

**WHITTIER ALLIANCE - Community Issues Committee – DRAFT MINUTES**

Monday April 14, 2008: 6:00 P.M. - 8:30 P.M.

Whittier International Elementary School

**Present** Michaela Ahern, Sihem Arak, Alex Bauman, Tom Bissen, Nick Boettcher, Henry Bromelkamp, Hosmer Brown, Mary Cable, Giancarlo Casale, Erica Christ, Andrew Church, Michael Cochran, Wendy Darst, Linda Donaldson, Bonnie Ford, Brian Foster, Jessica Frehse, Chris Gottshall, Verne Greenlee, Eric Grumdahl, Jeff Hellenbrand, Paul Jablonsky, Eric Johnson, Rana Kasich, S. Kritin, Ken Li, Barb Lickness, Councilman Robert Lilligren, Brooks Mahoney, Rhonda Meyers, Jo Ann Musumeci, Jeff Nelson, Destin Nygard (CI Chair), Felino de la Peña, Chris Popowski, Nancy Railsback, Chuck Sasse, Tod Skallerup, Scott Smith, Cara Spaccarelli, Daphne Stromberg, Lisa Vecoli, Anne Zander

**Presenters** Brian Bozeman (Simpson Housing), Linda Donaldson, Jeff Herman (Urban Anthology), Peggy Lucas (Brighton Development), Julie Manworren (Simpson Housing), Andy Madson (LHB), Pastor Jen Nagel (Salem English Lutheran Church), Marcy Tollefson (Washburn Center for Children)

**Staff** Marian Biehn, Josie Shardlow, Karin Knudsen

**Call to Order** at 6:10 by Marian Biehn. The Conflict of Interest & Standard of Conduct policies were noted, followed by introductions of all present. M. Biehn suggested moving the election of the Community Issues Chair to later in the meeting. **Motion** to approve the revised agenda **carried**. A **motion** to approve the March 10, 2008 CI minutes **carried**.

**Community Comments & Discussion:**

A resident noted the death of Whittier resident Wes Kemp who lived at 29<sup>th</sup> and Harriet. There was a memorial service last weekend. Kemp had been active in the Whittier neighborhood. An update on the **Karmel Village** housing development was requested: The plan for 72 housing units was taken to the planning commission. The PC placed a condition on the site plan that required that the exterior of the building was to be brick (or other high quality material). The exterior materials component of the regulation was appealed by the developer. The appeal was denied, and the matter has been forwarded to the City Council meeting April 18. The neighborhood position is that we want quality materials to be used in new construction, and we will advocate that position. **May Day Soiree, May 1<sup>st</sup>:** Everyone is encouraged to attend and bring a friend or neighbor to the event, which includes a silent action, entertainment, food from neighborhood restaurants, and cash bar. Tickets are available tonight. Donations are still being accepted; some examples were discussed. Please contact the WA office for information on how to donate your goods or services. **Neighborhood meetings:** There are additional ways to participate in the neighborhood. Frequently task forces are formed to further develop an issue or program. For example the Development Review Groups work with developers to help achieve better projects. The Pedestrian Overlay Task Force completed that task but now has the task of developing design guidelines. There is also the NRP Steering Committee/Work Group that works to develop RFPs or plans to get the Whittier Action Plan and NRP funds to use in the neighborhood. These task forces meet regularly but not frequently and have a specific task. If you are interested in participating in this type of planning please sign up on the volunteer sheet that will be passed around. **HCMC-GFI Task Force:** There was a meeting on Monday night discussing the development of the former GFI site for a HCMC family clinic. The task force meetings are a chance for the neighborhood to provide guidance for the development of the site (re: the pedestrian overlay, the reopening of Nicollet Avenue at Lake, its relation to the Midtown Greenway and other neighborhood concerns). **Whittier Walkers:** Be involved in walking the neighborhood at night: it is a chance to see and be seen. Contact Josie Shardlow at the WA for information on volunteering. **World of Whittier:** Upcoming neighborhood event on May 10 from 1-4 at Whittier Park, involving a carnival and other family-friendly events.

**Election of CI Chair:**

Erica Christ (WA Business Association Chair) volunteered to run the elections. **Destin Nygard**, whose term as chair ends tonight, was nominated to be the chair. His nomination was accepted, voted on, and **passed**.

