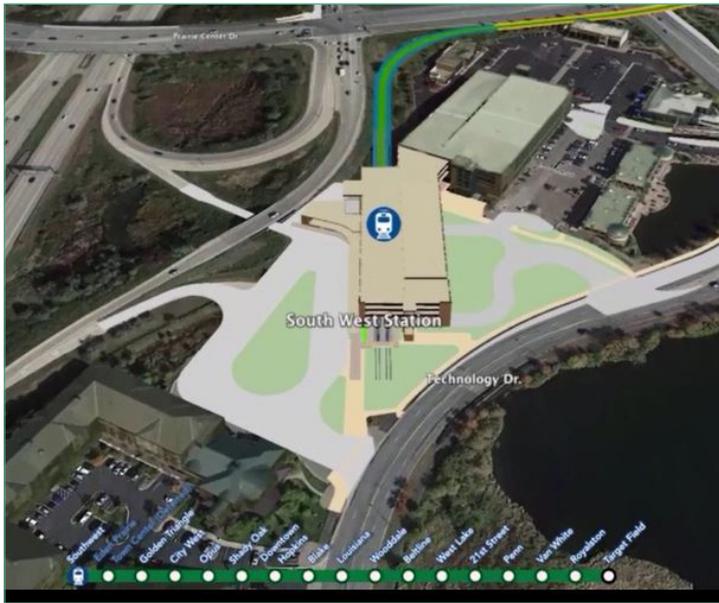


Extending TRACKS



Southwest LRT Project posts new narrated video of route with recent changes

The new video takes viewers on a virtual fly-over along the entire length of the planned METRO Green Line Extension, starting at Southwest Station in Eden Prairie and ending at Target Field Station in downtown Minneapolis.

Along the way, narration highlights the stations, bridges and structures that make up the planned light rail line, along with the numerous employment centers along the route and the corridor's many pedestrian and bicycle trails.

View the video on the Project's website at www.swlrt.org or on the Metropolitan Council's YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/user/MetropolitanCouncil.

Event planned for contractors to learn about Southwest LRT construction opportunities

Potential contractors are invited to an Oct. 21 event in Minnetonka to learn about construction opportunities and connect with potential subcontractors to build the planned Southwest LRT line.

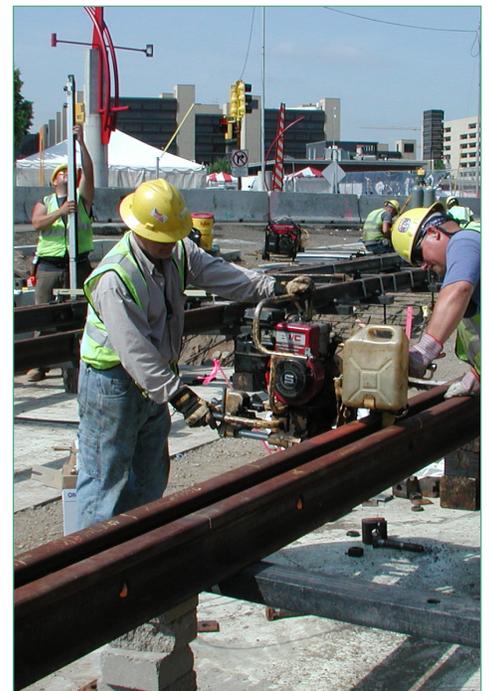
The construction contractor mixer will be from 2 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. at Minnetonka Community Center.

The purpose is to inform potential contractors about the types of construction activities, including the breakdown of main contracts, the timeline for bidding and the Metropolitan Council's bidding process.

Construction is anticipated to begin in 2017, and contractors need to get

information to begin preparing bid packages for the largest public works project in Minnesota history.

