

depicted and quoted in an article about the "Squeaky" problem with the Metro Transit Light Rail System! Through the bold efforts of Ms. Osborn, as the attached article states...

ATTORNEY SHARON OSBORN FEATURED IN THE STAR TRIBUNE

THE SQUEAKY RAIL WILL GET THE GREASE

From the October 3rd, 2006 Edition of the [Minneapolis Star Tribune](#)

By: Laurie Blake

In the beginning, Sharon Osborn, a believer in mass transit, was happy to see the Hiawatha trains rolling by her south Minneapolis home.

Now she has to keep her windows closed because of the squealing metal wheels less than a block from her bedroom window.

"It keeps me awake and wakes me up at night," said Osborn, an attorney who is considering filing a noise nuisance suit against Metro Transit. "When you can't enjoy having your windows open at night during the summer, that's a problem."

Meanwhile, Metro Transit is about to try a common-sense solution -- greasing the tracks.

Photo by: Tom Sweeney

Officials hope it will stop the noise that has drawn complaints from Osborn and others. It also should prolong the life of the trains' steel wheels, some of which are wearing out from the constant scraping.

Wheel squeal is not unique to Minneapolis. Light-rail systems nationwide contend with the high-pitched noise wherever trains take tight curves. When Metro Transit contacted other cities to see how they deal with the squeal, the transit agency in Portland, Ore., touted Teflon grease.

In a test that will start in December, the lubricant will be applied to the side of the curved track in view of Osborn's home near 51st St. and Hiawatha Av. S. and to another bend near the Mall of America in Bloomington.

"Some of our cars don't squeal anywhere and some squeal everywhere," said Vince Pellegrin, Metro Transit's director of bus and rail operations. The squealing is the result of a tight fit between the wheel and the track. That fit provides a sway-free ride. But on curves, the metal interface causes screeching and litters the ground with metal shavings.

The light-rail line has been in service slightly more than two years and the cars travel about 90,000 miles a year to meet the high demand for ridership, Pellegrin said. The constant use means each car will be due for an overhaul in 2009 -- two years earlier than planned, he said.

Silencing the noise and reducing wheel wear will require frequent applications of the grease, Pellegrin explained. A pump applicator -- controlled by a timer -- will squirt the lubricant into a

channel drilled into the side of the rail. Applicators cost about \$20,000 per location and the grease costs \$100 per 5-gallon pail -- about 10 times the cost of petroleum products, he said.

The test will determine if the grease effectively silences noise and if the pumps will work during a Minnesota winter.

In Portland, the grease has squelched the squeal from its light-rail cars for eight years, said Ken Kirse, track engineer for the TriMet transit system. "The complaints have completely dropped off," he said.

Portland positioned the grease pumps at more than 20 locations, each one using about a gallon of grease per month.

Osborn said it's time Metro Transit does something about the noise she first complained about more than a year ago. For most of this past summer, she said, the sliding glass door leading to a balcony of her home has been shut.

She said she's become accustomed to the ding, ding, ding of the train bells, "but that screeching is unbelievable. Anybody who goes down there and listens and tries to think about living with it would understand. This is a kink that really needs to be worked out."

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