



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Transit  
Administration**

**AUG 19 2014**

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August 15, 2014

Thomas L. Johnson  
Gray, Plant, Mooty, Mooty, & Bennett, P.A.  
500 IDS Center, 80 South Eighth Street  
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55402

Lewis A. Remele, Jr.  
Bassford Remele  
33 South Sixth Street, Suite 3800  
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55402-3707

**Re: Environmental Review Process for the Southwest Transitway Light Rail Transit Project**

Dear Mr. Johnson & Mr. Remele,

Thank you for your letter dated July 24, 2014 regarding the environmental review of the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) Project. The Federal Transit Administration (FTA), in coordination with the Metropolitan Council, is preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the SWLRT in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). There have been no NEPA determinations made regarding the SWLRT Project. A Draft EIS was published on October 12, 2012. You can view the Draft EIS at: <http://metro council.org/Transportation/Projects/Current-Projects/Southwest-LRT/Environmental/DEIS.aspx>.

Subsequent to the publication of the Draft EIS, the project team determined that a Supplemental Draft EIS (SDEIS) was necessary due to project modifications. Specifically, the SDEIS will supplement the evaluation of impacts included in the project's Draft EIS where there have been adjustments to the design of proposed LRT and freight rail alignments, stations, park-and-ride lots, and an operations and maintenance facility site that would likely result in impacts not documented in the Draft EIS. The Notice of Intent to prepare the SDEIS was published in the Federal Register on July 22, 2013 and can be found at: <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2013-07-22/pdf/2013-17506.pdf>. The public will have an opportunity to comment on the SDEIS once the analysis is completed. The NEPA process will conclude with a Record of Decision, which will state FTA's decision regarding the proposed action of the SWLRT Project.

The Metropolitan Council published a Notice of Supplemental DEIS Preparation in the Minnesota Environmental Quality Board Monitor (EQB Monitor) on July 22, 2013. You can view the notice at: <https://www.eqb.state.mn.us/sites/default/files/documents/EQB%20Monitor%2007-22-13.pdf>. The Scoping Decision Document and the Municipal Consent Process are Minnesota State processes and should be discussed with the Metropolitan Council.

As to your request for FTA to “refuse to provide further federal funding for the SWLRT project unless and until the Metropolitan Council appropriately supplements the environmental review for the SWLRT and fully complies with all applicable environmental laws and regulations”, FTA awards grants to the Metropolitan Council which they use for eligible activities under applicable laws. FTA monitors all federally assisted projects for NEPA compliance. No cessation of funding is warranted in this circumstance.

If you have any questions related to the project, please contact Ms. Nani Jacobson, Assistant Director, SWLRT Project Office, at (612) 373-3800 or [nani.jacobson@metrotransit.org](mailto:nani.jacobson@metrotransit.org).

Sincerely,



Marisol R. Simón  
Regional Administrator

cc: Kenneth A. Westlake, EPA  
Maya Sarna, FTA  
Nani Jacobson, Metropolitan Council