

# Making Tracks



November 2008

Four Pages

## Five artist teams with experience on public projects chosen to develop station art

Five artist teams with experience on public infrastructure projects will develop artwork to be integrated into the 15 Central Corridor LRT stations. The Metropolitan Council approved the recommendations of the artist selection committee on Oct. 22, clearing the way for the project office to negotiate and execute contracts not to exceed \$560,000 per artist or \$2.8 million total. The artists must create community task forces for each station and involvement plans to engage the community. They are to complete substantive station design work before April. The artists and their assigned stations are:

- Nancy Blum of New York – West Bank, East Bank and Fairview Avenue stations.
- Roberto L. Delgado of Los Angeles – Stadium Village, Snelling Avenue and Fourth and Cedar Street stations.
- Seitu Jones of St. Paul – Lexington Parkway and Dale and Rice street stations.
- Janet Lofquist of Minneapolis -- 29th Avenue, 10th Street and Capitol East stations.
- Myklebust + Sears Studio of Stockholm, Wis. – Westgate, Raymond and Union Depot stations.



Nancy Blum



Roberto Delgado



Seitu Jones



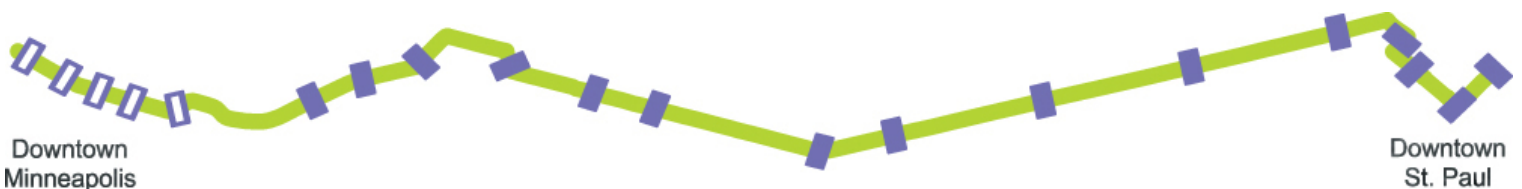
Janet Lofquist



Stanton G. Sears



Andrea Myklebust



## Applicants sought for station art committees

Applicants have until Nov. 14 to apply for positions on 13 LRT station art committees that will advise the five artist teams on the culture and history of the community. Two of the station art committees (Westgate/Raymond and Capitol East/Tenth Street) will work on two stations each; there are 15 LRT stations overall. The committees will assist the Metropolitan Council and its Central Corridor Project Office in planning and promoting public art meetings with the community.

The four- to five-person station art committee will include one member from the Community Advisory Committee and people from district councils, neighborhood groups, business representatives, advocacy groups, educational institutions, ethnic communities, arts organizations and religious organizations. For areas with special designations, such as the cities' Heritage Preservation Commissions, University of Minnesota and Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board, one of the committee members must represent the appropriate oversight agency. Membership will be granted through a formal application process and will be open to all persons who live or work within a one-mile radius of the station.

The Central Corridor Project Office will select the committee members, who will be expected to attend several meetings between November 2008 and July 2009. These meetings will include an informational training session in November, visioning sessions with the artists in December, concept meetings in January and February and presentations on final station art in June and July. Community outreach coordinators for the Central Corridor LRT Project will secure meeting locations, notify the public about the meetings and document the meetings and community input. Meanwhile, the Central Corridor LRT Project office will oversee the artists throughout the design process and provide feedback on technical issues.

Applications for the station art committees are available at :

<http://www.metrocouncil.org/transportation/ccorridor/ArtCommApplications.htm>

## Open houses on FEIS to be held next month

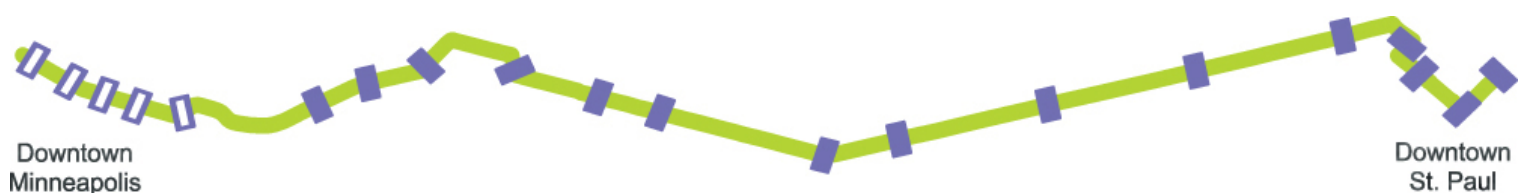
Five open houses will be held in December to gather public comments for the Final Environmental Impact Statement on the Central Corridor LRT Project. The times, dates and location are:

- Dec. 1 – 5-7 p.m. – Model Cities, 849 University Ave., St. Paul
- Dec. 2 – 11 a.m.-1 p.m. – Alliance Bank Center, 55 E. Fifth St., St. Paul
- Dec. 3 – 5-7 p.m. – Central Presbyterian Church, 500 Cedar St., St. Paul
- Dec. 4 – 6-8 p.m. – Brian Coyle Center, 420 15th Ave. SE, Minneapolis
- Dec. 6 – Noon-2 p.m. – Goodwill/Easter Seals, 553 Fairview Ave N, St. Paul

The purpose of the FEIS includes identifying the preferred route alternative, disclosing impacts not disclosed in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, describing mitigation measures and documenting and responding to substantive comments.

In preparation for the FEIS, project staff this fall has been conducting additional analysis on traffic and vibration impacts of LRT and summarizing and responding to public comments from the summer on the Supplemental DEIS. Issues raised in the DEIS and SDEIS process focused on the West Bank station location and access to it, Washington Avenue bridge, LRT's East Bank alignment, the 29th Avenue station location, vibration impacts, potential infill stations and the downtown St. Paul alignment.

