It’s official—the SW LRT route in Minneapolis is through the Kenilworth Corridor. The Metropolitan Council approved the route last week. Also announced is a design team that will work with Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority and the City of Minneapolis to conduct the station area strategic planning process for the five Minneapolis stations. The stations in Minneapolis will be Royalston, Van White, Penn, 21st Street and West Lake. To get the exact location of stations go to www.southwesttransitway.org.

The Station Planning Team
The selected design team involves five firms: AECOM (Steve Wilensky & Dave Showalter) will lead the team and have extensive experience working on LRT projects, urban design, and transit oriented development. SRF Consulting (Barry Warner) will bring expertise in local urban design, transportation, and landscape architecture. KLD Consulting (Kathie Doty) will manage the public involvement process. Ms. Doty has worked on the Southwest LRT project since 2002. McComb Group (Jim McComb) will conduct the Development Opportunities & Market Assessment. 4RM+ULA will do the graphics/visual representation.

LRT Route Decided

SUCCESS! The Trail Meets the River

SUCCESS...continued on page 5

Standing near the eastern edge of the park, looking east under I-394 into Linden Yard. The Cedar Lake Trail and Southwest LRT will coexist in this corridor. There will be two stations a short walk away.

The LRT trains will squeeze in around bike riders and autos crossing Cedar Lake Parkway, with South Beach and the lake in the background.

Light Rail...continued on page 3
The spirals of the Cedar Grove.
The Planning Process

The station area strategic planning process will begin with a detailed look at each of the station areas and land use planning done to-date, a multimodal access analysis, and a market study which will form the basis for conceptual designs for the station (platform, sidewalks, drop off, etc.), a detailed land use plan for a half mile radius around each station, and an implementation plan for each station area.

The plans will build on previous land use studies and inform future rail design and land use decisions. Planning is being done to inform Preliminary Engineering and to anticipate and plan for issues related to access to the stations, land use, market change, and potential impacts. It will allow for a dialogue about the issues, constructive resident and business input into the project, an understanding of potential change, and a unified vision for the stations.

Getting Involved

Public open houses will be held throughout the planning process to distribute information and collect input. Three open houses will be held for the 21st and West Lake Street Stations together, and three open houses will be held for the Penn, Van White, and Royalston Stations together.

A Community Members’ Working Group (CMWG) will be convened to: 1. Raise local issues as the site, concept, and implementation plans are formulated. 2. Act as liaisons between the station area planning process and their representative group.

The CMWG will meet a couple of weeks before each of the public open houses, and an additional time near the end of the planning process, for a total of four meetings. The purpose of each meeting will correspond to the planning process work being done at the time. The group will meet as a whole and break into small groups during the course of the meetings.

CMWG meetings will be open to the public, but in order to best represent the interests and stakeholders near the stations, neighborhood associations, business associations, local organizations, and owners of property immediately adjacent to stations are to appoint a member to the CMWG, this member will serve as the representative and liaison for your group.

CMWG meetings will be held Tuesdays from 6:30–8:00 p.m. on: June 22 (this kick off meeting will likely be two hours in length), August 24, October 26, and December 7 or 14. The location of these meeting has yet to be determined. Again, to get information as it unfolds go the web site cited above.

Cedar Lake Park Association will actively be involved in the station planning process. We must protect the park and trails! Your involvement is also urged. Stay tuned!

For more details go to www.southwesttransitway.org.

Bicycling Magazine rates Minneapolis the #1 city for biking in the country. A remarkable achievement, more so because of our winters. Adding to this is the recent rollout of Nice Ride Minnesota, a system of rental bikes available to pick up and leave at kiosks scattered around downtown, Uptown, and the U of M. This system is successful in Montreal, and is the first in the U.S.

The lakeshore trail, between the Mound and the Cedar-Isles Canal, runs .61 mile. It provides an intimate experience of the lake, woodlands, and marshes, passing by Linda’s Spiral, Hidden Beach, and the Sunset Bench.

Water Quality

Cedar Lake water quality was up for 2009, reports Tim Brown, Manager of the Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board (MPRB) Environmental Operations. Last year was a very dry year and lack of runoff due to rainfall was the main reason for this uptick. Cedar Lake’s overall water quality has steadily improved since 1996, mainly due to efforts to treat runoff, such as creating the Cedar Meadows pond complex on the southwest corner of the lake.

