

Making Tracks



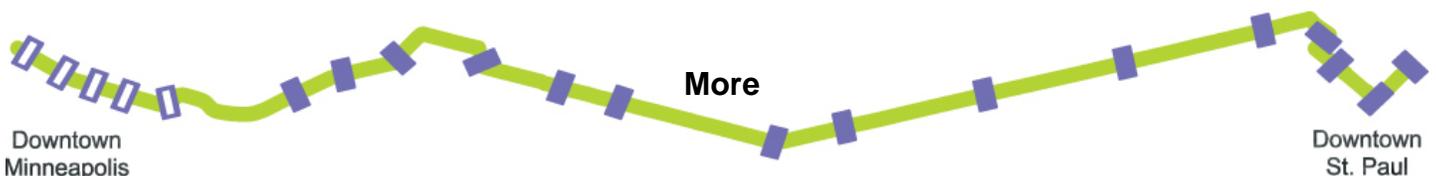
June 2009

Six Pages



Businesses encourage customers to contact outreach coordinators

Kathy Bjerke, vice president of Park Midway Bank at 2171 University Ave. in St. Paul, shows **Jim Roth**, executive director of the Metropolitan Consortium of Community Developers, a poster encouraging bank customers to contact the community outreach coordinators for the Central Corridor LRT Project with their questions and concerns about construction, which will begin in late summer 2010. Bjerke said the bank also encourages its customers to contact bankers about how to cope during construction, which will run through 2013. Bjerke and Roth are members of the Central Corridor LRT Project's Business Advisory Council, which provides input and feedback to the Central Corridor Project Office staff on issues related to project design and construction mitigation issues.



FTA gives go ahead for FEIS publication

The Central Corridor LRT Project marked another milestone with publication of the Final Environmental Impact Statement on Friday, June 26, in the Federal Register.

Publication of the 2,500-page document is the culmination of two years' worth of research, analysis and public engagement with more than 30,000 people through more than 1,300 meetings, community events and informal contacts.

The FEIS describes the project as it is going to be constructed, giving the final picture so everyone knows what is going to be built and where. The FEIS describes the route and how it was chosen and provides the location of the tracks, stations and key pieces of supporting infrastructure, such as the traction power substations and the LRT operation and maintenance facility.

It includes responses to all comments received on the 2006 Draft Environmental Impact Statement as well as the 2008 Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

The FEIS explains the purpose and need for the project and commitments to mitigate adverse impacts. Mitigation commitments made in the environmental process must be fulfilled.

Print copies of the Central Corridor FEIS will be available for public and agency review through July 27 at area libraries. For a listing of those libraries and a citizen's guide to the FEIS, visit: <http://www.metrocouncil.org/transportation/ccorridor/FEISJuly2009.htm>

The public review period ends 30 days following publication. In late August, the Federal Transit Administration is to issue a Record of Decision, which summarizes adverse impacts and the project's commitment to mitigate them. The FTA has been requested to issue a Letter of No Prejudice for the downtown St. Paul Fourth Street utility relocation work immediately after the issuance of the Record of Decision. The letter is the federal government's agreement to reimburse project partners for the federal share of the cost of relocating utilities if and when the agency awards a Full Funding Grant Agreement.

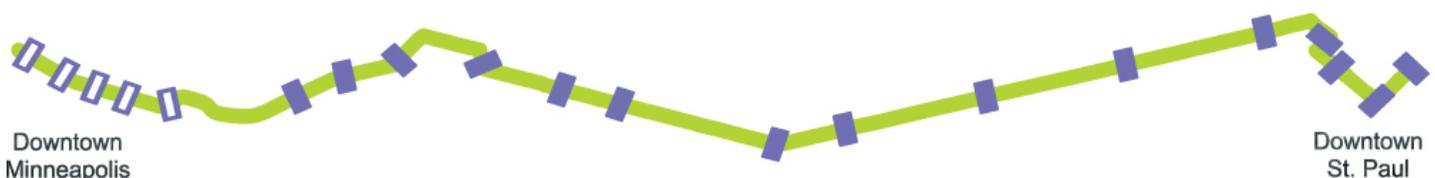
The Central Corridor Project Office will complete all design in the first half of 2010 and secure the federal Full Funding Grant Agreement for the \$914 million project to begin heavy construction in the latter half of 2010.

