

PUBLIC TESTIMONY AT THE JUNE 3, 2025, PUBLIC HEARING

Discussion can be found on archived video.

Signed up to speak at the public hearing + written testimonies:

Name: Melissa Wenzel (349 Michigan Street, St Paul, MN 55102) - Yes

Comments: The West 7th corridor deserves transit investment from the county. We NEED upgrade transit options, and the funding from the county is essential for these efforts. Please do NOT remove funding from the West 7th BRT initiative!

Name: Daniel Waddell (1144 Edgumbe Road, St Paul, MN 55105) Yes

Comments: The Riverview Corridor is a vital project that has been in discussion since the 1990s. Removing funding for the project is an embarrassment for the city and county. Bus rapid transit is a no brainer for the corridor that will help set up growth in Saint Paul for decades to come.

Name: Julia McColley (NA) Yes

Comments: Good morning,

Could you confirm the length of testimony allowed at the June 3 public hearing? Are community members able to share a visual?

Best

Julia McColley

Name: Frank Jossi (1810 Hartford Ave, Saint Paul 55116) Yes

Comments: Summarize comments from the Highland District Council.

Name: John Yust (256 Goodrich Avenue)

Comments:

Dear Ramsey County Commissioners.

My name is **John Yust**, and I live at **256 Goodrich Avenue**.

Over the past 20 years, Ramsey County orchestrated 1,000's of volunteer hours of West 7th community members to plan for new transit under the guise of Riverview Corridor, first an extension of the Twin Cities light rail, and then, a rail- based streetcar. After 20 years, Ramsey County canceled all of their activities related to Riverview Corridor in Fall 2024.

\$730 million of the Ramsey County Transportation Sales and Use Tax Fund was to be tapped for the County's share of funding for Riverview Corridor. The 13,000 residents of West 7th have contributed to this fund continuously for the past 20 years. However, we now learn that Ramsey County will not expend a penny of that fund to improve transportation in West 7th. In fact, there is no project listed for West 7th, not even improvements to Randolph Avenue, a county owned corridor.

Residents of the county, specifically West 7th, should not be penalized for over 20 years of effort participating in a misguided planning process led by Ramsey County.

Thank you.

Name: Jay Severance (350 St Peter Street, Saint Paul 55102)

Comments:

Testimony for the meeting of the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners 6/3/2025h t
My name is Jay Severance. I live at 350 St Peter Street, and have been a downtown resident for 20 years. Since 2014, I have been involved in the Riverview Corridor Project, most recently as a member of the Citizen Advisory Committee and as an associate of Citizen Advocates for Regional Transit.

The Riverview Modern Streetcar project compared the Modern Streetcar and Bus Rapid Transit solutions to address the transit needs of the Corridor, and it became apparent that the BRT solution, under today's and near-term outlook, was the better solution. At that time the Modern Streetcar portion of the project was closed. However, the assurance was given that the Riverview Project would not be abandoned.

Now, it appears that the Riverview Project and its funding are being recommended for removal.

I request that the Council not approve that action, and instead allocate funding to the continuation of the Project through the following action:

- Allocate funding to support the continuation of the Riverview Corridor transit plan being developed by the City of Saint Paul,
- Support the extension of the Metro Purple Line project to include the Riverview Corridor ABRT - providing greatly improved access to the corridor and the MSP/MOA complex, and the job opportunities for the whole East Metro.
- Allocate funding through the County Railroad Authority to purchase the CPKC Ford spur for active transportation and transit needs for the Corridor.

Thank you for your Consideration of these requests.

Jay Severance

350 St Peter St Unit 409 St Paul MN 55102

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info@c-a-r-t.org www.c-a-r-t.org

Below this line are all who provided testimony, but didn't wish to speak at the public hearing.

Name: (1266 Gorman Ave, West St Paul, MN 55114)

Comments: Creating the Emergency Management and Homeland Security Department within the Safety and Justice Service Team is a smart move for Ramsey County. This change will make our disaster response and preparedness efforts more organized and efficient. As someone impacted by disasters, this matters to me. It ensures we have the resources and structure needed to keep our community safe and resilient. By making this a dedicated department, we can better support our residents and local businesses in times of emergency.

Name: John Levin - No

Comments: Is there a document or other materials that provide background for the June 3 public hearing on the Transportation Sales and Use Tax. I don't see anything at this page: <https://www.ramseycounty.us/content/public-hearing-use-ramsey-county-transportation-sales-and-use-tax-funds>. It is not clear what the public is being asked to comment on.

Name: Joseph F Landsberger (112 South Leech Street, St Paul, MN 55102) No

Comments: Greetings Commissioners. Pursuant to your mission statement "To provide a safe and efficient multi-modal transportation system" I would like to advocate for a vital link in our metro wide transportation system. The main link west as proposed by the "New West 7th transit improvement project" will enhance this system, and promote transit-oriented development along our river corridor. The possibilities facing downtown development as well as the potential for building on tourist-oriented access to our historic and immigrant neighborhoods will reinforce efforts underway.

