

**April 19, 2016 Public Hearing Transcript (Cover)**

I-35W

4/19/2016

**CERTIFIED**

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PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE  
RE I-35W AND LAKE STREET IMPROVEMENTS  
TAKEN ON THE 19TH DAY OF APRIL 2016  
AT THE COLIN POWELL CENTER  
MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA  
6:00 P.M.

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1 MR. GRUBE: Good evening, everyone.

2 I'd like to welcome you to this  
3 evening's meeting. The purpose of this  
4 meeting this evening is to talk about the  
5 35W corridor between the 94 Commons and  
6 approximately 42nd, 43rd Street. So if  
7 you're -- if that just surprised you, you  
8 might be in the wrong meeting or something.  
9 Otherwise, we've got time, and we'd like to  
10 spend some time and talk to you about the  
11 35W corridor.

12 Assuming we're all in the right place,  
13 in the way of introductions, my name is Jim  
14 Grube. I'm from Hennepin County. I'm the  
15 project manager that had coordinated what is  
16 commonly referred to as the transit/access  
17 project, which we'll be getting into and  
18 describing in just a moment. With me this  
19 evening assisting is Jeni Hager from the  
20 city of Minneapolis. Jeni and I have been  
21 joined at the hip on this project, these  
22 series of projects for years, for years.  
23 And then Mike Kotila, Mike is the project  
24 manager with a consulting firm team that we  
25 put together. His firm is known as Short

1 Elliott Hendrickson. And I think Mike and I  
2 have been working on this since the late  
3 '90s. So we've been around the block more  
4 than once talking about this project. And  
5 some of you have probably witnessed a couple  
6 versions of the project.

7 Before we get started on it, I'd like  
8 to introduce a few people. We do have a  
9 court reporter over to my left, your right.  
10 And she will, when questions arise, be  
11 writing down questions and then answers to  
12 them, generally reporting what's being said  
13 this evening, not specifically word by word,  
14 from the three of us making a presentation,

f

15 but trying to get word by -- word for word  
16 from you, comments and questions. We also  
17 have interpreters this evening. So if  
18 anybody feels a desire, we have someone who  
19 is of Spanish, the Hmong language, and  
20 Somali.

21 We have a number of staff members  
22 around the room that after we get done this  
23 evening I'd invite you to continue to speak  
24 with folks. We've got a representative from  
25 MnDOT, Scott. We've got a number of folks

1 from the city of Minneapolis with Jeni. And  
2 there's a couple more folks from the city of  
3 Minneapolis. Metro Transit has a number of  
4 folks to talk to you this evening. And  
5 consultant team, raise your hand. So you  
6 can see that there are a number of folks  
7 around the room. When we get done, I invite  
8 you to spend some time and speak with them.  
9 Maybe they can get into a little more  
10 in-depth with you and talk to you about some  
11 of the issues that you find of interest.

12 What we'd like to do is go through our  
13 presentation this evening and hold the  
14 questions until the end. And at the end,  
15 then we'd like to go around the room and  
16 give people an opportunity to ask the  
17 questions. But we have such good resources  
18 in terms of the individuals here either with  
19 Metro Transit or the city or with MnDOT or  
20 with the consultant team that they can  
21 really dive into some of the details for you  
22 and on your behalf rather than spending a  
23 little too much time talking, like I'm just  
24 doing right now, and we could be in the meat  
25 of the issues and talk them through.

1           So what we'd like to do is take about  
2           half hour and go through some of the slides  
3           here and talk about the projects that  
4           comprise the 35W improvement between the 94  
5           Commons and about 42nd, 43rd Street.

6           (I-35W Transit/Access presentation by  
7           Jim Grube, Jenifer Hager and Michael  
8           Kotila.)

9           MR. GRUBE: Open up for questions.  
10          First, a reminder, we do have a court  
11          reporter here. If questions are asked,  
12          she'll take questions down. And I will  
13          repeat them for the people. We'll try and  
14          go around the room, give everybody an  
15          opportunity to ask their question and get a  
16          question asked and answered so we don't have  
17          people here too long waiting.