The MPRB assesses a wide range of indicators throughout the year at Cedar Lake and derives five water quality measures from the data: Aesthetics, Habitat Quality, Water Clarity, Public Health, and Recreational Access. For 2009 Cedar Lake rated “excellent” for Aesthetics, Habitat Quality, Public Health, and Recreational Access; and “good” for Water Clarity. Details of the indices and the data can be found in the MPRB’s Water Quality Report for 2009 at: www.minneapolis parks.org/documents/caring/Water ResourcesReport2009.pdf

Cedar Lake usually has a high density of aquatic plant life. In many areas, the lake’s depth is less than 15 feet—a depth where aquatic plants thrive. While these plants are crucial for animal habitat and water quality, they can be an obstacle for recreation, especially invasive Eurasian Milfoil. In 2009 Cedar Lake also had a high density of filamentous algae. The density of the algae can block sunlight and crowd space needed by other varieties of plant life. To maintain good recreational access to the lake, the MPRB annually removes some of this algae—along with invasive Milfoil—during the summer months.

Tim noted that the aluminum sulfite (alum) treatment performed by the MPRB in 1996 initially helped improve water clarity, but the effect was limited due to the normal life span of such a treatment and Cedar Lake’s relative shallowness. Today the impact of that alum treatment is probably not a factor in the observed water quality.
Projects in the Park

The Kenilworth Trail corridor, marked F on the map, has been selected as the locally preferred route for the Southwest Transitway. Presently active heavy rail will go away, and two sets of light rail tracks will be laid, requiring a 72’ wide corridor. Proposed stations near the park are close: Hidden Beach (H), and Penn Ave/I-394 N. The Mound area, M, is the highest point on the northern lakeshore. Here, the Loppet cross country ski trail comes off the lake, running east along the prairie to just south of B, where it turns south into the woods. The trail continues to the Hidden Beach area, where it returns to the lake. The 2010 races were a great success, and once again CLPA managed the end of race food stop. Partnering with students from Providence Academy, we served over 2000 participants.

The Jones-Harrison Residence, on the hill between K and O, graciously hosted our 2010 Annual Meeting. Moved from the cold of January to the warmer April, friends and supporters gathered to learn about CLPA activities, elect a new Board of Directors, and enjoy fellowship and good food.

The Burnham Woodlands restoration project, W, continues, having logged over 3000 volunteer hours since 2005. It is a good example of our model of landscape conversion in action, with the ongoing removal of invasive shrubs and forbs, freeing up the native vegetation. Seeds are also scattered throughout. Along with Big Woods I, G, and II, E, projects such as these can always use your help, and represent our ongoing commitment to the nature park at Cedar Lake.

There are three beaches to swim on Cedar, located at I, J, and H. There are thirst-quenching water pumps located by the Mound, M, near Hidden Beach, H, and at South Beach, L.

The memorial Cedar Grove, D, continues to mature. The cedar trees, laid out along two spirals, have grown to nearly 15 feet tall, and are visible from the air. One can walk the spirals, or sit contemplatively on the Kasota limestone bench. A henge has been created, with marks for the winter and summer solstice sunrise/sunset, and the cardinal directions. This year, we will have all of the names of the honorees and donors placed on our website, along with photos and text describing this important part of the park.

Hennepin County prairie lands, N, were partially burned this spring. We have had a series of meet-
We’ve Been Workin’ on the Railroad

BY PHILLIP QUALY

The Cedar Lake Park Association and United Transportation Union (UTU) are working together to conceptualize and capture attractive and relevant community history for the proposed Southwest Light Rail stations that will be located near Cedar Lake Park. At this time, the proposed station locations include Lake Street, 21st Street, Penn Avenue and Van White Boulevard. The theme for our collaborative effort is to honor the history of Labor, Commerce and Community that built our Minneapolis neighborhoods.

The UTU represents railroad conductors, switch persons, and yardmasters and represented the railroad workers who worked at the Cedar Lake Yards from the 1920’s to mid-1980’s when the yards were shut down. UTU continues to represent railroad workers who operate trains passing through the area, Amtrak, and North Star Commuter Rail Crews. The UTU holds a remarkable collection of videos, photos, documents, seniority rosters with the names of railroad workers, and other collections from the last century. The union wishes to share these archives with the communities of new riders who will benefit from rail transportation.