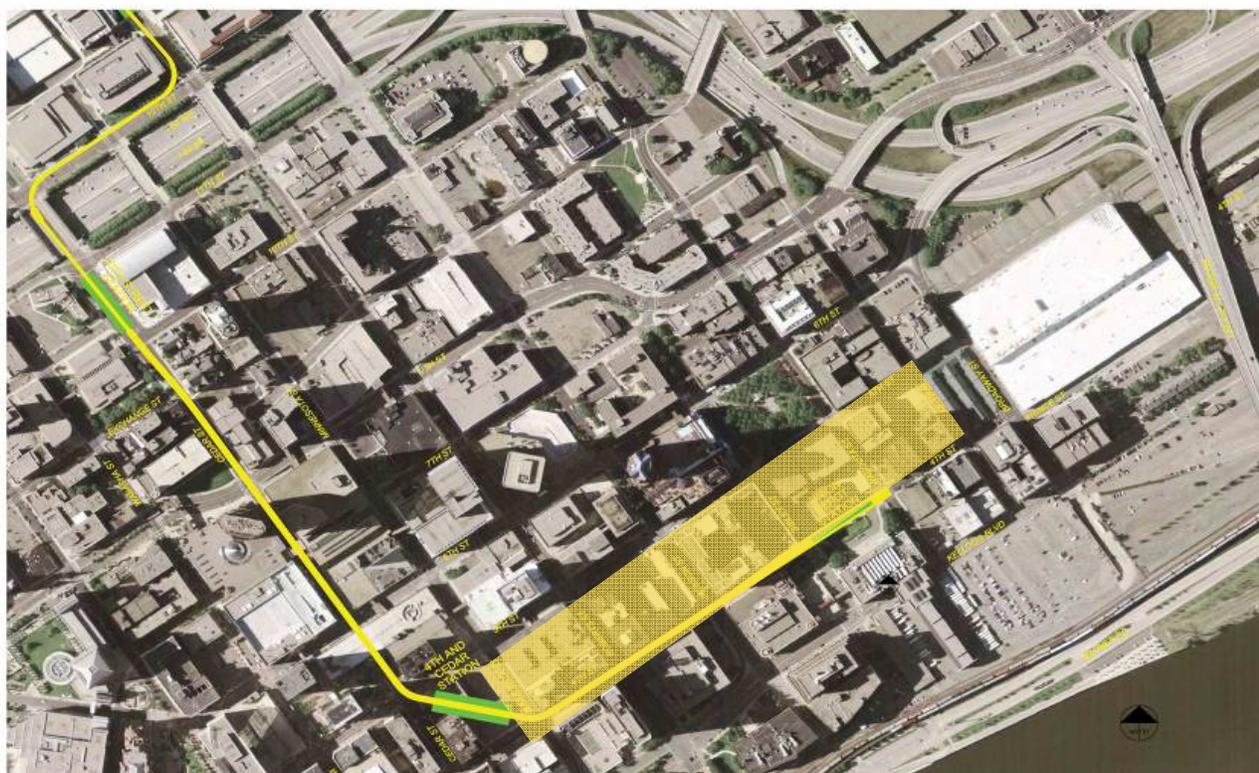
For questions about the FEIS, contact Kathryn O'Brien, environmental services manager for the Central Corridor LRT Project. Here is her contact information:

Email: kathryn.obrien@metc.state.mn.us

Phone: 651-602-1927

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Downtown St. Paul 4th Street utility relocation to begin week of July 6

The first advanced utility relocation work in downtown St. Paul for the Central Corridor LRT Project will be Xcel Energy conducting preliminary work on Minnesota Street, beginning the week of July 6.

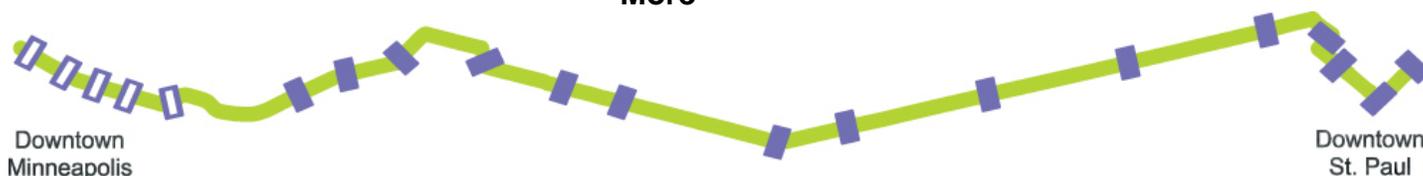
Xcel's construction crews will work from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays, but will be allowed to work from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. seven days a week if needed.

The project office will open contractors' bids on July 22 for work beginning late August at the earliest to relocate public utilities, such as water lines and storm and sanitary sewers, District Energy cooling pipes and to reconstruct sidewalks along Fourth Street in downtown St. Paul.

Closures/access:

- Minnesota will be closed for four weeks south of Fourth. Access will be maintained for Capital City Parking Ramp and Kellogg Square loading dock via Kellogg Boulevard.
- Fourth will be restricted to one lane westbound from 100 feet west of Minnesota through the intersection at Robert until late August when public utility relocation work will close all of Fourth in this block. No parking will be allowed. The loading zone on the north side of Fourth will need to be relocated to the east side of Minnesota north of Fourth.
- Robert will have lane closures on both sides of Fourth and vehicular traffic will be restricted to one lane in each direction for six weeks.