18          We do have a lot of subject matter  
19          experts in the back. So if do you have some  
20          questions that you don't necessarily feel  
21          need to be on the record, I'd invite you to  
22          go and chat with them. And we'd like to  
23          take maybe 10 or 15 minutes so that we have  
24          at least a half hour at the end so people  
25          can walk around. That doesn't mean you need

1 to take that time with these questions.

2 I'd also offer to you that there are  
3 comment cards that hopefully you saw when  
4 you came in. So if you feel you do not wish  
5 to go on the record with the court reporter,  
6 or after speaking with any one of the  
7 subject matter experts, you've got some  
8 comments, we'd invite to you spend some time  
9 and jot down your comments and give them to  
10 us. So okay. Yes, ma'am.

11 SPEAKER: I have one or two questions,  
12 I brought it up last time. The Super Bowl  
13 is in 2018, is that correct? And there will  
14 be six months into construction or is it --  
15 is it in -- it's in January or February of  
16 2018.

17 MR. GRUBE: When is the Super Bowl?  
18 Allen, do you know when the Super Bowl is,  
19 since you're with downtown traffic.

20 SPEAKER: February.

21 MR. GRUBE: The Super Bowl is early  
22 February 2018.

23 SPEAKER: At six months into  
24 construction, where are people going to come  
25 from the airport up 35 during that time

1 period?

2 MR. GRUBE: The question that was asked  
3 if we're six months into construction, how  
4 in the world are people going to get from  
5 the airport or anywhere into downtown?  
6 Actually, if you take a look at the timing,  
7 I think we're going to start in late '17,  
8 but I'm not sure that we're going to be  
9 ripping out all sorts of pavement, making it  
10 impossible to get through. They're going to  
11 try to at the beginning get things out of  
12 the way before we start making a mess in  
13 earnest in 2018, be able to get there and  
14 out.

15 SPEAKER: My question is detours, when  
16 I can't use 35W, and where do you detour  
17 traffic around the adjacent neighborhoods?  
18 I live in midtown Phillips. And we have  
19 three maybe routes, Park, Portland and  
20 Chicago Avenue, Cedar and maybe Hiawatha.  
21 Rather than having people detour through our  
22 neighborhoods, which is very difficult, is  
23 to have people detour around 46th over to  
24 Hiawatha or to 100?

25 MR. GRUBE: Generally the question was

1 regarding the traffic impacts that the  
2 neighborhoods are going to feel as a result  
3 of the construction on the freeway. In this  
4 particular case, the example was west  
5 Phillips and the north/south routes and  
6 how -- how are we going to, I would use the  
7 term, protect the neighborhood? In this  
8 particular case I think it's a good question  
9 that is a question that all the  
10 neighborhoods are going to be asking of us,  
11 not just Phillips west, but we've got  
12 Whittier, Lyndale, Central, Kingfield, and  
13 it goes on and on as you look at something  
14 that goes down 42nd. That's why we're  
15 looking at the staging, that's why we're  
16 working with Metro Transit, that's why we're  
17 working with the other folks to figure out  
18 how do you make this work out and try to  
19 protect the neighborhoods to the greatest  
20 extent that we can. I'm not sure that we're  
21 saying today we're going to close streets  
22 off so nobody can get in or get out. We're  
23 just trying to figure out what are the  
24 implications of that.

25 MS. HAGER: If I can just add that your

1 city councilmembers are also very concerned  
2 and already asking many questions and laying  
3 the groundwork for how they want to talk  
4 about that going forward. So that's on  
5 their radar as well.

6 MR. GRUBE: Yes, ma'am.

7 SPEAKER: What does the EAW project in  
8 terms of the number of vehicles that use  
9 35W, you know, at about Lake Street now as  
10 compared to what you might see or what you  
11 project you will see in 10 years or 20 years  
12 after this project? Are we going to see  
13 same number of vehicles carrying more people  
14 or are we going to see a big increase in  
15 vehicles?

