people
18 can get along with, people on bikes, people
19 walking, trains, less pollution. And the
20 ballpark, I think it could be a great win-win
21 if we can get the bike and the train,
22 everything working together. So that's my
23 comment, and I just hope you have a spot for
24 us in the trench. Thank you.

25 MARK FUHRMANN: Thank you very

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9

1 much. The last advance request to speak I

2 have here is Mr. Peter Radford. Is he in the
3 room?

4 PETER RADFORD: I'm Peter Radford.
5 I'm here -- I'm currently from the St.
6 Anthony east neighborhood, and I'm not
7 representing the board, I'm representing
8 myself, but I am -- I've been familiar with
9 some of the earlier developments that it
10 happened where there is actually going to be
11 a station in our neighborhood and it says
12 it's deferred so I'm assuming perhaps when
13 the Red Rock Line comes in you may be
14 considering that for the future, but I guess
15 I have a concern in that I see all these
16 stations are pretty much -- they look the
17 same, and the neighbors who are really close
18 to proposed station at the time they had
19 suggested to MN/DOT some improvements that
20 would kind of ease the impact of this
21 station. I mean you see a lot of these
22 stations way out, they're surrounded by trees
23 and not a lot of people. Well, the station
24 in northeast that is going to be built is
25 going to be surrounded by a lot of people, is

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1 going to have a big impact. My understanding
2 is when some neighbors presented a carefully
3 thought out plan of what would work for them
4 that would ease some of the problems MN/DOT
5 pretty much just ignored them and said we're
6 going to build a station just like that one
7 and you can't do anything about it. I would
8 hope that when the time comes for a station
9 to go into the northeast, which I think is a
10 good idea, I would hope you consider the
11 needs of the people who are going to be
12 impacted very closely who are living right by
13 the rails and it's having a bigger impact
14 than some of the people that aren't going to
15 be living as close and dense.

16 MARK FUHRMANN: Very good. Thank
17 you for that comment. I don't have any more
18 advance requests to speak. Does staff have
19 any more advance requests?

20 (No response.)

21 MARK FUHRMANN: All right. Well,
22 let me open to the floor here and let me see
23 any hands from folks who would like to speak
24 on the record with a comment. I saw a hand
25 in the rear there and next we'll come to the

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1 front. Yes, sir, please identify yourself,
2 name and address for the record, please.

3 JIM BRENNAN: Jim Brennan, I live
4 on California Street in Northeast
5 Minneapolis, and I'm strongly in favor of
6 what I see happening here tonight, but I want
7 to say that I hope that there will be a
8 station in Northeast Minneapolis. It seems a
9 shame to go from downtown Minneapolis to
10 Fridley while skipping all the neighborhoods
11 in between. That's it.

11

12 MARK FUHRMANN: Thank you very
13 much. All right. Next, in front. Please
14 identify yourself and your residence, please.

15 HENRY KOHRING: I'm Henry Kohring.
16 I live at 1900 James Avenue South, and I
17 would like to suggest that at the Fridley
18 station that there be connecting bus service.
19 There is a lot of jobs up there like
20 Medtronic and United Defense and it's not
21 just people that live in the suburbs and
22 commute to downtown Minneapolis but also
23 people that commute to a lot of these jobs
24 out there. And especially at the Fridley
25 station I think that's necessary.

12

1 MARK FUHRMANN: Great. I
2 appreciate that comment. Okay. Any other
3 hands for folks that would like to speak on
4 the record with a comment? Let me see if
5 there is anybody else who hasn't spoke for
6 the record before we come back for a second
7 round here. Any persons in attendance who
8 haven't spoken on the record first time
9 around?

10 (No response.)

11 MARK FUHRMANN: Yes.

12 FRANK BRODERICK: Again, Frank
13 Broderick, I gave her my address. The St.
14 Anthony Square Town House Association is
15 vehemently opposed to a station at Seventh
16 Street because of just the close proximity of
17 the last row of houses in our block that are
18 basically 60 feet from the track. I'll just
19 leave that as a comment.

20 MARK FUHRMANN: Thank you. Let me
21 see hands, one last call for comments, formal
22 comments on the record. One more time, any
23 more comments for the record? Any more
24 comments for the record? Anybody out in the
25 hall there, Paul or Rich?

1 (No response.)

2 MARK FUHRMANN: All right. Thank
3 you very, very much for all of your comments
4 tonight and taking time out of your busy home
5 schedules to come over and hear about the
6 Northstar Project tonight and share with us
7 your comments. As Bryan and I have both
8 said, the public record stays open until Feb.
9 16 and so please feel free to submit us in
10 writing or if you all want to come up to Big
11 Lake on Monday we'll hear your comments there
12 as well for the next couple of weeks through
13 Feb. 16. Then we'll be responding to those
14 comments as we publish the environmental
15 assessment shortly thereafter.

16 This concludes the formal public
17 hearing for the Northstar Environmental
18 Assessment. We would welcome, folks, if you
19 have any more questions that you'd like to
20 pose to staff around the room, please catch
21 one of us here as you're heading out and
22 please travel safely on your way to your next
23 destination. Thanks so much.

24

25

1 REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

2 I, Vikki L. Thompson, Professional Reporter
3 and Notary Public, hereby certify that the
4 foregoing is a true and accurate transcript of the
5 proceedings to the best of my ability.

6 WITNESS MY HAND AND SEAL this 2nd day of
7 February 2006.

8

Vikki L. Thompson, Court Reporter
9 My Commission Expires January 31, 2010

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Section 5.7

Responses to Verbal Comments Received at the January 26, 2006 Public Hearing



Section 5.7 – Responses to Verbal Comments Received at the January 26, 2006 Public Hearing

5.7.1

Bob Smith

Comment

Response

1. Construction for Phase I of the Northstar Corridor Rail project is scheduled to take from 2007 through 2009. The system is planned to be in operation in 2009.
2. Phase II of the project would extend the system to the St. Cloud area. The full 82-mile system was studied in the Final EIS and included in the ROD as the preferred alternative. Your support of extending the line to the St. Cloud area is so noted.

5.7.2

Frank Broderick

Comment

Response

3. Your comment regarding environmental impacts of the Northeast Minneapolis station is so noted. Phase I, or the revised preferred alternative of the Northstar Corridor Rail project, does not include a commuter rail station in Northeast Minneapolis. The Northstar supplemental Draft EIS and Final EIS evaluated the impacts of a commuter rail station in Northeast Minneapolis at 7th Street Northeast.

As documented in the Final EIS (Noise Section):

“In response to comments received during the DEIS public comment periods, additional noise monitoring was done in the vicinity of the proposed Northeast Minneapolis station at 7th Street NE and Fridley commuter rail stations. Residents in these areas had concerns regarding potential noise impacts to their neighborhoods. Two additional monitoring locations were initially staged at the Minneapolis Northeast site, but one monitor was discarded after construction at a nearby building potentially increased the ambient noise reading. The remaining monitor, identified in the FEIS as Monitor 1A, concurred with previous measurements in the area and showed no noise impact.”

5.7.3

Andrew Wanbach

Comment**Response**

4. Your comment supporting the commuter rail, and other transit initiatives in the Twin Cities Region (Red Rock and Central Corridor), is so noted.

5.7.4**Mary O'Connor****Comment****Response**

5. Based on analysis completed in July 2005, the annual project system operating cost in year 2005 dollars is \$10.9 million. The July 2005 Financial Plan for the Northstar Rail project identified that fare revenue averaged over 20 years of operation would account for approximately 36 percent of annual operations and maintenance costs. The remaining operations and maintenance costs for the system will be provided by Mn/DOT (Minnesota State General Fund), the NCDA capital partners (levy property taxes) and FTA grants (FTA Section 5307 urban formula grants).
6. The commuter rail service plan will provide a weekday operation of eighteen trips (nine each way) between Big Lake and downtown Minneapolis. Weekend and holiday service will consist of three round-trips between Big Lake and downtown Minneapolis. The 2025 daily ridership forecast of 5,590 (weekday) passengers corresponds to 2,795 round trips per weekday. Seating capacity in passenger cars will range from 135 to 150 passengers, depending on the interior arrangement and amenities provided in each car. Each train set is currently proposed to have four cars. Hence, each train set has the capacity to carry up to 600 passengers.

5.7.5**Dustin Maddy****Comment****Response**

7. Your request for naming the Downtown Minneapolis Intermodal station ‘the North Loop Station’ is so noted.

5.7.6**David Klopp****Comment****Response**

8. See response to comment 5.4.3.

9. See response to comment 5.6.7.

All stations and vehicles will provide for the accessibility of commuter rail and light rail patrons with disabilities.

5.7.7

Peter Radford

Comment

Response

10. Phase I of the Northstar Rail project does not include the Northeast Minneapolis station. The supplemental Draft EIS and Final EIS for the Northstar project did identify and evaluate a proposed station at 7th Street NE in Minneapolis. Volume two of the Final EIS includes a report to the Minneapolis City Council and the NCDA, by the Northstar Community Task Force, on the 7th Street NE Commuter Rail station.

The Programmatic Agreement (PA) currently in place for the Northstar Project, calls for the final design review and concurrence by the Minnesota SHPO of the Minneapolis Northeast station to assure it will not result in an adverse effect to the Northwest Furniture Mart (in proximity to the Northeast Minneapolis station).