The mixer also will provide a chance to connect potential prime contractors with subcontractors and encourage eligible minority-owned and women-owned businesses to become registered Disadvantaged Business Enterprises. The Metropolitan Council will establish goals for contracting with DBEs. For individual workers, the Met Council will apply state of Minnesota workforce goals for state-funded projects in Hennepin and Ramsey counties of 32 percent minority and 6 percent female workers.



Workers on the Central Corridor LRT (METRO Green Line) project.

CONTRACTS FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

The project is promoting the mixer via trade unions, Association of General Contractors, non-profit organizations; state, regional and local chambers of commerce as well as its list of national prime contractors and registered DBEs.

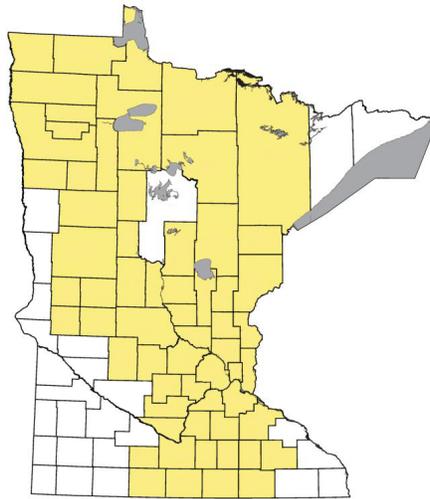
The Southwest LRT Project is expected to employ more construction workers than the Central Corridor LRT Project, which had a \$256 million payroll and drew more than 5,500 workers from all over Minnesota, stretching from the Canadian border to Iowa and the North Dakota border to Wisconsin.

More information on the event is available on the Southwest LRT website at metro council.org/swlrt/contract-kickoff.

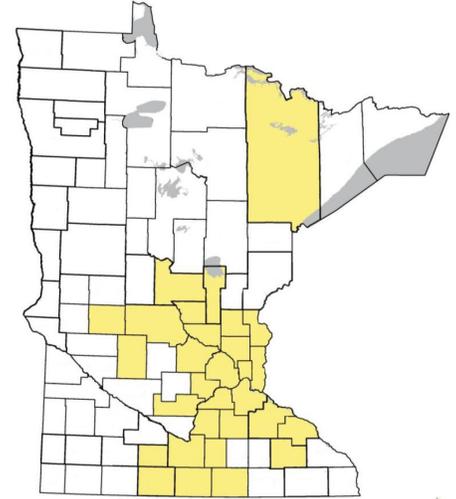
Individuals are encouraged to register for the event in advance. Companies and organizations that are interested in exhibiting at the kick-off event should contact the Southwest LRT project office staff listed on the website.

LRT construction contracts support jobs statewide

The Central Corridor LRT (METRO Green Line) project drew workers from across the state (left); construction subcontractors and materials suppliers were also widely distributed beyond the Twin Cities area.



Central Corridor construction workers' counties of residence.



Central Corridor contractor and supplier locations (counties).

Mapping firm's reach expands with Southwest, Blue Line Extension LRT work

Pointmap was an established mapping firm with a solid reputation for work on environmental projects when one of its engineering firm clients urged founder and owner Peggy Johnson to become certified as a Minnesota Disadvantaged Business Enterprise.

While Johnson did become certified in 2007, she didn't do much marketing around the DBE program, because she was concerned it would send the wrong message.

"I want you to hire my company because we do good work," Johnson said she told her company's clients.

But Johnson did notice that the DBE program expanded Pointmap's reach. A few years ago, when bids went out for environmental testing for the Southwest Light Rail Transit project, eight or nine companies contacted Pointmap to inquire about hiring the firm as a subcontractor.

That type of response convinced Johnson the program has value for a small company, even though she's not a fan of the word "disadvantaged." She wants Pointmap to get hired for the same reasons it has over the years – its high-quality work and her four-person staff's commitment to clients.



Peggy Johnson, founder and owner of Pointmap.