In addition to West Seventh's stretch out to the MOA and airport, we also have a Randolph spur out to Highland Bridge that can tie into our county's transportation network and so should be a priority for the immediate future.

Thank you.

Name: Will Nissen (399 Duke street, St Paul, MN 55102) No

Comments: Good morning,

I have lived in the West 7th neighborhood in St. Paul for 13 years and am now raising two young kids here. I appreciated the City and County's consideration of significant investment in my area through the Riverview Corridor streetcar project, and agreed with the decision to not pursue streetcars. However, West 7th still needs transportation and transit investment from the County. In particular, the portion of Randolph Avenue between West 7th Street and Shepard Road has extremely limited bike and pedestrian options but high traffic volume. This will be even more so with the increase in heavy truck trips with the proposed FCC station. And, positive improvements to the Sam Morgan Trail along Shepard Road will likely increase the need for connecting bike and pedestrian access along this portion of Randolph Avenue. The City of St. Paul is leading the New West 7th transit improvement project and County funding will be critical to moving that process forward successfully. Please keep reallocated funds from the Riverview Corridor project in the West 7th neighborhood.

Name: Jenn Pierson (890 Kenneth Street, Saint Paul 55116) Yes

Comments: I support the west 7th Bus Rapid Transit line and pedestrian improvements and ask you to maintain funding and see this project through to completion. If Saint Paul wants to revitalize downtown, welcome state employees back and work towards climate goals and reducing emissions this project is essential.

Name: Gabrielle Rosenthal (840 Seal Street, Saint Paul 55114) No

Comments: Ramsey County must continue to invest in safe and convenient public transportation. The Riverview Corridor not only connects presidential neighborhoods and businesses with downtown St Paul but also supports the vital need to revitalize the downtown by connecting airport travelers with the city. My tax dollars should be investing in our future. Convenient public transport ensures a more climate resilient city for all and provides access to economic opportunity for businesses and residents alike.

Name: Kevin Gallatin (1822 Highland Parkway, Saint Paul 55116) No

Comments: I strongly support funding for BRT improvements along West 7th Street. The community has patiently waited as study after study evaluated transit options only to defer to doing nothing. It's time to get this project done. The B-Line should already be operating along this corridor that is one of the busiest in the Metro Transit system. Community members depend on this transit route and they deserve better than the 54 bus can provide at peak times.

Thank you,
Kevin Gallatin

Name: Matthew McCord (1360 Hartford Avenue, Saint Paul 55116) No

Comments: I write with a concern about a component of the proposal for item 2025-203 - namely, the removal of county funding for the Riverview Corridor.

While I recognize that county-led planning for the corridor has ended, a county funding source for the new city-led project will be critical for funding and completing the proposed and essential transit and roadway improvements to this corridor. Cutting the city-led project off from county funding will likely just ensure that the corridor remains with poor and decaying roadway, transit, and pedestrian conditions. I would suggest an amendment to the proposal such that the city-led project remains eligible for county funding, and therefore the local commitment component of FTA matching programs. Thank you.

Name: Paul Hardt (291 7th Street West Apt 909, Saint Paul 55102) No

Comments: I Commissioners,

I write in support of shifting funds from the Riverview Corridor project to supporting badly needed improvements on West 7th Street. Unfortunately, due to a schedule conflict, I will be unable to attend your meeting. I hope this note will express sufficiently my support for moving funds to support West 7th improvements. I was a member of the Citizen Advisory Committee for the Riverview Corridor, as well as past chair of the Transportation and Landuse Committee of the Fort Road Federation. I have followed closely the proposals for improving West 7th over the last several years. I am also a former city councilmember for the City of New Brighton. The hole that opened up on West 7th Street in front of Tom Reid's is a dramatic, but not unique, indication that improvements to West 7th are badly needed. The road surface needs improvement, better pedestrian crosswalks are needed, and infrastructure must be updated. Some of the infrastructure in West 7th is decades old and reflects old, outmoded technology.

As a resident of West 7th and Ramsey County, I strongly support moving funds from the Riverview Corridor project to West 7th improvements.

Paul Hardt

Name: Jonathan Feldman (401 Sibley St Apt 302, Saint Paul 55101) No

Comments: I'm in support of the New West 7th Corridor outline. The 54 as it is frequently gets delayed, so the reliability and transit prioritization that comes with BRT would make me more excited to use this corridor and to encourage friends flying in to MSP that there actually is a modern and reliable option to get downtown. Also, the corridor deserves pedestrian improvements, as it currently feels intimidating and unwelcoming to access businesses up and down the corridor. I appreciate the multi-modal approach that balances the needs of all stakeholders without accepting more years of stagnation.

Name: Becky Yust (256 Goodrich Avenue, Saint Paul 55102) NA

Comments: To Ramsey County Commissioners.

