

June 28, 2012

William Hargis, Chair
Transportation Advisory Board
390 Robert Street North
St. Paul, MN 55101

Dear Chair Hargis,

The purpose of this letter is to request that the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) reconsider its recent action related to the CMAQ grant awards, and revisit the recommendation from its advisory committees (TAB Funding and Programming, Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC), and the CMAQ Scoring Committee) that recommended CMAQ funding for project CMT-11-07 SouthWest Transit's (SWT) TH 169 & Pioneer Trail Park and Ride.

It is SWT's understanding that at the June 20th TAB meeting, SWT's CMAQ application was removed from consideration after concerns were voiced that SWT's project would overlap the CMAQ project request put forth by the City of Shakopee, that the point differential between SWT's and the next highest ranked project was too great, and because of uncertainty surrounding the funding of operations from the proposed P & R facility. Each will be described further below.

Overlapping Service - The analysis put forth in SWT's application showed a relatively small number of users coming from Shakopee's closest Transportation Analysis Zone (TAZ) to SWT's proposed facility. The analysis showed 78 out of a total of 309 users coming from Shakopee by 2020, and 110 out of a total of 391 users coming from Shakopee by 2030. Given that SWT's project proposal was only for a 300-stall facility, even without any projected users from Shakopee, the facility would be at 94% capacity by 2030; demonstrating a clear future demand for the facility just from Eden Prairie and Bloomington alone.

Today, SWT has a higher number of Shakopee residents utilizing our current facilities in Eden Prairie than what was put forth in the application. It should also be noted that this analysis was completed using the Metropolitan Council's Demand Estimation Methodology and was reviewed by both Metro Transit and City of Shakopee staff prior to being submitted.

Point Differential – The justification to remove SWT's proposed project from consideration based on its evaluation score relative to the next highest project score creates a number of issues that need to be further reviewed. The fact that the advisory committees recommended the project for approval in two different recommendations demonstrates that the project has merit. While there is a seemingly large

point differential between SWT's proposed project and the next highest ranked project, the point differential is really no greater than between Project #1 and Project #2 in the transit category.

Today SWT has a small/50 stall park-and-ride lot in the area being proposed (TH169 and Anderson Lakes Road). Because of the lot size limitations and our agreement with the property owner (Preserve Shopping Center), we are not able to expand our operations to provide adequate service to this area to meet current as well as projected demand.

This project also shows promise because it fits a more refined niche geared toward serving the densely populated area of southeastern Eden Prairie (an area that has diversified mixes of housing types and income levels).

The bottom line is that this project would provide transit options for a corridor that is underserved in the southwestern area of our metropolitan region.

Funding of Operations - SWT's CMAQ application was only for a capital project and funds to run operations from this facility was not overlooked but omitted from the application by design. SWT Transit has a long history of building successful park and ride facilities. Our past practices have always been that if a facility cannot be supported from day one within a current or projected operating budget, then we do not feel it would be within the region's best interest to apply CMAQ funds toward the construction of any facility. Because SWT chooses to approach CMAQ funding projects in this manner, we do not believe we should be penalized for an approach we see as being fiscally prudent.

Given the reasoning and information put forth in this letter, I respectfully request that the TAB reconsider its position as soon as possible. SWT staff would be happy to address the TAB with any questions or concerns it may have.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Nancy Tyra-Lukens

Chair, SouthWest Transit Commission

Mayor, City of Eden Prairie

cc: Susan Haigh, Chair, Metropolitan Council
Gary Van Eyll, Metropolitan Council
Jennifer Munt, Metropolitan Council
Steve Elkins, Metropolitan Council
Randy Maluchnik, TAB Member – Carver County

Jan Callison, TAB Member – Hennepin County
Jon Ulrich, TAB Member – Scott County
James Hovland, TAB Member – Edina
Thomas Heffelfinger, TAB Member – District B
Bethany Tjornhom, TAB Member – Chanhassen
Aaron Isaacs, TAB Member – Transit
David Van Hattum, TAB Member - Transit
Len Simich, SWT CEO

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of the Metropolitan Council of the Twin Cities

Bill Hargis
Chair

July 26, 2012

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Transit

Ron Have
Freight

Ethan Fawley
Non-motorized

Nancy Tyra-Lukens, Chair
Southwest Transit Commission
13500 Technology Drive
Eden Prairie, Minnesota 55344

RE: SWT CMAQ Transit Project TH 169 & Pioneer Trail Park and Ride Facility.