POINTMAP CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

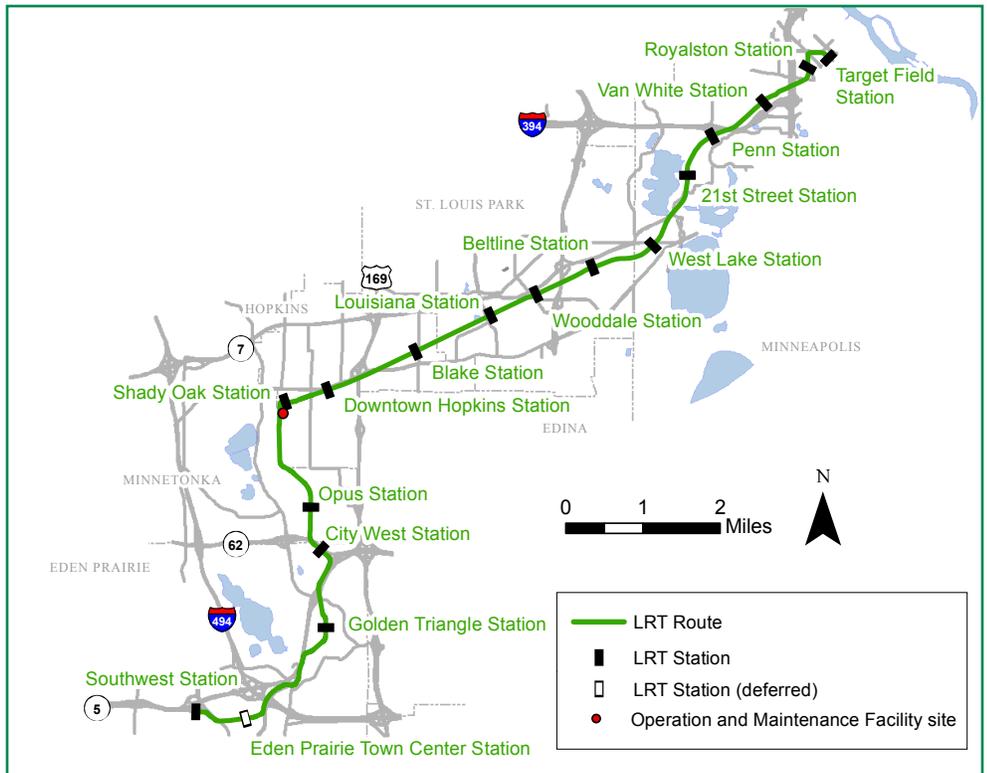
Cities, county approve changes to project

All five corridor city councils and Hennepin County in September approved changes that reduced the cost of the Southwest LRT line by \$250 million while maintaining strong ridership projections in order to help secure federal funding.

In their second round of municipal consent hearings, they agreed with the changes recommended this summer by their communities' leaders, who provide guidance and oversight on the project's Corridor Management Committee.

The changes retain construction of 15 of 17 stations, with the intent to build Eden Prairie Town Center Station in the future, and will connect LRT to the existing SouthWest Station transit hub. The changes retain 94 percent of the ridership and will serve 96 percent of the jobs in the corridor.

The 14.5-mile line with 15 stations is scheduled to open in 2020, and around 34,000 average weekday boardings are expected by 2040. The current project cost estimate is \$1.77 billion.



Above: The revised Southwest LRT alignment stops at Southwest Station in Eden Prairie; Town Center station is deferred and will be constructed later.

Next Steps

Metropolitan Council staff are working with environmental consultants to prepare the Project's Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), with completion expected in the second quarter of 2016.

The Final EIS will include responses to substantive comments received on the Draft EIS (2012) and Supplemental Draft EIS (2015). It will also identify measures to avoid, minimize or mitigate adverse impacts of the Project. The Federal Transit Administration will issue a Record of Decision on the Final EIS in the second quarter of 2016, signifying the end of the environmental review and approval process.

