

Lakes and Parks Alliance of Minneapolis
2121 Drew Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55416-3621

October 3, 2023

Members of the Metropolitan Governance Task Force
600 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
State Office Building, Room 72
St. Paul, MN 55155

Sent by email

Dear Task Force Members:

We are the board members of the Lakes and Parks Alliance of Minneapolis (LPA), writing to clarify and correct the record as represented in the September 19, 2023 letter submitted to you by Mr. Richard Adair and Mr. Barry Schade.

Their letter states: “[LPA] sued the Met Council for not following federal rules about [Southwest LRT] route selection. They lost in court but this caused a long delay in the project at a time of rapidly rising labor and material costs. “

- To clarify: Our LPA lawsuit asserted that the SWLRT route was selected before the environmental review was done. (In his decision, Judge Tunheim wrote regarding Minneapolis’s municipal consent for the route: “[T]he Court has determined that the MOUs the Council signed with Minneapolis and St. Louis Park are what the Council says they are: promises that can be broken. If the MOUs were binding and they limited environmental review to a single route, the Court would be compelled to find improper predetermination under NEPA. [National Environmental Policy Act]”)
- To correct: The lawsuit did not stop or slow down the construction — not for one moment. The suit involved no injunctions and had no effect on operations. The delay had to do with the changed route which resulted in the selection of the Kenilworth corridor very late in the process, which in turn required a redo of the EIS, which then caused a delay in completing and receiving the full funding agreement with the FTA. In addition, time was wasted in the confusion about how local funding would be achieved; this involved the dissolution of CTIB. There was a debacle involving the selection of a contractor, a process that had to be redone. And, finally, the reason for most of the massive delay in completing the project has to do with the difficulty digging the tunnel — a problem predicted by residents but ignored by the Met Council — adding years to the project.

We do agree with Mr. Adair and Mr. Schade that the Met Council should have elected members. That would help create public accountability.

We would be happy to provide you with additional information about our experience with the Met Council that would help you with your work.

Thank you for your service on the Task Force.

Very truly yours,

David Lilly, Chair
Stuart Chazin
Curt Gunsbury
Courtney Kiernat
Mary Pattock
George Puzak

—