Ramsey County orchestrated 1,000's of volunteer hours of West 7th community members over the past 20+ years to plan for new transit under the guise of Riverview Corridor, first an extension of the Twin Cities light rail, and then, a rail-based streetcar. After 20 years, Ramsey County canceled all of their activities related to Riverview Corridor in Fall 2024. Over \$730 million of the Ramsey County Transportation Sales and Use Tax Fund was to be tapped for the County's share of funding for Riverview Corridor. The 13,000 residents of West 7th have contributed to this fund continuously for the past 20 years. However, we now learn that Ramsey County will not expend a penny of that fund to improve transportation in West 7th. In fact, there is no project listed for West 7th, not even improvements to Randolph Avenue, a county owned corridor. Residents of the county, specifically West 7th, should not be penalized for over 20 years of effort participating in a misguided planning process led by Ramsey County.

Name: Kathy Carruth (NA) NA

Comments: Commissioner Ortega,

The Highland District Council (HDC) has submitted comments for the public hearing regarding the reallocation of funding from the West 7th street corridor. Please see attached. The HDC is disappointed that the County process did not share this information with the Highland District Council or give any information to your community partners prior to the hearing. I hope that improvements can be made to the engagement process moving forward.

Name: Robert Coleman (NA) No

Comments: Hello Ramsey County Clerk, and thank you for the opportunity to send in a comment via email. My name is Robert Coleman, and I am a transit advocate based in Bloomington. I rely on transit every day, and get around all over the metro area using it. It is extremely important that transit funding not be diverted to other purposes, now more than ever. Looking at the Transit and Transportation Investment Plan, very little of it is actually dedicated to transit. The Intersection and Interchange projects, while probably will be better for multi-modal transportation, look to have very little application towards transit improvements. The Corridor projects have a little bit of promise, but none of them are the transformational changes that West 7th would have received under Riverview. If the whole point is to dedicate to BRT to make it cheaper, then we need to actually spend that money on MORE BRT, instead of just making one project cheaper and forgetting to do anything else for a decade. There is zero guarantee that any percentage of the Corridor dollars will actually be spent on transit improvements. We're going to get stuck back in the cycle of whittling down features and improvements until it's basically just a road reconstruction at the status quo. The only thing in the plan that is guaranteed to actually improve transit is the 1 million for Transit Signal Priority, one tenth of one percent of the plan. The Mobility hubs may have a tangential influence on transit, but 2 million isn't going to go far if it's spend on transit. What this plan needs is actual commitment to transit, such as setting aside a significant portion of dollars for delivering 50 miles of bus lanes by 2035, for transitways (such as delivering a truncated first phase of the Purple Line White Bear Ave alignment without federal funding, since a St. Paul terminus isn't federally viable). Extending the platforms on the A line to accommodate articulated busses, more aBRT. The things that transit riders actually want and need, not EV charging infrastructure, subsidizing downtown businesses, or a new road. Actual, bold changes, like improvements to the Green Line to make actual speed improvements, or 35E BRT, or any number of projects that aren't just "Hey, we're

gonna rebuild some intersections". There are so, so, so many ideas that transit riders all over the region have been begging for, and this plan doesn't meet our needs in the slightest.

Name: Scott Berger (1452 Ashland Avenue, Saint Paul 55104) No

Comments: My name is Scott Berger, and I live in Saint Paul. I'm here to strongly urge Ramsey County to retain full funding for the West 7th Bus Rapid Transit and associated pedestrian and bike improvements. We talk a lot in this region about sustainability, climate goals, and equity—but we still design our infrastructure as if driving (i.e., cars, trucks, and SUVs) alone should be the default for the average person. The West 7th Corridor is one place where we can finally shift that pattern. Fast, frequent, and reliable BRT, combined with walkable streets and new regional trails, makes it truly possible for people to leave the car at home, even those of us with small kids. As a parent, I can tell you: families want more options. But the bus has to be predictable, dignified, and frequent enough to replace the car. This project does that. Even as Saint Paul and Ramsey County claim to be forward-thinking, we still build and budget like parking is rightfully king. It's time to change that. Our investments should reflect the kind of city and county we say we want: connected, green, accessible, and less car-dominated.

In short, the West 7th BRT project:

1. Delivers real transit priority, with up to 57% dedicated guideway,
2. Adds safer pedestrian connections and traffic calming,
3. Builds a new 5-mile regional multi-use trail, and
4. Maintains some on-street parking, but doesn't let parking dictate the whole design.

This isn't a speculative concept, it's the result of years of community engagement and planning. Backtracking now would send the message that car-first convenience still outweighs safety, sustainability, and access for everyone else. I urge you to stay the course and fully fund this project. We need more corridors like West 7th, not fewer.

Name: Joe Baierl (406 Wacouta Street unit 210, Saint Paul 55101) No

Comments: Please follow through and implement the most recent bus Rapid Transit plan for the W 7th corridor. I offer four strong reasons why you should do so: 1. The route is important. You know that, given that it's been under review for many years. 2. Ramsey County, the City of Saint Paul, and strategic partners and investors are about to initiate \$1 Billion or more of investment to transform Downtown. Failure to upgrade Downtown's direct link to the airport and Mall would be a red flag to investors. Do the right thing here to pull key components of the transformation forward TOGETHER. 3. There has been fresh new investment in Bus Rapid Transit in the Gold Line and the Metro B line. Keep the momentum going to build a coherent, easy-to-use system. 4. Your credibility is at stake. This route has been fraught with indecision for YEARS. This proposed bus route is inexpensive compared to the previous rail plan. If you fail to pursue even this plan, the public should look at all of you very critically.

