Jenifer Loon
State Representative

District 48B
Hennepin County

Minnesota House of Representatives

COMMITTEES: COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION FINANCE AND POLICY
RULES AND LEGISLATIVE ADMINISTRATION
TAXES
WAYS AND MEANS

June 12, 2014

Via Electronic Delivery

Eden Prairie City Council
City Center
8080 Mitchell Road
Eden Prairie, MN 55344

Dear Members of the Eden Prairie City Council,

In advance of your scheduled meeting of June 17 where you are expected to consider Municipal Consent of the Southwest Green Line LRT Extension, I am writing to share my concerns and the views that have been expressed to me by constituents who have contacted me regarding the project.

As you know, the scope of the project includes 15.8 miles of new Light Rail Transit (LRT) track, and 16 new stations running through four suburban communities connecting downtown Minneapolis with Eden Prairie. I question the overall return on investment of this $1.7 billion project and its impact on Eden Prairie. The project simply does not achieve the goals of connecting workers, shoppers, and people in a cost effective manner.

Even after months of review, public hearings and analysis there remain many unresolved matters and concerns about the current alignment through Eden Prairie. With five stations planned for Eden Prairie and numerous at-grade crossings still part of the route through our city, plans to mitigate construction congestion and business loss has not been adequately addressed.

Moreover, the decision to move the alignment to Technology Drive west of SW Transit station for the final station and parking ramp at Mitchell Road deviates from the original Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). It is my understanding that local business owners and citizens concerned about the wetlands in the area have expressed significant reservations about the proximity of the newly proposed alignment. I am told that a Supplemental EIS will be provided, but only after the City is asked to consider and grant Municipal Consent.

Early in the process of evaluating the alignment, the business community urged the City to find amicable solutions to alignment issues that are identified prior to granting municipal consent to the project. From

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my point of view, this has not been met given the most recent alignment changes and the lack of EIS on a portion of the route to satisfy the community's interests.

In addition, as a State Legislator, it is my responsibility to be a careful steward of our state's limited resources. While most of the focus has been on the cost for construction (combined local, state and federal funds) little attention has been given to the long-term budget impact of the operating costs associated with this project. The Met Council and project planners have projected ridership of 30,000 on an average weekday in 2030, and it is expected that that fare box revenue will cover one-third of the estimated operating budget. In other words, the proposed SWLRT will run a deficit of two-thirds the line's operating costs each year that will have to be covered by state taxpayers.

In your deliberations, I ask that you recognize the proposed alignment is without a completed EIS, the significantly negative impact of the construction phase on Eden Prairie residents and businesses, and the overall long-term budgetary impact of this project. For these reasons I oppose this project, and I urge your opposition to granting municipal consent for the SWLRT.

Sincerely,

Jenifer Loon

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State Representative

Cc: Nancy Tyra-Lukens, Brad Aho, Kathy Nelson, Ron Case, Sherry Butcher Wickstrom