16 MR. GRUBE: I'm going to repeat the  
17 setup for the question. And I'm going to  
18 ask Mike if he wants to take a shot at this.  
19 You have no choice, Mike, you're going to  
20 take a shot at this. Now he's warned. So  
21 the question was when you look at the  
22 environmental documentation, what do we say  
23 we see as a projected traffic increase along  
24 the freeway from what it is nominally today,  
25 in the future, and are we taking into

1 account any way in which we can get more  
2 people and less vehicles? That would be  
3 known as more people throughput as opposed  
4 to more vehicles. That's essentially, I  
5 think, what the question was.

6 MR. KOTILA: Yes. We do anticipate  
7 growth in vehicular traffic. And we also  
8 anticipate a mode split change, so a greater  
9 percentage of folks using transit, using  
10 bikes and walking.

11 I'm at -- my numbers are maybe not  
12 perfect from memory. We're planning out to  
13 2038, so we're looking at a number of years  
14 ahead so that the life of the facility can  
15 plan for future needs to that point. On the  
16 freeway, and these are round numbers, the EA  
17 has got maybe more precise numbers, I know  
18 that we're looking at 35W, which, by the  
19 way, is -- I believe it's the busiest  
20 highway in the state of Minnesota. But  
21 we're projecting out to about 200,000 cars a  
22 day using 35W. And today it's in more than  
23 150,000 cars, but not -- it's something like  
24 20 percent increase that we're planning for  
25 over time. At the same time the mode split,

1 and, again, my numbers -- my memory isn't  
2 perfect on this, but about an increase to a  
3 pedestrian, bike and transit users from the  
4 neighborhood at the input level up to about  
5 something like 25 percent. And we're down  
6 in the low teens, if I remember, right now.  
7 Expansion both, greater use of the  
8 multimodal and also greater number of cars  
9 on the highway.

10 SPEAKER: What about the buses?

11 MR. GRUBE: Let's just make sure --  
12 this was a good question. It's kind of like  
13 staff is behind, you've got two staff  
14 members reading through the document.  
15 They're looking for the numbers. So I  
16 invite you to step back and chat with them.  
17 They'll be able to answer that question for  
18 you. Then the question was what about the  
19 bus?

20 SPEAKER: The Orange Line.

21 MR. GRUBE: And the Orange Line is  
22 specific. Now we've got some folks in the  
23 back that would love to talk to you about  
24 the Orange Line. And the Orange Line bus  
25 rapid transit from downtown Minneapolis to

1 points south. Does that mean you want to  
2 speak now or bring her back there? The  
3 project manager for the Orange Line from  
4 Metro Transit waved her hand to show who she  
5 was so someone could come back and speak  
6 with her. Christine is back there. She'll  
7 be happy to answer that. But we're excited  
8 about the Orange Line for two reasons: One  
9 is it offers opportunities for people in the  
10 area to get on buses heading south on a  
11 reverse commute. And, secondly, it allows  
12 people who are coming into town to get out  
13 of the bus and take a walk on the Greenway  
14 or up through and get to some of those  
15 heavier users like Allina, Abbott and the --  
16 the employment centers. So people can feel  
17 good about using the bus getting off there  
18 and getting into the local area. Other  
19 questions. Yes, sir.

20 SPEAKER: Have you seen growth in  
21 public transit and biking and walking in and  
22 that kind of thing? Have you seen that  
23 increase more than traditional, you know,  
24 one-person or two-person car transportation?  
25 Have you actually seen that grow faster or

1 are you just kind of thinking if you build  
2 it, they will come?

3 MR. GRUBE: The question was have we  
4 seen a greater use of alternative modes of  
5 transportation, that would be walking,  
6 biking, transit or HOV, high occupancy  
7 vehicle, as opposed to a single occupant  
8 vehicle? And the answer to that is yes, the  
9 people who are walking, biking and using  
10 transit all of those are going up in terms  
11 of comparison with the single occupant  
12 vehicle. So very good signs and very robust  
13 efforts on Metro Transit to help in terms of  
14 some of the regional lines and your city of  
15 Minneapolis really promoting healthy living  
16 through the concept of biking and riding,  
17 and Hennepin County promoting it through  
18 what's known as Complete Streets. Your city  
19 also talking about Complete Streets as a  
20 policy, so trying to make it more attractive  
21 for people to get out of their cars. Yes,  
22 sir.