Dear Nancy,

Thank you for your letter of June 28, 2012 regarding the TAB's decision and recommendation to not include Southwest Transit's (SWT) proposed park and ride facility at TH 169 and Pioneer Trail among the projects that were awarded funds in the 2011 regional solicitation.

The purpose of this letter is to clarify the TAB's position and the decision made at its meeting on June 20th.

TAB did not redo or lower the score of your project. That score, as well as the scores for all other applications was approved at TAB's May meeting. That approval came after an extensive technical review process which also affords the applicants an opportunity for appeal. Those scores are final for this solicitation period.

After this process, we always ask our technical committees for recommendations as to macro funding options. That was made more challenging this year in the absence of a long-term federal transportation funding bill, but the process used is similar to that used in prior solicitations.

At the June meeting, the TAB considered and debated these options. We are not restricted to those options and adopted a hybrid of the options submitted. This is consistent with past practice.

You noted in the letter that the point break between the highest ranked and the second ranked CMAQ projects is about the same as the point break between the SWT project and the next highest ranked project. This is true, as the TAB uses point breaks to consider where to "draw the line" on funding, but that is within the policy prerogative of the TAB.


The SWT project was ranked sixth out of nine qualified CMAQ applications and the TAB considered the point break between the SWT project and the next highest ranked project to be large enough to warrant drawing the line above the SWT project. The potential that there may be an overlapping market area with a higher ranked project in Shakopee that would reduce the ridership at the SWT project was discussed but did not change the score of any project. TAB selected two bicycle and pedestrian projects in another category where the scoring was closer.

Page 2

You or your staff may address the TAB to reconsider funding of the SWT project if you wish to do so. Our next meeting is on Wednesday, August 15 at 1:30 PM. If you do wish to address the Board, please notify TAB Coordinator Kevin Roggenbuck by August 8 so we can accommodate your request.

There is also another opportunity. TAB will amend these projects into the 2013-2016 Transportation Improvement Program later this year. The amendment process will include a public hearing and comment period, and SWT may also comment then as well.

