

The Southwest Light Rail ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT CARD

At a cost to build of at least \$1.5 billion tax dollars and \$25 million annually to operate, SWLRT as currently designed drains resources from local and federal economies, actually worsening or only minimally improving environmental problems. We invite you to grade SWLRT for yourself.

Here are the facts from the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) of December 2012 found at www.swlrt.org.

LAKES, PARKS, TRAILS, AND OPEN SPACE

OUR GRADE: **F** YOUR GRADE:

SWLRT would degrade the most used park and trail area in the state – **the Minneapolis Chain of Lakes**. Risks to the lakes, groundwater, and aquifer are real and have not been studied. The lakes are already suffering serious consequences from irresponsible development. On the Kenilworth Greenway, up to **1000 trees would be clear-cut**. This trail already sees 3000 daily bicycle riders or 30% of the projected new-to-transit 2030 SWLRT one-way riders – with no emissions and very little cost to taxpayers.

REGIONAL ENERGY CONSUMPTION AND CLIMATE CHANGE

OUR GRADE: **F** YOUR GRADE:

Many people see SWLRT as an important way to decrease regional energy use and reduce our contribution to climate change. In fact, the SWLRT would decrease regional energy use by **much less than 1%**, so much less than 1% that the DEIS declined to quantify it. And the decrease would be so small that the source of energy used to create the electricity for SWLRT, coal or natural gas, would not even matter. (DEIS, p. 4-75)

CARS OFF THE ROAD

OUR GRADE: **D** YOUR GRADE:

The 28,700 projected daily SWLRT boardings (14,350 round trips) may seem substantial, but details from the DEIS Ridership Tables (6.1-3 and 6.2-4) show that:

- The majority of projected SWLRT riders would **come from the existing bus system**;
- SWLRT would attract fewer than 5,000 daily round-trip rides by people new-to-transit;
- By 2030 SWLRT would reduce rush hour demand by **fewer than 4,000 cars**, assuming SWLRT commuters make round-trips. That's a tiny fraction of the 132,000 cars daily on I-494 at Hwy 169, and at a cost of **\$400,000 per car off the road**.

AIR QUALITY

OUR GRADE: **F** YOUR GRADE:

At several at-grade crossings and all SWLRT stations, especially those with park and ride facilities, vehicle traffic and air toxics will increase. By 2050, overall reduction in air toxics should occur, but only due to required regulatory improvements in vehicle efficiency and fuel emissions, **not due to positive impacts of SWLRT**. (DEIS p. 4-69, 4-75)

SPRAWL AND INDUCED DEMAND

OUR GRADE: **F** YOUR GRADE:

With reverse commute urban ridership of SWLRT projected to be 25% or 7150 of total daily rides (DEIS p.6-12), SWLRT is primarily **suburban infrastructure, fails to serve high-density urban areas, and comes at the cost of urban open space**. SWLRT encourages decentralized development, sprawl, and – just like freeways to and from the suburbs — creates “induced demand.”

ALL OF THIS FOR \$1.5 BILLION? TELL ELECTED OFFICIALS TO CHOOSE A DIFFERENT ROUTE.

Contact your City Council Member: <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/council/>

Contact Mayor Rybak: <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/mayor/contact/index.htm>

Contact Governor Mark Dayton: <http://mn.gov/governor/contact-us/form/>

Contact Susan Haigh, Chair of the Metropolitan Council: susan.haigh@metc.state.mn.us

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