

MPRB: Southwest LRT Community Advisory Committee Draft Issues and Outcomes by Location

Current to: 6 December 2010

This is a compilation of issues and outcomes identified by the CAC. It is a work in progress, current to the date above. This document is organized by location and then issue, as shown in the brief Table of Contents below. For more information contact Jennifer Ringold at jringold@minneapolisparcs.org.

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1 Entire Corridor

1.1 Issue: Bike/pedestrian trail

1.1.1 **DRAFT Outcome:** A bike/pedestrian trail will exist along the corridor

1.1.2 **DRAFT Outcome:** All trail users can safely use the trail

1.2 Issue: Access to trail

1.2.1 **DRAFT Outcome:** There will be adequate access to the trail from both sides of the LRT track, and access points will be reasonable walking distance apart

1.3 Issue: Safety

1.3.1 Need to better define “safety” along corridor once DEIS is released, including emergency vehicle access to beaches and parks, and trail/park users responding to LRT and crossing impediments with risky behaviors

1.4 Issue: Visual appeal

1.4.1 **DRAFT Outcome:** Minimize the visual impact of the LRT and related infrastructure on the users of the Corridor trail and neighboring park lands

1.5 Issue: Construction impacts

1.5.1 **DRAFT Outcome:** Water quality is protected during construction

1.5.2 **DRAFT Outcome:** Any flora that is lost to construction or LRT use is replaced with flora that is in accordance with MPRB plans

1.5.3 **DRAFT Outcome:** All design options will take full advantage of as well as take great care with the water table (per Met Council, the water table is 27 feet below the surface where Depot Avenue junctions with the trail)

1.5.4 **DRAFT Outcome:** Soils and slopes are stabilized during construction

1.5.5 **DRAFT Outcome:** Water table is protected during construction

2 Calhoun Executive Center parking lot

The Calhoun Executive Center parking lot sits partially on privately owned land in addition to land owned by the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board as part of the Chain of Lakes regional park system. The parking lot provides parking on the weekends and week day evenings for the regional park users and Lake Calhoun. This location, within the regional park system, is the closest major park land to the SW LRT Lake Street Station.

2.1 Issue: Access to parks and trails

- 2.1.1 Parking lot providing access to Lake Calhoun and trails is MPRB land and should be included in the CAC's response to the DEIS
- 2.1.2 **DRAFT Outcome:** Lake Calhoun Executive Center parking lot (partially owned by MPRB) remains available for park users

3 Trail access at Abbott Avenue S. (by new Lake Street Station)

Access to the Midtown Greenway at Abbott Avenue S. is currently the closest trail access point to the proposed Lake Street Station. At this trail entrance, the West Calhoun Neighborhood Association has added park-like features including a kiosk, picnic table, bike racks, decorative fencing and a drinking fountain.

3.1 Issue: Access to parks and trails

- 3.1.1 **DRAFT Outcome:** Lake Street station users have access to and from Lake Calhoun and Kenilworth Trail
- 3.1.2 **DRAFT Outcome:** Wayfinding is provided for Lake Calhoun and trail users from Lake Street station
- 3.1.3 **DRAFT Outcome:** Safe access is provided from Lake Street station to and from Lake Calhoun and trail

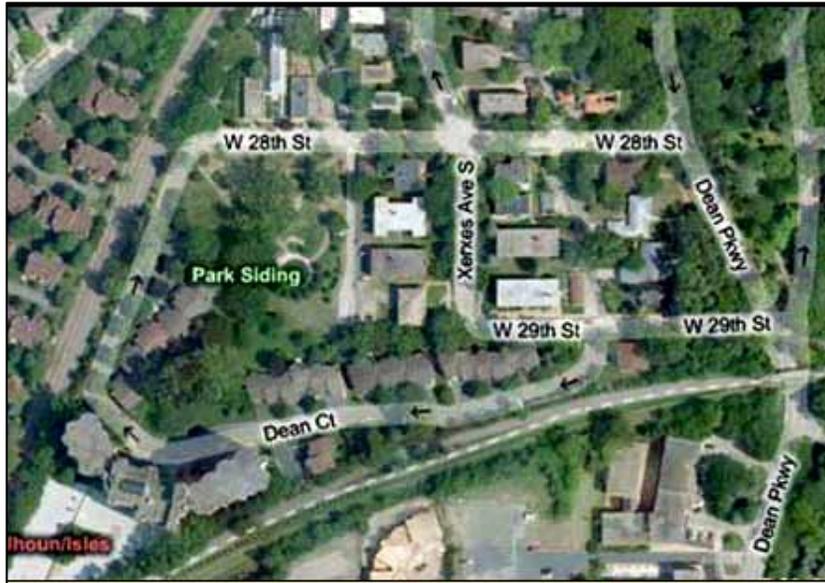


Amenities provided by West Calhoun Neighborhood Council



4 Park Siding Park

This small neighborhood park includes a tot-lot, formal gardens, and play equipment. It is used almost exclusively by neighborhood residents on both sides of the proposed trail alignment.