5.7.8

Jim Brennan

Comment

Response

11. Your comment of support for including a station in Northeast Minneapolis is so noted. The Northeast Minneapolis commuter rail station is not included in the revised preferred alternative. It is identified as a future station, when funding is available. The supplemental Draft EIS and Final EIS disclosed the impacts of a Northeast Minneapolis commuter rail station at 7th Street NE.

5.7.9

Henry Kohring

Comment

Response

12. The Northstar Rail project will include a bus operating plan that provides efficient (timed-transfers) bus service to and from commuter rail stations.



5.7.10

Frank Broderick

Comment

Response

13.

Your comment opposing the Northeast Minneapolis commuter rail station is so noted. The Northeast Minneapolis station is not included under the revised preferred alternative evaluated in the EA/4(f) Evaluation. The impacts and mitigation for a future station at that location are disclosed in the supplemental Draft EIS/Final EIS and ROD for the Northstar Corridor.

Section 5.8

January 30, 2006 Public Hearing (Verbal Comments)

1

2

PUBLIC HEARING

3

for the

4

NORTHSTAR CORRIDOR RAIL PROJECT

5

Environmental Assessment/Draft 4(f) Evaluation

6

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Held at:

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Big Lake High School

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501 Minnesota Avenue

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Big Lake, Minnesota

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January 30, 2006

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7:30 p.m.

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Jackie Young, RPR
Adams Court Reporting
320 East Main Street
Anoka, Minnesota 55303
763-421-2486

24

25

1 TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS, taken on
2 Monday, January 30, 2006, at the Big Lake High
3 School, 501 Minnesota Avenue, Big Lake, Minnesota,
4 commencing at approximately 7:30 o'clock p.m.,
5 before Jackie Young, Professional Registered
6 Reporter and Notary Public, in and for the County
7 of Hennepin, State of Minnesota.

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1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 MR. YANTOS: It's 7:30, the second
3 portion of tonight's activities. The first portion
4 was an open house. We wanted you to be able to
5 come in and just take a look around and ask
6 questions.

7 The second part is a public hearing on
8 the environmental assessment that we did. We've
9 been working on this program since 1997. We've had
10 somewhere between 50 and 60 public meetings.
11 There's been a few changes in the project itself.
12 There have been a few changes in some environmental
13 things, and so this portion deals strictly with the
14 environmental changes that have taken place.

15 We have to follow a federal and state
16 legal process for this meeting, so I'm going to
17 read this to you. If you want to make a comment,
18 it's very important that you sign in, and we also
19 need to get your name and address for the court
20 reporter.

21 But let me read through this so everybody
22 understands. I want to welcome you here to the
23 environmental assessment for the Northstar Rail
24 Project. We are absolutely glad to see you and all
25 of the many, many questions that you've had for us.

1 The purpose of this public hearing --
2 Oh, I'm sorry. I'm Tim Yantos and I'm the
3 executive director -- And we keep going in and
4 out here a little bit. -- executive director of
5 the Northstar Rail Project, and I will be presiding
6 over the public hearing.

7 The purpose of this public hearing is to
8 present an overview of the environmental assessment
9 and provide an opportunity for comments.

10 Shortly I will introduce Bryan Dodds, who
11 will be presenting a short Power Point presentation
12 on the environmental assessment.

13 First of all, I want to go over the
14 different rules, strictly, again, because we're
15 following a federal and state legal process.

16 Now, the presentation and comments
17 received tonight will be transcribed by a court
18 reporter, who is right here. There will be
19 opportunity for comments following Bryan's 15 or 20
20 minute presentation.

21 If you wish to make a verbal comment
22 tonight, I would request that you fill out a
23 request to speak card found at the sign-in table,
24 and a lot of us have these cards if you would like
25 to make a comment. This will help us insure that

1 we take your comments in an orderly manner and that
2 the court reporter spells your name and gets your
3 address currently. So that we may provide everyone
4 who wishes to speak an opportunity, we will limit
5 your comments to about three minutes. And we will
6 request, let's see, testimony, stating your name
7 and address. We said that already.

8 Comments will not be responded to at the
9 public hearing, so you can make a comment, but at
10 the public hearing we are not able to respond back
11 to you, but if you wish to ask anybody in the
12 yellow shirt the same question on a one-to-one
13 basis, we will be able to answer that question for
14 you.

15 Let's see. This will become part of the
16 final environmental document that will be prepared
17 and distributed following the close and comment
18 period on February 16th of 2006. This is the third
19 meeting that we've had along the corridor downtown
20 Minneapolis, Coon Rapids, and here in Big Lake.

21 If you have any specific questions about
22 the Northstar Corridor Project, again you're
23 invited to discuss them informally with anybody
24 that has a yellow shirt on.

25 Verbal and written comments are

1 considered as equal value. If you do not wish to
2 make a verbal comment tonight, you may use the
3 comment cards found at the sign-in table to provide
4 a written comment. You may deposit your written
5 comments in the comment box at the sign-in table
6 tonight or you may mail the card to the
7 Northstar Project Office as long as we get it by
8 February 16th. And the address of the Northstar
9 Project Office is on the card itself.

10 Let's see. This is the third of the
11 hearings. I think that's all the official rules
12 and regulations.

13 Let me introduce Bryan Dodds, who will go
14 through the presentation, and we can get to the
15 comments. Thank you.

16 MR. DODDS: Thank you, Tim. Welcome this
17 evening for the third and final public hearing on
18 the Northstar Corridor Environmental Assessment
19 Draft 4(f) Evaluation. The agenda this evening and
20 for this presentation will be to go over the
21 purpose of the public hearing, the project history,
22 alternatives evaluated, EA analysis, overview of
23 findings, our next steps, and how to provide
24 comments.

25 Again, the purpose of the public hearing,

1 to present the summary of our findings through the
2 EA analysis, present our decision at hand, and
3 describe the commenting process so you can give us
4 some feedback and seek your input.

5 The EIS involvement for this project.
6 The federal agency involved in our project is the
7 Federal Transit Administration, the FTA. We will
8 be following their environmental process. The
9 local funding partners are MN/Dot, Minnesota
10 Department of Transportation; and Northstar
11 Corridor Development Authority, the NCDA; and
12 Metropolitan Council.

13 So what is commuter rail? Commuter rail
14 operates on existing railroad tracks. This is
15 different from the light rail system that was
16 recently put in the Minneapolis area that operates
17 on a dedicated right-of-way. It only operates on
18 its own track; no freight service. They're
19 typically a longer system, 30 miles or more in
20 length. Stations are placed approximately five
21 miles part, unlike light rail, which are one mile
22 or less; and we're moving people to work, we're a
23 commuter rail service.

24 Northstar's description. We are
25 approximately 40 miles in length, starting in Big

1 Lake and going towards downtown Minneapolis. We
2 have a maintenance facility that has been moved
3 from Elk River to Big Lake. We have six stations
4 along the way. We have 18 train cars and five
5 locomotives. We plan to do improvements to the
6 Burlington Northern Santa Fe railroad facilities
7 between there, and that includes an LRT connection
8 between the existing LRT system and our downtown
9 Minneapolis station.

10 Project history. Many of you have been
11 around the last several years for this project
12 history. It started back in 1999, working on the
13 environmental documentation and working on
14 preliminary engineering. Preliminary engineering
15 is approximately 30 percent design of the plans
16 themselves.

17 We've worked on our environmental impact
18 statement, or EIS, and that was completed in 2002.
19 And we got our ROD and accuracy determination.
20 ROD is a Record of Decision or document basically
21 saying that the FTA is satisfied with our document,
22 we're okay to go on the project.

23 Well, our state funding stalled back
24 then, and we've had to -- we've gotten our funding
25 going again. The project has gained momentum and

1 so we're looking at re-evaluating the changes that
2 have happened in the interim. And so with our PE
3 validation report, our preliminary engineering, we
4 relooked at what we had done, looked at any changes
5 that we had done in the past few years, and worked
6 on our environmental assessment.

7 So our project history as evaluated in
8 our final environmental impact statement. We had a
9 commuter rail system between Minneapolis and Rice,
10 so it's 82 miles or so, or about twice as long as
11 we're proposing right now. We had 11 commuter rail
12 stations. We had a vehicle maintenance facility at
13 Elk River, layover facility at Rice at the end of
14 the line. We had an LRT connection on Fifth Street
15 from the existing LRT line to our commuter rail
16 station, however, it was on the north side.

17 The BNSF track improvements did not
18 include the third main line, which we looked at
19 more recently, and also included a bus operations
20 plant. So the project history.

21 As you can see, here's a map from the
22 FEIS. Here's downtown Minneapolis, heading north,
23 Big Lake tonight, and all the way up to Rice.

24 So what did we look at in our
25 environmental assessment. We looked at our 40 mile

1 system. It's pared down, it's leaner, it's more
2 cost effective. We looked at six stations:
3 Downtown Minneapolis, Fridley, Coon Rapids, Anoka,
4 Elk River, and Big Lake. We have a maintenance
5 facility combined with our layover facility at the
6 end of the line in Big Lake. We have changed the
7 Big Lake station location. I'll go into that at a
8 further slide.

9 Our LRT connection on Fifth Street has
10 switched from the south side from the north side,
11 and we have added the third main line track.
12 Currently there's a double main line, two main line
13 tracks, for the BNSF in Fridley and Coon Rapids.