23 SPEAKER: So related to that, when this  
24 bus station is done, are there some numbers  
25 on how many people a day you think will be

1 using it? My observation right now in the  
2 condition that things are now, I don't see  
3 that many people wanting to take the bus  
4 from Lake Street getting onto the freeway.  
5 I could be entirely wrong, but it looks like  
6 you're anticipating maybe hundreds of people  
7 a day. Is that correct?

8 MR. GRUBE: The question was in terms  
9 of the transit station being constructed and  
10 open for use, how will it really be used?  
11 Will there really be ridership?

12 And I invite you to take a look at the  
13 brochure. On the back of the page it gives  
14 you some thumbnail sketch on the number of  
15 riders, the ridership for the Orange Line  
16 and the number of jobs in the area. And I'd  
17 really invite you to go back and talk to  
18 Christina, because there is a belief that  
19 this is going to work well.

20 When you look at it today, it is  
21 spartan, at best, for the southbound side  
22 because there's a little shelter. There is  
23 no shelter on the eastbound side for  
24 northbound. Actually, Metro Transit has  
25 discontinued the service that goes from the

1 46th Street station, crosses over four lanes  
2 of traffic to the edge of Lake Street and  
3 crosses over four lanes of traffic to get  
4 downtown. They've actually stopped that  
5 service and taken the shelter out. They  
6 still stop there if people seek to  
7 disembark, but the service has been stopped.  
8 The southbound is still there and it's  
9 spartan environment. Yes.

10 SPEAKER: Peter Wigenius from Mayor  
11 Hodges' office.

12 Jim is correct that less people get  
13 confused. They're not stopping that service  
14 because of a lack of demand. They're  
15 stopping it because of the difficulty of  
16 having the buses move from the inside to the  
17 outside and back to the inside.

18 We're confident the demand is there. I  
19 was told by a person at Metro Transit that  
20 35W, in general, is the most well used  
21 transit corridor in the state other than the  
22 Blue Line and the Green Line. I mean, you  
23 can see it if you stand on the -- Christine  
24 is nodding. I think that's still true. It  
25 was true as of couple years ago. 35W is,

1 I'll say it another way, the most well used  
2 non-rail transit corridor in the state. The  
3 question is is our neighborhood going to be  
4 included or not, not is there transit  
5 service on 35W.

6 In fact, the demand is already quite  
7 high and it's time we had a fully  
8 functioning station.

9 MR. GRUBE: Thank you for filling that  
10 in. Appreciate that, Peter. Yes, sir.

11 SPEAKER: I would like to make EA  
12 findings. I'd like to know, it seems like  
13 there will be no CO violations and air  
14 toxins will be less once the project is  
15 being implemented. And I'm just thinking  
16 when 62 was ended, there was traffic  
17 flowing, but now you could see a lot of  
18 traffic stagnant. For me I was thinking  
19 it's going to be a lot of what if the  
20 project is being bigger, but it's still  
21 going to have maybe more issue with cars  
22 being stuck in the way. And is that --  
23 maybe it have to do more it was done to it's  
24 going to be more clean air for the  
25 community.

1 MR. GRUBE: The gentleman was talking  
2 about air quality and the concept of how do  
3 we know that this will be improved, and  
4 cited the fact that the Crosstown Commons  
5 had cars going through it a little more  
6 efficiently, sliding through the area a  
7 little more efficiently. And then what  
8 happens is that in the northbound direction  
9 they're kind of getting stuck up in the Lake  
10 Street area and -- and it's kind of from the  
11 94 Commons heading back in the northbound  
12 direction kind of stacking up. And so how  
13 do we know about the air quality issues?