**Light Rail 3C Nicollet Ave Alignment Task Force Report; Destin Nygard (WA) & Alex Bauman (WA)**

**Introduction:** In January, a Task Force was organized to discuss the proposed Nicollet Ave Light Rail Alignment. They met four times and came up with a neighborhood resolution and impact statement [meeting attendees were given time to review the "Impacts" statement, and the "Light Rail Resolution"]. The list of neighborhood impacts includes neighborhood-specific areas potentially affected by the proposed light rail 3C line. The **"Impacts" document** will be submitted to the South West Transit group for inclusion in the Environmental Impacts Study (EIS).

**Discussion:** A resident noted that the North Loop Neighborhood is supportive of the Kenilworth trail alignment, as is the Bryn-Mawr neighborhood. She noted that the new Twins stadium also seems to be dependant on the alignment since stadium plans do not include sufficient parking for stadium attendees. A resident asked for clarification of the term **"Park and Hide"** used in the "Transportation" section of the statement. Nygard noted that the use of "Park and Hide" was intentional, as it refers to people who park within the neighborhood (often on residential streets, or in shopping center parking) and then use alternative transportation for the remainder of their travel. He noted that one concern with the 3C rail alignment is the expectation that some travelers would park near the proposed line stops at the edges of Whittier. In the **"Suggestions"** section of the Impact statement, a resident noted that the phrase **"Surface route along Nicollet"** seemed ambiguous: does it mean a surface route of the Light Rail? Bauman noted that the intent behind that phrase was the suggestion of light rail on the surface of Nicollet rather than tunneling under it. A resident suggested that what the line should more directly refer to is a streetcar route along Nicollet, since that is what the neighborhood advocates rather than a surface light rail line. A resident asked about **upcoming public meetings** on the light rail. Bauman, the WA rep to those meetings, noted that the Environmental Impact Survey scoping meetings were coming up in June (no dates are set yet). The purpose of the meetings is to decide the scope of the EIS by soliciting neighborhood participation in defining what should be included in those surveys.

A participant asked if all the proposed rail routes undergo basically the same EIS, or if the impacts and concerns they focus on are **line specific**. Councilman R. Lilligren noted that the scoping process' intent is to get the input of local stakeholders on what they feel will be impacted so that the EIS can be localized.

**Motion** to amend the **LRT 3C Nicollet "Impacts" list** as "**Draft,**" and to **amend the language of the list** to read "**Surface Streetcar** route along Nicollet" in the "Suggestions" section. **Carried.**

**CI Motion 1:** The Community Issues Committee moves to support the "Draft Impacts" of the proposed Southwest Transitway route 3C Nicollet alignment through Whittier as amended. **Motion Carried 24-0-1.** [*document attached*]

Nygaard and Bauman **introduced the Light Rail Resolution**, and noted that at least three other neighborhoods have drafted resolutions in favor of the 3C alignment: Cedar-Isles-Dean and Kenwood. They noted that at the joint BA & CI January meeting, there was a broad range of opinions regarding the potential benefits and disadvantages of the proposed 3C line. The challenge of bringing the diversity of opinions together in one document fell to the Task Force. This document is an attempt by the WA to get an official position of the Whittier neighborhood into public discourse.

**Discussion:** A resident noted that at the **BA meeting** [April 9], the participants revised and **passed an amended Light Rail Resolution**. She suggested that perhaps that same document should be approved at this meeting. E. Christ (BA chair) noted that the BA changes were made to make it clearer that the BA is opposed to light rail. They felt rearranging and rewriting some of the document accomplished that. A resident noted that the level of engagement on this issue is great, and that the task force worked hard to come up with a document that they felt represented the neighborhood's position accurately. He suggested that the neighborhood is best served by coming to some closure on this issue, rather than **wordsmithing** the document for the next few months. He felt the BA has some differences in agenda from those of the general neighborhood. A resident who served on the task force said that the **green handouts** from today were not what the task force agreed to, and she resented that participants of this meeting would disregard the BA amended resolution as well as the original input from the task force meetings. She suggested that the green handouts did not represent her recollection of the task force meetings.