14 So here's an undated project map. We
15 have the LRT connection connecting to the existing
16 LRT system, and then heading north, showing Phase 1
17 to Big Lake.

18 So why the change? Funding availability.
19 FTA projects, they're much more competitive these
20 days, so we needed to improve our cost
21 effectiveness and improve safety. We did that
22 mostly in Big Lake. I'll show you those. There's
23 been some development expansion. The project has
24 been living in an evolving world, so downtown
25 there's a proposed station site and additional

1 development. We needed to slide the station to the
2 north a little bit.

3 We have a BNSF design agreement. That's
4 where the third main line came in as a design
5 alternate for the BNSF. And we have improved
6 vehicle circulation downtown by moving the
7 alignment of LRT from the north side to the south
8 side.

9 So I'm just going to go quickly through
10 the station site layouts. Hopefully you've all had
11 a chance to look through our boards to my left.
12 Here's downtown. North is up to the upper right
13 hand of the screen. The commuter rail comes in on
14 the Burlington Northern. We peel off the main line
15 around Washington Avenue and pull up to our station
16 site platform here. Here's Fifth Street in
17 downtown. The LRT ends down here just off the map,
18 and we'll meet up with us on Fifth Street over a
19 bridge over the Burlington Northern.

20 To kind of ground us, here's the Target
21 Center and here's the Ford Center, which we -- The
22 Ford Center is right here and the Hennepin County
23 Energy Plant here.

24 Fridley station, one of our more unique
25 stations. We have parking facilities on both

1 sides, the east and the west, and we have a tunnel
2 connecting the two with a center platform. And so
3 their main lines will go on each side of us. So in
4 the morning when you come, you can get in on this
5 side, and in the afternoon it will come from the
6 south and you can get on this side.

7 To ground you, north is to your left, the
8 river is to the south of the screen or behind the
9 screen, and University Avenue is over here.

10 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Can we ask
11 questions as you go or --

12 MR. DODDS: No. We'll address those
13 later.

14 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay.

15 MR. DODDS: Thank you.

16 The Coon Rapids station. This is a site
17 by an existing commuter coach park-and-ride
18 facility. And here's Northdale Boulevard and the
19 existing sites here, Target is in this location.
20 There is a pedestrian overpass as part of this
21 project because there's no crossing in this
22 location, and we have platforms on both sides of
23 the main line here.

24 Anoka station, near the Rum River, and
25 we'll have the BNSF mainline going through. We'll

1 have stations on either side and a parking
2 structure or lot on either side of it.

3 Elk River station. Again the existing
4 site for the commuter coach, and we will be
5 expanding it over here. Highway 10 is off the
6 bottom of the screen. And access will be right
7 here. This is kind of an older aerial photo.
8 There's been development going on over here.

9 Big Lake station, and here's where
10 one of our proposed changes is. The existing park
11 and pool where the FEIS analysis looked at having
12 our commuter rail station. This is an existing
13 detention pond. We've now moved it to the
14 southeast quadrant of County Road 43 and Highway
15 10. Highway 10 is up here.

16 And so the reason for this change. If we
17 were parking here and going to get on our
18 platforms, which would be on either side of the
19 Burlington Northern main line, we would have had to
20 cross the main line tracks at grade to get on our
21 station platform in the morning. The way we have
22 it proposed now, we are on a siding track off to
23 the edge of the main line track, and in the morning
24 and the afternoon you will not have to cross the
25 tracks to access the platform.

1 The maintenance facility proposed is
2 just off the right side of the screen. Here is
3 what we were just looking at here. The main line,
4 Highway 10, County Road 43. The maintenance
5 facility is in this location. It includes a
6 light-duty maintenance facility, a train washer,
7 storage tracks for the train sets.

8 Our capacity improvements for the BNSF.
9 We're looking at adding a third main. This is kind
10 of a difficult graphic to look at, but to the left
11 is north, here is 694, and the improvements start
12 just on the north side of their Northtown Yard.
13 And we head north and start again on the right-hand
14 side heading north along here, ending just north of
15 610 and Coon Rapids Boulevard.

16 And finally downtown. As you can see,
17 here's the Target Center. Again our commuter rail
18 station is here. We're coming in here. There will
19 be a core building and vertical circulation here.
20 The existing Hiawatha LRT line stops here. We'll
21 be extending it. And then we'll have tail tracks
22 past the station for storage.

23 For our EA analysis, what did we look at.
24 We looked at social impacts. We looked at land use
25 and economic development, community facilities and

1 services, displacements, relocations, archeological
2 and historical resources, visual aesthetics,
3 environmental impacts, and safety and security.

4 Some of the environmental impacts. We
5 looked at farm lands, wetlands, wild and scenic
6 rivers, vegetation and wildlife, rare and
7 endangered species, water quality and utilities,
8 hazardous waste and contaminating materials, air
9 quality, noise and vibration, and transportation.

10 So the overview of the findings of the
11 environmental assessment. We found that it was
12 consistent with the local land use plans. We
13 actually had a reduction in the property
14 acquisition requirements over what we looked at in
15 the FEIS. We're following the provisions in the
16 programmatic agreement, which is an agreement with
17 the state historical preservation office, and so
18 we're basically -- we're looking after and we're
19 sensitive to historic resources and buildings along
20 the corridor.

21 We're improving safety in Big Lake. We
22 have 2.09 acres of wetland impacts, primarily due
23 to the third main track, as well as a flood plain
24 impact with the third main near Rice Creek. We do
25 have a reduction of an impact to the Rum River

1 scenic easement. Through more detailed design, we
2 were able to pull our -- our plant further out of
3 the easement so now it's just on the edge of it.

4 We've also identified a potential impact
5 to the Blandings turtle, which we will do our best
6 to mitigate during construction. We've made
7 storm water ponding modifications. We have
8 recommended a Phase 2 environmental site assessment
9 at selected stations, which means we've had
10 additional research into where there's possible
11 contaminating materials, and we will be doing our
12 best to identify those and put together a
13 mitigation plan.

14 We're doing traffic improvements
15 associated with the Fifth Street alignment change
16 in downtown Minneapolis, and we do have a temporary
17 closure of the Rice Creek Regional Trail, which is
18 called a F(f) impact because it impacts a park
19 land.

20 I'll explain that a little bit more. So
21 that's -- when you read the top of our document and
22 the hearing notice, it was environmental assessment
23 and draft 4(f) evaluation. So what it is. It's a
24 temporary impact to the Rice Creek Regional Trail.
25 I'll show a graphic on the next page. It involves

1 a trail closure of approximately six to eight weeks
2 during construction, and it's just temporary, and
3 we will restore the trail to its previous condition
4 once the construction is complete. We have been
5 coordinating with Anoka County Parks and we will be
6 posting trail closure signs.

7 So here's a map of the area. The trail
8 closure is right here. Here's Mississippi Street,
9 here's University and East River Road, and this is
10 Lock Lake and Rice Creek flows through here. And
11 so the trail connection is under the bridges for
12 the third main line track or the BNSF mainline
13 track, and so when they're adding the bridge for
14 the third main line for safety reasons, they will
15 need to close the trail, build the bridge, and then
16 open the trail back up.

17 So our next steps. We're having the
18 public meetings. This is the third and final. The
19 close of our comment period is February 16th. We
20 will have an environmental determination, which
21 will include any comments that you have asked for
22 this evening, written and otherwise, for the other
23 public hearings, and we're anticipating
24 construction between 2007 and 2009.

25 Providing comments. Please provide

1 comment. Verbal or written, they're both given the
2 same weight. They can be submitted to myself and
3 my address is on the comment cards.

4 Some of the rules for the verbal comments
5 this evening, we will give five minutes to elected
6 officials and representatives of groups.
7 Individuals will be allowed three minutes. The
8 public hearing is being transcribed by the court
9 reporter, and questions will be responded to in our
10 final environmental document. So everyone who
11 fills out a card and gives a comment tonight will
12 be mailed a copy of that document so that their
13 questions will be answered.

14 Okay. Where is Tim?

15 MR. YANTOS: Bryan, thank you. Remember,
16 if you wish to make a comment, you need to fill out
17 one of these cards. We have people here that have
18 the cards. And if you want to, when I call your
19 name, and I'm going to spell your last name so I
20 don't say it incorrectly, if you would stand. If
21 you still want to make a comment, give us your name
22 and your address and then your comment.

23 Again, we cannot respond to questions
24 right now because the process doesn't allow us to
25 do that. After the hearing is over, we will all be

1 here, we'll be able to answer your questions, but
2 that's just the way the process works. So the
3 first one that we received is from Mr. Jim -- it's
4 looks like G-r-a-e-r-e. Hopefully I spelled that
5 correctly.

6 MR. GRAERE: That's right.

7 MR. YANTOS: If you could again -- You
8 can come up here if you wish or stand and give us
9 your name and address and then what your comment
10 is.

11 MR. GRAERE: Jim Graere, Box 525, St.
12 Joseph, Minnesota. I'm a representative of a group
13 called All Aboard. We've been in existence for the
14 past three and a half years or so.

15 And we think that for the environment
16 commuter rail is the best thing that could happen
17 to Minnesota. We've been lobbying for this from
18 out there and some day we want to see that train go
19 all the way to Rice. Actually there's a lot of
20 people in outstate Minnesota who want to see this
21 thing run all the way up to Brainerd, or at least
22 to Camp Ripley because of the troop movements and
23 so forth. So that's where we're at with that.