Name: Matthew Belanger (1458 Arona Street, St Paul, MN 55108) - No

Comments: Hello,

I would like to express my support for the West 7th reconstruction project to receive funding from the Ramsey County Transportation Sales and Use Tax Fund.

The current state of West 7th is dangerous for pedestrians, cyclists, and transit users, and encourages hazardous driving behavior along the corridor. This money is critical in ensuring that this street becomes and livable and vibrant corridor for all. I implore the County Board of Commissioners to continue to allocate these dollars to the West 7th reconstruction project.

Respectfully,

Matthew Belanger

Name: Julie Borgerding July (1111 Montreal Ave) - No

Comments: Please use money from the thankfully scuttled corridor project to construct the new plan with rapid bus added to W 7th while keeping the 54 line. The sink hole shows that the street needs work.

Thanks

Julie Borgerding July

Name: Justin Nelson (2121 Iglehart Ave, St Paul, MN 55104) - No

Comments: I'm writing to urge the council to support the new West 7th corridor concept. The corridor is an important transit way for the county and has been waiting decades for a proper solution.

Name: Anna Potter (2121 Iglehart Ave, St Paul, MN 55104) - No

Comments: Hello, I believe you should support the New West 7th Corridor Concept. It is a critical transitway in the region that needs County funding to implement. The multimodal elements of the concept will transform the corridor and the County for decades to come, for the better. Your work on Riverview will not go to waste if we can pull together and fund a great BRT and trail concept on West 7th. Thank you for all that you do.

Name: Tim Morehead (1932 Bayard Ave, St Paul, MN 55116) - Yes

Comments: I want to comment on the transfer of funding from the West 7th Street corridor to other projects within the Ramsey County "Transit and Transportation Investment Plan". The West 7th Street corridor from downtown St. Paul to MSP has been studied to death and frankly Ramsey County has wasted much time and money on this vital transportation link. Now that the State of Minnesota Transportation Department and the City of St. Paul are in the planning stages for a plan on this corridor, Ramsey County is pulling the funding for this street. The government of Ramsey County is again showing that it is not listening to the people. The people that live and drive on West 7th street need this road finally fixed and not delayed any longer. We have been waiting well over 10+ years to get this road fixed. Don't take the money away.

Name: Maggie Rock (NA) -

Comments: Dear Commissioners,

I am writing to urge Ramsey County to take immediate and decisive action to invest in the West 7th community. This district has waited long enough. After decades of broken promises, missed

opportunities, and deferred projects, it is time for the County to fulfill its obligation to the residents of this neighborhood—**not someday, but now.**

I am calling for two urgent funding priorities:

1. **A modern transit solution** to replace the now-canceled Riverview Corridor project; and
2. **A greenway with safe pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure** along Randolph Avenue, connecting West 7th to Shepard Road, the Grand Round, and the Mississippi River.

The history of disinvestment in West 7th is long and well documented. The Riverview Corridor project began in 1998 and has consumed **over \$11.7 million in public funding** without yielding results. In the process, our community has been passed over for other investments—**\$28 million in 2014 alone**—because we were told to wait for Riverview. Our infrastructure has suffered as a result. The mill and overlay project for West 7th has been delayed again and again—now scheduled for 2028 or even later. Meanwhile, the street deteriorates, nearly **90 trees removed in 2019 have never been replaced**, and our sidewalks remain unsafe and uninviting.

Whether or not one supported the streetcar proposal, the abrupt cancellation of the Riverview Corridor—**without a clear alternative or reinvestment plan**—has left our neighborhood behind once again. This decision directly harms residents who rely on transit, walkable streets, and public infrastructure, and it leaves us more vulnerable to developments like the recently approved FCC industrial trash truck depot.

I am encouraged by the City of Saint Paul's leadership in advancing a **bus rapid transit (BRT) line for West 7th**, a project with strong potential to meet our community's needs. The West 7th/Fort Road Federation supports this initiative, with the clear expectation that residents' voices will help shape the final design. But without a meaningful financial and planning commitment from Ramsey County, this project remains in jeopardy.

At the same time, **Randolph Avenue is in critical need of investment.** It serves as the only connection from much of our neighborhood to the river, yet currently offers **no sidewalks, no bike lanes, and no safe space for people on foot or bike.** With the new industrial traffic from the FCC site, the dangers are only increasing. The County must act before this becomes a public safety crisis.

Ramsey County has access to **millions of dollars previously allocated for West 7th.** It is unacceptable that those funds are now at risk of being diverted elsewhere. Our neighborhood has already waited over 25 years. We cannot afford to be overlooked again.

This is a pivotal moment. With the right investments, we can create:

- **A safer, more accessible West 7th Street**
- **A frequent, reliable BRT line that truly serves our community**
- And a **green, connected Randolph Avenue** that offers safe access to the river and links our neighborhood together

I urge you to commit to these priorities and partner with us to deliver on promises that have been delayed for far too long.