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Downtown St. Paul 4th Street . . .

- The sidewalks will be closed on the north side of Fourth between Robert and the Xcel vault located mid-block and on the west side of Robert from Fourth to the Xcel vault located mid-block. This is necessary to allow Xcel to run a temporary feed to the vault while relocating permanent duct and cable. This will be in place until the new Xcel utilities are in and energized, which should take about 10 weeks. Access will be maintained to the First National Bank building.
- Once public utility relocation work begins in late August at the earliest, Fourth will be closed to all vehicular traffic between Minnesota and Jackson streets but pedestrian access will be maintained. Vehicular access will be maintained on Robert at Fourth.

Construction contact:

For all initial construction questions, contact Kevin Ryan, the Central Corridor LRT Project's manager of transitways construction. His office phone is 651-602-1905 and his cell is 612-799-1044. His email is Kevin.ryan@metc.state.mn.us

General contact:

For all general non-construction questions about the project, contact community outreach coordinator Dana Happel. Her email is: dana.happel@metc.state.mn.us and her office phone is 651-602-1954 and her cell is 612-968-8382.

Soil borings to begin late July

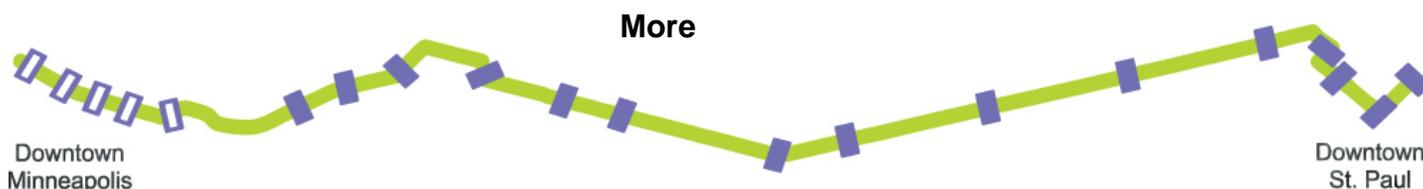
In late July, crews will begin drilling borings to collect soil and water samples so they can be analyzed for the presence of possible contamination. The information will be used to develop plans to properly handle any contaminated soil and ground water affected by LRT construction.

Borings will be drilled from late July through November on the corridor. During this time, parking lanes will be closed on one side of the street at a time. Work will be performed in one- to two-block sections, and crews should advance the work by a block or two every couple of days. That means that parking lanes in any given two-block stretch will be closed for only a couple of days.

Drilling will be done generally in the parking lanes, not driving lanes. Drilling also will be done on some private property with owners' prior written permission. The drilling will be done under permits issued by both cities and occur and will be allowed from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. weekdays. Schedules are subject to change due to weather and other unforeseen circumstances.

Crews will work with Metro Transit to temporarily relocate bus stops as needed, and signs will be posted at bus stops to notify passengers of any changes.

For safety's sake, please don't talk to crews or go around the barriers into work zones. Questions should be directed to the Central Corridor LRT Project office by emailing centralcorridor@metc.state.mn.us or calling the comment line at 651-602-1645.



Project budgets nearly \$34 million for mitigation work

Project designers are budgeting nearly \$34 million to mitigate noise, vibration, electromagnetic interference (EMI), increased traffic and other impacts of the Central Corridor LRT Project.

Mitigations for **noise** by area will involve:

- Lowertown St. Paul – adjusting bells and horns on non-revenue service track
- University Avenue residential areas – relocating track crossovers away from residences
- Minnesota Public Radio – soundproofing studios M & P

Mitigations for **vibration** by area will involve:

- Cedar Street buildings – installing a 750-foot long floating slab
- University of Minnesota – using 1,800 feet of resilient track fasteners
- Dinnaken House at University of Minnesota, University and Raymond and University and Avon in St. Paul – relocating crossover track to avoid residential impacts.

Mitigations for **EMI** by area will involve:

- University of Minnesota research equipment – primary method is dual-split power supply to cancel emissions at source (similar to strategy employed at Washington University in St. Louis). If required, secondary method will shield equipment (active cancellation).

