

VIDEO TRANSCRIPT

RESEARCH MITIGATIONS

Vice President Tim Mulcahy:

Hi. I'm Tim Mulcahy, Vice President for Research at the U, and behind me of course is Washington Avenue the major public thoroughfare through the heart of our campus. Washington Avenue is also the major research corridor for the University, and along its lengths are located hundred of laboratories supporting the work of faculty, staff, and students. Hundred of millions of dollars of research targeting disease, cures for disease, renewable energy solutions, and all sorts of basic research that will lead to improvements of quality of life.

You may know that Washington Avenue is also going to be the site of the light rail, mass transit solution. The University thinks this is a great development, and has advocated light rail solutions, and mass transit solutions for decades. In fact our faculty, staff, and students are major users of the Minneapolis mass transit system, and are likely to be major users of the light rail system. The problem we're confronting at the moment is that we all know that the introduction of the light rail system, down Washington Avenue, is going to introduce vibrations and electromagnetic interference, which puts at risk some of the very sensitive research equipment we have along the research corridor. Some of that equipment is located in laboratories as close as 30 feet from the proposed rail line. For example, the Nuclear Magnetic Resonance laboratory is located right below those bushes, just 30 feet off the existing pavement. The introduction of these vibrations and electromagnetic interferences associated with the light rail puts at jeopardy, not only the expensive equipment we have in the location, but the major research that it supports. So the University cannot accept a light rail solution that doesn't provide prevention of damage to our research mission.

We've been working with the light rail project now for a number of months to try to identify adequate solutions that will allow a win-win outcome--protect our research while preserving the opportunity to put the light rail line along Washington Avenue. Regrettably, we haven't gotten the kind of response that we need from the project, and to date, our concerns have not be adequately addressed. Most frustrating about this current impasse is the fact that there is precedence, or solutions that can resolve these problems at other major research universities. For example, the University of Washington. When the light rail line was proposed there, they worked with Sound Transit, the project management team there, to come up with mitigations that would prevent damage to their research mission from vibrations and electromagnetic interferences associated with the frequent passage of trains along the line.

That's the same sort of consideration and solution the University is looking for, and has been advocating for. Regrettably to date, we haven't gotten a favorable response to our concerns. Bottom-line is the University really supports mass transit as an important solution to the region. It will benefit the U. It will benefit the community. We're all

behind it. But we can't accept a solution for mass transit that puts at risk one of the fundamental elements of our mission. That is, the research that benefits not just the faculty, staff, and students on campus, but the people of the state of Minnesota, the nation, and the world. We're trying to work cooperatively to find a solution.

We extend a hand saying, "We're willing to work with you, but our concerns need to be taken seriously, and the appropriate mitigations need to be considered thoroughly before the University can agree to allow the project to go forward." We want this to work; we're ready to roll up our sleeves and work with the project to find the right solutions. We just need the willingness on the part of the project to join us in that effort.