A **Motion to revise the Light Rail Resolution** (paragraph three, sentence one) to read: "The Whittier Alliance *does not support* ~~has significant concerns about~~ the Nicollet Alignment (3C) for the following reasons: ~~could cause the neighborhood.~~" was made.

**Discussion:**

A resident recommended that tonight's green **handout undergo changes** similar to those of the BA amendment. Nygaard noted that the BA has a unique agenda, one that is not necessarily representative of the neighborhood at large. He pointed out that part of the reason for the formatting of the document [one of the changes made by the BA] was the typical formatting of resolutions (with the recommendations at the end). A resident raised the **issue of timeliness** and the potential for revising the document. E. Christ remarked that the BA amended document will go the WA Board later this month, and the CI document should go forward at the same time. Nygaard explained that as this resolution stands as the official position of the neighborhood on this light rail alignment (and most other neighborhoods have had their positions posted for a year), timeliness is important.

**Motion** to Call to Question **carried.**

**CI Motion 2:** The Community Issues Committee approves the neighborhood Light Rail Resolution regarding the proposed 3C Nicollet alignment, as amended. **Motion Carried 27-1-4.** [*document attached*]

**Washburn Center for Children: CUP for use of 2437 Nicollet Ave as a parking lot (Informational presentation): Marcy Tollefson (Director of Human Resources and Operations)**

**Introduction:** Washburn Center for Children has been located in the Whittier neighborhood since 1971. Out of their eighty employees, 55 work at their location on 2430 Nicollet Ave. Washburn is looking to purchase a vacant lot at 2437 Nicollet Ave to create a surface parking lot to meet the additional parking needs of their employees. Washburn currently estimates a need for 20 to 30 additional parking spots, and anticipate the lot could be leased by other businesses in the area for use at night. The vacant lot is currently owned by the Pamer Brothers Company. Washburn is asking the neighborhood's approval for the conversion of the lot, with a "sunset clause" of seven years, given their intent to purchase and develop other land for a larger facility within the next seven years. At that time, the lot would be available for future development.

**Discussion:** A question was raised about the **history of the lot:** there were two empty and deteriorating buildings on the lot (owned by Michael Pham of Duc Loi Grocery) torn down two years ago. A resident asked about the **planned entrances** for the lot, and if there would be an entrance from the street or alley. Tollefson noted that because Washburn is just now looking at estimates for the work, they don't have a formal plan for the site. A resident questioned how the parking lot will fit into the **pedestrian overlay** (in terms of the width of a single-use site limits and the lot being 100 feet wide). Tollefson noted that because the lot would be more than 60 feet wide, it would need a variance. A curb cut off of Nicollet would also be requested. Regarding the pedestrian overlay district in general, Councilman Lilligren noted that surface parking lots are generally not that compatible with good urban design; however, in this case, given that it is an empty lot and that this is presented as a short term solution, a CUP for this land would allow for the use of an empty lot. Another participant expressed concern over disregarding the work of the pedestrian overlay by building a parking lot. Lilligren responded that this is a use within limits, and that this is an unusual application, given the sunset clause. He was unsure how the planning department would see the application. A participant expressed **concern with paving over the land**, given the amount of

**runoff** from the property flowing into the alley behind it. She suggested the use of pervious paving, as well as landscaping to help control runoff if the application went forward; it was noted that a low-impact design would help with these issues. It was also suggested that the addition of **lighting** for this lot may make it safer at night. An attendee asked about **Washburn's source of funding**. Tollefson responded that Washburn receives funds from contracts with Hennepin County, a long-term endowment from which they annually withdraw funds, third party reimbursement, and funds from the United Way. As Washburn is a **non-profit organization**, it was pointed out that it will pay no taxes on the lot. A resident asked if Washburn has considered **other leasing options** (use of adjacent and nearby lots). Tollefson responded that they haven't explored the churches in the area yet, but do lease some spaces from Relax Exotic Restaurant. In response to a question about the **need for surface parking in the entire lot**, Tollefson reiterated Washburn's need for 25-28 spaces (which would take up the entire lot).

