

# NEWS RELEASE: Transit advocate bobagain releases “modified 3C” SWLRT alternative; Eden Prairie & Minnetonka cut; starts at Shady Oak; follows Greenway to Uptown & I-35W; elevated above Freeway to Convention Center; links to Green Line at Target Field



**Note:** An attached .pdf News Release version includes graphics.

**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”; bobagain has launched a Crowd Funded video series, and is also launching a for-profit business to offer better transit solutions.

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**Minneapolis 8/27/15** – Transit advocate, registered lobbyist for “We the People” (informal association), entrepreneur and “candidate-journalist” Bob “Again” Carney Jr (“bobagain”) has released a detailed “modified 3C” SWLRT alternative plan. The 31 page plan, about 11,800 words, is available as a .pdf download at [www.bobagain.com](http://www.bobagain.com); it is too big to include as an e-mailed News Release attachment.

The “modified 3C” plan starts at Shady Oak station in Hopkins; all Eden Prairie and Minnetonka stations are

cut, but their service area would be reached by bus-based extensions. Rather than going through the environmentally sensitive Kenilworth park environment, “modified 3C” follows the Greenway to Uptown.

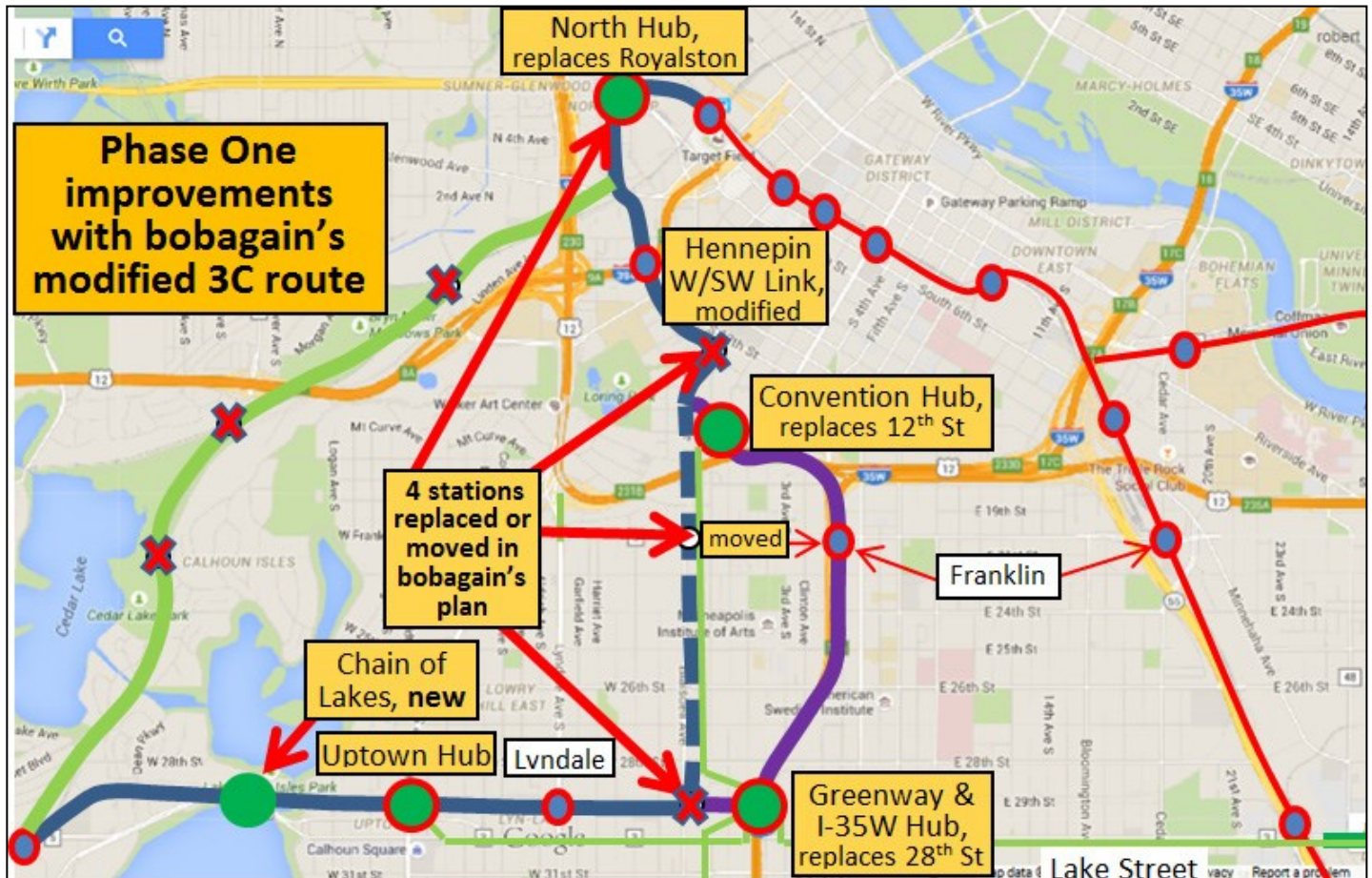
A map on page 2 shows the proposed current route, the 3C alternative route, and bobagain’s “modified 3C” route. At Nicollet, the 3C route heads north to Downtown in a tunnel; as shown by a dashed line. The “modified 3C” route would continue a little further East to a Greenway & I-35W Hub. The LRT would then be elevated above the Freeway corridor, and would stop at a Franklin Station (moved from Nicollet) before reaching a new Convention Hub, which would replace the 3C 12<sup>th</sup> Street Station.



