

REPORT / RECOMMENDATION



To: Mayor Hovland & Council Members

Agenda Item #: IX. A.

From: Debra Mangen
City Clerk

Date: July 16, 2013

Subject: CORRESPONDENCE

Action
Discussion
Information

Action Requested:

Attached is correspondence received since the last Council Meeting.

No action is necessary.

July 9, 2013

The Honorable James Hovland
City of Edina
4801 West 50th Street
Edina, MN 55424

RE: Grant Award under the Livable Communities Tax Base Revitalization Account

Dear Mayor Hovland: *Jim*

I am pleased to inform you that the Metropolitan Council has awarded the City of Edina a contamination cleanup grant under the Council's Livable Communities Tax Base Revitalization Account. The Council awarded the grant for the second Phase of the Pentagon Park North redevelopment project in the amount of \$535,100.

A grant agreement will be drafted for the authority's review within the next few weeks. The grant agreement will specify the payment procedures and reporting requirements. If you have questions about grant administration procedures, please contact Deb Jensen at 651-602-1554.

The authority's project was among those that best met a range of goals in a competitive process. This process favors projects that improve the environment and protect human health, increase tax base, add jobs or affordable housing units, and support the policies and goals of the Council's 2030 Regional Development Framework. In this grant cycle, the Council received 12 applications and awarded grants to 10 redevelopment projects.

Congratulations on your successful application. The Metropolitan Council is pleased to assist local communities through its Livable Communities programs with projects that help achieve both local and regional goals.

Sincerely,

Congratulations!!

Sue

Susan Haigh
Chair

cc: Bill Neuendorf, City of Edina
Steve Elkins, Metropolitan Council Member, District 5
Guy Peterson, Director, Community Development, Metropolitan Council

July 9, 2013

Mark Fuhrmann
Director of New Starts Rail Projects
Metro Transit, Metropolitan Council
Southwest Project Office
Park Place West Building, Suite 500
6465 Wayzata Boulevard
St. Louis Park, MN 55426

The City of St. Louis Park has been and continues to be an ardent supporter of the SWLRT project. We believe construction of the SWLRT and the extension of the Green Line is in the best interests of the region, county and all the cities along the SW Corridor. We are eager for the SWLRT project to gain FTA approval and the funding necessary for the project to proceed.

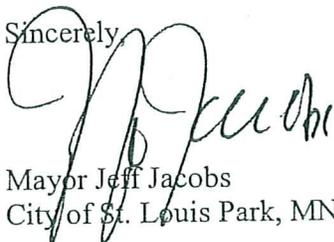
We recognize that since the inception of the idea for a LRT line in the Southwest Corridor, finding a way to accommodate freight rail traffic in the same corridor has been a vexing issue, and an issue that was not addressed when St. Louis Park and the other cities along the corridor were asked to approve the Locally Preferred Alternative route for LRT. Finding a solution to the freight rail issue that is acceptable to all the stakeholders involved is and has been a daunting task. The purpose of this letter is to thank the SPO for its efforts and place on the record the City of St. Louis Park's official response to the SPO's current freight rail options. Our hope is that our timely response will facilitate preparation of sound SWLRT plans that the City of St. Louis Park can embrace and approve during the Municipal Consent process this fall. We also hope that by providing our input now, the SWLRT process will be expedited and will continue to move forward on schedule.

For a number of years the City of St. Louis Park has studied the freight rail issue. More recently, the St. Louis Park City Council has reviewed the current freight rail routing alternatives in great detail during a series of study session discussions. The City's comments attached to this letter are based on a thorough understanding of the routing options and the potential impacts on the community. The City of St. Louis Park's review of the SPO freight rail options have been undertaken in the context of the City's policies regarding freight rail. Those policies are documented in resolution 10-070 adopted on July 10, 2010. The policies have been largely unchanged since 2001 and grew out of the years