The time for study and delay is over. West 7th needs investment now.

Sincerely,
Maggie Rock
District 5 Resident and West 7th/Fort Road District Council First Vice President

Name: Steven Dropkin (489 Michigan Street, St Paul, MN 55102) - No

Comments: I am a 22-year resident of the West 7th neighborhood. I am EXTREMELY dismayed to learn that funds allocated over the years for the now-defunct Riverview Corridor project are being spread to transit projects throughout Ramsey county, with no major work being scheduled for the very area Riverview was supposed to serve.

Government has held off West 7th Street repairs and improvements for YEARS on the theory that repairs and improvements would be wasted when mass transit finally was built. That belief held on through MANY years of delays and studies and demonstrations of political will.

And now that the county has finally pulled the plug -- on what I believe would have been a very expensive but underwhelming solution to transit on West 7th, no shade for that -- NO significant money will be allocated to fixing a heavily-used thoroughfare that hasn't seen needed repairs in years??

I'm sure you can do better. Please take advantage of the years of study of West 7th and build some transit projects that actually improve the quality of the neighborhood for residents and businesses and -- in third priority -- those just passing through West 7th on their way to other places.

Thank you.

Name: Tanya Beck (686 Victoria Street, Saint Paul 55102) - No

Comments: I'm heartbroken that West 7th is being overlooked for road and transit improvements yet again. I wish I was surprised. I've lived here over 20 years and raised my kid in this neighborhood. I didn't let them cross West 7th alone until they were 14, because it's not safe. We've been promised better streets, pedestrian safety efforts, and sufficient transit for decades, and been plied with plastic bollards while nothing of substance ever comes.

The Riverview Corridor promise dragged on for years, and now it's gone, with no benefit to our community, despite all the public money spent to plan it. We were told improvements and investments were coming. Then they built a truck depot on one of the few walkable routes from 7th access the river.

I am engaged. I show up at the community events. I am on my district council. I go to listening sessions where our politicians from the city and county nod reassuringly, acknowledging our needs and our frustration. I've watched our taxes go up, up, up. I genuinely cannot think of a time I ever complained about property taxes. I care about the things those dollars are supposed to support. But to pay those taxes year after year while our needs are ignored is not fair.

We need trees. We need lights that are safe from vandals. We need crosswalks maintained and adequately marked. We need transit and pedestrian improvements that support our residents and our businesses. We need roads that don't damage vehicles that get our neighbors to work to pay

their rent/mortgages. I lost two tires to W. 7th between downtown and 35 last year, an expense that many folks cannot afford and may cost them transportation to a job.

The money raised for transit in our neighborhood should be used, at least in part, for our neighborhood, not an invitation for new projects in other places.

Name: J.B Shank (jbshank@umn.edu) – No

Comments: Dear Ramsey County Commissioners,

I am writing to express my vehement opposition to the proposed diversion of Ramsey County funds away from the Riverview Corridor project and toward other projects that offer no direct remedies for the decades-old development needs of the West 7th/Fort Road neighborhood.

I have lived in Saint Paul Ward 3 for over a quarter century, first up in the highlands in a 1924 bungalow where my wife and I raised two boys that both graduated from Saint Paul Central High School. After 2022, we moved down into the river flats to start a new empty-nest life in a rental apartment at Otto Avenue and Shephard Road. We moved down into the West 7th/Fort Road/Riverview Corridor neighborhood in order to have better access to the river and to join in the exciting renaissance currently occurring in this eclectic and vibrant community.

We have found the neighborhood to be exactly what we wanted it to be, but I have also come to realize the way that the vitality of the West 7th/Fort Road neighborhood as a residential community has been achieved only through a constant fight with the city and Ramsey County to obtain our fair share of the funds necessary to keep infrastructure updated and needed repairs completed.

As Fort Road Federation President Meg Duhr correctly describes the situation: “In my West 7th neighborhood, every day I see crumbling sidewalks, I see street tree spaces that have been empty for over 8 years, I see a bunch of plastic bollards that have been run over or broken off littering the streets, I see missing crosswalk paint, I see drivers treating our street like a freeway. I see Randolph Avenue between 7th and Shepard– a Ramsey Co. right of way without a single improvement made for pedestrians or cyclists, not even a sidewalk” Why is it that our neighborhood continually gets treated with neglect?

I am a professional historian employed by the University of Minnesota, and my assessment of the history of this battle between residents of the West Seventh neighborhood and government agencies has been amply confirmed by my many conversations with long-time neighborhood resident and friend Joe Landsberger over the last decade. His recently published book *Origin Story*, which documents the struggle over the last century, is also a great record of what has happened. What *Origin Story* teaches us is that while our neighborhood has always been a thriving home of a diverse community of people and families who consider the West Seventh/Fort Road corridor to be their residence and home, those in charge of neighborhood management and development repeatedly lost sight of that reality and instead viewed our neighborhood solely as a zone for industry and commercial development.