24 We can see nothing that we know that
25 would impact the environment negatively about train

1

1 transportation. Reducing the number of cars is
2 good for our environment. We have 16,000 students
3 at St. Cloud State University. A great number of
4 them come from northwest suburbs. They drive cars
5 up there, a lot of them right now.

6 We have a form of banker system up there.
7 Seventy-five to eighty people commute to that
8 business place every day from the Minneapolis
9 suburbs. That brings traffic up that way. So we
10 see this as a plus/plus for the environment and for
11 our cities. And some day I want to get on a train,
12 come down to Minneapolis, see my grandson, go to a
13 play, go to a ball game, without driving through
14 traffic, traffic, traffic. Thank you very much.

15 (Applause).

16 MR. YANTOS: Next person is Roland
17 F-r-o-y-e-n. Again, if you could give your name
18 and address, I'd appreciate it.

19 MR. FROYEN: Roland Froyen, 633 South
20 Beadwood Road, South Haven, Minnesota. I'm also
21 serving on the same committee as Mr. Graere. I'd
22 like to talk about this environmental impact in a
23 little different way.

24 We have, as all of you know, we are
25 experiencing much growth in this Northstar Corridor

1 right now before the train runs, and I think the
2 train will bring significantly more growth to this
3 area. And I think we have -- I think this gives us
4 a wonderful opportunity to try to manage that
5 growth and plan for that growth in a reasonable way
6 that can provide the kind of infrastructure that's
7 important for our environment. And I'm talking
8 about surface water controls, storm water control
9 and also wastewater control.

2

10 I think there's -- right now there's
11 planning. New developments are usually required to
12 put in a community sewer system or hook up to the
13 large St. Cloud system or a large city system. But
14 I think there ought to be a way for us to plan for
15 this growth so that it can also consider the
16 development that's already here.

17 There's a -- there's a large amount of
18 development in this area, which is blessed with
19 many lakes and rivers, and who would have planned
20 to build a city around the lake and then not plan
21 for the sewage that that city produces, because we
22 know where that water goes; it goes to the lake
23 eventually. And the kind of pharmaceuticals that
24 we're using right now are having an impact on the
25 fish and other wildlife and we need to do a better

1 job taking care of our wastewater.

2 And I think this development gives us a
3 chance possibly to get together with our neighbors
4 and neighboring counties and do some joint planning
5 for a rational, intelligent handling of the
6 infrastructure that we need to have in order to
7 serve the development this train is going to bring
8 us. It's an environmental opportunity that we have
9 now and I hope we will take advantage of it,
10 because the train is, I think, a wonderful, as my
11 friend pointed out, a wonderful environmental
12 asset.

13 Thank you very much.

14 (Applause).

15 MR. YANTOS: The third card we received
16 is Gary -- I believe it's Gocchiarella.

17 MR. LOCCHIARELLA: Locchiarella.

18 MR. YANTOS: Thank you.

19 MR. LOCCHIARELLA: My name is Gary
20 Locchiarella. I live in Big Lake, 1045 Kilbirnie
21 Road. My wife and I and a rather large of group of
22 people --

23 MR. GRAERE: Can you come up front so we
24 can hear you better?

25 MR. LOCCHIARELLA: Okay. We're with the

3

1 No Northstar Organization. I'm not a public
2 speaker so I'm a little nervous.

3 My question is that this is a designated
4 commuter rail and polls indicate that maybe 12 to
5 15 percent of our community will use it to get back
6 and forth to work. Why does it need to be so large
7 and expensive? And, also, has there been any
8 thought given to the fact that sooner or later the
9 government will demand high density housing to be
10 built in this area?

4

5

11 MR. YANTOS: Thank you. The next card is
12 from Brian K-r or K-n-e-t-z-a-n.

13 MR. KNUTSON: Yeah, Brian Knutson, 23604
14 Nightingale Street, St. Francis. I work for the
15 BNSF Railroad.

16 I think this is a great idea. I would
17 like to see it go up to St. Cloud like he was
18 talking about, up to Fort Ripley.

6

19 Are the crews on these trains going to be
20 BNSF employees? That's one of my questions.

7

21 And two, it's good to have triple tracks
22 because we run about 55 to 60 trains a day through
23 Big Lake right now and it's increasing with the
24 train in China, so it's good to have three tracks
25 so.

8

1 MR. YANTOS: Thank you. Here's one I
2 think I can handle. Tom Thompson.

3 MR. THOMPSON: Yeah. Tom Thompson from
4 Elk River. I -- I have a couple of problems with
5 the Northstar. I'll just read a few of them here.
6 It seems like a lot of our tax dollars are going to
7 be spent to provide cheap subsidized transportation
8 for a small number of people and there won't be
9 enough cars taken off the road to help the traffic
10 congestion for people who do not ride the trains.

9

11 Just in looking at the sign boards here
12 or whatever, the stations look pretty expensive and
13 extravagant, and I'm just wondering why we have to
14 spend so much money on the shelters.

10

15 In talking to one of the gentleman here
16 tonight, he told me that we still don't have an
17 agreement with Burlington Northern on the use of
18 the rail tracks, and it seems to me that that
19 should have been one of the first things that was
20 taken care of. With all the money that's been
21 spent on this project so far, I'm pretty sure we're
22 not just going to stop. It seems like that puts
23 them in the driver's seat as far as demanding or
24 getting whatever they want, you know, when the deal
25 is finally done.

11

1 MR. YANTOS: Thank you. The next one is
2 Representative Mark Olson.

3 REPRESENTATIVE OLSON: Thank you, Tim.
4 Well, anybody who has watched the last two election
5 cycles know that I haven't been a supporter of this
6 proposal, and given that he said that I have five
7 minutes, I figure I'd better say something. I know
8 there's a lot of advocates here and I know that
9 there are people who have concerns who are here,
10 and with all due respect to everyone, I just
11 thought I should just share some concerns that I
12 have so you have a chance to respond. I have some
13 cards here I'll leave on the table, and any of you
14 who want to send me comments and keep providing the
15 input, I will continue listening.

16 But my concerns have been, piggybacking
17 one that we've already heard, is the concern that
18 we don't even have an agreement with Burlington
19 Northern; therefore we do not even know the cost.
20 When this has occurred in other states, that
21 problem has really mushroomed towards the end of
22 the project because they do, in fact, really have
23 the upper hand in negotiation, and I don't believe
24 that's the way to handle state money or local
25 money.

12

1 Secondly, 13.4 percent of commuters in
2 the 13 county metropolitan area, which goes over
3 into Wisconsin, just considering this a region and
4 forgetting about the state boundaries, 13 -- only
5 13.4 percent of the people actually commute to
6 downtown. Reflecting a very similar statistic to
7 national averages in all the metropolitan areas,
8 that 80 to 90 percent of the people are commuting
9 suburb to suburb, which really means that a bus
10 system is far more effective, which would also be
11 environmentally sound; in fact, more
12 environmentally sound because the only way trains
13 really are environmentally sound are if you have
14 enough people riding them to compensate for the
15 pollution that does come from a train.

13

14

16 Trains in and of themselves are not
17 pollution free. In fact, if you don't get enough
18 people riding them, the statistics -- federal
19 numbers even show that the pollution of a train is
20 worse than that of a car because since the '60s
21 cars have been reduced -- pollution from cars has
22 been reduced as much as 73 and more percent.

23 So it's really not what it really sounds
24 like. There's a lot of nostalgia to it. There's a
25 lot of emotion to it. It's very appealing. And I

1 love riding the train. I've ridden it in Japan and
2 I've ridden it in various places around the United
3 States here, and I prefer it myself, but this just
4 isn't about our own back yard, because we need
5 congestion relief in every corridor.

6 Here we're going to wait until 2009. We
7 could take this money and provide congestion relief
8 in every corridor around the entire metropolitan
9 area, and we could do it within a year, and we are
10 so far behind in transportation that we need to.
11 That's why -- Those are just some of the reasons
12 why I've been concerned.

13 The high-rise issue, the density issue, I
14 have not met anybody that moves out here to see a
15 more dense community. I just don't find it. Once
16 we get the trains, we will find it, and it will
17 happen. It's happened everywhere that I've
18 researched in the country. Everywhere they have
19 put these in, they have to have the density to make
20 it work, because people experience then the reality
21 that they really don't want to drive a great
22 distance to get to the train and then find a bus to
23 get from the train to their work, because there's
24 only a few people that live on the corridor and
25 work on the corridor.

15

16

1 If you consider only 13.4 percent of the
2 people commute to downtown, how many of the people
3 in this area really do live and work very close to
4 the track on the corridor.

5 Should something like this be built for
6 people who go back and forth to the airport? Is
7 that really our congestion problem?

8 This is the first time in the history of
9 the state -- Second time. Excuse me. Light rail.
10 This is really the first time of real substance in
11 the history of the state where we have put a major,
12 major subsidy into a transportation infrastructure
13 like this that is so heavily subsidized. The last
14 figures exceeded the cash amount that we pay for a
15 welfare mother and two kids, and I don't think
16 that's a good comparison, because I have two bus
17 companies that worked with me on legislation last
18 year that we passed in committee and on the house
19 floor. That if we just give them a few tax breaks,
20 a little deregulation, make sure that the metro
21 transit system will work with them and they can
22 drop passengers off at their bus stops, they will
23 provide bus transportation, commuter nonstop
24 transportation in major corridors all around the
25 metropolitan area without any out-of-pocket

1 taxpayer revenues.

