

Making Tracks

June 2011

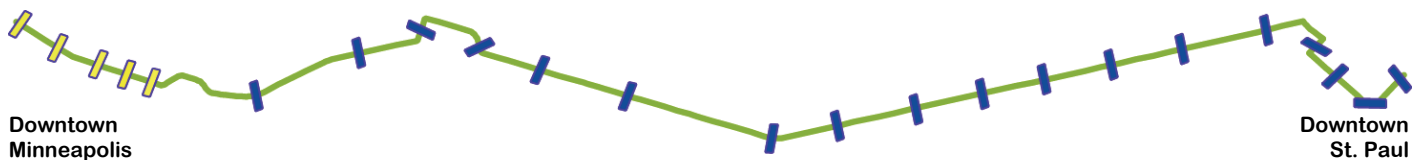


Caribe, a Caribbean bistro a block north of University Avenue at 791 Raymond Ave. in St. Paul, opened in April 2010. Its website, www.caribemn.com, provides customers with alternate routes to reach the restaurant during LRT construction.

Twenty-two businesses open from Feb. to May on corridor

Twenty-two businesses opened on the corridor from February through May, according to the Central Corridor LRT Project's latest survey of corridor businesses on Washington and University avenues and Cedar and Fourth streets.

The same survey found 14 businesses closed and nine moved during this time. Of the nine, six relocated on the corridor, two moved elsewhere in St. Paul and one relocated to Roseville. The report can be viewed at: <http://tinyurl.com/3ozop5r>



Twenty-two businesses open (cont. from page 1)...

The information is contained in a Status Report on the Implementation of Mitigation Measures—CCLRT Construction-related Business Impacts. It summarizes how the Metropolitan Council and partner agencies worked during April and May to minimize impacts from LRT construction to local businesses. The Federal Transit Administration requires these reports.

How the survey was conducted

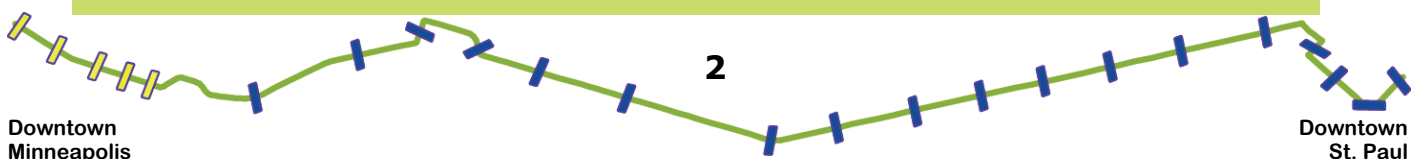
Project staff gathered the information by going door-to-door, by mailing surveys to businesses and with the help of property managers who shared tenant lists. The survey counted businesses with a street presence, such as a storefront on the corridor, but did not count businesses on upper levels in high-rise buildings. Both retail and non-retail businesses were counted along the entire corridor in both St. Paul and Minneapolis.

What else the business mitigation report covers

The report also covers construction-related complaints (137) in May, responses to them (majority were responded to within 24 hours), public outreach and communication activities, funds spent to assist businesses during construction and requests for business assistance and responses.



Cook Yuwadee Poophakumpanart (left) at Thai Café, 371 University Ave. W., in St. Paul and owner Phyllis Gilliam of Sunday's Best Boutique, 601 University Ave. W. in St. Paul's Frogtown Square. Thai Café opened in February, and the boutique opened in May.



Website use quadruples

In May, 49,260 hits were recorded of users visiting the project website, www.centralcorridor.org. This was a large jump in the number of hits recorded in April (12,650). In large part, this increase was due to an explosion in people viewing East Bank construction alerts (over 35,000), which coincided with the closure of Washington Avenue to vehicle traffic on May 16.

The Central Corridor Project Office uses Constant Contact, a listserv to update the public on project news, including construction activities. It has over 5,702 contacts to whom project information is sent. Staffers also use Twitter to send news releases and weekly construction updates to the public. At the end of May, the project had 837 followers on Twitter.