For St. Louis Park the freight rail issue is of immense importance. Where and how freight train traffic is routed is not just a matter affecting a few neighbors, it is a decision with potential impacts on the very core of the community and the nature of the community's future. It will influence the success not only of the SWLRT line and stations themselves, but areas far from the SWLRT line. It will have a lasting impact on virtually all of St. Louis Park. The City experiences the TC&W freight rail traffic today and will continue to do so no matter what freight rail routing option is ultimately chosen. However, where and how the TC&W train traffic is handled and the details of the freight rail route design are critically important for the future of St. Louis Park. The freight rail options under consideration potentially route trains by all three of St. Louis Park's SWLRT stations, or past two of four elementary schools and past our only high school or through our football stadium or through the high school campus. The relocation options literally split St. Louis Park in two with more than 1.5 miles of freight rail track elevated a few feet to 35 feet onto earthen berms or bridges. The route choice and design decisions will determine whether the impact of the SWLRT/freight rail project will be positive or negative for St. Louis Park.

On behalf of all of St. Louis Park, I thank you for your efforts in trying to find effective solutions to all the issues confronting the SWLRT project. Thank you for your consideration of the issues and requirements outlined in this letter. We look forward to continuing the strong working relationship that has been established between the City of St. Louis Park and the SPO staff and stand ready to discuss any of these issues as needed.

Sincerely,



Mayor Jeff Jacobs
City of St. Louis Park, MN

Enclosures (2)

cc: Susan Haigh, Chair Metropolitan Council and, Chair SWLRT Corridor Management Committee
Senator Klobuchar
Senator Franken
Representative Ellison
State Senator Latz
State Representative Simon
County Commissioner Dorfman
CMC Members
St. Louis Park City Council

City of St. Louis Park

Key Issues and Comments on Freight Rail Alternatives

July 8, 2013

The City of St. Louis Park has reviewed the eight (8) alternative freight rail routing alignments and provides the following comments and requests for further information for evaluating the alternatives. *It is important to note that any comment, question or suggestion relating to the Re-Location Alternatives should not in any way be construed that the City supports the re-location options.*

Key Issues to address for freight rail routing to be successful:

Co-location Alternatives

1. Presence of freight rail and trains potentially interferes with access to LRT station platforms by foot, bike, bus and auto. Significant traffic impacts will occur at Wooddale Avenue and Beltline Boulevard; these impacts must be assessed and addressed. A circulation study for the areas around the stations is needed to evaluate and mitigate traffic impacts in the area.
2. Grade separation of freight rail at Wooddale Avenue is not practical; however grade separating LRT and the Cedar Lake Regional Trail is feasible and would reduce traffic conflicts. The search for ways to eliminate the negative traffic and access impacts from freight rail and LRT crossing Wooddale Avenue needs to continue. This is a vital north-south route for the community and the Elmwood and Sorensen neighborhoods specifically, and long delays due to LRT and freight trains are not acceptable or safe. Alternative grade separated vehicular crossings or routes under or over the rail/trail corridor are needed at either Yosemite or Xenwood Avenues.
3. Beltline Boulevard must be grade separated from LRT, freight rail and the regional trail by putting Beltline with sidewalks below the rail/trail corridor. Beltline is the only north-south crossing of the rail/trail corridor between the W. Lake Street Bridge and Highway 100. It is critical for circulation in the community and emergency vehicles that traffic movements not be unduly delayed by the presence of freight trains or LRT. Only grade separation will ensure that no matter when freight trains and LRT trains arrive, or whether they are on schedule or not, traffic and emergency vehicles will be able to move where they need to go. The accumulative effects of at grade crossings at both Wooddale and Beltline are particularly troubling, since a train that creates traffic problems at one street crossing will move on to create crossing problems at the next street; and in some cases a single train will be long enough to block both intersections at once. Grade separation at Beltline would mean traffic could at least continue to flow there, and if the Wooddale crossing is blocked, traffic could divert to either Beltline on the east or Louisiana Avenue on the west if needed.