2 So those are just some of the reasons why
3 I have been raising concerns with this. I believe
4 very strongly that we need to be prudent with our
5 dollars because we are in some of the most fragile
6 economic times in the history of our nation.

7 And I don't have another five minutes so
8 I won't expound on that anymore, but I will be
9 happy to later. Thank you very much.

10 (Applause).

11 MR. YANTOS: Next person is Mr. Jim
12 Stahlman.

13 MR. STAHLMAN: Thank you. My name is
14 Jim Stahlman. I live at 17539 - 182nd in Big Lake,
15 and I belong to no organization whatsoever.

16 I only want to talk about the economic
17 impact of your Northstar Corridor. I think that
18 the metropolitan Twin Cities is one of the largest
19 metropolitan areas without any kind of a light rail
20 system, save the light rail that has just started.

21 The costs have risen on this project
22 because the legislators have dilly-dallied for at
23 least seven, possibly ten years, and we have
24 watched the cost of this project go from very
25 reasonable to reasonable plus.

1 The population -- the pollution of the --
2 The fine legislator who just talked about the
3 pollution of the train is worse than any car, I'll
4 agree to that, but the pollution of a train versus
5 15,000 cars can't be compared.

6 And just to bring a couple of numbers to
7 light as to this project. The Stillwater bridge,
8 which they're building, the Stillwater bridge is
9 \$400 million. The 494 corridor is hundreds of
10 millions of dollars. The fifth and the sixth lane
11 of I-94 between Rogers and St. Cloud, one billion
12 with a B, billion dollars. So this project, in my
13 mind, for the kind of dollars we're talking about,
14 to bring another viable lane of traffic up through
15 our area is a -- is a dead cinch bargain.

16 And I'm hoping that the legislators, I
17 know Governor Pawlenty has finally changed his
18 mind. He voted against it when he was in the
19 legislature. He's now a governor and he's a
20 proponent. And I just want to go on the record
21 encouraging the legislature to finally get this
22 project done before it costs us another 20 or 30
23 million dollars. Let's get it done and let's keep
24 moving. Thank you.

25 (Applause).

1 MR. YANTOS: And I have one last card, so
2 if you wish to get a card from our people, please
3 do so right away. I believe this is Phebe Koha, if
4 I said that right.

5 MS. KOHA: Good evening. I'm Phebe Koha,
6 and I live at 5138 Ridge Road. Amazingly, just to
7 piggyback on what the gentleman had said earlier, I
8 previously, before moving to Minnesota, lived in
9 the Washington D.C. metropolitan area; and anyone
10 who has been to the East Coast knows that we could
11 not survive without getting on the train. I lived
12 there for maybe 15 years, and I didn't need a car.
13 I didn't need a car.

14 What was really surprising and
15 disappointing to me when I got a job at Pillsbury
16 and moved to Minneapolis was that there were no
17 trains; and I kept thinking, I have to drive
18 seriously, and in the snow. That was definitely --
19 that was really frightening.

20 I'm very proud to be a part of this, and
21 it excites me to own property in Big Lake and to
22 hear about rails coming through, because I've seen
23 first-hand the kind of developments that come up.
24 And the costs are phenomenal, but the benefits far
25 outweighs it. There are many days when I don't

1 want to take my two kids and drive to the
2 Children's Museum just because I think I'm going to
3 sit in traffic or there's going to be something on
4 94 that's going to keep me there for, I don't know,
5 an hour.

6 Saturday I had to go downtown to a
7 volunteer thing and it took us 30 minutes just --
8 we just sat in Maple Grove, when I'm thinking we
9 could be on a train and we could get down to Maple
10 Grove maybe in ten minutes.

11 So I'm very excited. I think this is a
12 great opportunity for us to expand our community.
13 I'm driving an hour to work every day, and I know
14 that there are a lot of people who live on this end
15 who will be happen to sit on a train and just get
16 down to it.

17 So I think the best thing for Big Lake
18 and all the different cities on the corridor is to
19 support this project because I think it will be
20 beneficial to us. Minneapolis/St. Paul is one of
21 the biggest metropolitan cities without a proper
22 light rail system or a train commuter system. It's
23 just unbelievable. Unheard of. Just think about
24 the amount of people that will benefit from this
25 and the costs that will be saved in the long run.

18

1 To me it's totally worth the project. Thank you.

2 (Applause).

3 MR. YANTOS: Any other cards? Yes.

4 Thank you. Go ahead.

5 MS. HOLMES: I'm Susan Holmes. I live at
6 11963 - 182nd Street in Big Lake. And I'm not a
7 public speaker but --

8 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Could you please
9 speak up.

10 MS. HOLMES: I said I'm not a public
11 speaker, but I ride the bus every single day out of
12 Elk River, and that bus is packed every single day.
13 I don't know how many they run, but it's standing
14 room only coming and going every day.

15 And the -- He asked about the shelters.
16 When you park your car and you wait for a bus and
17 it's snowing and the wind is blowing, it's nice to
18 have a little shelter. That's a little thing.

19 Commuters aren't using transportation
20 because there isn't enough of it. When we have the
21 rail and there's more transportation -- Just look
22 at what's happened with Hiawatha. I have people
23 that I work with that ride Hiawatha every day and
24 it's packed every day. Once we have good
25 transportation, we will have more commuters that

1 will use that transportation.

2 Thank you. That's all I have to say.

3 (Applause).

4 MR. YANTOS: Any other comments? Why
5 don't you go ahead and give us your name and your
6 address.

7 MS. RANKIN: My name is Verna Rankin. I
8 live at 19829-182nd Avenue in Big Lake, and I would
9 just like to tell the research that I did on my own
10 and also attest to some of the light rail that I've
11 seen in Seattle in, I believe, Atlanta, Dallas.

12 Light rail, as Legislator Olson
13 indicated, does work in areas of really prime
14 population: New York City, Washington, D.C., where
15 the population is really crowded and people are
16 close together. And the reason it works there is
17 because they have a really extended rail system.
18 They don't have a small corridor.

19 In -- in cities that are spread out like
20 Minneapolis, like Los Angeles, like Seattle, if you
21 watch the light rail coming and going, there are
22 very few people on it. Very few. It's been a big
23 expense to the taxpayers. It's a big subsidy for
24 those who ride.

25 I think it would be a wonderful thing

1 for -- I'm a homemaker, so it doesn't really
2 matter to me, but my husband would benefit by it
3 because we live close by it, and his business is in
4 Coon Rapids and it's also close by. But for the
5 general population, I think it would be a big
6 expense on the -- on the tax burden. Thank you.

21

7 (Applause).

8 MR. YANTOS: Laurel Resman.

9 MS. RESMAN: My name is Laurel Resman.
10 I'm from Milaca County, DFL, and we used to live in
11 Big Lake in the school year. And from my
12 experience out there, the immediate age in Milaca
13 County is 55 years old, and what you're looking at
14 is an aging community. The boomers are aging, and
15 it's getting to the point where a lot of us aren't
16 going to be wanting to drive, and there's a lot of
17 us that shouldn't be driving. And in another ten
18 years, we're going to be 65 years old.

19 A lot of people have to drive to the
20 Cities for medical care. Personally I've been in
21 two severe accidents; one on 101 before they
22 widened it, and another one up in Milaca County.
23 The roads are not adequate. It's going to cost
24 more money to put more roads in. And never mind
25 the cost. The safety factor. Do we really want 65

22

1 year old people in ten years driving to the Cities.
2 And more of us are going to need that medical care
3 who can't get out here.

4 So I see it as a big plus. And the
5 traffic, you know, is so horrible now compared to
6 when we moved out here in '85, that it's -- you
7 know, it's to the point of even ridiculous. And I
8 agree with him, if they had done this ten years
9 ago, it wouldn't have cost as much. So that's all
10 I have.

11 (Applause).

12 MR. YANTOS: Any further comments? Any
13 further comments? Any further comments?

14 Thank you for coming. Again, you can put
15 your comments in writing, and if you do that with
16 your name and address, you will get something back.

17 Again, we're all here to answer questions
18 for you after the public hearing, so please do so,
19 and thank you for coming. We really do appreciate
20 it.

21 (Public hearing concluded at 8:11 p.m.)

22 * * *

23

24

25

1 STATE OF MINNESOTA)

2 COUNTY OF HENNEPIN)

3

4 I, JACKIE YOUNG, Certified Court Reporter,
5 do hereby certify that the foregoing transcript
6 consisting of thirty-five pages is a true and
7 correct reproduction of my steno notes taken in
8 said matter.

9 Dated this 3rd day of February, 2006.

10

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Jackie Young, Court Reporter

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Section 5.8

Responses to Verbal Comments Received at the January 30, 2006 Public Hearing



Section 5.8 – Responses to Verbal Comments Received at the January 30, 2006 Public Hearing

5.8.1

Jim Graere

Comment

Response

1.

Your comment of support for commuter rail and the full build out of the Northstar Corridor (to Rice) is so noted.

5.8.2

Roland Froyen

Comment

Response

2.

