

**Background Information for MPRB
Community Advisory Committee for
2010 Southwest Light Rail Transit
Project DEIS Comment Letter
Section 4**

1 4. CAC Role in Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) Process

As shown in the [schedule](#) above, the CAC's work during fall 2010 will be tied to the project's status in the DEIS process.

What is a Draft Environmental Impact Statement?

Source: http://www.southwesttransitway.org/index.php?cid=1&option=com_easyfaq&Itemid=35

The purpose of a DEIS is to provide a full and open evaluation of the potential environmental impacts of the proposed Southwest LRT line to ensure that decision-makers and the public are aware of the impacts and of reasonable alternatives to avoid or minimize adverse consequences prior to implementing the transit line.

During the DEIS, the public is invited to review and comment on the elements, which include the following:

- Identify and explain the purpose and need for improved transit to serve the area
- Develop and describe the alternatives for the proposed action being considered
- Identify the environmental and community effects of the three LRT alternatives and measures to avoid, minimize or mitigate adverse impacts of their implementation
- Describe agency and public coordination efforts
- Serve as the basis for a decision to move forward with the Southwest LRT line
- Allow opportunities for public and agency input

Hennepin County has completed the initial DEIS and as of late August 2010 it is undergoing formal legal review by the Federal Transit Association; with this step, the project begins its formal transfer to the jurisdiction of the Metropolitan Council. When that legal review is complete and any required changes are made by the County, the DEIS will be released to the public for review and comment. It is not known when that release will occur.

When it does, it triggers a formal, 45-day public comment period. As described in the CAC's charge below, the Park Board will be submitting a Comment Letter on the DEIS, and created the CAC to support that effort.

CAC Charge: Prepare recommendations to the Board on the contents of a formal Comment Letter in response to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed Southwest Light Rail Transit Alternative 3A. The recommendations of the CAC shall focus on desired outcomes relative to historical, cultural, visual, recreational, social, environmental, and safety issues as they relate to lands owned or managed by the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board.

The combination of the description from the SW LRT website with the CAC charge means the following: The CAC will focus on the DEIS sections that identify the environmental and community effects of Alternative 3A on Minneapolis parks and park users, and ways to avoid, minimize, or mitigate adverse impacts. The CAC will look at desired outcomes relative to historical, cultural, visual, recreational, social, environmental, and safety issues.