**Simpson Housing: CUP for 30 additional shelter beds for women, at Simpson Church, 2740 1<sup>st</sup> Ave S: Julie Manworren (Executive Director) and Brian Bozeman (Shelter Manager)**

**Introduction:** Simpson Housing Services (SHS) has been providing shelter for non-married homeless adults at Simpson United Methodist Church (2740 1<sup>st</sup> Ave S) since 1982. In 1999, a separate women's shelter opened at 1901 11<sup>th</sup> Ave S (Community Emergency Services). The immediate goal of SHS is to get homeless people off the street; their long-term goal is to move people into long-term (permanent) housing. They are committed to helping individuals and families through their support services, including moving long-term shelter guests into rental housing throughout Hennepin County. SHS **would like to rent additional space from the Church in order to move 20 women to Simpson Church**. They feel moving women to this space would allow for greater efficiency within their operation (centralizing their resources), would improve services for both men and women, and would allow for SHS to provide overnight staffing at Simpson Church. (Currently, only the women's shelter is staffed overnight by employees, the men's shelter has overnight volunteers.) The women's shelter is being forced to relocate (the current site is incompatible with its zoning requirements) and the Church has the available space. SHS has a **good working relationship** with the 5<sup>th</sup> precinct police department; there appear to be no safety issues present (level 3 sex offenders are excluded from the shelters). They have received **letters of support** from the Stevens and the First Avenue Block Clubs, and have a signed **petition of support** with over 50 signatures of residents. They have a stake in the neighborhood, as SHS owns 2 properties in Whittier (2100 Pillsbury Ave S, and 17 E 24<sup>th</sup> St). SHS is **committed to being a good neighbor** to the Whittier Alliance, and promises future engagement at Whittier Alliance meetings and events.

**Discussion:** A resident asked **how many shelter beds were currently in use** by SHS: Manworren noted that there are 40 beds at the men's shelter, and 20 at the women's. Bozeman explained that there is a lottery every Monday, determining who receives the beds, and that beds are allotted for 28 days straight. The men's lottery is filled by a waiting list. A resident asked **what happens to the men they turn away**: Bozeman said that those men tend to go to the downtown shelters. It was also asked if the women and the men will be **housed on the same floor**, and Manworren noted that the situation is to be determined, but that they have sheltered men and women together before at other sites with no problems. A resident commented in order to **recognize the incredible work that SHS** does as an organization within this neighborhood.

A **Motion to write a letter of support** for this CUP was seconded.

**Discussion:** A clarification on the **number of beds** being asked for was requested: Manworren noted that the women's shelter needs to close, and they will likely move 20 women to Simpson Church, but they are asking for up to 30 additional beds in case the need increases in the future. Another resident pointed out that adding 20-30 beds at Simpson seems like a lot for an already impacted neighborhood. Whittier has 12-13% allotted to low-income housing, 15 supportive housing buildings and 9 residential facilities. Adding **more services impacts the neighborhood** rental properties, and the resources of the 5<sup>th</sup> precinct in dealing with the high number of men turned away each night. In response, Bozeman noted that they only turn away an average of 7 people each night. Another resident spoke against the request. She argued that of the 81 neighborhoods in Minneapolis, only 15 have homeless shelters located within them, and that three are in Whittier. **Adding more beds stretches the resources of an overly impacted neighborhood**; she believes the future of the neighborhood is in business, education, and maintaining and improving properties here. A question of the **Conditional Use Permit's time frame** was asked. Manworren noted that it is currently permanent, though Biehn (WA) noted that an interim use can be added to the CUP. It was suggested that a **five-year review** of the permit might allow the neighborhood to weigh in on this issue again at that later date. Manworren noted that making the use subject to review in five years would put SHS's investment of resources at the site at risk. A few volunteers at Simpson Church **spoke in favor** of the letter of support. One said that the shelter's purpose is not to bring homeless into the community, but to provide those already present with a place to stay. Another volunteer noted what a positive place the shelter was, and mentioned a **savings program** at the shelter which helps guests save enough for a security deposit and first month's rent. She also commented that with the addition of those beds, the shelter could have overnight staffing (instead of volunteers). A participant noted that the shelter is a place of transition for those in need. Another neighbor noted that Simpson Housing has proven itself to be a good neighbor to the community. A question was raised about if the building was code compliant for added housing. Manworren concluded that a pro bono architect for SHS has walked through the space, and said that it is workable. They need permission to expand from the neighborhood in order to start on work. One of the goals of SHS is to move 30 of the longest-term women, in the next 3 years, into permanent housing. They are in the process of hiring 3 staff members to reach out to those women. Bozeman noted the current policies at Simpson Church: the men line up starting around 5:30 pm for admittance at 6, and are required to leave by 7 am. Once they enter, they are expected to spend the

night, and once they leave, there is no re-admittance. Most of the men leave early in the morning to go to work or to seek services downtown.