Southwest LRT Project Six-Month Look Ahead

Complete Municipal Consent approval process	Oct 11, 2015
Complete 60% design, including Kenilworth landscape design concept and station design renderings	Q4 2015
Complete 90% design	Q1 2016
Submit applications for state and local environmental permits	Q1 2016
Publish Final Environmental Impact Statement	Q2 2016
Receive FTA Record of Decision	Q2 2016

Design and engineering staff are also working toward the 60 percent design milestone, which will include a landscape design concept for the

Kenilworth area of Minneapolis as well as station design renderings.

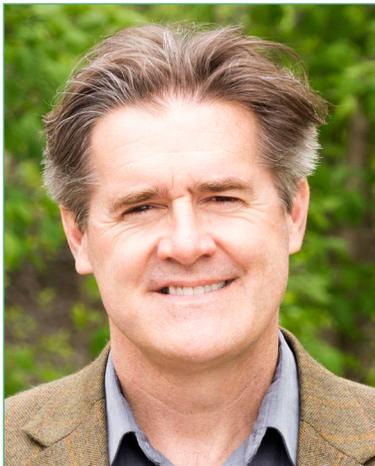
Outreach staffers are public's first point of contact with project office

A former Central Corridor LRT outreach coordinator who speaks four languages in addition to English and an outreach coordinator with extensive community engagement experience in the South Pacific joined Minneapolis outreach coordinator Sophia Ginis earlier this year as the public's first points of contact for the Southwest LRT Project.

Right: Outreach coordinator Sophia Ginis and other project staff set up a pop-up tent in August in the Kenilworth area of Minneapolis to explain plans for Kenilworth landscape design with LRT.



Eden Prairie, Minnetonka



James Mockovciak (Mo-KOV-ee-ack), who serves Eden Prairie and Minnetonka, is a former program development manager for Youth With A Mission in the Fiji Islands. He previously was an instructor for a non-profit in Denver, providing basic construction training to urban youth and was a faculty tutor at a private Minnesota college. Mockovciak has a master's degree in international development from the Josef Korbel School of International Studies at the University of Denver.

Contact James:

612-373-3894

James.Mockovciak@metrotransit.org

Hopkins, St. Louis Park, Edina



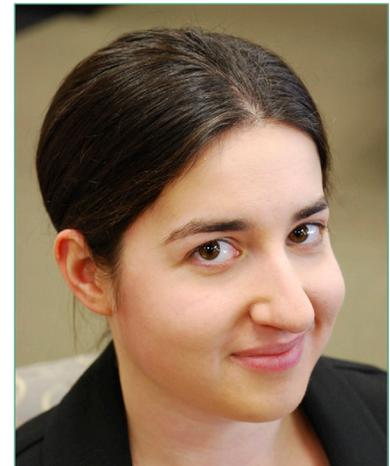
Nkongo Cigolo (NEN-kong-go SEE-guh-lo), a former Central Corridor LRT Project (METRO Green Line) outreach coordinator, serves St. Louis Park, Edina and Hopkins. He speaks Swahili, French, two dialects of Bantu and English. A University of Minnesota graduate, Cigolo worked in the nonprofit field before joining the Metropolitan Council in 2007.

Contact Nkongo:

612-373-3825

Nkongo.Cigolo@metrotransit.org

Minneapolis



Sophia Ginis has been outreach coordinator on the Minneapolis portion of the Southwest LRT Project since 2013. Formerly outreach manager for the Center for Science, Technology & Public Policy at the University of Minnesota Humphrey School of Public Affairs, where she earned a master's degree in advanced policy analysis. Earlier, she was a community organizer in the Cedar-Riverside area of Minneapolis. She speaks some Spanish in addition to English.

Contact Sophia:

612-373-3895

Sophia.Ginis@metrotransit.org



Left: Trail users and Southwest LRT outreach staff discuss plans for landscape design incorporating LRT in the Kenilworth area. Staffers frequently take their information to busy people where they are, not content to engage only the people who are able to attend public meetings.