The West 7th/Fort Road/Riverview Corridor neighborhood has long been subjected to environmental injustices, from the destruction of homes for freeway construction to industrial developments that have polluted our air and water. We have also been stuck in limbo for transportation funding and improvements for decades. The Riverview project began with a study in 1998. Since then, it's consumed over \$11.7 million in public funds and created decades of delay.

We lost out on earlier transit investments—\$28 million in 2014 alone—because of it. Our mill and overlay project was put off until 2022, then 2024, and now 2028-2029 to align with Riverview Corridor construction. Meanwhile, the street deteriorates, approximately 90 trees were cut down in 2019 but never replaced, and pedestrians face dangerous, unpleasant conditions.

This neglect must stop now. Our neighborhood must be given the funding support it needs and has been waiting for over decades. I therefore strongly urge Ramsey County to reconsider its priorities for its funding allocations in 2026 and beyond.

Respectfully submitted,

J.B. Shank

Area 3 Coordinator for the Fort Road Federation

Morse Alumni Distinguished University Teaching Professor in the Department of History, Scholar of the College of Liberal Arts, and Chair of the College of Liberal Arts Faculty Assembly at the University of Minnesota

Name: Andrew Greenlee (148 McBoal Street, Saint Paul 55102) – No

Comments: Ramsey County's Transit and Transportation Investment Plan says "The county had allocated approximately \$730 million in funding... towards completing the Riverview Corridor. With the removal of streetcar as an option, an opportunity to reallocate the funding across the county arose."

This makes it sound as if the streetcar option was the only option being contemplated for the Riverview Corridor Project, but Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and Arterial Bus Rapid Transit (ABRT) were frequently presented as viable alternatives for Riverview - see, for instance, Riverview Corridor Report #7 "Detailed Definitions of Alternatives." A BRT project is aligned with Riverview's fundamental goals and values and seems to be a prime candidate for Riverview Corridor funding. It is not clear why the County would abandon this type of effort entirely, opting to reallocate all of the funding for projects that are completely unrelated to Riverview.

The planning process for the Riverview Corridor Project was long and expensive and came with extremely high opportunity costs for the W7th neighborhood. Maintenance of W7th has been deferred to align with the Riverview timeline, and tens of millions of dollars of funding for possible transit projects was foregone to avoid conflicts with Riverview. If Riverview funding is now reallocated, with no investments in W7th, the W7th community will have borne those costs for nothing. Please consider revising the Transit and Transportation plan to invest in projects that help fulfill some of Riverview's key goals, so that the long, expensive, and arduous Riverview process will bear some fruit for the W7th community.

Thank you!

Name: Korinne Dennis (65 Garfield Street, Saint Paul 55102) – No

Comments: I moved to the West 7th neighborhood because it reminded me of home. The community's history, culture, and closeness made it feel familiar, even when my hometown of Philadelphia felt worlds away. As a first-generation homebuyer, I poured my entire savings into this home and this neighborhood.

I've since become President of the Little Bohemia Neighborhood Association, a board member of the Fort Road Federation, organized National Night Out, distributed back-to-school backpacks to students, and personally manage the trash at the Pleasant Place green space.

These are not titles I wear for recognition—they are part of the unpaid labor many of us contribute to making West 7th a clean, safe, and vibrant place to live. That’s what makes this so disheartening. Despite our efforts, we receive little in return from the city and county governments that should be partnering with us—not leaning on us to do what they’ve neglected.

St. Paul residents are the most heavily taxed in Minnesota. So why am I, a neighbor, taking out the trash in a public park? Why are we leading beautification projects in schoolyards yet still dodging potholes, broken sidewalks, and unsafe crosswalks? How has this community been waiting since 1998 for a meaningful revitalization plan—only to be denied once again?

We all know how dangerous West 7th Street can be. It’s treated like a highway, but we live here. Neighbors walk their kids to school here. I walk my dogs here, and let me also add the lack of trash bins and dog waste stations that are prominent in other major cities, including Minneapolis. And we’ve all heard the stories—popped tires from potholes, accidents at intersections, close calls crossing the street. There has to be accountability for that.

Politics has lost sight of the people. It’s become more about the bottom line, optics, or pleasing a select few. But what if we flipped that? What if we invested in all of us? What if Saint Paul was treated like the capital city it is—not forgotten, not bypassed, but celebrated? Let’s put our dollars where they belong: back into our neighborhoods.

According to Ramsey County’s Transit and Transportation Investment Plan, “The county had allocated approximately \$730 million in funding... towards completing the Riverview Corridor. With the removal of streetcar as an option, an opportunity to reallocate the funding across the county arose.”

This wording implies that streetcar was the only viable option—but that’s simply not true. Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and Arterial BRT (ABRT) were clearly outlined as feasible and cost-effective options in Riverview Corridor Report #7. These alternatives align closely with Riverview’s goals and values and should still be on the table.

The planning process for the Riverview Corridor was long, expensive, and disruptive. Maintenance along West 7th was delayed to align with Riverview’s timeline, and tens of millions in potential transit funding were deferred to avoid conflicts. If the promised investments now vanish entirely, the West 7th community will have shouldered those burdens for nothing.