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Goal to keep Washington Avenue bridge open to foot, vehicle traffic during construction

Pedestrians and vehicles will face lane restrictions but will be able to use the Washington Avenue bridge during two rounds of construction from January 2009 through 2011 to make it ready for Central Corridor LRT trains.

From January through April 2009, Hennepin County will install bracing to stabilize the columns supporting the upper pedestrian deck. Pedestrian traffic will be maintained throughout construction in its current restricted condition. Full use of the upper pedestrian deck is expected after April. However, some temporary restrictions may be necessary during construction of the lower auto deck beginning in 2010.



Beginning next summer, the Central Corridor project will do much of the traffic mitigation work on Washington Avenue, requiring closure of the future transit/pedestrian mall from Pleasant to Walnut streets. This work will allow the project to close the mall during subsequent LRT track construction beginning in 2010.

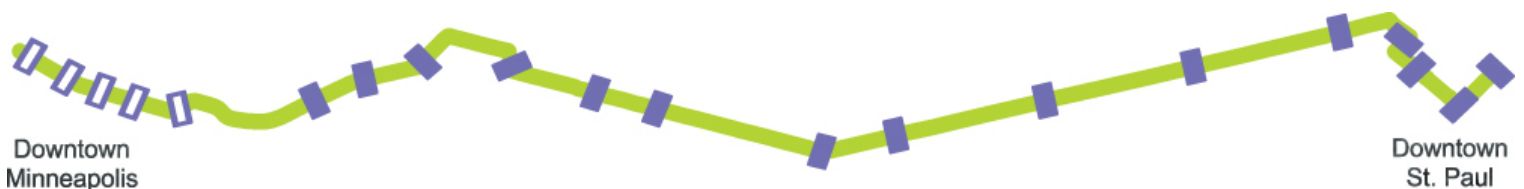
In 2010, the LRT project will begin work on the roadway level of the bridge to add elements for structural redundancy because the design of the main girders doesn't meet current codes. Construction of the improvements will be in conjunction with the retrofitting of the lower auto deck to accommodate one pair of tracks and one lane of traffic in each direction. During construction, vehicle traffic on the bridge will be restricted to one lane in each direction, which will be similar to the final traffic flow on the bridge once LRT tracks are installed. Temporary closures of the bridge to all traffic may be necessary for critical construction activities, but these closures will be kept to a minimum and generally occur when traffic levels are low such as nights and weekends.

The LRT project cost estimate includes \$30 million to construct modifications to the main roadway structure of the bridge to accommodate LRT. It does not include any cost for the modifications to the pedestrian deck, which will be funded by Hennepin County. Costs to improve the bridge beyond those required for the LRT project will be the financial responsibility of others.

For more information about the project, visit: [www.centralcorridor.org](http://www.centralcorridor.org)

Questions or Comments? Call the comment line at 651-602-1645 or e-mail us at [centralcorridor@metc.state.mn.us](mailto:centralcorridor@metc.state.mn.us)

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Not the last spike, but the last weld on LRT extension

When the final weld was made on the Hiawatha light-rail transit (LRT) extension to a shared station with the Northstar commuter-rail line in downtown Minneapolis on November 5, the moment was akin on a local level to the driving of the last spike on the transcontinental railroad.

“This connection will create a 52-mile passenger rail network for the Twin Cities, 12 miles for Hiawatha and 40 miles for Northstar. The network will increase to 62 miles when Central Corridor begins service,” said Mark Fuhrmann, director of the Northstar and Central Corridor projects. Fuhrmann also was chief financial officer of the Hiawatha project.

The milestone marked the beginning of a light-rail connection between St. Paul and Minneapolis and between the Twin Cities and communities on the Northstar commuter rail line. Central Corridor LRT trains from St. Paul will operate their last mile in downtown Minneapolis from a point near the Metrodome to the Hiawatha extension when Central Corridor service begins in 2014.



A chemical reaction turns steel rails to molten metal during the welding process. Jose Figueroa, general superintendent of rail construction for Balfour Beatty Rail, monitors the weld.

**New station will operate on two levels**

Commuters on Hiawatha and Central Corridor LRT trains will board and disembark at the Minneapolis Multimodal Station being built on the Fifth Street North bridge next to the new Minnesota Twins stadium. The same station also will serve Northstar commuter trains traveling to and from Big Lake on BNSF Railway tracks, terminating below the bridge. Stairs, elevators and escalators will take commuters from Northstar trains on the lower level to Hiawatha and Central Corridor trains on the upper level. Hiawatha LRT trains will begin operating over the extension from the Warehouse Station to the new station at the same time Northstar begins service late next year.

No dignitaries were on hand to make speeches and there was no fanfare as welders Britton Carpenter and Brian Downey of Chesapeake Thermite Welding, a subcontractor, finished the final welds in the intersection of Fifth Street and First Avenue by the Warehouse Station.

The welders worked behind barricades as motorists and pedestrians passed through the busy intersection and Hiawatha trains picked up and dropped off commuters at the nearby station, but the public gave no heed to the significance of what was occurring. The men placed a clamp where the rail was to be joined, heated the spot with an acetylene torch, placed a metal bucket with chemicals over the spot and set off a chemical reaction with a fuse. Stepping back, they watched as sparks shot several feet into the air for about 30 seconds, turning the cold steel to molten metal so the two could pound and grind it. And that was it.

By Thursday, crews in yellow slickers were working in the rain to install rebar in preparation for the pouring of concrete to create embedded track so autos on First Avenue can drive smoothly across the spot.