As stated in Section 4.1 of the EA:

The Northstar Corridor Rail project provides an opportunity to focus this development and redevelopment around transit centers. Transit Oriented Development (TOD) adjacent to the proposed Northstar commuter rail stations is already occurring and gaining momentum. Station area TOD plans range from medium to high density residential units above street level, to townhomes and senior housing, as well as to commercial office space and includes structured parking areas. Appendix A-1 of the EA provides a summary of mix-use developments that have been recently completed, are under construction, or are proposed. TOD is occurring around the proposed station sites in response to market demand.

With regards to water quality and utilities, Mn/DOT and its project partners, the NCDA and Met Council, have worked closely with the communities where commuter rail stations are proposed regarding the location and function of stormwater treatment ponds to accommodate both the proposed stations, and surrounding development, where appropriate.

3

See response to comments 1 and 2 above.

5.8.3

Gary Locchiarella

Comment

Response

4

The Northstar Corridor Rail project is the most cost-effective option for this corridor. Northstar will operate on existing tracks, so construction costs are significantly less than other transportation options. Adding a lane each way to TH 10 and I-35W would be

nearly four times as expensive, and adding a dedicated bus route is nearly six times more costly than commuter rail per passenger trip.

5. See response to comment 5.8.2 above (response 2).

5.8.4

Brian Knudtson

Comment

Response

6. Your comment of support for the system to extend up to St. Cloud is so noted.
7. The current plans call for the Northstar trains to be operated by BNSF employees.
8. The revised preferred alternative includes a triple track from milepost 15.1 to 21.1 in Fridley and Coon Rapids. The track capacity improvements defined in the *Rail Passenger Capital Improvements Engineering Agreement* (July 2005) have been developed and agreed upon to provide efficient freight and commuter rail service in the corridor.

5.8.5

Tom Thompson

Comment

Response

9. See response to commenter 5.5.6 (response 1).
- Additionally, according to an analysis prepared for the FTA, Northstar will save commuters nearly 900,000 hours in travel time every year, compared to the next best transit alternative defined as express bus transit.
- The Northstar system has the ability to carry the equivalent of nearly 1.5 lanes of highway traffic at peak travel times. Commuter rail can more quickly adapt to increased commuter demand than expanding highway capacity.
10. The Northstar commuter rail stations have been designed for both construction and operational efficiency. The amenities proposed at the stations reflect minimum station area requirements. The shelters are uniform in design to reduce maintenance costs over the life of the facility. One of the most important functions for the stations is to provide adequate passenger information so they understand when trains will be arriving and departing.

11. See response to commenter 5.2.9 (response 1).

5.8.6 Representative Mark Olson

Comment

Response

12. See response to commenter 5.2.9 (response 1).

13. A notable feature of the Northstar Corridor and the Minneapolis Central Business District (CBD), in general, is that commuters use transit in larger percentages to reach the Minneapolis CBD. The existing work-trip transit share from the corridor of the CBD is 50 percent, and this amount is expected to grow to over 62 percent in the 2025 baseline scenario. The outer portions of the Corridor (Big Lake and Elk River) show low transit shares today, largely because limited transit service is provided in these portions of the corridor, but is expected to grow significantly if transit service is provided. With the lack of space on downtown streets for additional buses, commuter rail will be an important carrier of commuters to the CBD in the future.

14. The Northstar Corridor Rail project is the most cost-effective option for this corridor. Northstar will operate on existing tracks, so construction costs are significantly less than other transportation options. Adding a lane each way to TH 10 and I-35W would be nearly four times as expensive, and adding a dedicated bus route is nearly six times more costly than commuter rail per passenger trip.

15. As presented on page 14 of the EA, the non-federal share of the estimated project capital costs is approximately \$144 million. The federal share of total project cost is estimated at 50 percent. The federal funding would come through the Section 5309 New Starts grant program. The New Starts program is a competitive program, on a national level, that ranks major transit programs. The grant program is administered by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). This source of funding would not be available for highway improvements. Major transportation improvements, whether they be transit or roadway related, require appropriate environmental analysis and public review. The planning, design and construction process for such actions, with funding availability, typically takes several years.

16. See response to commenter 5.8.2 (response 2).

5.8.7 Jim Stahlmann

Comment Response

17. Your comment of support in terms of cost-effectiveness is so noted.

5.8.8 Phebe Koha

Comment Response

18. Your comment of support is so noted.

5.8.9 Susan Holmes

Comment Response

19. See responses to commenters 5.5.6 (response 4) and 5.8.6 (response 13).

5.8.10 Verna Rankin

Comment Response

20. Commuter rail is different from light rail in that it is typically a longer system, and primarily provides transit service during peak periods each day. Stations are typically farther apart than light rail systems, and do not require as dense of land use as LRT. Commuter rail is effective when you have a high population traveling to the CBD. This is consistent with the projects cited.
21. See response to commenters 5.5.6 (response3) and 5.7.4 (response 5).

No. 5.8.11 Laurel Resman

Comment Response

22. Your comment of support for the system, based on safety considerations, is so noted.

Press Release Distribution List
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PRESS RELEASE DISTRIBUTION LIST/LEGAL NOTICES/EQB MONITOR PUBLICATIONS

Table A-1 – Media, Organization, and Location

Type of Media	Organization	Location
Newspaper	ABC Newspapers, Coon Rapids Herald	Anoka
Newspaper	Asian Pages	Bloomington
Newspaper	Benton County News	Fosston
Newspaper	Blaine Banner	Minneapolis
Newspaper	Blaine-Spring Lake Park Life	Anoka
Newspaper	Champlin/Dayton Press	Osseo
Newspaper	City Pages	Minneapolis
Newspaper	ECM Publishers, Inc.	Forest Lake
Newspaper	Elk River Star News	Elk River
Newspaper	Finance and Commerce	Minneapolis
Newspaper	La Prensa	Minneapolis
Newspaper	La Voz Latina	West St. Paul
Newspaper	Minnesota Spokesman-Recorder	Minneapolis
Newspaper	Monticello Times	Monticello
Newspaper	Morrison County Record	Little Falls
Newspaper	Paynesville Press	Paynesville
Newspaper	Princeton Union Eagle	Princeton
Newspaper	Saint Paul Pioneer Press	St. Paul
Newspaper	Sherburne County Citizen	Becker
Newspaper	South Side Pride/Pulse of the Twin Cities	Minneapolis
Newspaper	Southeast Angle	Minneapolis
Newspaper	St. Cloud Times	St. Cloud
Newspaper	Star Tribune	Minneapolis
Newspaper	The Northeaster	Minneapolis
Newspaper	Tri-County News	Fulda
Newspaper	West Sherburne Tribune	Big Lake
Radio	KASM-AM	Albany
Radio	KBEM-FM	Minneapolis
Radio	KCFB-FM	St. Cloud
Radio	KCLD-FM, KCML-FM, KNSI-AM, KZPK-FM	St. Cloud
Radio	KEEY-FM	Minneapolis
Radio	KFAI-FM	Minneapolis
Radio	KKJM-FM	Sauk Rapids
Radio	KLFD-AM	Litchfield
Radio	KLZZ-FM, KKSJ-FM	St. Cloud
Radio	KMSR-FM	Sauk Centre
Radio	KNSR-FM	Collegeville

Type of Media	Organization	Location
Radio	KQQL-FM	Minneapolis
Radio	KQRS-FM	Minneapolis
Radio	KRWC	Buffalo
Radio	KSTP-AM	Minneapolis
Radio	KSTP-FM	Minneapolis
Radio	KTIS-AM	St. Paul
Radio	KUOM-AM	Minneapolis
Radio	KVSC-FM	St. Cloud
Radio	KXSS-AM	St. Cloud
Radio	WBHR-AM	Sauk Rapids
Radio	WCCO-AM	Minneapolis
Radio	WHMH-AM	Sauk Rapids
Radio	WJON-AM, KMXX-FM	St. Cloud
Radio	WMNN-AM, KSJR-FM, KNOW-FM	Minneapolis
Radio	WQPM-AM	Princeton
Radio	WVAL-AM	Sauk Rapids
Radio	WXPT-FM	Minneapolis
Radio	WYRQ-FM	Little Falls
Television	ATT Cable Services – MediaOne	St. Paul
Television	Coon Rapids Community Television Network	Coon Rapids
Television	KARE-TV	Minneapolis
Television	KMSP-TV	Eden Prairie
Television	KSTP-TV	St. Paul
Television	KSTP-TV	St. Paul
Television	KSTP-TV	St. Paul
Television	KTCA-TV	St. Paul
Television	Metro Networks News	Minneapolis
Television	North Metro Media Center	Blaine
Television	Quad Cities Community TV	Anoka
Television	WCCO-TV	Minneapolis
	Anoka Area Chamber of Commerce	Anoka
	Big Lake Chamber of Commerce	Big Lake
	Elk River Chamber of Commerce	Elk River
	Ham Lake Chamber of Commerce	Ham Lake
	I-94 West Chamber of Commerce	Rogers
	Metro North Chamber of Commerce	Blaine
	Minneapolis Regional Chamber of Commerce	Minneapolis
	Monticello Chamber of Commerce	Monticello
	Northeast Minneapolis Chamber of Commerce	Minneapolis
	Quad Area Chamber of Commerce	Circle Pines
	St. Francis Area Chamber of Commerce	St. Francis
	Twin Cities North Chamber of Commerce	Moundsview



The Legal Notice announcing the availability of the EA/Draft 4(f) and the January 2006 public informational meetings/hearings was published in the following newspapers:

<u>Name of Paper</u>	<u>Date Published</u>
• Elk River Star News	01/04/06
• Columbia Heights/Fridley Columbia Heights Focus	01/05/06
• Coon Rapids Anoka County Union	01/06/06
• Coon Rapids Herald	01/06/06
• Minneapolis Finance and Commerce	01/06/06
• Minneapolis Star and Tribune	01/06/06
• Becker Citizen	01/07/06
• Big Lake West Sherburne Tribune	01/07/06

A copy of the legal notice included in the Big Lake West Sherburne Tribune is included for reference. The content of all the legal notices was the same (format varied somewhat for each paper).