We urge you to revise the Transit and Transportation Investment Plan to ensure that some of the Riverview funding remains invested in the corridor it was meant to serve. The people of West 7th have waited long enough. Let this process bear fruit—not just for the record books, but for the community that has lived its consequences for over two decades.

Finally, consider your legacy and the youth who will one day take over this neighborhood. What will you leave them?

Name: Moz Rude (876 W 7th Street, Saint Paul 55102) – No

Comments: Ramsey County needs to invest in West 7th—not someday, but now.

We’re calling for two urgent funding priorities:

A modern transit solution to replace the canceled Riverview Corridor project.

A greenway with pedestrian and bicycling infrastructure on Randolph Avenue, connecting West 7th to Shepard Road, the Grand Round, and the River.

West 7th has been stuck in limbo for decades. The Riverview project began with a study in 1998. Since then, it's consumed over \$11.7 million in public funds and created decades of delay. We lost out on earlier transit investments—\$28 million in 2014 alone—because of it. Our mill and overlay project was put off until 2022, then 2024, and now 2028-2089 to align with Riverview Corridor construction. Meanwhile, the street deteriorates, approximately 90 trees were cut down in 2019 but never replaced, and pedestrians face dangerous, unpleasant conditions.

Whether or not you supported the streetcar plan, canceling the whole project—without supporting an alternative—leaves our neighborhood behind once again. This decision hurts real people who depend on transit, walkable streets, and public infrastructure. Continuing to delay this work also prolongs disinvestment in our community, putting our residents at risk of additional harmful developments such as the FCC industrial trash truck depot.

We are encouraged that the City of Saint Paul has stepped up and taken the lead on developing a bus rapid transit project for West 7th, a project that has the potential to transform our neighborhood. The West 7th/Fort Road Federation supports it as a whole with the caveat that the final design must reflect the voices of those who live, work, and travel here. But without funding and partnership from Ramsey County - this project risks never coming to fruition any time in the near future.

At the same time, Randolph Avenue urgently needs investment. This is a major corridor that currently lacks any pedestrian or biking infrastructure—no sidewalks, no bike lanes, no safe way to move through the area without a car. This section of Randolph is the only way for area residents to get to the river, because we are cut off by railroad tracks and urban highways elsewhere. With the recent addition of the FCC Environmental Services trash truck depot and refueling station, the need for safety improvements has risen to a critical level. Residents are now navigating this road precariously alongside industrial truck traffic. That is unacceptable.

Meanwhile, the County has amassed millions of dollars meant for West 7th and intends to reallocate those funds elsewhere. We are here to say: West 7th must not be left out again. No more delays.

This is a turning point. With the right investment, we can finally create:

A safer, more accessible West 7th Street;

A reliable and frequent bus rapid transit line;

And a green, connected Randolph Avenue that links our neighborhood to the river and to each other.

We need action from our County partners. Let's work together to deliver the future our community has been promised for over 25 years.

My concerns are in alignment with the Fort Road Federations testimony. West 7th is a neighborhood of strong willed, resilient and exuberant human beings.

When funding to keep our neighborhood safe, accessible and comfortable to live in gets depleted, it affects a large community. The people are tired and fed up with the lack of resources that hinder their quality of life. Our neighborhood is overlooked and neglected of resources. It is continuously disappointing and frustrating that so many advocate for restoration and decent living conditions and are met with broken promises and no consideration. I ask that you take the Fort Road Federations requests and concerns seriously, as they are amplifying the voices of the real people who live here and want what's best for our community as a whole.

Name: Sara Fleetham (953 Scheffer Ave, Saint Paul 55102) – No

Comments: Public Hearing: Use of County Transportation Sales and Use Tax Funds

The County has amassed millions of dollars meant for West 7th and the River Corridor yet intends to reallocate those funds elsewhere. How dare you? It's unconscionable and a slap in the face of the West 7th Community. Ramsey County needs to invest in West 7th NOW – no more kicking the proverbial can down the road.

West 7th has been stuck in limbo for decades. The Riverview project began with a study in 1998. Since then, it's consumed over \$11.7 million in public funds and created decades of delay. We lost out on earlier transit investments—\$28 million in 2014 alone—because of it. The W 7th mill and overlay project was put off until 2022, then 2024, and now 2028-2089 to align with Riverview Corridor construction. Meanwhile, the street deteriorates, approximately 90 trees were cut down in 2019 but never replaced, and pedestrians face dangerous, unpleasant conditions.

As a resident of this community, I implore Commissioner Ortega and other commissioners to revisit the use of County Transportation Sales and Use of Tax Funds and include a transit solution for W 7th. It was Ramsey County that unceremoniously cancelled the Riverview Corridor Project.

The proposed revisions to Ramsey County Transportation Sales and Use Tax Capital Improvement Plan hurt real people who depend on transit, walkable streets, and public infrastructure. Continuing to delay this work also prolongs disinvestment in my community, putting my neighbors at risk of additional harmful developments such as the FCC industrial trash truck depot on Randolph.

My neighborhood needs a safe and accessible W 7th Street and safe and an accessible route to reach the Mississippi River. It is the responsibility of Commissioner Ortega to provide this for my neighborhood that he represents. Do something.