Park Siding Park

4.1 Issue: Connectivity and accessibility

- 4.1.1 Parkland providing neighborhood connectivity throughout the planned LRT route; concern regarding connectivity being broken in both formal and informal access points
- 4.1.2 Connectivity and integrity of surrounding neighborhoods
- 4.1.3 People are crossing the existing rail line and fence from the west side to access this park
- 4.1.4 Trail connectivity from neighborhood to park
- 4.1.5 Interruption of wildlife corridor
- 4.1.6 General question: is there enough room for two sets of tracks, trail, and park access?
- 4.1.7 **DRAFT Outcome:** Maintain safe and clear access from both sides of track



Access path between trail and park

4.1.8 **Outcome:** Trail users have safe access to and from the park

4.2 Issue: Safety

4.2.1 Safety issues both when people access park and as users

4.2.2 Safety is paramount at this narrow point

4.2.3 **DRAFT Outcome:** Park users of all ages and abilities are safe

4.3 Issue: Visual appeal

4.3.1 Visual impact of rail cars/ advertisements on sides of LRT and commercialization of park experience

4.3.2 Aesthetic integrity of parkland negatively affected

4.3.3 Question: How to deal with LRT users' experience?

4.3.4 **DRAFT Outcome:** Maintain visual integrity for park users and for residents and users on the *west* side of the tracks

4.3.5 **DRAFT Outcome:** The visual impact of the LRT will be compatible with the context of the park

4.4 Issue: Noise and vibrations

4.4.1 There should be minimal noise impacts on park users

4.4.2 Vibrations and additional noise

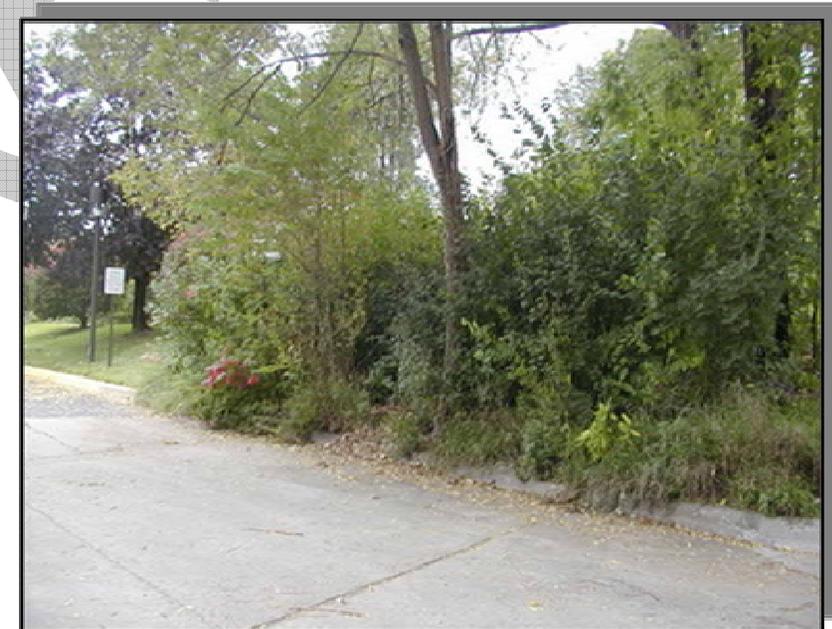
4.4.3 Proposed solution: tunnel the train

4.4.4 Proposed solution: Use public art to mitigate noise and visual impact

4.4.5 **DRAFT Outcome:** Park users will not be subject to LRT noise that exceeds applicable standards



Landscaped berm (at right) between park and corridor



Berm, continued, with natural flora

5 Cedar Lake Parkway and Grand Rounds

The proposed SW LRT alignment will cross the Grand Rounds at Cedar Lake Parkway. Currently at this intersection, traffic occasionally stops for a passing freight train. The trail users are required to stop for vehicular traffic coming and going from both Dean and Cedar Lake Parkways. Also at this intersection, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board trail network meets the Kenilworth Trail. To the west of the trail corridor is South Cedar Lake Beach.