The Legal Notice stating the Correction to the Coon Rapids Civic Center address (January 25, 2006) was run in the following papers.

<u>Name of Paper</u>	<u>Date Published</u>
• Minneapolis Star and Tribune	01/13/06
• Minneapolis Finance and Commerce	01/17/06
• Elk River Star News	01/18/06
• Fridley Columbia Heights Focus	01/19/06
• Coon Rapids Anoka County Union	01/20/06
• Coon Rapids Herald	01/20/06
• Becker Citizen	01/21/06
• Big Lake West Sherburne Tribune	01/21/06

A copy of the legal notice included in the Big Lake West Sherburne Tribune is included for reference. The content of all the legal notices was the same (format varied somewhat for each paper).

LEGAL NOTICE:

Public Hearing for the Environmental Assessment for the Northstar Corridor Rail Project Environmental Assessment/Draft 4(f) Evaluation for the Northstar Corridor Rail Project is completed and available for review. Open House/Public Hearing Dates set for January 25, 26 and 30, 2006.

The Minnesota Department of Transportation (Mn/DOT), in cooperation with the Northstar Corridor Development Authority (NCDA) and the Metropolitan Council of the Twin Cities (Metropolitan Council), announce the availability of the Environmental Assessment (EA)/Draft 4(f) Evaluation for the proposed changes to the Northstar Corridor Rail Project from downtown Minneapolis to Big Lake, Minnesota.

The EA/Draft 4(f) Evaluation has been prepared by Mn/DOT, the NCDA and Metropolitan Council to update information found in the Northstar Corridor Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) dated March 2002 and the Record of Decision (December 2002). The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) is the lead federal agency for the Northstar Corridor Rail Project. The Northstar project under evaluation in the EA runs from downtown Minneapolis to Big Lake, Minnesota (40.1 mile system). This document evaluates whether there have been significant changes to the proposed action, the affected environment, the anticipated impacts or the proposed mitigation measures required since the Record of Decision (ROD) was issued for the project.

The EA/Draft 4(f) Evaluation review period will run from January 2 through February 16, 2006. Comments will be accepted by Mn/DOT through February 16, 2006 (45-day review and comment period). Copies of the EA will be available at libraries in the Northstar Corridor (listed below) and at the Northstar Project Office (see address below).

Minneapolis Northeast Library
Technology and Science Library
Columbia Heights Library
Crooked Lake Branch Library
Northtown Central Library
Rum River Branch Library
Elk River Public Library
Great River Regional Library - Big Lake and St. Cloud
Legislative Reference Library

Comments on the Northstar Corridor Rail Project EA/Draft 4(f) Evaluation should be submitted to:

Bryan Dodds, Northstar Project Office
155 Fifth Avenue South, Suite 755, Mpls. MN 55401
Phone: 612-215-8200 Fax: 612-215-8210
E-mail: bryan.dodds@mnrail.org

To afford an opportunity for all interested parties, agencies, groups to comment on the proposed project, Mn/DOT and its local partnering agencies, the NCDA and Metropolitan Council, will host three open house/public hearings:

January 25, 2006

5:30 p.m. Open House/7 p.m. Presentation and Comments-Coon Rapids Civic Center, Room B
1155 Robinson Drive, Coon Rapids

January 26, 2006

5 p.m. Open House/6:30 p.m. Presentation and Comments-Heywood Facility
560 Sixth Avenue North, Minneapolis

January 30, 2006

6 p.m. Open House/7:30 p.m. Presentation and Comments-Big Lake High School Cafeteria
501 Minnesota Avenue, Big Lake

Individuals with a disability, who need reasonable accommodation to participate in the public hearings, please contact Bryan Dodds at 612-215-8200. The EA/Draft 4(f) Evaluation document is available in alternate formats to individuals with disabilities by calling the Minnesota Relay Service at 1-800-627-3529.

**PUBLIC NOTICE CORRECTION - PUBLIC HEARING FOR THE
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR THE NORTHSTAR CORRIDOR RAIL
PROJECT:**

An earlier public notice appearing in this publication for the Northstar Corridor Rail Project Environmental Assessment/Draft 4(f) Evaluation public hearings listed an incorrect address for the Jan. 25, 2006 Open House/Public Hearing in Coon Rapids:

The **CORRECT** address for the Jan. 25, 2006 meeting is as follows:
Jan. 25, 2006

5:30 p.m. Open House/7 p.m. Presentation & Comments
Coon Rapids Civic Center, Room B
11155 Robinson Drive NW
Coon Rapids, MN

All other information contained in the original notice remains valid.
for more information about the public hearing, please contact 763-323-5729.
Individuals with a disability, who need reasonable accommodation to participate in the public hearings, please contact Bryan Dadds at 612-215-8200. The Environmental Assessment/Draft 4(f) Evaluation document is available in alternate formats to individuals with disabilities by calling the Minnesota Relay Service at 1-800-627-3529.



January 2, 2006



Description: The property is 69 acres with 1,550 feet of frontage on Little Coyote and 1,940 feet on King Lake. A stream is located along the south boundary of proposed lot 7 that is navigable between both lakes. Proposed are 13 lake lots and 2 back lots that range from 2.5 to 6.5 acres. Lake frontages range from 203 to 630 feet.

RGU: St. Louis County

Contact: Scott Smith, Physical Planning Manager, 227 West First Street, Suite 100, Duluth, MN 55802; 218-725-5005; fax: 218-725-5029; e-mail: smiths@co.st-louis.mn.us

EA/DRAFT 4(f) EVALUATION AVAILABLE

Northstar Corridor Rail Project Environmental Assessment/Draft 4(f) Evaluation

The EA/Draft 4(f) Evaluation has been prepared under 23 CFR 771.129 and 23 CFR 771.130 by Mn/DOT, the NCDA and Met Council to update information found in the *Northstar Corridor Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statement (Draft and FEIS)* dated December 2000 and March 2002, respectively, and the *Record of Decision* (December 2002). The Northstar Rail Project under evaluation in the EA runs from downtown Minneapolis to Big Lake, Minnesota (40.1 mile system). This document evaluates whether there have been significant changes to the proposed action, the affected environment, the anticipated impacts or the proposed mitigation measures required since the *Record of Decision (ROD)* was issued for the project. The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) is the lead federal agency for the Northstar Corridor project.

Copies of the EA are being distributed to those agencies on the current Minnesota Environmental Quality Board (MnEQB) distribution list and others with interest in the proposed project. The EA/Draft 4(f) Evaluation review period will begin upon notification in the January 2, 2006 *EQB Monitor*. Comments will be accepted by Mn/DOT through February 16, 2006 (45-day review and comment period). Copies of the EA will be available at libraries in the Northstar Corridor (listed below) and at the Northstar Project Office (see address below).

Minneapolis Northeast Library
Technology and Science Library
Columbia Heights Library
Crooked Lake Branch Library
Northtown Central Library
Rum River Branch Library
Elk River Branch Library
Great River Regional Library – Big Lake and St. Cloud
Legislative Reference Library

Comments on the Northstar Corridor Rail Project EA/Draft 4(f) Evaluation should be submitted to:

Bryan Dodds
Northstar Project Office
155 Fifth Avenue South
Suite 755
Minneapolis, MN 55401
Phone: 612-215-8200
Fax: 612-215-8210
e-mail: bryan.dodds@mnrail.org

To afford an opportunity for all interested parties, agencies, groups to comment on the proposed project, Mn/DOT and its local partnering agencies, the NCDA and Met Council will be hosting three open house/public hearings as follows:



January 2, 2006



January 25, 2006
5:30 PM Open House/7:00 PM Presentation and Comments
Coon Rapids Civic Center, Room B
1155 Robinson Drive
Coon Rapids

January 26, 2006
5:00 PM Open House/6:30 PM Presentation and Comments
Heywood Facility
560 Sixth Avenue North
Minneapolis

January 30, 2006
6:00 PM Open House/7:30 PM Presentation and Comments
Big Lake High School Cafeteria
501 Minnesota Avenue
Big Lake

Individuals with a disability, who need reasonable accommodation to participate in the public hearings, please contact Bryan Dodds at 612-215-8200. The EA/Draft 4(f) Evaluation document is available in alternate formats to individuals with disabilities by calling the Minnesota Relay Service at 1-800-627-3529.

PETITIONS FILED

The following petitions have been filed with the EQB requesting preparation of an EAW. The EQB has assigned the indicated unit of government to review the petition and decide on the need for an EAW.