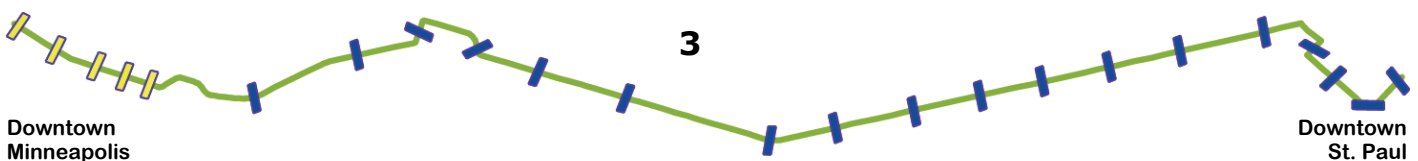
Meetings attract more than 1,000 people

More than 1,000 people attended 67 CCLRT meetings and events in May. These included meetings to discuss LRT station art for the Victoria Street and Western Avenue stations, regular meetings of the construction communication committees and Lunch on the Avenue. The lunch meetings are part of a grassroots marketing campaign to patronize Central Corridor businesses.

Adjustments made as result of public input

As a result of input at meetings and correspondence received by staff, the following changes to the project were made:

- Committed to keeping Berry Street open on north side of University Avenue to maintain access to the Westgate office complex.
- Reopened Syndicate Street to right in/right out traffic to alleviate traffic congestion on Hamline and to provide better access to some of the Midtown shopping area businesses.
- Worked with Metro Transit to revise bus route 50 so that it stops at Hampden to better accommodate vision-impaired employees and customers going to and from the State Services for the Blind.

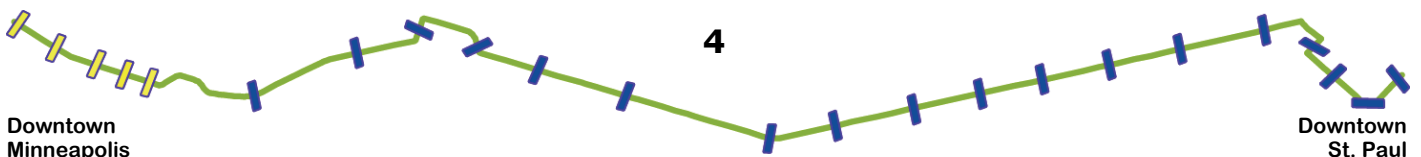


Adjustments made (cont. from page 3)...

- Purchased and installed three variable message signs at the ends of the construction zone to let travelers know that businesses are open.
- Worked with cities to waive sign permit fees to allow businesses to hang “open for business” signage on the construction fence.
- Added sign that says “Medical Services” below the “Washington Avenue businesses” for wayfinding signage on the East Bank to better direct people to the Fairview and University of Minnesota clinics.
- Designated a construction liaison to work directly with downtown St. Paul property managers to provide and respond to construction issues in real time.



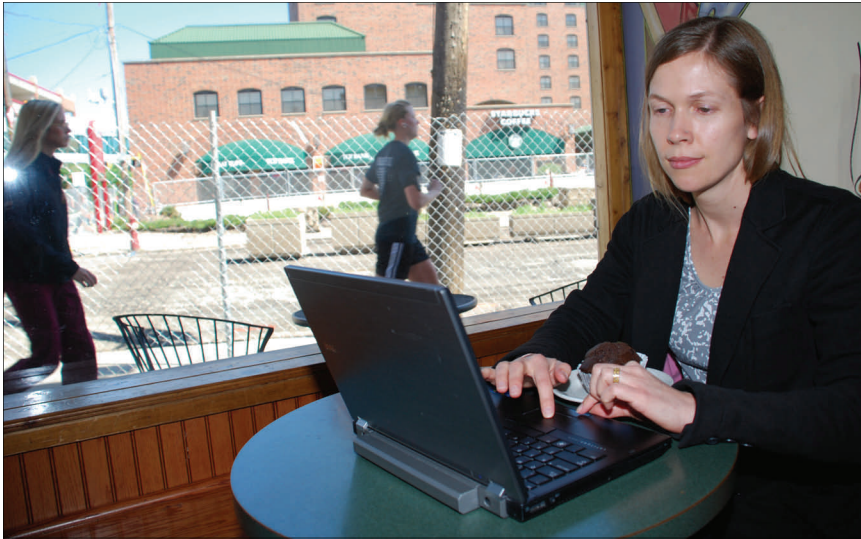
The Central Corridor Project Office set up three portable signs to encourage the public to patronize corridor businesses. They are (clockwise from top left) at Huron Boulevard and University Avenue, Emerald and University and Hamline and University.