**CI Motion 3:** The Community Issues Committee moves to write a letter of support for a CUP for an addition of 30 shelter beds at Simpson Church. **Motion Carried 27-4-5**

**Salem English Lutheran Church, 28<sup>th</sup> and Lyndale, Informational Presentation:**

**Peggy Lucas (Brighton Development), Andy Madson (architect at LHB), Pastor Jen Nagel (Salem English), Linda Donaldson, Jeff Herman (Urban Anthology)**

**Introduction: Peggy Lucas:** This development presents a unique opportunity to meet the shared needs of two churches: Lyndale United Church of Christ and Salem English Lutheran, who currently share a space at LUCC. The proposal is to update and build onto Salem English Lutheran. Because it is important that part of the original structure remain intact, the preferred proposal is to modify and update the existing space to meet the needs of the churches. The proposed solution is to create a common sanctuary for the congregations to use, and to update the building to make it more energy efficient. The proposal also includes both commercial space, and space for rental housing.

**Andy Madson** (architect representing LHB) went over **the proposal:** The site plan is on Lyndale and 28<sup>th</sup> Street. The first floor will be 16 thousand square feet, including commercial space and a lobby. The first floor will also include an open air link between the Lyndale sidewalk, the Church, and the parking behind the building. The plan calls for 50 underground parking spaces, plus surface lots for 48 more plus an “hour car”; a ramp off 28<sup>th</sup> will lead to the underground parking. The 2nd, 3rd, and 4th floors will have 62 units: 9 efficiency apartments (around 400 sq ft), 26 one-bedrooms (650-700 sq ft), and 27 two-bedrooms (in the range of 900 sq ft). There will be some demolition of Salem Church, but the oldest portion will be retained. There will be a new entry along the west side of the building, and a new staircase. The plans call for a north sanctuary and a south sanctuary, with a shared fellowship hall. The basement has a space for child care/Sunday school, as well as 3500 sq ft designated for non-profit use. The Ackerberg Group is doing the commercial work [Urban Anthology]. Lucas noted that they are putting in more 2 bedroom units than this type of development would usually call for, partly to meet neighborhood concerns. She also noted that the TIF still needs to be secured in order to fund the renovations of the Church. Lucas remarked that one goal of the project was to create a product that fits in with the existing Church.

**Discussion:** A resident asked if any of the building will be designated for use as **community space**. The presenters noted that there is no space dedicated as such so far, but that the child care rooms on the lowest-level could likely be multi-purpose rooms and used for community events. Lucas noted that there will be offices for the pastors on the second floor, as well as meeting space and extra storage. She said the churches want the building to be forward thinking, and so Brighton is looking at making the building as **sustainable** as possible. They are looking at solar panels, and geo-thermal heating under the parking lots. She noted that LHB is known as a green architectural firm, which is why they partnered with them. A resident asked if there will be a **setback** on the commercial side. The presenters noted that there is a setback on the south side on 28<sup>th</sup> feet in order to retain a view of the church from the street.

**Jeff Herman** (Urban Anthology) went over the **commercial development** of the site: Before doing the site plan, they were careful to do research in housing in other cities (Denver, Chicago, San Francisco) on the viability of mixed use (commercial plus housing redevelopment) at this site. They also want to take into account the unique retailers on Lyndale, and the individuality of the Lyndale development and retail space. They believe that with the right type of retail (they don't want big-box retailers for example) this could be a great project. They are 12-18 months from seeing anything develop with this project in terms of the specific retailers that will sign on.