- 5.1.1 (Staff will provide more information about who owns what land at this intersection)

5.2 Issue: Flow and safety on Grand Rounds

- 5.2.1 Congestion and stoppages on the Grand Rounds (Cedar Lake Parkway) caused by train crossings inhibits continuous and unimpeded flow on the Grand Rounds
- 5.2.2 Car backups cause safety issues for bicyclists
- 5.2.3 Train crossings prevent pedestrians/joggers on the sidewalk along Cedar Lake Parkway from crossing
- 5.2.4 Significant use conflicts at this intersection between cars, bicyclists, pedestrians with backups due to train crossings
- 5.2.5 Note that this is policy related with regard to continuous flows along the Grand Rounds
- 5.2.6 This is a long-standing “choke” point in the park system, but the problems increase by orders of magnitude with an at-grade LRT line
- 5.2.7 Links will be impeded between the trail along Cedar Lake and the Kenilworth Trail, along with the connection to other MPRB trails
- 5.2.8 **DRAFT Outcome:** Continuous and safe flow of motorized and nonmotorized vehicles and pedestrians along the Grand Rounds and chain of lakes connecting trails



From trail looking NW toward Cedar Lake



Looking north across Cedar Lake Parkway

5.3 Issue: Grand Rounds (seeking historic designation)

- 5.3.1 Note that the Grand Rounds runs along Cedar Lake Parkway and also intersects with the Kenilworth trail, and the continuous flow that defines the Grand Rounds is prevented if the LRT crossing is at grade here
- 5.3.2 The Grand Rounds is a National Scenic Byway and the State Historic Preservation Office nominated it for listing on the National Register of Historic Places
- 5.3.3 Request: staff to provide information on the status of this nomination <This will be included in upcoming CAC conversations with Dennis Gimmelstad from MnDOT>
- 5.3.4 **DRAFT Outcome**: The integrity and intention of the Grand Rounds is maintained

5.4 Issue: Noise

- 5.4.1 Noise impacts from LRT and crossing harms park and Grand Rounds users' enjoyment and use
- 5.4.2 **DRAFT Outcome**: LRT and crossing-related noise will not diminish the enjoyment and use of the park and Grand Rounds users

5.5 Issue: Visual appeal

- 5.5.1 The great views of Cedar lake and park land would be impeded by the train and tracks, depending on the configuration of the intersection and the train's power source/infrastructure
- 5.5.2 **DRAFT Outcome**: The view of and from Cedar Lake and surrounding parkland is preserved
- 5.5.3 **DRAFT Outcome**: The parkland around Cedar Lake remains the natural visual buffer between Cedar Lake and the Southwest LRT Corridor <Staff: how does this relate to Mpls city plans?>

5.6 Issue: Air quality

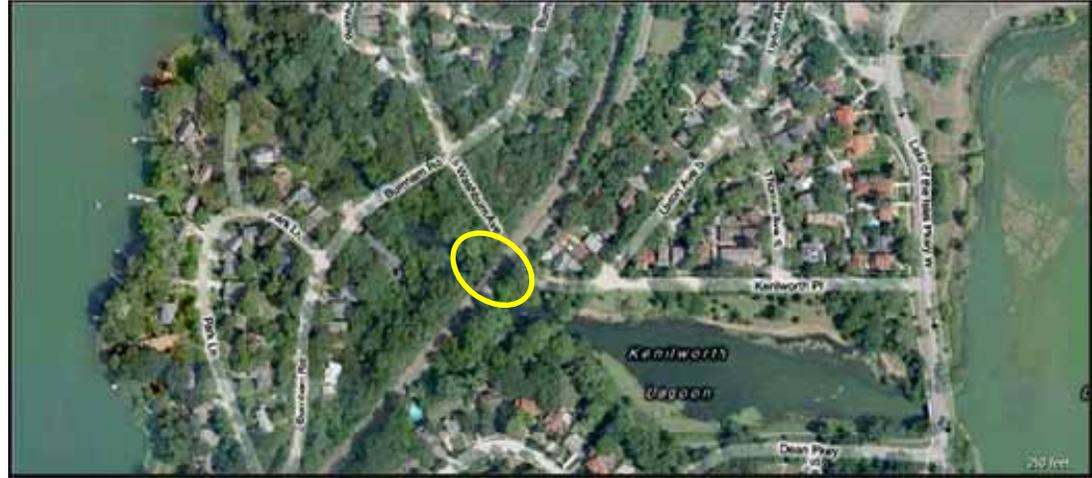
- 5.6.1 Air pollution would be a serious problem with many cars idling while waiting to cross the LRT route
- 5.6.2 South Beach is very close to this location and air pollution could be harmful to users
- 5.6.3 (Staff to check into applicable air quality regs so we have the correct reference, as well as whether there's information on potential harm to water quality if pollution levels increase significantly)
- 5.6.4 This is a heavily used park area plus pedestrians, bicyclists
- 5.6.5 **DRAFT Outcome**: Ensure conformity with state and federal air quality regulations (make reference to federal Clean Air Act and other standards that would apply in such situations)