Sincerely,

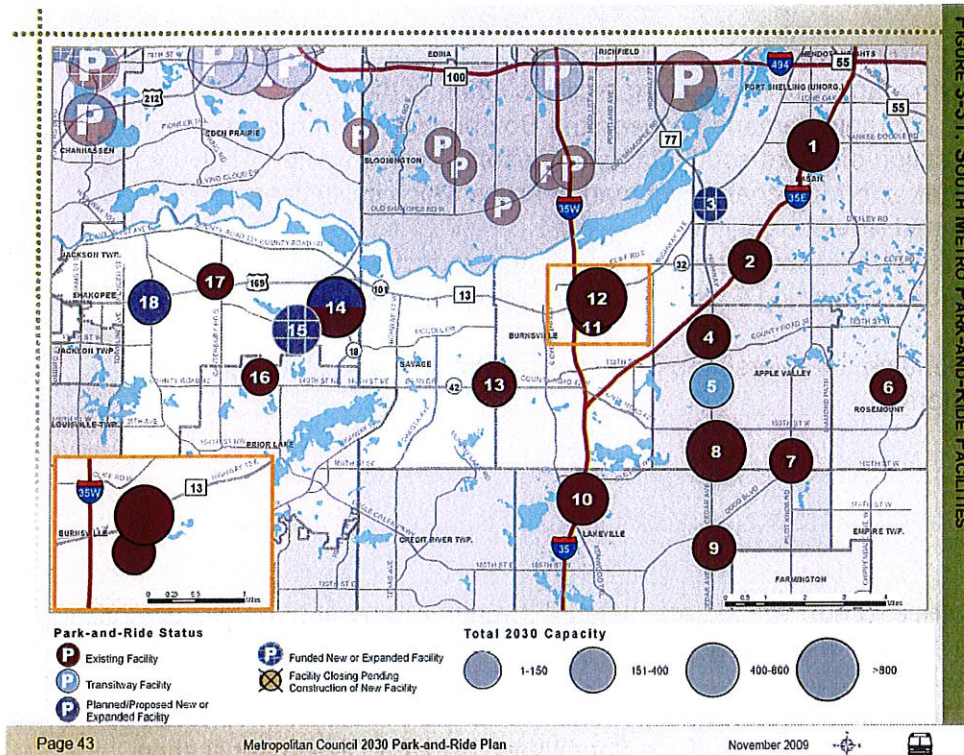

Bill Hargis, Chair

cc: J. Hovland, R. Lilligren A. McCarthy L. Simich L. Spevacek

Highway 169 South Park and Ride Transit Market

2030 Park and Ride Plan

The 2030 Park and Ride Plan was adopted by the Met Council in May 2010 and provides regional guidance on locating parking facilities and forecasts demand for planned facilities. The Plan includes the figure below which identifies existing and planned park and rides. Locations 14 – 18 support the Hwy 169 South corridor. The Plan does not include a park and ride at Pioneer Trail.



Usage and Capacity

The following table provides the estimated 2030 demand from the 2030 Park and Ride Plan as well as 2011 usage and parking capacity.

Map ID	Facility	Location	2011 Usage	Capacity	Available Parking Spaces Remaining	Est. 2030 Capacity Demand
14	Southbridge Crossing	Shakopee	294	515	221	915
15	CR 16&CR 21/ Eagle Creek*	Shakopee	0	544	544	545
16	Safe Haven	Prior Lake	37	110	73	110
17	Seagate Technology	Shakopee	28	82	54	82
18	Hwy 169/Marschall Road**	Shakopee	0	400	400	400
Total			359	1651	1292	2052

* Facility opened with new service in July 2012

** Service starts in 2015 with CMAQ operating & bus grant

The 2015 capacity of 1,651 spaces will provide 1,292 more spaces than the 359 users (2011 data) providing adequate capacity for many years.

It should be noted that the 2030 capacity estimates do not take into account the impacts of Southwest LRT (see below).

Pioneer Trail Proposal

- The proposed \$8.75 million, 300-space Pioneer Trail park and ride represents an overlap in market areas and a competing facility to the existing facilities south of the river.
- Because of the river valley, ridership demand between the Southbridge and proposed Pioneer Trail facility is minimal; attraction of riders south of the Minnesota River would primarily be from the Southbridge, Eagle Creek and Marschall Road market areas which collectively provide attractive service locations and levels.
- There is a significant benefit to VMT, emissions and congestion reductions by providing commuters a strong transit option starting south of the river bridge which is served by BlueXpress.
- The Pioneer Trail project benefits are overstated given the overlap in markets and double counting of some transit riders.

Southwest LRT Impact

- Approximately 1,850 *new* park and ride spaces are planned in Eden Prairie at three Southwest LRT stations – Mitchell, SouthWest Station and Eden Prairie Town Center – as a part of the Southwest LRT project (see Attachment A).
- A large share of park and ride users in the proposed Pioneer Trail market area are currently using SouthWest Station, as shown in the map from SouthWest Transit's CMAQ application (see Attachment B).
- The high-frequency, all-day service offered by LRT is more attractive to many transit riders than proximity and more direct service that express bus service offers.
- The region's experience with Hiawatha LRT shows that LRT has a broader express market penetration drawing from existing express bus market areas much farther than some would expect. For example, Attachment C shows that many LRT riders drive past the 750-space Eagan Transit Station which provides high levels of express bus service to Minneapolis (as well as express service to St. Paul) to access Hiawatha LRT at Fort Snelling.
- With the opening of the Southwest LRT, transit customers will have the choice of express bus service and LRT from several facilities in Eden Prairie. This choice of both express commuter service and all-day LRT offers very high quality service options which will provide a very strong draw from the market area identified for the proposed Pioneer Trail park and ride.