**Discussion:** A resident asked about the **ownership of the commercial spaces**. Herman noted that there will be one owner who will rent out individual spaces (on the short or long term) to retailers. A resident also expressed concern about the number of restaurants in the development, given that there isn't a lot of planned parking, but noted that a coffee shop would probably work ok. A resident asked if proximity to the church will make it **difficult for any restaurant** to receive a **beer and wine license**. Herman said that getting a license for that should be fine, although he can't speak at this time as to who might be interested in being part of the development. It was noted that 19k sq ft of retail with limited parking cannot support a large food service businesses without asking for a parking variance. A resident raised the issue of the **architectural styling of the building**. He noted that there is a unique point of view on Lyndale, and that he felt most people who frequent this area would not want to go to a place that is too reminiscent of the suburbs. He supports doing something with this space, but the exterior design—as shown tonight—does not fit in this neighborhood. He stated that the design of the Church as shown was too suburban and not in keeping with the context of the surrounding homes and buildings. A resident asked for clarification on **who would own the site**. Lucas noted that the Church will be selling the residential parcel of land to Brighton [currently the whole space is owned by the SE Church]. She further explained that Brighton explored national historic designation as an option for the site, but preservation would require that the sanctuary remain unmodified (contrary to the needs of the churches). The presenters also noted that the area will need to be rezoned, as it is currently classified as residential. A resident expressed concern with the **traffic flow at the 28<sup>th</sup> and Lyndale intersection**. Madson explained that the proposal calls for a 2 way onto 28<sup>th</sup> and a 1 way onto Lyndale. He said that the safety of that intersection was something the architects were considering in their design, and that nothing had been finalized in that area.

A resident stated that a neighborhood priority was to preserve the Church and that this plan does that. We should commend a proposal like that that preserves the church.

**Call for Old/New Business:** (There was none offered.). **Meeting Adjourned** at 8:20. Minutes submitted by Karin Knudsen.

**CI Motion 1:** The Community Issues Committee moves to support the “Draft Impacts” of the proposed Southwest Transitway route 3C Nicollet alignment through Whittier as amended. **Motion Carried.**

**Impacts List as amended and approved:**

## **DRAFT IMPACTS**

Of the proposed Southwest Transitway route through Whittier

### ❖ **Business / Economic Impacts**

- ❖ Timing of Icehouse hotel construction (will it mean years of construction at 26<sup>th</sup> and Nicollet?)
- ❖ Disruption of utilities (water, gas, electric)
- ❖ Loss of street access during construction
- ❖ Loss of parking (hide ‘n’ ride)—*a parking study is needed to anticipate the impact to the business and residential street parking*
- ❖ Increase in regional customer base
- ❖ Construction or operating noise
  - Particularly on existing noise-sensitive businesses
- ❖ Impacts on employee commutes
- ❖ Increase in foot traffic
- ❖ *What is the anticipated loss or attrition of businesses during construction*
- ❖ *What is the loss of local employment by local businesses*
- ❖ Potential to redo streetscape
  - Impact on outdoor dining
- ❖ Impact on property values
  - Property taxes paid by local business

### ❖ **Visual and Aesthetic Resources**

- ❖ Streetscape for stations would need to be reconstructed
- ❖ Compatibility with pedestrian overlay
- ❖ Placements of vents and electrical stations
- ❖ *What will be the impact on Vera’s garden and the Soo Line garden*

### ❖ **Noise and Vibrations**

- ❖ How would construction affect buildings?
- ❖ How would operation affect businesses?
  - Businesses that need quiet for operation
- ❖ Compare levels of noise and vibration during operation of proposed route with noise and vibration from existing transportation
- ❖ *What are the on-going levels noise from train squeal, horn, crossing bells and underground vibration*
- ❖ *How will the continual vibration affect the infrastructure of the older and historical homes and businesses along the route*

### ❖ **Hazardous / Regulated Materials**

- ❖ Potential for spread of contaminants from GFI site
- ❖ Potential for contaminated soil along Greenway rail corridor

### ❖ **Ecosystems, Geology and Hydrology**

- ❖ Air quality and noise impacts
- ❖ Drainage for tunnel
- ❖ Changes to Greenway water runoff

### ❖ **Air Quality**

- ❖ Effects on vehicular traffic in Nicollet Corridor?