Sara Fleetham

Name: Scott Smith (1060 Grand Ave, Saint Paul 55102) – No

Comments: Please do not divert more money to road projects. This city needs more public transit. It's not fair that you are moving all of this money to these projects without a longer period for the public to comment and provide feedback. I have a 2 year old and rely on the bus system to get

around. Buses that are fast and frequent are helpful to families, like mine, living in the city. Please don't do this.



June 3, 2025

Chief Clerk
Ramsey County
15 W. Kellogg Blvd., Suite 250
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Re: Ramsey County Transportation Sales and Use Tax Funds

Dear Ramsey County Board of Commissioners,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the revised list of projects eligible for the Ramsey County Transportation Sales and Use Tax funds. The City of Saint Paul and Ramsey County have a long history of proactive collaboration to deliver multimodal transportation improvements that benefit all roadway users, and we look forward to building on that history together.

Following the county's decision to suspend development of the Riverview Streetcar plan in September 2024, the City of Saint Paul, MnDOT, and Metro Transit have been working to develop a new multimodal BRT concept in the West 7th Street corridor. This new and exciting work builds on years of planning and development led by Ramsey County to achieve our shared goals for this corridor. This new concept brings:

- Faster, more reliable transit through a high level of investment in a regional BRT line, with nine miles of dedicated lanes in Ramsey County
- A new five-mile multiuse trail that expands regional bicycle and pedestrian connectivity
- A reconfigured West 7th Street that addresses critical utility needs and pedestrian safety improvements

This is an important regional investment in transit that connects to key county investments in the METRO Gold and Purple lines and provides improved connections for Ramsey County residents to the airport and Mall of America.

The new concept has been positively received by members of the public and other key stakeholders. There is a strong desire in this corridor to deliver the aforementioned improvements as quickly and efficiently as possible. The time to advance this multimodal BRT concept is now, aligning development with MnDOT's programmed 2028-2029 investment in the condition of West 7th Street.



County involvement is critical to delivering these three well-supported and much-needed project elements to their fullest benefit, with the lowest disruption, and without further delay. Achieving this transformative vision for the West 7th corridor will depend on the financial commitments and advocacy of each of our agencies, including Ramsey County.

Our shared proposed financial plan identifies Ramsey County, MnDOT, and Hennepin County, as important funding participants in the capital project. The required capital funding commitment would be significantly lower than the county's anticipated prior commitment for the Riverview Streetcar. Metro Transit and the City of Saint Paul would be responsible for the ongoing operations and capital maintenance of transit and trail elements. MnDOT is committed to working through a turnback process to address long-term ownership of West 7th Street.

To ensure the viability of this proposed financial plan and consequent ability to deliver the strongly supported benefits of this concept, the City of Saint Paul, MnDOT, and Metropolitan Council request that Ramsey County include the West 7th corridor in the list of projects eligible for the Ramsey County Transportation Sales and Use Tax funds.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide comments. Our agencies remain committed to a generational multimodal reinvestment in the West 7th Street corridor. We deeply appreciate the historical and ongoing partnership between our agencies and look forward working together to deliver our shared vision for this corridor in the near term.

Sincerely,

Melvin Carter
Mayor
City of Saint Paul

Khani Sahebjam
Metro District Engineer
MnDOT

Charles A. Zelle
Chair
Metropolitan Council

CC

Commissioner Tara Jebens-Singh, District 1
Commissioner Mary Jo McGuire, District 2
Commissioner Garrison McMurtrey, District 3
Commissioner Rena Moran, District 4
Commissioner Rafael Ortega, District 5
Commissioner Mai Chong Xiong, District 6
Commissioner Kelly Miller, District 7
Brian Isaacson, Director Ramsey County Public Works
Mike Rogers, Deputy Director – Multimodal Planning
Jennifer Jordan, Transit Project Manager

AA-ADA-EEO Employer

June 3, 2025

Attn: Commissioner Garrison McMurtrey
Ramsey County Board Office
Room 220 Courthouse
15 West Kellogg Boulevard
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Dear Commissioner McMurtrey,

I am writing to express concerns about the revisions to the list of projects eligible for the Ramsey County Transportation Sales and Use Tax funds.

While the reallocation of funds away from the Riverview Corridor to other projects may not completely preclude Ramsey County's cost participation on West 7th Corridor, it appears that a significant portion of the revenue approved specifically to improve and expand the county's transit system will not be used for its intended purposes.

Furthermore, for reallocating approximately \$730 million in funding from the ½ cent local option sales tax and regional railroad authority levy—almost a billion dollars—we have identified that there has not been sufficient public awareness and engagement of the process.

The Ramsey County Board of Commissioners could vote on this matter as soon as June 10, 2025. We ask that you consider whether the reallocation of funds will truly improve and expand the transit system in the county before taking a vote.

Ramsey County residents deserve great transit and travel options that are equitable and sustainable. During a time of federal uncertainty, now is the time to lead on transit investments locally.

Respectfully,

MJ Carpio
Executive Director
mjc@move-mn.org | 651-789-1403