- Cass County, Tall Pines development on Ten Mile Lake
- Morrison County, H. Block Dog Breeding Facility

EAW NEED DECISION

The noted responsible governmental unit has made a decision regarding the need for an EAW in response to a citizen petition.

- City of Mahtomedi, Wildwood Village Project, Denied.

EIS NEED DECISIONS

The responsible governmental unit has determined the following projects do not require preparations of an EIS. The dates given are, respectively, the date of the determination and the date the EAW notice was published in the EQB Monitor.

- Maple Grove City Council, Fieldstone Meadows Residential Development, December 19, 2005 (October 24, 2005)
- Crow Wing County Board of Commissioners, Canyon Creek Meadows, December 13, 2005 (October 24, 2005)
- Salem Town Board, John Donovan Sandpit, December 7, 2005 (September 26, 2005)



January 16, 2006



EA/DRAFT 4(f) EVALUATION AVAILABLE

Northstar Corridor Rail Project Environmental Assessment/Draft 4(f) Evaluation Corrected Address for Coon Rapids Civic Center

The EA/Draft 4(f) Evaluation has been prepared under 23 CFR 771.129 and 23 CFR 771.130 by Mn/DOT, the NCDA and Met Council to update information found in the *Northstar Corridor Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statement (Draft and FEIS)* dated December 2000 and March 2002, respectively, and the *Record of Decision* (December 2002). The Northstar Rail Project under evaluation in the EA runs from downtown Minneapolis to Big Lake, Minnesota (40.1 mile system). This document evaluates whether there have been significant changes to the proposed action, the affected environment, the anticipated impacts or the proposed mitigation measures required since the *Record of Decision (ROD)* was issued for the project. The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) is the lead federal agency for the Northstar Corridor project.

Copies of the EA are being distributed to those agencies on the current Minnesota Environmental Quality Board (MnEQB) distribution list and others with interest in the proposed project. The EA/Draft 4(f) Evaluation review period will begin upon notification in the January 2, 2006 *EQB Monitor*. Comments will be accepted by Mn/DOT through February 16, 2006 (45-day review and comment period). Copies of the EA will be available at libraries in the Northstar Corridor (listed below) and at the Northstar Project Office (see address below).

Minneapolis Northeast Library
Technology and Science Library
Columbia Heights Library
Crooked Lake Branch Library
Northtown Central Library
Rum River Branch Library
Elk River Branch Library
Great River Regional Library – Big Lake and St. Cloud
Legislative Reference Library

Comments on the Northstar Corridor Rail Project EA/Draft 4(f) Evaluation should be submitted to:

Bryan Dodds
Northstar Project Office
155 Fifth Avenue South
Suite 755
Minneapolis, MN 55401
Phone: 612-215-8200
Fax: 612-215-8210
e-mail: bryan.dodds@mnrail.org

To afford an opportunity for all interested parties, agencies, groups to comment on the proposed project, Mn/DOT and its local partnering agencies, the NCDA and Met Council will be hosting three open house/public hearings as follows:

January 25, 2006
5:30 PM Open House/7:00 PM Presentation and Comments
Coon Rapids Civic Center, Room B
11155 Robinson Drive
Coon Rapids



January 16, 2006



January 26, 2006
5:00 PM Open House/6:30 PM Presentation and Comments
Heywood Facility
560 Sixth Avenue North
Minneapolis

January 30, 2006
6:00 PM Open House/7:30 PM Presentation and Comments
Big Lake High School Cafeteria
501 Minnesota Avenue
Big Lake

Individuals with a disability, who need reasonable accommodation to participate in the public hearings, please contact Bryan Dodds at 612-215-8200. The EA/Draft 4(f) Evaluation document is available in alternate formats to individuals with disabilities by calling the Minnesota Relay Service at 1-800-627-3529.

EIS NEED DECISIONS

The responsible governmental unit has determined the following projects do not require preparations of an EIS. The dates given are, respectively, the date of the determination and the date the EAW notice was published in the EQB Monitor.

- Detroit Lakes City Council, River Hills RV Park, January 3, 2006 (September 25, 2005)
- Douglas County, Taylor Sunset Shores, December 27, 2005
- Todd County Planning Commission, The Sanctuary, December 1, 2005
- Becker County Board of Commissioners, Bambi Resort, CIC Conversion, Toad Lake, December 27, 2005 (February 28, 2005)
- Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Rum River Trunk Sanitary Sewer Extension, December 22, 2005 (September 12, 2005)
- Burnsville City Council, Woodland Enclave, January 3, 2006
- Meeker County Board of Commissioners, Fitterer Feedlot Expansion, January 3, 2006 (September 12, 2005)
- Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Exetare Partnership, LLP, Wood View Sow Site, December 12, 2005 (November 7, 2005)
- Metropolitan Airports Commission, 2015 Terminal Expansion Project, December 22, 2005
- City of Mankato, Mankato Regional Airport Expansion, December 14, 2005 (October 24, 2005)

EIS PREPARATION NOTICE

Blue Heron Bay Residential Cluster Development
Dead Lake (56-383), Otter Tail County

Otter Tail County will be preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for a proposal by Blue Heron Bay Land Company LLC (developer) for a residential cluster development on a 257 acre parcel consisting of a large peninsula, a small peninsula, and an island located on Dead Lake.

EA/Draft 4 (f) Distribution List



DISTRIBUTION LIST
Northstar Corridor Rail Project
Environmental Assessment/Draft 4(f) Evaluation

Federal Agencies

Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
Federal Emergency Management Agency
Federal Highway Administration, Allan Steger
Federal Railroad Administration, Laurence Hasvold, Regional Administrator
Federal Transit Administration, TPL Region 5 Coordinator
Federal Transit Administration, William Wheeler, Community Planner
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Tamara Cameron
U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resource Conservation Service
U.S. Department of Commerce, NEPA Coordinator, Ecology and Conservation Office
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
U.S. Department of Interior, Director, Office of Environmental Affairs
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Twin Cities Field Office E.S.
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 5, Kenneth Westlake, Environmental Planning and Evaluation Unit
National Park Service, Stewardship Team Manager

State Agencies

Board of Water and Soil Resources, Jim Haertel
Department of Agriculture, Becky Balk
Department of Health, Environmental Health Division
Department of Commerce, Marya White
Department of Natural Resources Thomas W. Balcom
Minnesota Department of Transportation, Gerald Larson
Environmental Quality Board, Environmental Review Program
Minnesota Historical Society, State Historical Preservation Office
Minnesota Indian Affairs Council
Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Beth Lockwood, Supervisor

Regional Agencies

Metropolitan Council of the Twin Cities, Review Coordinator/Planning and Technical Assistance Unit
St. Cloud Area Planning Organization, Bill Hasson

Libraries

Columbia Heights Library
Crooked Lake Branch Library
Elk River Public Library
Great River Regional Library, Big Lake
Great River Regional Library, St. Cloud
Legislative Reference Library, Carol Blackburn
Technology and Science Library, Minneapolis Public Library
Northtown Central Library
Rum River Branch Library
Minneapolis Northeast Library



Organizations

Anoka County Parks and Recreation, Jon VanDeLinde
Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad, Patricia Casler, Manager
Coon Creek Watershed District
Lower Rum River Watershed Management Organization
Middle Mississippi Watershed Management Organization
Rice Creek Watershed District
Six Cities Watershed Management Organization
Springbrook Nature Preserve
City of Minneapolis HPC, Greg Mathis, Senior Planner
Anoka Conservation District, Chris Lord, District Manager

Northstar Corridor Development Authority

Anoka County, Dennis Berg
Anoka County, Dan Erhart
Anoka County Government Center, Tim Yantos
Becker Township, Mark Limpert
Benton County, Earl (Butch) Bukowski
Benton County, Duane Grandy
Benton County RRA, Dan Lieser
Big Lake Township, Ewald Petersen
City of Anoka, Carl Anderson
City of Anoka, Bjorn Skogquist
City of Anoka, Community Dev. Dir., Robert Kirchner
City of Becker, Ken Paulson
City of Big Lake, Patricia May
City of Blaine, Jean Keely
City of Blaine, Tom Ryan
City of Clear Lake, William Kiffmeyer
City of Columbia Heights, Bruce Nawrocki
City of Coon Rapids, Scott Schulte
City of Elk River, Paul S. Motin
City of Fridley, Robert Barnette
City of Minneapolis, Paul Ostrow
City of Ramsey, Tom Gamec
City of Rice, Les Mateffy
City of Rice, Lyn Mohs
City of Rice, Joseph Voigt
City of Sauk Rapids, Art Daniels
City of Sauk Rapids' Harold Jesh
City of Spring Lake Park, Jeanne Mason
City of St. Cloud, John Ellenbecker
City of St. Cloud, Bob Johnson
City of St. Cloud MTC, Woody Bissett
Clear Lake Township, Paul Goenner
Clear Lake/Clearwater Joint Sewer Authority, Lori Bartlett
Haven Township, LeRoy Pauley
Haven Township, Lewis Stark



Northstar Corridor Development Authority (Continued)

Hennepin County, Mark Stenglein
Langola Township, Greg Bruestle
Morrison County, Eugene Young
Morrison County RRA, Tom Wenzel
Sherburne County, Terry Nagorski
Sherburne County, John Riebel
Sherburne County RRA, Arne Engstrom
St. Cloud Metropolitan Transit Commission, Thomas Cruikshank