

Whittier Alliance Light Rail Transit Task Force Resolution

The Whittier Alliance (representing the residents, businesses, and property owners of the Whittier neighborhood) has given significant consideration to the alternate routes of the proposed Southwest LRT. The Nicollet Alignment (3C) was extensively considered, as its selection would have major impacts on the neighborhood. Based upon robust public discussions of the alternatives with a wide range of stakeholders, The Whittier Alliance has reached the following findings:

The Whittier Alliance supports the Kenilworth Alignment (3A).

The Whittier Alliance recognizes that the Nicollet Alignment (3C) could provide meaningful benefits for the neighborhood.

- Improved transit speed, reliability, frequency and connectivity
- Access to increased customer and investment base
- The possibility of minimized traffic congestion through grade separation

The Whittier Alliance has significant concerns about the Nicollet Alignment (3C) for the following reasons:

- The reduced likelihood of a Midtown Greenway Streetcar serving all of the Midtown neighborhoods and connecting between Southwest and Hiawatha LRT, with the potential to extend to the river and beyond
- The preclusion of a future Nicollet Avenue Streetcar, whose more frequent stops might better serve our dense, near-downtown neighborhood
- The likelihood of reduced, rerouted or eliminated bus service currently serving the area
- The proposed line and station locations poorly serve the commercial nodes at 26th & Nicollet and Lake & Nicollet
- Vehicular traffic currently along Nicollet may be forced on to the residential streets
- The physical and technical requirements of the Nicollet Avenue tunnel, and specifically it's entry portals near the Midtown Greenway and Franklin Avenue, may have the following undesirable impacts:
 - Render Nicollet Ave useless as a through street
 - Render reopening of Nicollet at Kmart infeasible
 - Isolate and render nearly useless the area between Cecil Newman (29th St) and Kmart
 - Eliminate Nicollet Ave parking
 - In the short term and likely in the long term, be detrimental to the commercial and retail business along Nicollet Ave
 - Be disruptive of the urban fabric of Nicollet Ave, the Greenway and the neighborhood
- Even without factoring in the immediate (and possible long term) negative economic impacts to the Nicollet commercial corridor, the projected cost of construction for the trench and cut-and-cover tunnel doesn't appear to provide for the well executed system that The Whittier Alliance would expect in order to truly benefit the neighborhood. Given recent experience with the Central Corridor planning, The Whittier Alliance fears that should such amenities and mitigation efforts not be fully accounted for and explicitly included at an early stage, they may disappear from the plan during later budget cuts.

Based on the currently presented alternatives and for the above reasons, **The Whittier Alliance does not support the Nicollet Alignment (3C), and supports the Kenilworth Alignment (3A), supplemented by a Nicollet Ave Streetcar and a Midtown Greenway Streetcar, as the best option for the neighborhood.**