

# Extending TRACKS



## Designs for Southwest LRT stations now available on project website

More design detail for each of the 15 light rail stations is now available on the website of the proposed Southwest LRT Project: <http://metro council.org/swlrt/stations>.

Staff have completed 90 percent plans for the stations, and a rendering of one station from each of the five cities on the corridor is shown below.

### SouthWest Station in Eden Prairie



The LRT line's westernmost station will be built as a shared station for light rail and SouthWest Transit bus service. This is the view looking east from Technology Drive. The LRT project will add 450 parking spaces to the 925 that are there. The exterior design of the station is intended to complement the existing building without copying it, avoiding a monotonous look.

### President Obama proposes \$125 million for Southwest LRT in 2017 federal budget

President Obama has proposed \$125 million for the Southwest Light Rail Transit line in his 2017 budget recommendation released in early February.

"This is a remarkable development for the Southwest LRT Project," Metropolitan Chair Adam Duininck said. "The president's budget demonstrates the federal government's belief in the strong merits of this project. This puts us in an excellent position to achieve our federal matching dollars which we will apply for later this year."

Southwest LRT is on the Federal Transit Administration's shortlist of New Starts projects in line to receive a Full Funding Grant Agreement in 2017.

## Metropolitan Council awards grants for two non-profits near future Southwest LRT stations

Two non-profits near future Southwest LRT stations received nearly \$3 million in grants from the Metropolitan Council in 2015.

PLACE near the future Wooddale Avenue Station in St. Louis Park received a \$2 million Livable Communities Demonstration Grant (LCDA). PLACE, a non-profit developer, proposes to construct a mixed-income, mixed-use, creative community on the former McGarvey Coffee site at 5725 Highway 7. PLACE's website is [www.welcometoplace.org](http://www.welcometoplace.org).

YouthLink Supportive Services near the future Royalston Avenue/Farmers Market Station in Minneapolis received an \$841,852 LCDA grant and a Tax Base Revitalization Account (TBRA) grant for \$110,000.

The grants are for the housing for homeless youth (ages 18-23) that will be built in partnership with Project for Pride in Living. The organization's website is [www.youthlinkmn.org](http://www.youthlinkmn.org).

In addition to these grants awarded in 2015, \$5.4 million worth of grants were awarded in 2011–2014 for projects near the planned stations, including several that have been built such as TowerLight near Wooddale Avenue and ARTery connecting the Downtown Hopkins Station to Mainstreet.

The LCDA funds innovative (re)development projects that efficiently link housing, jobs, services and transit in an effort to create inspiring and lasting livable communities.

Grants are available to fund basic public infrastructure and site assembly.

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#### Opus Station in Minnetonka



Looking south along Bren Road, the Opus Station is a minimal landscape design and its form and color will blend in with the natural surroundings. The grassy boulevard shown in the foreground of the rendering will be planted with trees, which are omitted only to make the station visible in the image. An ornamental metal fence will separate the bicycle-pedestrian path and the LRT tracks. The undersides on all of the station canopies on the future METRO Green Line Extension are planned to be clad in a metal panel system that resembles wood for a warm feel. Also, freestanding vertical elements are planned and will include graphic panel features. These panels are under design and are intended to further reinforce the identity of each station.

#### Downtown Hopkins Station in Hopkins



The Downtown Hopkins station is a bold design with lantern elements extending above the canopy to draw attention to the station as the gateway to the Hopkins ARTery and historic Mainstreet. The station's materials and colors, such as the weathered steel-like edged canopy, are a nod to the location's industrial past. An ornamental metal fence and landscape separates the Cedar Lake LRT Regional Trail from the LRT tracks. A covered bicycle parking area will be provided adjacent to the trail at this station as shown in the bottom left corner of the rendering.

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Wooddale Avenue Station in St. Louis Park



Staff is working with the city of St. Louis Park on the color palette for the Wooddale Avenue Station as well as the other two stations within the city. The form and color of the Wooddale Avenue station are intended to be consistent with the surroundings. The station is adjacent to a recent development, with plans for additional redevelopment, and just south of a planned grade separation of the Cedar Lake LRT Regional Trail under Wooddale Avenue.

West Lake Street Station in Minneapolis



Looking north toward the West Lake Street Bridge from the trail, the West Lake Street Station will be a bold, colorful design to make it more easily seen from the street above where pedestrians will access the station by way of a stairway/elevator structure. The structural elements of the station will be painted in an orange hue and tinted orange lantern elements are planned to extend above the station canopies and the elevator structure. The stairway/elevator structure will be semi-enclosed with an architectural woven mesh material. An ornamental metal fence and landscape will separate the Cedar Lake LRT Regional Trail from the LRT tracks.