East Bank faces and places

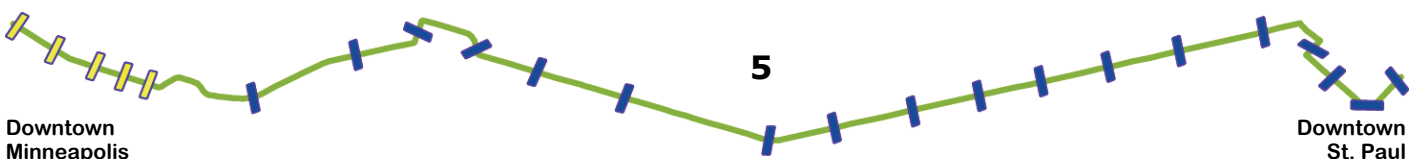
East Bank 2011 construction overview is at: <http://tinyurl.com/439o9rq>

Minneapolis construction update is at: <http://tinyurl.com/2fmh255>



Pedestrians (clockwise from top left) on Washington Avenue at Harvard as seen from inside the Espresso Expose coffee shop. The Dairy Queen/Orange Julius, 716 Washington Ave. SE, advertises its participation in the Discover Central Corridor Perks card program at <http://tinyurl.com/6heqmcr>

Passerby watches construction from the sidewalk on Washington Avenue.



West Bank, East Bank construction scenes

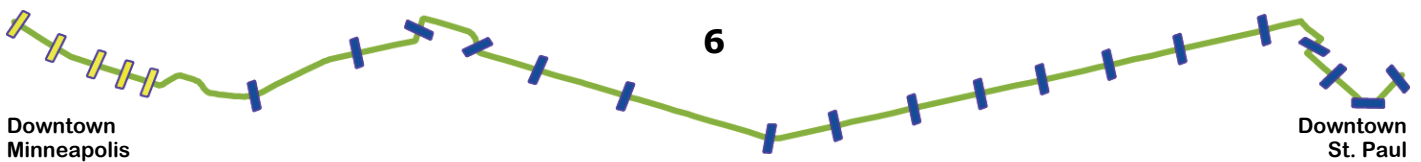


Top photo

Workers strengthen the easternmost pier of the Washington Avenue Bridge.

Bottom photo

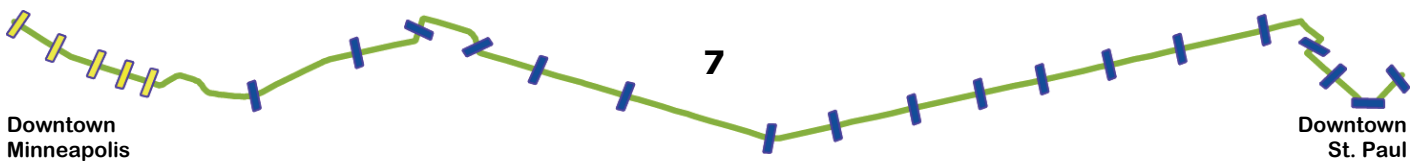
Roadway is removed on Washington Avenue on the East Bank for the transit-pedestrian mall.



St. Paul—University Avenue West (Emerald to Hamline)



Crews work on the Westgate Station at Berry Street and University Avenue. See the 2011 construction overview for University from Emerald Street to Hamline Avenue at: <http://tinyurl.com/3k2kyl3>
For details on how to get there, see: <http://tinyurl.com/436ka2p>



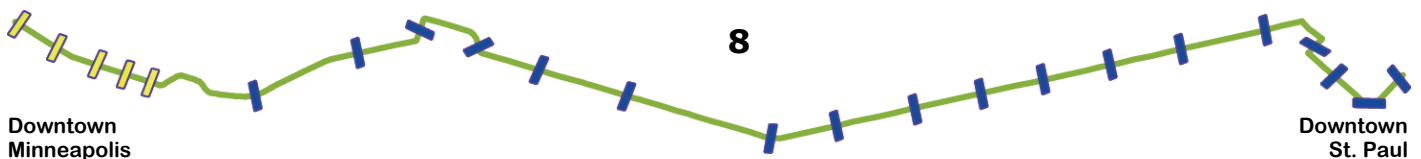
University Ave. West—St. Paul Faces & Places



Cashier and customer service representative Shelitha Ashford works at the Goodwill/Easter Seals retail store at 553 Fairview Ave. N. She said she hasn't had any problem during construction getting to work at the store near Fairview and University avenues.