The screen shot above is from Chapter 1 of bobagain’s new Crowd Funded Video Series

The Convention Hub and/or the Hennepin W/SW Link Station (also in the 3C plan) would link to an extensive existing network of about 700 commuter buses. Hundreds of additional Reverse Commute routes would be scheduled, using Commuter buses that are already running today, but that are not scheduled for Reverse Commute runs.

At 12<sup>th</sup> Street the “modified 3C” route would then rejoin and continue along the unmodified 3C route; remaining elevated past Hennepin. The Royalston Station is moved slightly and upgraded in the “modified 3C” plan to a North Hub; the LRT would then link to the Green Line at Target Field.



The “modified 3C” alternative will be presented today by bobagain at the Metropolitan Council, Hennepin County Board and Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority Municipal Consent hearing. The 6 PM hearing is at the Minneapolis Central Library, at 3<sup>rd</sup> and Hennepin in Downtown Minneapolis. An open house presenting the Metro Council’s current plan will be at 5 PM.

“It appears that the entire history of this project has been driven not by the goal of designing an optimal transit solution for the Twin Cities and Minnesota, but by conforming to the changing criteria and requirements associated with securing federal matching dollars for the project. My biggest concern is that the current plan is nothing short of a disaster in three major respects. First, it fails as a satisfactory solution to the challenge of

what can and should be done to develop the best possible transit system from the point of view of serving “We the People” generally, and transit users in particular. Second, it increases the danger that Minnesota’s budget for metro area transit will be insufficient to fund bus-based alternatives that could accomplish much more to address transit equity issues – building a system that can best meet the transit and housing needs of minorities and low income people. Third, there are extraordinary environmental risks associated with both tunneling through an area near our Chain of Lakes that is known to connect the lakes with both surface and subterranean flows of water, and with co-locating freight and a light rail tunnel,” bobagain said.

The Southwest Light Rail project has been plagued with repeated cost increases, and most recently with an evident, obvious loss of support for the project at the Legislature. The recent “lights on” Transportation bill cancelled two thirds of the total money the Legislature had appropriated for the project – an action advanced and promoted by bobagain’s lobbying activity. At the recent Special Session, Republican House Speaker Kurt Dautb told bobagain the Legislature would not make more money available for Southwest Light Rail in the 2016 session. Because the current financing plan calls for a total of \$165 million from the Legislature, but only about \$15 million has been appropriated, the project is currently about \$150 million short of local funds. The Metro Council is talking about using “Certificates of Participation” – a kind of bond financing – however the legality of this has been called into question by House Transportation Chair Tim Kelly, and others

“If we are going to build SWLRT at all, we need a realistic budget, and a plan that does not go through Kenilworth. This will require reopening the scoping process. Due to the unique and unfortunate history of this project, we can and should work with the FTA on an Agreement to allow SWLRT to re-enter the scoping process while remaining in the New Starts program. I am not a member of the Lakes and Parks Alliance, and don’t speak for them, but I will offer this assessment: such a plan could be part of a negotiated settlement of the current Lakes and Parks Alliance lawsuit. If the process continues to a Final EIS and a Record of Decision, the FTA can and would also be sued at that point – so there is a basis and an incentive for the FTA to be part of settlement talks now,” bobagain concluded.

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