14 Well, as Mike had mentioned, we go  
15 through and did a fairly robust analysis in  
16 terms of how traffic goes through the area  
17 on the freeway and opening up the  
18 opportunities to keep the buses going on  
19 that one lane, managed lane, and then  
20 providing the access points with some  
21 connections up to 28 Street, getting rid of  
22 some of that congestion that really starts  
23 to churn in the area of 35th to 31st where  
24 we get a lot of people wanting to get off  
25 and get up to 28th Street, keep them on the

1 freeway and then get them off at 28th  
2 Street, it cleans up that northbound  
3 direction -- northbound direction, sure,  
4 condition quite well. So, you know, there's  
5 a confidence there. Then, secondarily,  
6 remember some of that back -- coming back in  
7 the afternoon is the flyover bridge from  
8 northbound over to westbound 94, that lane  
9 gets backed up, then you get the -- you get  
10 the congestion from people slowing down next  
11 to it. And you just watch the traffic  
12 moving back and forth.

13 With the dropping that -- that bridge  
14 on the inside, you'll be able to pump the  
15 northbound traffic more efficiently through  
16 the area into a more efficiently moving  
17 westbound 94, not necessarily faster, but  
18 more efficiently moving instead of stopped.  
19 Those are the things that create that backup  
20 that we observe daily. So -- and you can  
21 talk to the staff about that, be happy to  
22 give you a little more detail. But in a big  
23 nutshell, that's what it is. Yes, sir.

24 SPEAKER: Good afternoon, peace. Jay  
25 Webb is my name. I don't know if you all

1 know the place where we're standing from  
2 Portland to Blaisdell is part of  
3 International Gateway. And it's non-profit.  
4 And a lot of the businesses, we've all  
5 gathered together. This is a challenged  
6 area that we're in with -- so we've banded  
7 together, helping cleaning and just  
8 different events, right. So I'm tired.  
9 Sorry, I've been hanging sheetrock all day  
10 so I'm -- but anyway, but twofold question:  
11 One part is diversity, and second one with  
12 renewable energy and things like that.

13 First one is how can International  
14 Gateway, how can we engage? How can we help  
15 you? How can we -- our community is parts  
16 Whittier, it has McDonald's, Third, Fourth,  
17 Fifth precinct police in it. And it's right  
18 in the heart of the city. And this is a  
19 great opportunity for us to really bring  
20 fresh blood to the city. So that's the  
21 first question, how can we engage?

22 We really look forward to doing it here  
23 in this area to promote it.

24 MR. GRUBE: Thank you Jay, appreciate  
25 that. Generally the situation is the

1 question revolves around the fact that there  
2 are a number of different nationalities in  
3 the area right here, a lot of folks  
4 representing different life experiences.  
5 And how can we take a project of this nature  
6 and -- we can improve upon life for a lot of  
7 folks by engaging those people with those  
8 different backgrounds and those different  
9 life experiences? That's kind of sort of  
10 what he's asking.

11 And I -- what I'd offer to you is that  
12 on the ground as it relates to the  
13 neighborhoods here, we are actually talking  
14 about that on the Lake Street connections  
15 project, the last slide that I'd offered  
16 talking about to the business people and the  
17 neighborhoods on the ground on Lake Street  
18 talking about that. Okay?

19 Everybody looked, and I said something  
20 just happened. Thank you, Jeni.

21 So this is the avenue, Jay, and we've  
22 been talking to people who are interested in  
23 that movement on this group, the project  
24 advisory committee. So I think we've got --  
25 I think we've got a little bit of a door

1 opening to get access to that energy and  
2 resource.

3 SPEAKER: And last, we're looking  
4 forward to -- it's been called like  
5 International Freedom Day in Kmart area, we  
6 look forward to bringing everyone together  
7 and having a celebration of diversity and  
8 music. You know, we're looking -- we would  
9 love to see it in before like August,  
10 September, October around that area where we  
11 could, like I said, continue to promote and  
12 let everyone know that this is a good thing  
13 going on.