Owner Dave Marcin of Aggressive Records, 1951 University Ave., Ste 107, offers pick up and delivery for customers of his audio duplication business. His website is <http://tinyurl.com/3dfofss>



Downtown
Minneapolis

Downtown
St. Paul

University Ave. West—shared parking

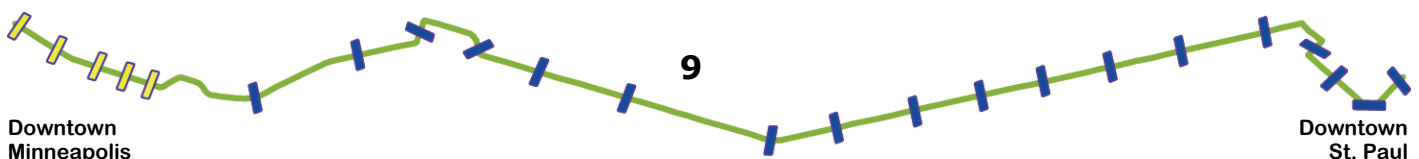


Under an arrangement with the city, a former restaurant parking lot at the southwest corner of Fry and University offers free two-hour parking for patrons of nearby businesses.

The city of St. Paul is funding and administering a program to address parking loss during and after LRT construction. The program provides low-interest loans to individual businesses that can be used to reach agreements with other businesses for shared parking or for limited construction to improve off-street parking.

To date, the city of St. Paul Housing Redevelopment Authority has approved \$1.32 million in funding for 24 parking improvement projects. One project has dropped out and five projects have been completed or mostly completed.

Almost all of the 24 parking improvement projects funded through this program are anticipated to be completed by the end of this year. This includes a large project in the northwest block at Snelling and University avenues. It involves the city leasing land and improving it for off-street parking. Property owners support this project, which is on schedule for September construction.

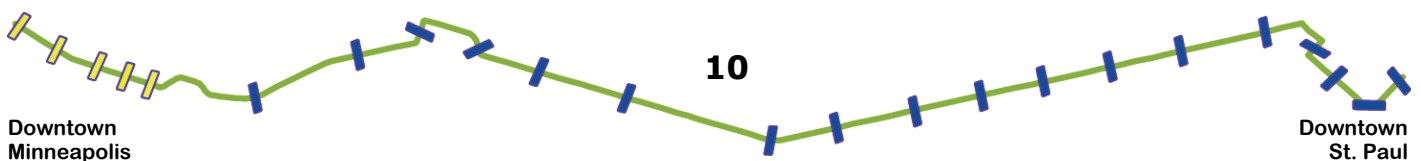


University Ave. East—business improvements



The Best Steak House at 860 University Ave. W. in St. Paul is among businesses sprucing up in advance of LRT construction next year on the eastern end of University Avenue.

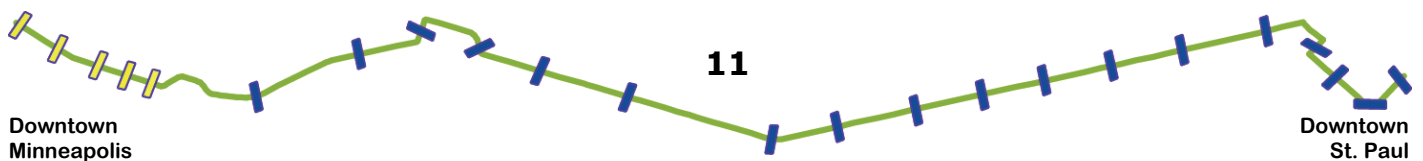
The Business Improvement/Expansion Assistance program includes \$850,000 available in loan, grant and Program-Related Investment Funds to assist targeted businesses with significant growth opportunities and/or that are in a position to buy or improve their own buildings. The goal is to reinforce the importance of locally owned and minority-owned businesses to the corridor. The Neighborhood Development Center is administering this program.