B. Safety impacts

1. Elimination of reverse curves, reductions in grade changes, upgrading of tracks and elimination of at grade freight rail crossings of streets inherently improves safety of freight traffic in St. Louis Park. These improvements reduce the potential for accidents and derailments. Elevating trains on bridges and earthen berms especially in sensitive environments, creates special safety risks and concerns. The impacts of spills and derailments can be more severe on elevated tracks. The proposed freight rail re-location routes elevate tracks significantly and introduce freight rail tracks to areas that have not had tracks before. Measures to improve the safety and eliminate potential negative impacts associated with elevated tracks need to be included in the SWLRT project. They should include:
 - a. Softening of side-slopes. The proposed side-slopes are far too steep at 2:1 grades; they should be at 3:1 or flatter for safety, and to maintain proper vegetation.
 - b. Inner guard rail should be used. A special extra rail should be placed on tracks to reduce the potential severity of derailments.
 - c. Widening the MN&S right-of-way width to a minimum 100 ft. or possibly more in some areas depending on the height of the tracks relative to adjacent property. The current right-of-way is 66 feet or less. This is inadequate especially for elevated tracks. A wider right-of-way must be provided to:
 - i. provide an appropriate area for buffering single-family homes and yards from trains,
 - ii. provide safe, maintainable side-slopes for the tracks elevated by earthen berms; and,
 - iii. allow adequate space to access the tracks for maintenance.The homes along the west side of Blackstone Avenue between Minnetonka Blvd and 27th Street need to be acquired to create an adequate corridor for train operations and buffer nearby residents from trains. Similarly, four homes on Minnetonka Blvd; and, four homes near Lake Street, one home on Brunswick and three homes on Blackstone, also must be acquired to create adequate right-of-way. The locations of the homes that must be acquired are shown on the attached map.
 - d. Align freight tracks in the right-of-way to provide adequate protection for residents and uses on both sides of the freight rail tracks. In general, this means locating the tracks in the middle of a 100 foot right-of-way, but in some cases more buffer area may be needed on one side or both sides of the freight rail tracks. An evaluation of the potential consequences of a train derailment may lead to the conclusion that more than a 50 foot buffer is needed between the center line of the tracks and the nearest property line on one or both sides of a portion of the tracks. Tracks elevated more than 13 feet above adjacent properties will require more than 100 feet of right-of-way to accommodate side-slopes and the freight tracks.
 - e. Fencing and signage are needed to minimize railroad right-of-way trespassing.

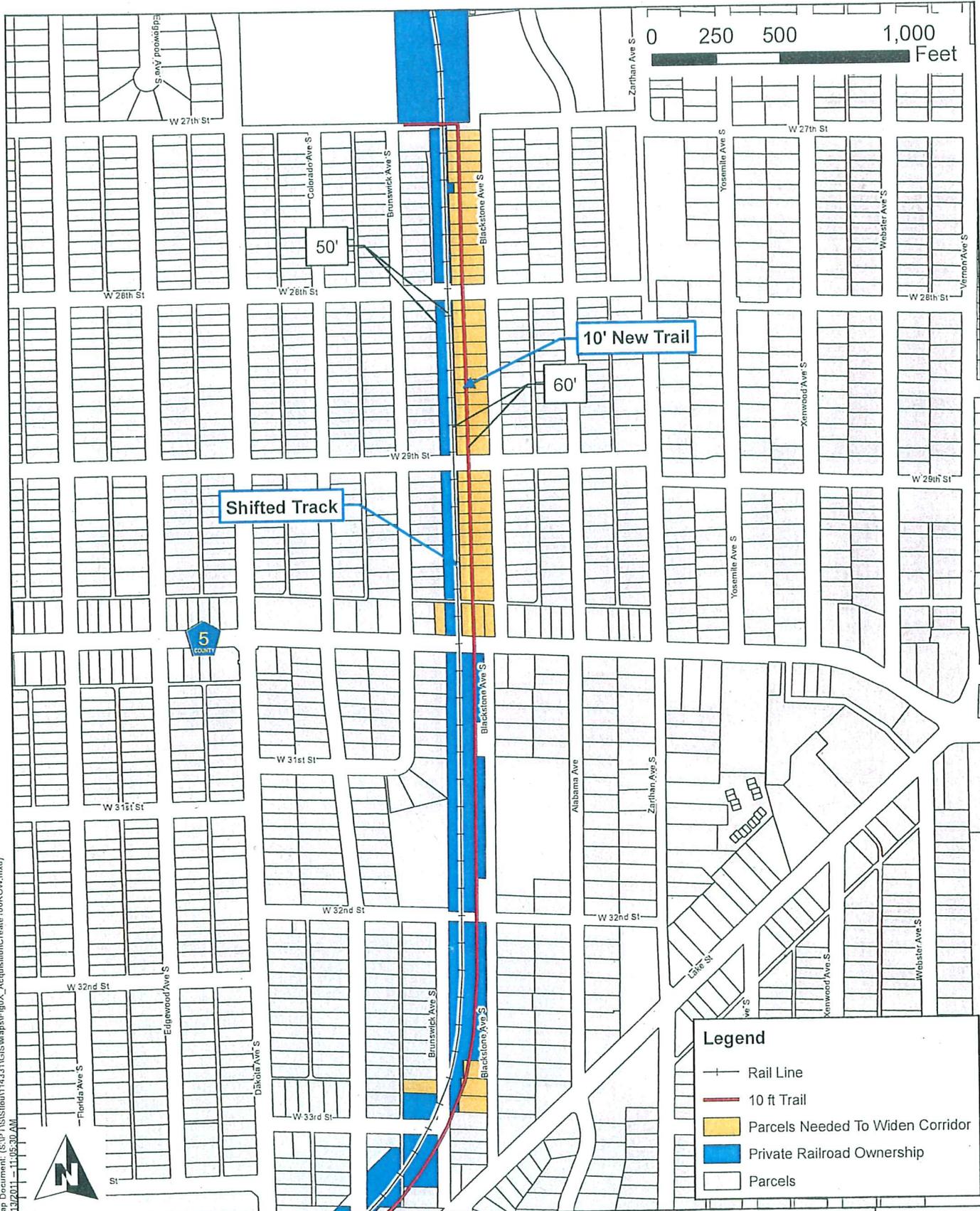
extensive public process of its own that will be time consuming and expensive. This process needs to be funded and completed before a freight rail routing decision is made, if the Brunswick West re-routing alternative is to be seriously considered. The future location and funding for replacing the football stadium must be resolved by the SWLRT project.