Small Brooklyn Center engineering firm helps build Green, Blue Line Extensions

Progressive Consulting Engineers Inc. has intentionally remained a small company, but its 10-person staff has utilized their expertise on some of the biggest public works projects in Minnesota history.

The Brooklyn Center-based engineering firm, incorporated in 1979, is doing utility-related work on both the Southwest LRT (METRO Green Line Extension) and the METRO Blue Line Extension projects. That follows work the firm did on the Blue and Green Lines starting more than 10 years ago.

While PCE had already built up a solid client base before starting to work on Metropolitan Council LRT projects, Naeem and Nuzhat Qureshi -- the firm's husband-and-wife owners -- say the state's Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) Program helped open doors.

"DBE provides you an opportunity to prove yourself," Naeem Qureshi said.

Both of the Qureshis grew up in Pakistan and were married there before coming to the United States to further their educations in the mid-1970s.

The move to Minnesota followed Naeem's brother, who had come to the state in the 1950s. Naeem, who had been educated as an engineer, landed a job with Minneapolis' Public Works Department soon after his arrival. He later earned a master's degree in civil engineering from the University of Minnesota.

Naeem started PCE in his spare time while still working for the city of Minneapolis and made the firm his full-time

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GRANTS FROM PAGE 2

Previously funded project elements include street improvements, plazas, parks, demolition, design, development plans, implementation techniques, market studies, storm water management, zoning, land acquisition, master plans, utility relocation, site assembly and reconstruction.

The TBRA provides \$5 million annually to investigate and clean up brownfields – contaminated land, ground water or buildings – for redevelopment in the seven-county metro region. The account provides key support for a wide range of projects, from affordable and market rate multifamily housing to commercial and industrial redevelopment.

Design concepts for the proposed projects by YouthLink and PLACE are shown in renderings below.



### Street-friendly design for operations and maintenance facility in Hopkins

An ornamental fence and trees will line the public street outside of the main entrance to the line's operations and maintenance facility in Hopkins, giving the facility a street-friendly presence.

The facility will provide space for cleaning, maintaining and storing up to 30 light rail vehicles and is where about 160 employees, including operators, will report for duty.

Its layout is similar to the METRO Blue Line's Franklin Avenue maintenance facility in Minneapolis, with tracks looping around and through the facility. The building will be made of materials that reflect the industrial past of Hopkins in a contemporary way.