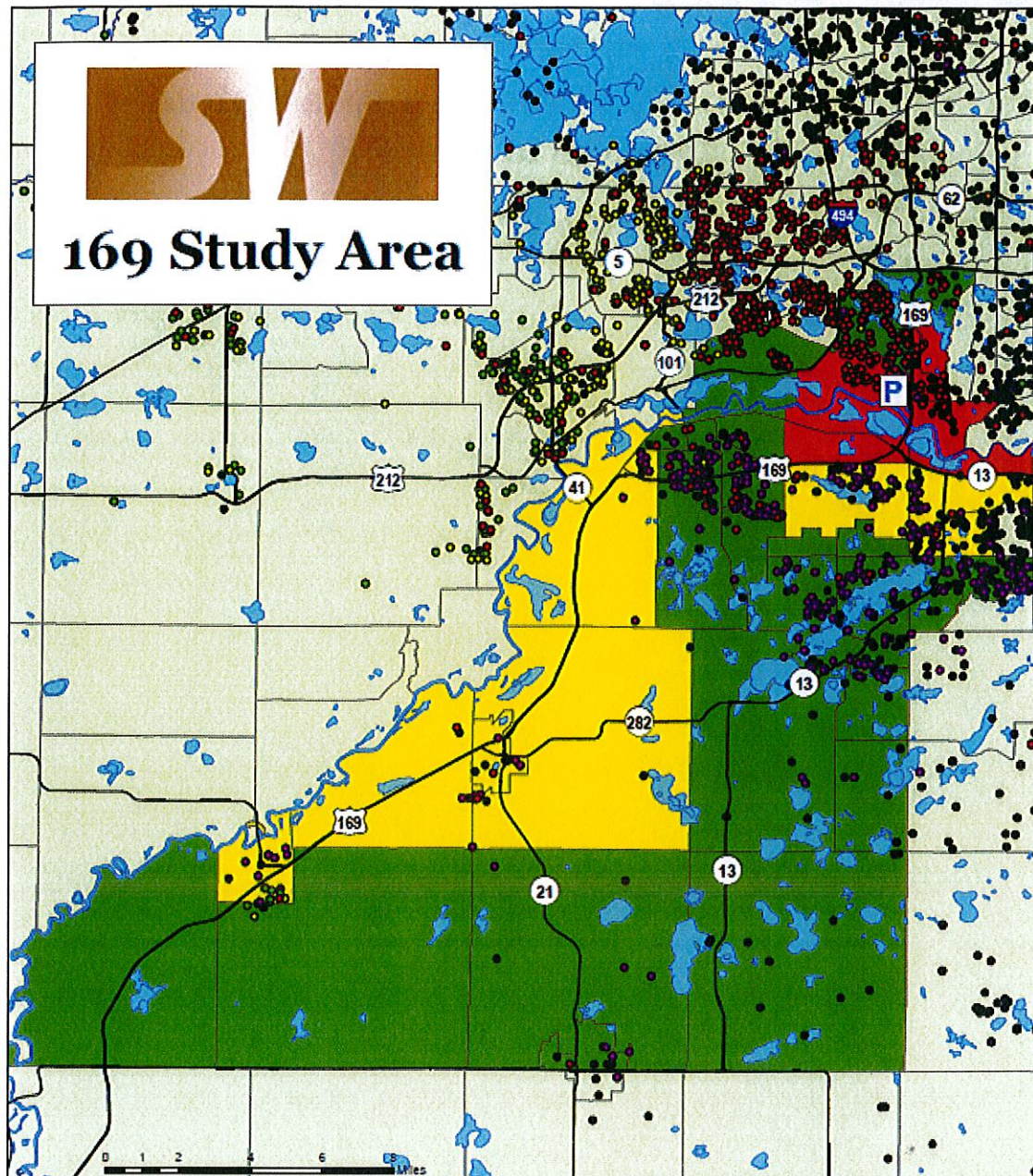


Station	New Spaces
Mitchell	800
Southwest	400
EP Town Center	650
Golden Triangle	100
City West	100
Opus	100
Shady Oak	250
Hopkins	100
Blake	350
Louisiana	100
Wooddale	100
Beltline	100
West Lake	100
21 st St	100
Penn	100