POINTMAP FROM PAGE 2

Pointmap does computer-aided design (CAD) and moved into geographic information system (GIS) work as well in the late 1990s. Johnson and her employees don't go out in the field. Instead, they use mapping resources online and information from contractors.

"We start out with many different maps, sometimes it's a survey map," she said. Aerial and topographic maps are a common starting point. States, cities and counties often have historical documents and aerial photos available as well. The maps may show historical industrial sites where hazardous materials may have been used or show locations of on-site testing and whether hazardous materials were found.

From St. Paul Technical College to business owner

After earning a civil tech degree from St. Paul Technical College in 1982 and working on survey crews for the Minnesota Department of Transportation and the city of Roseville, she struck out on her own in 1993 and started Pointmap. Some of Pointmap's clients have GIS mapping or drafting operations in-house, but they hire Pointmap to free up staff time or to meet a tight deadline.

The firm has worked on long-running environmental projects around the country, such as Superfund sites, brownfield projects and bulk-storage facilities. Pointmap has also provided CAD and GIS for several high-profile projects in Minnesota, including the Twin Cities Army Ammunition Plant site in Arden Hills and the Port Authority's Beacon Bluff site in St. Paul. Working closely with American Engineering Testing Inc. of St. Paul, they have provided maps and figures for Target Field and the Interchange transit project in downtown Minneapolis.

Part of the Southwest, Blue Line Extension LRT project teams

On the Southwest LRT Project, Pointmap is working for SEH Inc., a St. Paul-based engineering firm. Pointmap's work was tied to early environmental testing on the Southwest LRT Project, which involves historical mapping of parcels along the proposed line that stretches west from downtown Minneapolis to Eden Prairie.

Pointmap is also a subcontractor for Braun Intertec Corp., which is doing environmental testing on the Blue Line LRT Extension project. The proposed Blue Line Extension runs from Target Field Station in downtown Minneapolis to Brooklyn Park in the northwest metro area.

About the DBE program

Requirements for participating in the DBE program include limits on personal net worth (less than \$1.32 million), and 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.

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

It's worthwhile for businesses in the DBE program to pay attention to state projects and DBE hiring efforts, Johnson said. There are classes on the DBE program offered through state agencies, such as MnDOT and the Metropolitan Council, that are valuable, Johnson added. "People there go out of their way to be helpful."

More information about the DBE program is available on the Metropolitan Council website at: metro council.org/DBE

Andrew Larson, who works with the DBE program, can be reached at 612-373-3896.

205 comments received on Supplemental Draft EIS

Less than the 1,000 public comments received on the Southwest Transitway Draft EIS

The Southwest LRT Project received 205 comments on the Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS) this summer.

"It is interesting to note that the number of comments is about one-fifth of the number of comments received by the end of 2012 on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. We believe the greatly reduced number of comments is a result of the good work done to address the public's concerns," said Adam Duininck, chair of the Metropolitan Council.

Staff will analyze the comments and develop responses to them with the environmental/engineering team. The comments and responses to them will be in the appendix to the Final EIS, which is scheduled to be published in the second quarter of 2016.

The comments are posted on the project's website at: metro council.org/swlrt/sdeis/comments

Forty-three people testified at the public hearings held on June 16, 17 and 18. A total of 162 people submitted comments in writing (email, letter or comment card).

Individuals provided the majority of the comments:

- 43 comments were submitted by business/organizations
- 18 comments were submitted by government agencies
- 144 comments were submitted by individuals

Top five comments/themes:

- Noise and vibration
- Safety and security
- Visual impacts and aesthetics
- National Environmental Policy Act process
- General opposition to keeping freight rail in the corridor where light rail will be built in the Kenilworth Corridor

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 (HCRRRA) and other project partners. The Southwest LRT Project website is www.swlrt.org.

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