

Dear Council President and members,

My name is Becky Yust and I live at 256 Goodrich. I speak tonight as a resident of West 7<sup>th</sup> and as President of the Fort Road Federation.

The Federation voted at our Annual Meeting in April 2017, and in October, the Board of Directors reaffirmed our position, that we support an enhanced Bus Rapid Transit option for the Riverview Corridor, not the LPA before us tonight.

I have lived in my home for 44 years, and have been involved in the Federation for that entire time. We have had to swim upstream more often than not to educate government authorities on projects in our neighborhood. To review just a few:

- By the 1970's, the City of St. Paul had zoned Irvine Park for industrial businesses. The Federation and the Minnesota Historical Society fought together to save the homes and revitalize this neighborhood into one of the premier national historic districts in the U.S.
- When the State of Minnesota decided to replace the High Bridge in the 1980s, their design was a four-lane, concrete structure (similar to the old Lafayette Bridge), which would eliminate the Leech-McBoal neighborhood. Reaching out to a higher power, the Federation contacted U.S. Senator David Durenberger who authored a Federal amendment to ensure that the replacement bridge would remain at two-lanes and MNDOT was not required to accept the lowest bid. As a result, we saved a neighborhood.
- In the late 80's St. Paul Public Works planned to build a grade-separated interchange for Shepard Road and Chestnut Street, requiring a 22-foot high wall of dirt and roadway at the river's edge that would have obliterated access to the river. Eleven years after the Federation submitted our response to the DRAFT EIS, we were successful in maintaining an on-grade intersection and moving Shepard Road away from the river to allow for recreational access. Because of our fight, the Science Museum relocated and new housing was built in the Upper Landing.
- In the 1990's, brewing had ended at the Schmidt Brewery and the City approved the only U.S. urban industrial ethanol plant to take over operations. After the Federation fought its continuance for many years, it finally left and opened the door for the kind of development that enhanced not just the neighborhood, but the city as well.
- Finally, in 2000, the Metropolitan Council planned a dedicated busway on West 7<sup>th</sup> from Kellogg to the River. It would have required removing all of the parking along West 7<sup>th</sup> or all of the trees and narrowing the sidewalks. It does not exist today because of the Federation's work, and, yet we have experienced continued growth and economic development, without the busway.

Now, in 2018, we are faced with Ramsey County orchestrating a \$2 Billion transit plan on West 7<sup>th</sup>. One that will reduce the number of transit stops and will reduce the frequency of other bus service on West 7<sup>th</sup>. For every question we have posed to Ramsey County, the response has been, "we won't know that until the Draft EIS is completed." One thing we do know is that a BRT along this street would be one-twentieth of the price of a streetcar. For the cost of this one streetcar line, Ramsey County, the Met Council, and You could actually fund a transit system that works to connect the city.

Thank you.