Locally Preferred Alternative (as approved to enter PE)

- 3,450 New Spaces



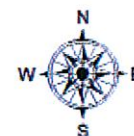


Park & Ride User Destination (2010)

- SouthWest Station
- SouthWest Village
- East Creek Station
- Other
- Hwy 212 & Shady Oad Rd
- BlueXpress Riders
- **P** Proposed Park & Ride

**Percentage of New P & R Users
(Proposed 169 Ramp)**

- 25% of New Riders
- 50% of New Riders
- 100% New and Existing Riders



Data Sources: Met Council 2010 Park and Ride Study, MnDNR, MnDOT

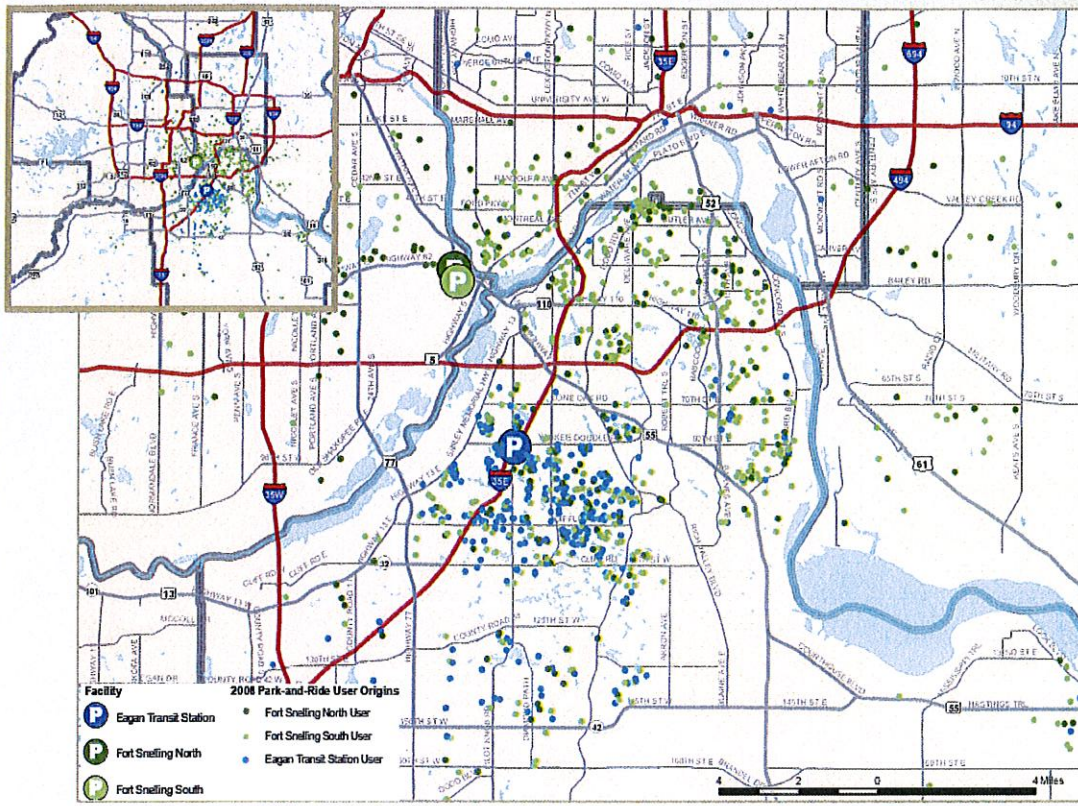


FIGURE 2-24: EAGAN TRANSIT STATION & FORT SNELLING USER ORIGINS