“There is a tremendous legacy from these abandon rail yards that built our Minneapolis neighborhoods. Generations of residents walked to work to the mills, lumber yards, machine shops and produce houses that were serviced by these rail yards,” said Phillip Qualy, UTU State Legislative Director. In 1993, Qualy presented a historical narrative with over 100 slides to the Save Cedar Lake Park Association. UTU members then raised over $500 for a memorial to the dignity of labor. “For example, the Bryn Mawr neighborhood was largely comprised of railroad families who worked for the Minneapolis and St. Louis Railroad which had its yard and shops on the east side the park.”

We welcome all persons to contribute any photos, including family members in photos, or documents they may have from the old days in western Minneapolis. “We wish to pass on a sense of the dignity of Labor so that future generations of light rail riders and the greater community can see the faces and locations that built this great city.”

Please send in any photos, stories, to the Cedar Lake Park Association, via email info@cedarlakepark.org, or USPS to: 2000 Aldrich Avenue South, Minneapolis, MN 55405.

Volunteer Opportunities

CLPA is a volunteer organization. We accomplish all that we do through the dedicated efforts of ordinary people like you who believe in our mission.

We need your help in a variety of areas, such as digging in the dirt in the park, database and website management, media production such as our newsletter, community outreach, fundraising and networking with the public/private sector.

Without you, we are not able to succeed. Please help us make a difference, and have fun along the way.

To volunteer or contribute to your park:

Email info@cedarlakepark.org
Call 612-377-9522, or
Write: CLPA, 2000 Aldrich Ave. So., Minneapolis, MN 55405

SUCCESS continued from page 1

As before, that support caused government agencies to look at the project in a new light. Part of that light came from the warehouse district.

The trail, whichever alignment was picked, would run through the Minneapolis Warehouse District. Once a quiet backwater of dilapidated brick buildings, by 2003 the warehouse district was booming. As developers renovated old warehouse space and erected fashionable housing units, sleepy old 4th St.—where the City planned to route the trail—had become a crowded thoroughfare lined with upscale condos. Those new homeowners were not too happy about a bike trail going past their doorways, but they were excited about trail access. An ally had appeared.

In the spring of 2003, CLPA stepped up to the federal level. A meeting was arranged with U.S. Representative Martin Sabo. At the meeting, CLPA pitched a $3.4 million proposal for property acquisition and trail construction. Congressman Sabo quickly scanned the proposal, asked a few questions, and said he would get back to us. The congressman’s stoic features and laconic language did not fill the group with confidence, but his chief-of-staff Louis Moore (an avid bicyclist) was optimistic.

Later that month, CLPA approached State Representative Margaret Anderson-Kelliher in search of matching state funds. News of the Sabo meeting kindled state interest in the project. In May, Hennepin County Commissioner Peter McLaughlin expressed his support. Since the county was a major player—owning much of the public land in the corridor—it’s support was crucial. It became clear: If federal money could be secured, state, and county monies would follow.

That June, the group went back to see Lisa Goodman. An intuitive politician, she had been following CLPA’s crusade with interest. Seeing the groundswell of support, and the real possibility of federal funding, she embraced the ‘preferred’ alignment. With her support, the city council directed MPW to rework its plans using the CLPA trail alignment. The trail was back in the trench.
CLPA Update, Summer 2010

If you want to be added to our mailing list, or would like earlier editions of this newsletter, please visit www.cedarlakepark.org/publications

CALENDAR

Ice Out of Cedar Lake
March 28, 2010

CLPA Annual Meeting
April 8, 2010 and April 2011

Fall Equinox
September 23, 2010, 3:09 a.m.

Loppet Trails Day
Saturday, October 20, 2010

Annual Fund Drive
November 2010—Please contribute

Cedar Lake Trail Opens
November 2010

Winter Solstice
December 21, 2010, 11:38 p.m.

CLPA Steering Committee
Second Monday, 7:00–9:00 p.m. at the Kenwood Recreation Center. You're invited.

The Cedar Lake Tail corridor to the river can be visualized passing east under the skyline, framed by the Twins stadium sign on the right and the early 20th century Ford factory tower on the left.

Cedar Lake Park Association Mission

1. Create and nurture a park at Cedar Lake with a thriving nature preserve and connecting trails and greenways.

2. Provide opportunities for people to learn to live in community with nature and one another.

3. Continue to foster citizen leadership and private involvement in the development and management of the park and trails.

4. Support similar efforts throughout the metro area and beyond.