### ❖ **Transportation**

- ❖ Compatibility with existing city plans

- Particularly Comprehensive Plan and Nicollet Pedestrian Overlay District
- ❖ Park and Ride
  - Detriment or benefit for neighborhood
- ❖ Impact on other potential rail routes in Midtown Corridor
- ❖ Accidents in Greenway due to increased pedestrian traffic at LRT stations
- ❖ Necessary transit police for stations and route
  - Costs? Safety impacts?
- ❖ Travel time for transit users
- ❖ Existing bus service
  - necessary changes to route and frequency
  
- ❖ **Land Use**
- ❖ Eminent domain
  - Where will it be used?
  - How much will it cost?
- ❖ Land values
  - How will changing land values necessitate a change in land use?
- ❖ Density along transit route
- ❖ Traffic patterns around stations
- ❖ *How will the proposed LRT cross the Greenway bike and pedestrian lane as it turns north on to Nicollet*
  
- ❖ **Cultural Resources / Parklands**
- ❖ Changes to experience of using the Greenway
- ❖ Loss of green space along south side of Greenway
- ❖ Greenway safety
- ❖ Connection to MIA
- ❖ Impact on historic buildings
  
- ❖ **Suggestions**
- ❖ 26<sup>th</sup> Street Station
- ❖ Define EIS boundaries early
- ❖ Alternate route along freeway / 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave
- ❖ Streetcar route along Nicollet
- ❖ Route continuing along Greenway to Hiawatha instead of Downtown
- ❖ Greenway Streetcar or Trolley
- ❖ Nicollet Ave Streetcar

**CI Motion 2:** The Community Issues Committee approves the neighborhood Light Rail Resolution regarding the proposed 3C Nicollet alignment, as amended.

Light Rail Resolution as amended and approved:

### **Light Rail Resolution**

The Whittier Alliance (representing the residents, businesses, and property owners of the Whittier neighborhood) has given significant consideration to the alternate routes of the proposed Southwest LRT. The Nicollet Alignment (3C) was extensively considered, as its selection would have major impacts on the neighborhood. Based upon robust public discussions of the alternatives with a wide range of stakeholders, The Whittier Alliance has reached the following findings:

#### **The Whittier Alliance recognizes that the Nicollet Alignment (3C) could provide meaningful benefits for the neighborhood.**

- Improved transit speed, reliability, frequency and connectivity
- Access to increased customer and investment base
- The possibility of minimized traffic congestion through grade separation

#### **The Whittier Alliance does not support the Nicollet Alignment (3C) for the following reasons:**

- The reduced likelihood of a Midtown Greenway Streetcar serving all of the Midtown neighborhoods and connecting between Southwest and Hiawatha LRT, with the potential to extend to the river and beyond
- The preclusion of a future Nicollet Avenue Streetcar, whose more frequent stops might better serve our dense, near-downtown neighborhood
- The likelihood of reduced, rerouted or eliminated bus service currently serving the area
- The proposed line and station locations poorly serve the commercial nodes at 26<sup>th</sup> & Nicollet and Lake & Nicollet
- Vehicular traffic currently along Nicollet may be forced on to the residential streets
- The physical and technical requirements of the Nicollet Avenue tunnel, and specifically it's entry portals near the Midtown Greenway and Franklin Avenue, may have the following undesirable impacts:
  - Render Nicollet Ave useless as a through street
  - Render reopening of Nicollet at Kmart infeasible
  - Isolate and render nearly useless the area between Cecil Newman (29<sup>th</sup> St) and Kmart
  - Eliminate Nicollet Ave parking
  - In the short term and likely in the long term, be detrimental to the commercial and retail business along Nicollet Ave
  - Be disruptive of the urban fabric of Nicollet Ave, the Greenway and the neighborhood
- Even without factoring in the immediate (and possible long term) negative economic impacts to the Nicollet commercial corridor, the projected cost of construction for the trench and cut-and-cover tunnel doesn't appear to provide for the well executed system that The Whittier Alliance would expect in order to truly benefit the neighborhood. Given recent experience with the Central Corridor planning, The Whittier Alliance fears that should such amenities and mitigation efforts not be fully accounted for and explicitly included at an early stage, they may disappear from the plan during later budget cuts.

Based on the currently presented alternatives and for the above reasons, **The Whittier Alliance supports the Kenilworth Alignment (3A), supplemented by a Nicollet Ave Streetcar and a Midtown Greenway Streetcar, as the best option for the neighborhood.**