6. How the playground serving the Central Community Center (Central) will be replaced and funded must be established before freight rail decisions are finalized. The playground is critical to the operation of the Central facility. Access from Central to the football stadium must be addressed through a pedestrian tunnel or other measure. The connection between these facilities is important for the operation of Central and the commitments made by the SLP School District in the funding of the turf field. Access must be maintained.
7. Freight rail relocation options show a large loss of commercial properties that house many businesses that would have to move but may not be able to be relocated in SLP. The potential loss of locally owned businesses is of particular concern. Every effort to retain locally owned businesses and the jobs they provide must be utilized.
8. The loss of tax base, jobs, and businesses must be minimized.
9. There are significant impacts on commercial/industrial businesses and properties which need to be addressed. In some cases, through streets are turned into cul de sacs or re-routed. In other cases, existing streets are eliminated or re-aligned. All of these changes have impacts on the accessibility and visibility of existing businesses. The plans to date are rudimentary at best and only begin to scratch the surface of identifying issues, much less resolving them. The consequences of the changes to the street system, elimination of existing commercial buildings and the future of the remnant parcels created within the proposed changes in the Lake Street/Wooddale/Walker/Library Lane area must be fully evaluated and mitigation actions identified. Access issues for businesses and uses at Dakota and Walker St. where a cul-de-sac is proposed must be addressed and solutions acceptable to the businesses involved created.
10. How freight trains and the trail will operate during construction must be clearly identified. The massive nature of a freight rail reroute project raises concerns about the constructability of the re-route options. The proposed routes cut through the center of the City of St. Louis Park. How the new rail route can be constructed while the current trains continue to operate is not apparent. A plan for how freight rail service will be maintained during construction and how any negative impacts on the community, its residents, businesses, schools, parks and property owners from the actions needed to maintain freight rail operations will be mitigated must be prepared and approved by St. Louis Park before a decision to re-route freight trains is made.
11. The construction of either of the freight rail re-route options will entail significant disruption to all aspects of the community; residents' daily lives, schools, parks and businesses will all be dramatically affected. Construction will entail hauling massive amounts of fill material through single-family neighborhoods, school campuses, parks