Mitigations for **increased traffic** by area will involve:

- East Bank – constructing turn lanes and installing traffic signals
- University Avenue – extending turn lanes and installing new signalization system

Mitigations for **environmental justice** by area will involve:

- Western Avenue – Preparing and implementing transit service plan to ensure transit service levels (combined rail and bus) are maintained with implementation of Central Corridor LRT

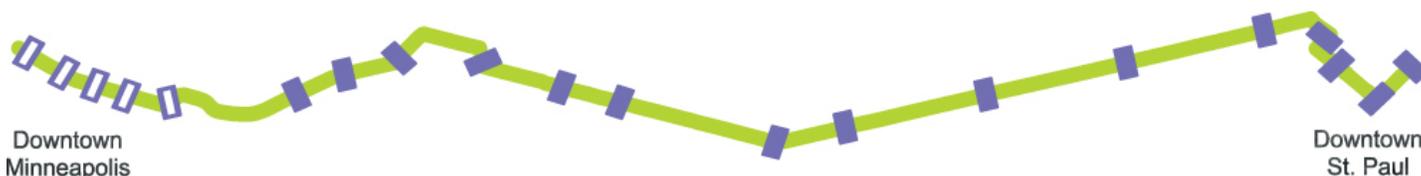
Mitigations for **pedestrian/bicycle access** by area will involve:

- Downtown St. Paul – restoring skyway connection
- University Avenue – adding non-signalized pedestrian crossings, adding secondary station access
- University of Minnesota – designing the transit-pedestrian mall
- Corridor-wide – providing racks for parking bicycles

Mitigations for **historic resources** will involve:

Providing a programmatic agreement to stipulate process for developing mitigation plans to address adverse effects identified through consultation

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Transit access will increase for most with start of LRT service

Overall transit access will generally increase for most Central Corridor residents and businesses. Only three predominantly minority blocks out of 1,252 overall blocks will experience a decrease in transit trips once LRT service begins in 2014, according to a Metro Transit analysis.

But the decrease in the number of trips in those three predominately minority blocks near Western Avenue can be mitigated, Metro Transit service development director John Levin told the Central Corridor Management Committee on June 10 while outlining the results of a Title VI analysis done last year. Title VI prohibits discrimination in federally funded transit projects and other federally funded projects.

Levin recommended that the Metropolitan Council conduct a transit sector study, beginning two years before LRT revenue service starts. Opportunities for public involvement in the study would be provided. The transit study's goal would be to retain or improve overall transit service within a half mile of the LRT route.

The analysis looked at the entire 11-mile corridor, including St. Paul neighborhoods a half mile on both sides of the route. It examined transit service levels before and after LRT service begins and the location of bus and LRT stops. The study found no disparate impacts on minority or low-income populations.

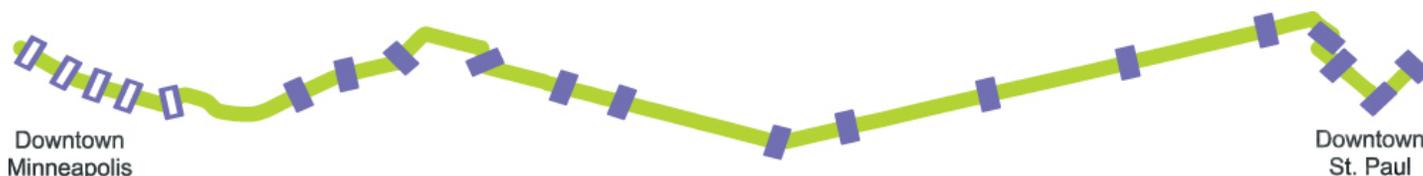
The transit system is being designed so that most riders will walk, bicycle or ride the bus to an LRT station. (No park-and-ride lots are planned for the Central Corridor LRT.) Bus routes serving the Central Corridor LRT stations will be spaced about a half mile apart in many areas, and most homes and businesses in the corridor will be within a quarter of a mile of a bus stop that provides connecting service to an LRT station.

On the Hiawatha line today, one-third of the riders take one of the 27 connecting bus routes to reach an LRT station. A 2008 transit survey of the Hiawatha line supports the position that one-half mile is a reasonable walk distance to stations.

With the start of Central Corridor LRT service, the Route 16 bus service on University Avenue will be reduced from every 10 minutes to every 20 minutes peak and 30 minutes at other times. However, new routes will be added to bring riders north and south of University Avenue to the corridor. For more details on pending bus service changes with the advent of LRT, see the project's Frequently Asked Questions at:

<http://www.metrocouncil.org/transportation/ccorridor/ccfaq.htm#bus>

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About the project: The Central Corridor Light Rail Transit Project will link downtown St. Paul and downtown Minneapolis along Washington and University avenues via the state Capitol and the University of Minnesota. Construction would begin in 2010 on the planned 11-mile Central Corridor line, with service beginning in 2014. The line would connect with the Hiawatha LRT line at the Metrodome station in Minneapolis and the Northstar commuter rail line, which will begin operation in late 2009, at the new Minneapolis Multimodal Station. 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 Central Corridor Management Committee, which includes commissioners from Ramsey and Hennepin counties, the mayors of St. Paul and Minneapolis and the University of Minnesota, provides advice and oversight.

Questions or comments? Call 651-602-1645 or email centralcorridor@metc.state.mn.us. For more information, visit: www.centralcorridor.org