Looking south along corridor; Cedar Lake to the right

6 Kenilworth Channel, bridge

The proposed alignment of the SW LRT crosses the Kenilworth Channel, a body of water that was built in the early 1900s to connect Cedar Lake and Lake of the Isles to form the Minneapolis chain of lakes. The Channel is used all year for recreational purposes from boaters in the summer to skiers and skaters in the winter. The channel also provides access for wildlife. The bridge over the channel for the existing freight tracks and trails is narrow and relatively low to the water (Hennepin County Regional Rail has an easement for the channel crossing).



6.1 Issue: Connectivity and Recreational Use

- 6.1.1 Structures that may be put in place to protect people and animals from the train, may at the same time prevent or obstruct crossing and access to the channel
- 6.1.2 This channel is unique in creating the connected chain of lakes, and is heavily used by boaters, skiers, etc.
- 6.1.3 **DRAFT Outcome:** Maintain access to the Kenilworth Trail and both Cedar Lake and Lake of the Isles from both sides of the Kenilworth Trail
- 6.1.4 **DRAFT Outcome:** Maintain human and wildlife access from both sides of the Kenilworth Trail to and along undeveloped channel shoreline
- 6.1.5 **DRAFT Outcome:** Maintain unfettered, year-round passage along the channel (in the water) between the lakes
- 6.1.6 **DRAFT Outcome:** Maintain the current functionality of the channel as the historic water connection between the two lakes, which makes the chain of lakes



Looking east along channel toward Lake of the Isles

6.2 Issue: Aesthetics, tranquility

- 6.2.1 The Kenilworth Channel is a uniquely quiet and tranquil space, and frequent trains crossing the channel would disrupt that serenity
- 6.2.2 The noise, vibration, and potential advertising on the trains would severely disrupt the experience of users on/in the channel

- 6.2.3 Great ambiance; a beautiful space
- 6.2.4 This is one of the darkest locations in the city which makes for great stargazing, so light pollution would be an issue
- 6.2.5 **DRAFT Outcome:** Any support or safety structures should be harmonious, beautiful, and context sensitive
- 6.2.6 **DRAFT Outcome:** Maintain natural beauty and serenity of the Kenilworth Channel experience

6.3 Issue: Safety

- 6.3.1 Safety at this crossing due to ice buildup on the bridge
- 6.3.2 Debris, vibrations, icicles, blowing snow may harm summer and winter users in channel underneath bridge
- 6.3.3 **DRAFT Outcome:** Ensure that year-round users of the channel area are safe.



Informal paths along the channel connect the two lakes and allow users to get onto the trail



7 Intersection with 21st Street

The intersection of the Kenilworth Trail and 21st Street is a proposed station location. The station would sit on Hennepin County property, however the west side of the rail line is MPRB property, Cedar Lake Park. At 21st Street, Cedar Lake has a very popular beach and access to a trail network as well as informal foot paths.

7.1 Issue: Park access and neighborhood connectivity

- 7.1.1 Informal access points from the trail into the woods (between Burnham Road and 21st Street), will be eliminated
- 7.1.2 Entrance to the beach amenity will be changed
- 7.1.3 Access to other points on the Chain of Lakes, as this could be one of the primary LRT stops to access the Chain of Lakes Regional Park
- 7.1.4 A possible solution could be an improved/formalized path from Burnham Road to 21st Street on the west side
- 7.1.5 **DRAFT Outcome:** Attractive, natural, welcoming access to park at 21st Street
- 7.1.6 **DRAFT Outcome:** Neighborhood connectivity by easy and safe pedestrian access back and forth between the neighborhoods on the east side of the corridor and the woods on the west side of the corridor

7.2 Issue: Safety

- 7.2.1 Safety concerns for crossings and connections to the neighborhood, trails, and Cedar Lake
- 7.2.2 Heavy use by youth and children increases safety issues
- 7.2.3 **DRAFT Outcome:** All park users can access the park safely, regardless of mode of transport
- 7.2.4 **DRAFT Outcome:** Safe access is provided that is aesthetically pleasing, and without excessive lights and noise.