20. South of Bass Lake Spur, the MN&S tracks move east, potentially impacting adjacent residential property and reducing the setbacks to less than 25 ft.; these properties must be acquired.
21. The Cedar Lake Trail Bridge at the Iron Triangle wye is not shown on plans; this must be included on the plans and funded as part of the project.
22. The future of the CP right-of-way in the vicinity of the SLP High School needs to be addressed as the re-route options eliminate the freight rail tracks in this area. No further railroad use of this property must be allowed; the use and ownership of the property needs to be established. The first priority for the use of the property should be the SLP School District or some other public use such as a trail, followed by providing some opportunities for economic development. The potential reuse of the property will be hampered by the on-going presence of overhead power lines that currently follow the MN&S right-of-way.
23. More information on properties shown as "partial acquisition" must be provided to understand if they are usable and if they will have access to a public street or not. Some of these parcels may need to be full acquisitions.
24. The future of the land caught between the MN&S tracks and the wyes connecting the Bass Lake Spur to the MN&S tracks south of Hwy 7 is not explained in the proposed relocation plans. Who will own and maintain these properties and how will they be used must be known in order to evaluate the relocation options.

D. Environmental Impacts

1. Environmental impacts including noise, vibration, safety, wetlands, woodlands, traffic/road systems and all other standard environmental review items must be evaluated. No information on the potential environmental impacts has been provided. This is a critical component in the evaluation of the freight rail options and the design of the project, and must include mitigation measures. It is anticipated that the increased elevation of the tracks and trains will increase the potential for noise impacts on the surrounding neighborhoods. No indication has been provided for how these impacts will be addressed. Mitigation measures must be identified and funding for those measures included in the SWLRT project.
2. The football stadium, Central Community Center playgrounds, Roxbury/Keystone Park, Dakota Park, Birchwood Park and other properties present potential 4f parcel impacts; these must be evaluated, addressed and mitigated.
3. Several potentially historic homes and buildings may be taken and this situation needs to be evaluated. 106 reviews may be required for older buildings now potentially impacted by new re-location routes.



Map Document: (S:\PT\GIS\StLouis\114331\GIS\Map\Fig0X_Acquisition\Create 100ROW.mxd)
 5/13/2011 11:05:30 AM



Legend

- Rail Line
- 10 ft Trail
- Parcels Needed To Widen Corridor
- Private Railroad Ownership
- Parcels



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Project: STLOU 114331
 Print Date: 05/13/2011
 Map by: SRH
 Projection: Hennepin County NAD83 ft
 Source: Mn/DOT, Mn/DNR, LMIC,
 City of St. Louis Park, and SEH Inc.

Expanded RR ROW Concept
 Railroad Freight Relocation Study
 Saint Louis Park, Minnesota

Figure X

This map is neither a legally recorded map nor a survey map and is not intended to be used as one. This map is a compilation of records, information, and data gathered from various sources listed on this map and is to be used for reference purposes only. SEH does not warrant that the Geographic Information System (GIS) Data used to prepare this map are error free, and SEH does not represent that the GIS Data can be used for navigational, tracking, or any other purpose requiring existing measurement of distance or direction or precision in the depiction of geographic features. The user of this map acknowledges that SEH shall not be liable for any damages which arise out of the user's access or use of data provided.

To the Edina City Council

We, the members of the Fairway Femmes Golf League at Fred Richards Golf Course, ask that the city does not close down this golf course at anytime going forward. Our league has been playing there for 15 plus years and our members would like to continue to do so. It is an important part of our community and also important to us as a group.

Please thoughtfully consider this request that Fred Richards Golf Course remain open for all the residents of Edina and surrounding communities for everyone's enjoyment.

Thank you for your consideration and respectfully submitted:
The League Members---

Susan B DeWees 7100 Bristol Blvd EDINA, MN 55435

Nancy Stiller 7460 Colby Ct Eden Prairie MN 55346

Sue Messerle 6732 Garfield Ave Richfield 55424

Sandy Hoffman 10896 Leaping Deer, Eden Prairie 55344

Janet Barnett 6201 Oliver Ave Richfield 55422

Mary Johnson 8698 Black Maple Dr, Eden Prairie 55344

Cindy ATKINSON 6121 ASHCROFT AVE EDINA 55424

Barbara Fredrickson 6505 Wilbur Wood Edina 55436

Jean Barry 7100 Metro Blvd 231 Edina 55439

Jean Lindahl 6075 Lincoln Ave, Edina 55436

Jana W Smith 10670 Kiawah Drive Eden Prairie MN. 55344

Lorain Plummer 1400 Astor Blvd 55438

Mary McFarley 1136 Hollebrook Drive Wayzata 55391

Betty Quattler 5466 Huntington St SLPA 55416

Sue 4306 Wagon Wheel Huntington MN 55437

Betty Oehl 7117 Shannon Dr. Edina 55439

Bert Herbst 309 Coventry Lane 55437

Cathy Deon 2825 Summerfield Way 55437

(more spaces on second page)