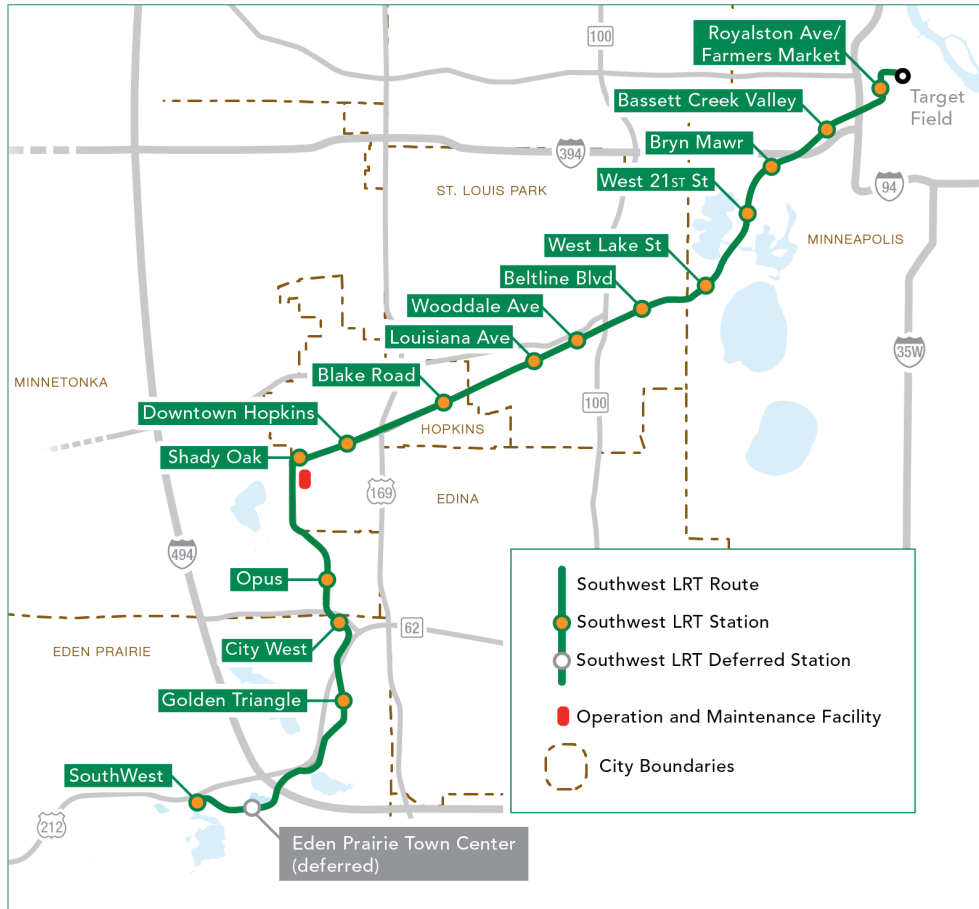


Grants from the Council will help support the construction of housing for homeless youths near the proposed Royalston Avenue/Farmers Market Station in Minneapolis.



A rendering shows plans by PLACE for a proposed new development near the proposed Wooddale Avenue Station in St. Louis Park.

# Four stations in Minneapolis are renamed



The names of the four easternmost Southwest LRT stations, all of which are in Minneapolis, have changed.

Royalston Station added “Farmers Market” to reflect the nearest major landmark. The new name is Royalston Avenue/Farmers Market Station.

Van White Boulevard Station changed to Bassett Creek Valley Station based on feedback from the city and adjacent neighborhoods. The change recognizes their plans for redevelopment of the area named for the nearby stream and avoids confusion with a station of the same name on the planned METRO Blue Line Extension LRT Project.

Penn Station changed to Bryn Mawr Station also to avoid confusion with a station of the same name on the Blue Line Extension. The new name is a reference to the adjacent neighborhood.

West 21st Street Station added “West” to the station name to be consistent with street signs and aid in wayfinding.

The Metropolitan Council made the changes on Feb. 24 based on feedback from the project’s various committees of community, business and technical representatives from the five corridor cities and Hennepin County.

The station names needed to be finalized now so they could be incorporated in the project’s final plan drawings, which will be included in the civil construction bid documents.

Old name	New name
Royalston Station	Royalston Avenue/Farmers Market Station
Van White Station	Bassett Creek Valley Station
Penn Station	Bryn Mawr Station
21st Street Station	West 21st Street Station
West Lake Station	West Lake Street Station
Beltline Station	Beltline Boulevard Station
Wooddale Station	Wooddale Avenue Station
Louisiana Station	Louisiana Avenue Station
Blake Station	Blake Road Station
Downtown Hopkins Station	Downtown Hopkins Station
Shady Oak Station	Shady Oak Station
Opus Station	Opus Station
City West Station	City West Station
Golden Triangle Station	Golden Triangle Station
Eden Prairie Town Center Station	Eden Prairie Town Center Station
Southwest Station	SouthWest Station

PCE FROM PAGE 3

job in the mid-1980s. PCE has been in its current office in Brooklyn Center for more than 20 years, but it does business across Minnesota. Client cities stretch from Cloquet to Oakdale, and Naeem regularly travels the state to make contacts and market PCE.

Nuzhat has an MBA degree from the University of St. Thomas and has long been the vice president and controller of PCE, handling the company's finances.

A big break for PCE came in the late 1990s, when work began on the Blue Line LRT project along Hiawatha Avenue in Minneapolis. The lead engineering contractor wanted a local firm that was familiar with Minneapolis' public works staff for the utility work. That job was also PCE's first experience with the state's DBE program.

When the Qureshis first heard of the DBE program, "both Naeem and I did not like that idea at all," said Nuzhat Qureshi. "We are professionals."

But they were told the program could give their firm leads on more projects, and they signed on.

Requirements for participating in the DBE program include limits on personal net worth (less than \$1.32 million). Also, participating companies need to meet Small Business Administration size standards as measured by annual gross receipts. Those standards vary by industry. Also, ownership must be at least 51 percent minority or female.

The DBE goal is 19 percent for the Green Line Extension LRT Project's advanced design contract and for the Blue Line Extension engineering contract.

The Hiawatha Avenue project in the late 1990s went well for PCE. As time went on and more transit-related projects, such as the METRO Blue Line LRT project, progressed, the Qureshis



Naeem and Nuzhat Qureshi

realized the DBE program was an opportunity, Nuzhat said. "We wouldn't have gotten the light rail work without DBE," Naeem said.

The firm's engineering expertise is centered on water supply and utility design, handling everything from water tower and water treatment plant designs, to site plans and required approvals from watershed districts. On the METRO Green Line and Blue Line Extension projects, PCE's work is focused on utility design and relocation.