14 But the segue, how -- what I would like  
15 to ask, too, is how could -- if I could say  
16 someone had access to solar energy or  
17 biofuels or organic soap that's being  
18 recycled here in Minneapolis, right, oil  
19 from kitchens turned into soap or biofuel,  
20 how could we introduce that to the bus  
21 systems, which would be cleaner fuel. You  
22 cut 10 percent, it will burn cleaner, or run  
23 the actual subway station by solar all the  
24 lights, LED. Who do we talk to and like how  
25 can we get on calendar?

1 MR. GRUBE: It appears that the desire  
2 to answer that question.

3 SPEAKER: I think that is out of the  
4 scope of this meeting. I think that if you  
5 are interested in things like that, you can  
6 talk to your elected officials in  
7 Minneapolis, it would be your councilmembers  
8 that represent your ward. And obviously  
9 there's two wards represented in this or is  
10 it three in this project -- four.

11 SPEAKER: We were talking about  
12 emissions.

13 SPEAKER: I think the purpose of the  
14 emissions, the whole purpose of the  
15 environmental study is for this specific  
16 project. It's not about creating new  
17 technologies.

18 SPEAKER: Solar.

19 MR. GRUBE: Thank you. Crystal is the  
20 executive for the west Phillips  
21 neighborhood, so she's got a good idea and  
22 handle on what's going on. Jay, I'd invite  
23 you to talk to either the city or Metro  
24 Transit folks --

25 SPEAKER: Okay.

1 MR. GRUBE: -- after the presentation,  
2 be happy to chat with you.

3 SPEAKER: Thank you very much.

4 MR. GRUBE: That's a little different  
5 scope than what we have, but thank you very  
6 much.

7 SPEAKER: Thank you.

8 MR. GRUBE: We've kind of run over  
9 time. If there's one more question that  
10 somebody might have, otherwise we'll adjourn  
11 this portion. And i remind you of the fact  
12 that the court reporter is here and will be  
13 happy to take an official statement from you  
14 if you'd like. There are comment cards that  
15 you can fill out and you can put in the box  
16 to -- to let people know what your thoughts  
17 are. We invite you to do that. And, Peter,  
18 I think you had a closing comment.

19 SPEAKER: Yeah, again, Peter Wigenius  
20 from Mayor Hodges' office. I just wanted to  
21 convey to you if you're excited at the  
22 prospect of this project happening, from a  
23 road standpoint, from a transit standpoint,  
24 from pedestrian, bicycle, whatever part of  
25 this project resonates with you, I encourage

1           you to take that message to your state  
2           legislators.

3           Earlier, as it just so happens, Mayor  
4           Hodges met with four legislators, three  
5           senators and one state representative  
6           advocating for this project. I know  
7           Commissioner Laughlin from the county has  
8           been doing the same thing. Not all of the  
9           money is in place yet. We're almost there.  
10          But we need a little bit more commitment  
11          from the legislature. And we think we have  
12          a very compelling story to tell. But we  
13          invite you to be part of telling that story,  
14          so feel free to call your state legislators  
15          and say pass a transportation bill so we can  
16          get projects like this done. It does help.  
17          Your voice does matter.

18          Thank you all for being here on behalf  
19          of the mayor.

20          MR. GRUBE: That's a perfect close.  
21          Thank you for your time and invite you --  
22          staff, you want to get up to your spots  
23          again. And please take some more time.

24          (The proceedings came to a close at  
25          approximately 8:00 p.m.)

1 STATE OF MINNESOTA)

2 COUNTY OF RAMSEY )

3 Be it known that I took the Public Open House the  
4 19th day of April at Minneapolis, Minnesota;

5 that I was then and there a Notary Public in and  
6 for the County of Ramsey, State of Minnesota;

7 that the testimony of said witness was recorded  
8 in stenotype by myself and reduced to print by means  
9 of Computer-Assisted Transcription under my direction,  
10 and that the hearing is a true record of the testimony  
11 given to the best of my ability;

12 that I am not related to any parties hereto nor  
13 interested in the outcome of the action.

14 Dated this 20th day of April 2016.

15

16

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Pauline Hanson". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

17

Pauline Hanson, RPR

Ramsey County, Minnesota

18

My Commission expires 1-31-20

19

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