Capitol area



Looking south on Robert Street from above University Avenue, construction is ongoing from University to 12th Street where the tracks will turn west and go a block to Cedar Street before turning south. For details on getting around during construction, see the weekly Capitol update at: <http://tinyurl.com/3wdqvtx>

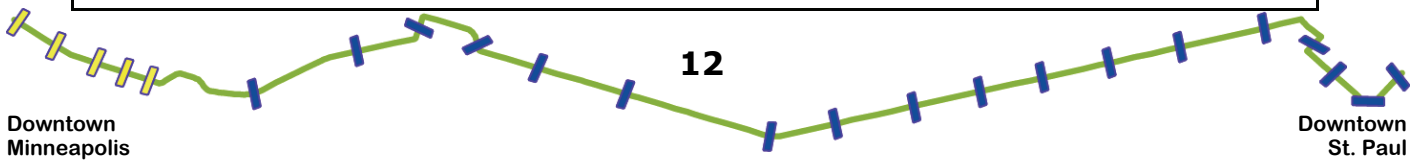


.....

Cedar Street in St. Paul



Access is maintained to parking ramps (top two photos) on Cedar Street north of Seventh Street across from Minnesota Public Radio and south of Seventh into the Wells Fargo ramp. The vacant Bremer Bank (bottom photo) will be demolished in mid-June to make way for LRT tracks and the Fourth and Cedar Street Station. For details, see **Cedar Street—What to Expect from Construction** at: <http://tinyurl.com/3mg2e94>



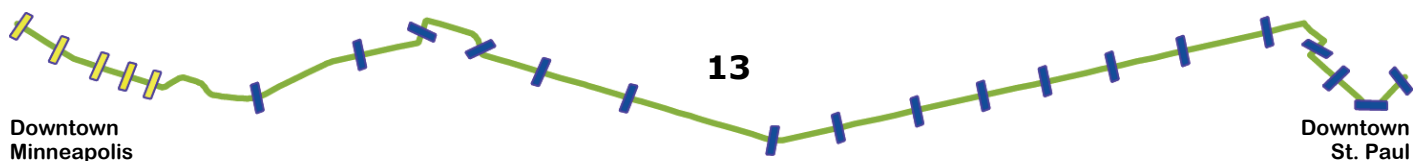
.....

Fourth Street in St. Paul



Crews dismantle the western wall of the former Diamond Products building at Fourth and Broadway streets as they work on converting it into the operations and maintenance facility. The facility will clean and store light rail vehicles overnight.

To learn how to get around the construction zone, see the weekly downtown St. Paul update at: <http://tinyurl.com/2eaucu2>



.....

Bus information—Visit www.metrotransit.org/construction for construction-related bus detours and bus stop closures during construction.

Weekly construction updates—Learn how to get around during construction by entering your email address in the yellow box at the top right of the www.centralcorridor.org homepage. Addressees will receive updates every Friday for the sections of the corridor they choose. The updates provide a look at the week ahead with details on lane shifts, crosswalk and sidewalk closures and alternate routes and relocated bus stops. The public also can sign up to receive project newsletters such as Making Tracks and DBE News about Disadvantaged Business Enterprises and workforce participation on this project.

Construction Hotline - 651-602-1404.

For general questions or comments - Call 651-602-1645 or email centralcorridor@metc.state.mn.us

About the project: The Central Corridor Light Rail Transit Project will link downtown Saint Paul and downtown Minneapolis along Washington and University avenues via the state Capitol and the University of Minnesota. Construction began in late summer 2010 on the planned 11-mile Central Corridor line, and service will begin in 2014. The line will connect with the Hiawatha LRT line at the Metrodome station in Minneapolis and the Northstar commuter rail line at the Target Field Station. The Metropolitan Council is 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. Funding is provided by the Federal Transit Administration, Counties Transit Improvement Board, state of Minnesota, Ramsey and Hennepin counties' regional railroad authorities, city of Saint Paul, Metropolitan Council and the Central Corridor Funders Collaborative. For details, visit www.centralcorridor.org