PCE anticipates utility issues similar to what it saw when it worked on the Green Line in Minneapolis and St. Paul, Naeem said. Cities and utility companies have lines running under stretches of LRT right-of-way, and those lines need to be relocated so utility crews can maintain them in the future without interfering with LRT service. Existing sewer lines, water lines or electrical lines sometimes are located near each other.

"Competing interests have to be accommodated," he said. The various groups involved need to be satisfied with the process on relocations and the final outcome.

On the METRO Green Line Extension project, the overall design work is ongoing, and PCE's work has focused

on utility coordination with the project stakeholders and private utilities, sanitary sewer and water main relocation and design, said Bojan Mistic, who leads the engineering work on the civil, utility and LRT track parts of the project.

That work also includes meeting regularly with private utility companies, such as gas and electrical firms, to discuss design and future construction work. The actual utility relocation work on the METRO Green Line Extension won't start until the project's environmental review is complete, which is expected later this year.

"They do great work," Mistic said of PCE. The firm's work is well known in the Twin Cities area from its previous experience on large civil and transportation projects, he said. PCE's work will also continue during construction, as crews identify other underground issues.

The Qureshis are members of the Boomer generation, and have started thinking about the future of PCE after they retire. PCE's work on the light rail projects will continue for about five more years, and then the Qureshis say they'll start looking for a way to transition the firm's leadership, possibly to a current employee.

"We want the company to be sustainable. It has to live," Nuzhat Qureshi said. "We want to see the values and strategies continue."

Small minority-owned or women-owned companies that want information about the DBE program and working on the LRT projects should contact senior equal opportunity consultant Andrew Larson of the Metropolitan Council's Office of Equal Opportunity at [Andrew.Larson@metc.state.mn.us](mailto:Andrew.Larson@metc.state.mn.us) or 612-373-3896.

## Getting a green light for the Green Line

A guest column by Metropolitan Council Chair Adam Duinick appeared in the Sun-Current newspaper on Jan. 11, 2016.

At a recent meeting with local mayors, city council members, and community leaders, I had the opportunity of providing an update on a project that will create more than 7,000 local jobs and eventually connect nearly a quarter million residents with jobs.

Though we faced some big challenges in 2015 for the proposed METRO Green Line Extension project (commonly called the Southwest Light Rail Transit project or SWLRT), my update to local leaders was a positive one, a story of overcoming those challenges. Test results and engineering studies led to an increase in the project's cost estimate, but I'm proud that we dealt with all these hurdles, and today, the Green Line Extension is closing in on the finish line.



Adam Duinick

Read more at <http://current.mnsun.com/2016/01/11/getting-a-green-light-for-the-green-line/>

### Where the project is at

The Southwest LRT Project is still in the environmental review and design phases, so all areas of the proposed route are subject to change.

The Federal Transit Administration is expected to publish the Final Environmental Impact Statement this spring. No final decisions regarding property acquisition will be made until after the FTA issues a Record of Decision, which is expected in summer 2016, and the Metropolitan Council makes a Determination of Adequacy for the Final EIS in accordance with Minnesota environmental reviews. A Record of Decision is the federal government's recognition that the project's environmental review process is complete.

Heavy construction is expected in 2017-19, while the line is to begin service in 2020.

## ABOUT THE PROJECT

The planned Southwest Light Rail Transit (LRT) Project (METRO Green Line Extension) will operate from downtown Minneapolis through the communities of St. Louis Park, Hopkins, Minnetonka, and Eden Prairie, passing in close proximity to the city of Edina. The line will connect major activity centers in the region including downtown Minneapolis, Methodist Hospital in St. Louis Park, downtown Hopkins and the Opus/Golden Triangle employment area in Minnetonka and Eden Prairie. Ridership in 2040 is forecasted at approximately 34,000 average weekday boardings.

The project will interline with the METRO Green Line, which will provide a one-seat ride to destinations such as the University of Minnesota, state Capitol and downtown St. Paul. It will be part of an integrated system of transitways, including connections to the METRO Blue Line, the proposed METRO Blue Line Extension, the Northstar Commuter Rail line, a variety of major bus routes along the alignment, and proposed future transitway and rail lines. The Metropolitan Council will be the grantee of federal funds. The regional government agency is charged with building the line in partnership with the Minnesota Department of Transportation.

The Southwest Corridor Management Committee, which includes commissioners from Hennepin County and the mayors of Minneapolis, St. Louis Park, Edina, Hopkins, Minnetonka, and Eden Prairie, provides advice and oversight. Funding is provided by the Federal Transit Administration, Counties Transit Improvement Board (CTIB), state of Minnesota and Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority (HCRA) and other project partners. The Southwest LRT Project website is [www.swlrt.org](http://www.swlrt.org).

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