

BREAKING NEWS: House Speaker: “No” to more state \$’s for Southwest LRT; Met Council Chair: “would be up to us... either through the Met Council, or through other local governments” to “find \$150 million somewhere else” if State money “doesn’t come thru”



Note: A .pdf version of this News Release is attached.

Disclosure: bobagain is a registered Lobbyist, representing “*We the People*”, an informal association, and has announced a campaign to win a Pulitzer Prize for investigative reporting, covering the unfolding “SWLRT disaster”.

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Minneapolis 6/18/15 – Metropolitan Council Chair Adam Duinink responded yesterday during a brief video interview to a report that House Speaker Kurt Daubt has said the Legislature will provide no more money for Southwest Light Rail next year. Duinink understood the project would then be \$150 million short of State and Local money, and said:

“So the question is: ‘if the State share doesn’t come through, can we find \$150 million somewhere else?’

Duinink then answered that question:

“And that would be up to us, to do that, either through the Met Council, or through other local governments that care about this project.”



Photo from a dialogue with Met Council Chair Adam Duinink and bobagain at a public hearing 6/17/15 in Eden Prairie

Duinink’s statements were part of a [brief video dialogue](#) with “Candidate-Journalist,” Transit activist and registered lobbyist for “We the People” (an informal association) Bob “Again” Carney Jr. (bobagain) at yesterday’s Met Council Public Hearing on the Southwest LRT Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement, held at the Eden Prairie City Center (the interview is on youtube “bobagain channel”; [click this hyperlink](#), then go to one minute -- 1:00 -- on the time line).

Legislature takes back \$30 million from SWLRT; “funding plan is falling apart”

On June 15th, Finance and Commerce became the first “Minnesota Media Establishment” organization to report on the Legislature’s recent action to cancel about \$30 million of the 2013 appropriation of \$37 million for the Southwest Light Rail project. That article, by Cali Owings, is headlined: “[Legislature takes back \\$30M for Southwest LRT.](#)” In a 6/16/15 phone conversation with bobagain, Owings said she had been told about the Legislature’s action by bobagain at a recent Corridor Management Committee meeting – bobagain had been standing at the back of the room, briefly telling the essential facts to as many people as he could. Bobagain has been reporting extensively on this story on his website, www.bobagain.com, and through news releases and videos, since May 20th – the news releases are sent to about 170 members of the Legislature, and about 250 media sources.

Bobagain recently put [a set of video clips on youtube](#), including the explanations given on the floor of the State Legislature by State Sen. Scott Dibble and State Representative Tim Kelly, the Transportation Committee Chairs for the Senate and House respectively. The video clips are to “help [the media] see that there really was about \$30 million taken from an earlier appropriation for Southwest Light Rail,” bobagain said. Details and sources for the video clips are provided in a 6/10/15 news release at www.bobagain.com.

After backing out the \$30 million appropriation recently cancelled by the Legislature, the total money appropriated by the Legislature is now about \$15 million. Because it appears evident no more money is coming from the State, there is now a \$300 million shortfall in funding for the Southwest LRT project – the State’s missing \$150 million, and an additional \$150 million in Federal matching dollars that will also be lost.

Bobagain has raised a concern that if spending on the project isn’t stopped immediately, an additional **\$67.3 million** could be spent on the project by the end of the year. The basis for this \$67.3 million amount is detailed in an extensive 6/2/15 News Analysis article on the www.bobagain.com site.

“The funding plan is falling apart,” bobagain said. “It is time to put an immediate freeze on spending any more money on this project. We need to go all the way back to reopening the scoping process – so that alternative routes, including a route shortened to Hopkins, and running through Uptown, to Nicollet and I-35W, and then downtown along the I-35W corridor, can be considered,” bobagain concluded.

A transcript of the brief dialogue between Chair Duinick and bobagain follows this news release.

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bobagain: “Hi.”

Duinick: “Hey Bob, how are you?”

bobagain: "Well pretty good, how are you?"

Duininck: "Hanging in there. {looks at pants cuffs tucked in sock} Did you ride your bike all the way out here?"

bobagain: "I've got the bike here, I rode the last mile from Southwest [Station, main Eden Prairie terminal). Did you bike here?"

Duininck: "I did not."

bobagain: "'cause I did see you biking over to the Corridor Management Committee."

Duininck: "I did bike to that meeting." (bobagain: "yeah") "I do when I can."

bobagain: "You got time for a quick question?"

Duininck: "Ah, sure."

bobagain: "Ok, now as you know the Legislature..."

Duininck: "Promise it'll be quick." [crosstalk]

bobagain: "Yeah, well, I'll, here goes. The Legislature as you know took back \$30 million that had been appropriated for Southwest Light Rail. Now there's a total of \$15 million they've appropriated. And the plan for \$1.65 billion would be \$165 million from the Legislature, so..."

Duininck: "It would be \$150."

bobagain: "Well, yeah, I was going to say, there'd be \$150 million short." (Duininck: "Yep") "Now, I talked to Speaker Daubt at the special session, he said the Legislature's not puttin' any more money in next year. So, you know, with \$150 million there, and another \$150 matching, where are you going to get \$300 million to get the \$1.65 billion of funding?"

Duininck: "Well, the funds are a little bit more complicated than that. There's HCRRA's funds, CTIB's funds, and the State share, so the \$150 you talked about is the only amount that's in question. The rest of the whole local share is already accounted for. And it's up to us to make the case that the project warrants the other \$150."

bobagain: "But you do agree that with the \$150 missing from the State that really is \$300 million because..."

Duininck: "No, it's not \$300 million."

bobagain: "No? Because [crosstalk]"

Duininck: "You're talking about the Feds matching it?"

bobagain: "Yeah."

Duininck: "Well the Feds don't match some of the money and not all of it. They match... they match half of

bobagain: “Yeah.” [crosstalk]

Duininck: “So the question is: ‘if the State share doesn’t come through, can we find \$150 million somewhere else?’

bobagain: “Yeah.”

Duininck: “And that would be up to us, to do that, either through the Met Council, or through other local governments that care about this project.”

bobagain: “Ok, thank you for the answer, I appreciate it.”

Duininck: “Yeah, sure.”