7.3 Issue: Aesthetics, tranquility

- 7.3.1 Cedar Lake is uniquely quiet and tranquil in the Chain of Lakes
- 7.3.2 There could be noise impacts on park users
- 7.3.3 **DRAFT Outcome:** Cedar Lake remains a quiet, tranquil, and natural park destination

+++ start here for CAC next meeting

7.4 Issue: Congestion

- 7.4.1 Parking issues for the neighborhood and congestion
- 7.4.2 Idea of this stop as a seasonal one
- 7.4.3 Already heavy parking in neighborhood on weekends

8 Cedar Lake Trail Junction

The Cedar Lake trail carries pedestrians and riders between downtown Minneapolis and the western suburbs. Just outside of downtown, the trail splits off to the south Kenilworth Trail and the proposed SW LRT alignment. At this location the bike trails are separated into north- and south-bound, and there is a separate pedestrian trail. The land in this location is owned by the County and the MPRB. Per agreement, the prairies and trails are maintained by the MPRB.



8.1 Issue: Safety

- 8.1.1 Safety of Cedar Lake Trail users crossing the LRT line

8.2 Issue: Access

- 8.2.1 Trail users must have easy access to station; bike/pedestrian-friendly
- 8.2.2 **DRAFT Outcome:** Number of bicycle and pedestrian users remains the same or higher after the LRT

8.3 Issue: Connectivity, flow

- 8.3.1 Interruption of trail crossing by train; LRT impedes continuous flow and bicyclists ability to maintain speed
- 8.3.2 Free flow of trail users on Cedar Lake trail and on Kenilworth Trail
- 8.3.3 **DRAFT Outcome:** Bike flow and speed is maintained in crossing area

8.4 Issue: Environmental protection

- 8.4.1 Interruption of wildlife corridor and habitat
- 8.4.2 Prairie restoration going on here; avoid damage; don't introduce new species

8.5 Issue: Visual appeal

- 8.5.1 Blight of train through prairie area – incongruent with natural feel and look of parkland
- 8.5.2 **DRAFT Outcome:** The train blends in visually with the natural setting of the area

9 Bryn Mawr Meadows Park

Bryn Mawr Meadows Park is a neighborhood park in the Bryn Mawr neighborhood. Amenities that include ball fields, tot-lots, wading pools, and tennis courts. The park is adjacent to the Cedar Lake Trail and proposed SW LRT line, but there is currently no formal access to the Cedar Lake Trail from this park.

9.1 Issue: Connectivity

9.1.1 Reduced connectivity of park to trail

9.2 Issue: Noise, pollution

9.2.1 Air and noise pollution of rail yard and switching station, plus rail storage – heavy infrastructure in a small corridor

9.2.2 Park users impacted by noise, diesel fumes (smell) and rail yard storage plus freight area

9.3 Issue: Safety

9.3.1 No safe crossings (need definition of safe crossings)

9.3.2 Existing informal access from park to trail

9.4 Issue: Visual appeal

9.4.1 Visual impact of LRT on park users

10 Spring Lake Trail Junction

At this location trail users easily connect to the near by parks and trails including Spring Lake, Kenwood Parkway, and Parade Park, traveling beyond to the sculpture garden, Loring Park, and the Grand Rounds.

10.1 Issue: Access

10.2 Issue: Safety

10.3 Issue: Flow

DRAFT

11 Linden Avenue (by asphalt and concrete recycling plant)

Linden Avenue is a trail access, but is used primarily by city maintenance vehicles to access the asphalt and concrete recycling facility. Few trail users use this access point due to high vehicular traffic with the nearby entrance to I-394. At this location, the SW LRT line and trail separate from MPRB-owned land, marking the end of the CAC's project scope.

11.1 Issue: Environmental protection

11.1.1 **DRAFT** Outcome: Park lands are protected from anything hazardous

11.1.2 Mature trees along trail

11.2 Issue: Safety

11.2.1 **DRAFT** Outcome: Emergency vehicles can access parks and trails

DRAFT