Linda Shirk 11991 Tiffany Lane, Eden Prairie 55344

Mary Lund 7100 Metro Blvd. Edina 55439

Lady Brooke 4728 Temple Rd, Minnetonka, MN 55345

Louis Grimes 5400 Haljas Lane Edina 55424

Therese Eshelbath 7510 Cahill Rd. Edina, 55431

Burt Grimes 5400 Haljas Ln. Edina 55424

Jean Howell 15710 17 Ave No, Plymouth 55447

Jayne Karsten 6414-13th Ave So 55423

Please Don't Destroy the Fred Richards Golf Course !!!

The Happy Hackers Golf League would like the City of Edina to reconsider the destruction of the Fred Richards Golf Course. Please consider the accessibility and pleasure this size course brings to so many seniors, juniors, husbands and wives and their families. This course has a natural beauty that would be a shame to destroy and provides a needed alternative to other longer, more difficult courses.

Aue Messerli	612 869 1971
Jean McKeon	612 - 869 - 1507
Bamsen Jacob	612 - 866 - 1071
Hein Norheim	952 938-3715
Cathy Schaffman	952-941-1879
Carol Koch	952-377-1127
Sue Dearborn	952-888-9655
Diane Batz	612-825-1843
Mary Jaruszewski	952-942-7769
Wicki Wilberg	952 832-2689
Barbara Vertreis	612-922-4710
Gloria Helgren	952-926-7747
Yvonne Huffman	612 703-4776
Kathleen Loftus	612-929-3561

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Barb Moore 612 869 0276

Christie Neugebauer 612 659-0742

Deb Neugebauer 952 929 7120

Margaret Debbes 952 831 5729

Marge Scurson 612-866-7402

Deane Botz 612-825-1843

Margaret Treanor 952-934-9609

Sharon Eric 651-454-6326

Julie Pasche 612-721-4464

Paul Danielson, President of the Toro Par 30 Golf League
8111 Lyndale Avenue S.
Bloomington, MN 55420
June 28, 2013

The Honorable James Hovland
Mayor of Edina
4801 W. 50th Street
Edina, MN 55424

Dear Mayor Hovland:

As an Edina resident and president of The Toro Company's Par 30 Golf League, I have attached a letter of support, to keep the Fred Richards Golf Course, open as a public golf course.

Thank you for your consideration.



Paul Danielson

CC: The Honorable Ms. Joni Bennett, The Honorable Ms. Mary Brindle, The Honorable Mr. Josh Sprague & The Honorable Ms. Ann Swenson

Attachment:

Paul Danielson, President of the Toro Par 30 Golf League
8111 Lyndale Avenue S.
Bloomington, MN 55420
June 21, 2013

Edina City Council
4801 W. 50th Street
Edina, MN 55424

Dear Honorable Council Members:

We, the undersigned members of The Toro Company – Par 30 League would ask for your consideration and support, in keeping the Fred Richards Municipal Golf Course open – as a golf course. We have heard the city is considering “re-purposing” the park for other recreational uses.

The Toro Par 30 League has used the Fred Richards course for league play for a number of years and we appreciate the convenience of the location, friendly and flexible staff, and of course, the course itself.

It does not appear that the Braemar course would have sufficient open time slots, to absorb the leagues that currently utilize Fred Richards.

It is our recommendation that you keep the Fred Richards course open – as a golf course. Thank you for your consideration.

Paul Danielson
Coff/Bd
Gonna Johnson
Kelly M. Plavon
Marie Solberg
Chick M. [unclear]
[unclear] Kaye
[unclear] Fallon
Grace Stewart
Debra Schlegel
Yvonne Prodzger

