



'Where the biggies leave off...'

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Southwest Project Office selects 'certain properties' along Kenilworth Corridor for pre-construction surveys

By Michael Wilson

The Southwest Project Office (SPO) mailed letters on February 11 to selected residents along the Kenilworth Corridor to request permission to perform "a pre-construction survey of your property" in advance of the start of "construction activities in Spring of 2019."

This "pre-construction inspection of certain properties [will] document existing conditions before construction starts. This information will be used to compare conditions after construction." The free pre-construction survey, the letter says, will "consist of the examination and documentation of the interior and exterior of the premises, together with any outside structures within the limits of the property" and will take "approximately two to three hours to complete."

When David Davies, SPO community outreach coordinator for the five Minneapolis SWLRT stations, mentioned the letters at the Cedar-Isles-Dean Neighborhood Association (CIDNA) board meeting on February 13, some attendees who live near the corridor asked why they hadn't received their letters. As it turns out, according to Davies, the letters went only to properties which lie within 95 feet of the SWLRT right-of way.

Davies was asked why 95 feet was chosen as the cutoff for conducting pre-construction inspections. He indicated he would look into it. As of press time for this issue of Hill & Lake Press (Thursday afternoon, February 21), the SPO had not given an explanation for the 95-foot zone.

By way of comparison, construction in 2015 for the footings of the Trammel Crow apartments caused \$30,000 in damage to the Calhoun Isles condo towers -- 160 feet away.

Many Cedar-Isles-Dean residents recall the battles with the Met Council a few years back over damage

caused by the sewer force-main project along Sunset Blvd. The Council's initial response was to deny residents' damage claims. In the end, some residents' damage claims were paid. Some were never compensated.

Kenilworth Corridor residents who live beyond the 95-foot cutoff -- including several Cedar Lake Shores townhome owners -- are on their own if SWLRT construction causes any damage. Without meticulous documentation, their damage claims will be difficult to prove.

Several residents who did receive the SPO letter are planning to pay for an independent inspection and legal advice. They expect to share the information with neighbors.

"The SWLRT contractor has hired a subcontractor to conduct the inspections, which will be used following construction to determine whether the contractor bears any responsibility for damage," says one Corridor resident. "It has a potential built-in conflict of interest."

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An email account (above) has been created to disseminate and coordinate information among Corridor residents, including updates on the independent inspections. Send an email if you wish to be included. Name and address are required. All group emails from this account will be sent on a "bcc" basis; your contact information will not be shared. Michael Wilson and Jeanette Colby will moderate the list.

Information will also be posted to NextDoor, restricted to Kenwood and Cedar-Isles-Dean residents.

For questions about the 95-foot cutoff, inspections, the damage claim process, or any and all aspects of SWLRT construction, contact Davies at <david.davies@metrotransit.org> or (612) 373-5336.