

Making Tracks

April-May
2012



Rolling right along

During the last full week of April, crews began paving University Avenue at Hamline Avenue Station eastward.

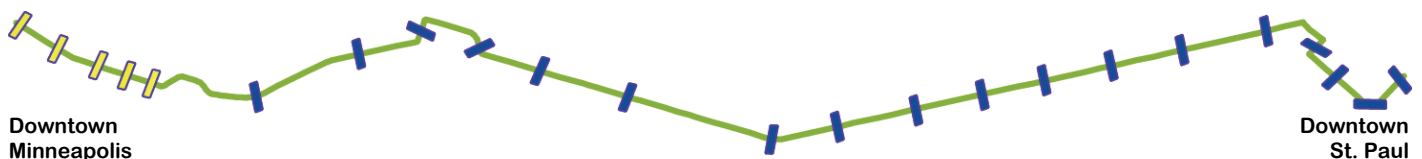
LRT construction is at halfway point, on schedule, within budget

Construction of the Central Corridor LRT Project is 50 percent complete and on track to be 75 percent done by the year's end.

"The contractors really hit the ground running in March. We now have work occurring in all areas of the nearly 10-mile long project, employing more than 3,000 workers to date," Met Council Chair Sue Haigh said.

Praise also goes to the Midway Chamber of Commerce for encouraging patronage of corridor businesses, to banks and other businesses that use their signs to promote University Avenue businesses, and the city of St. Paul and U7 for administering the forgivable loan fund, Haigh said. Through 2011, 98 business assistance grants had been approved, totaling \$1.34 million.

"And then there are the patient businesses that work with the project office to maintain access and share information with their tenants and the citizens who serve on the construction communication committees," she said.



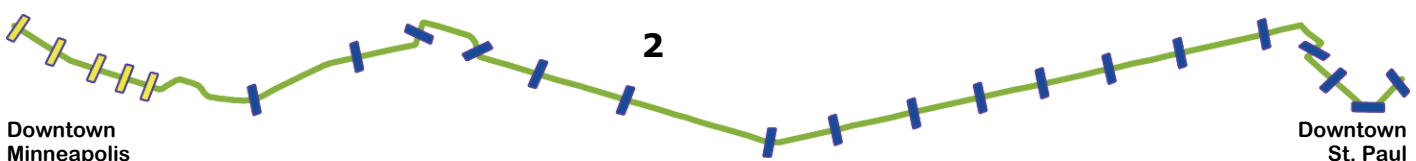
LRT construction...(continued from page 1)

As a result of this cooperation, the project is on schedule to substantially complete utility relocations, roadway removal and replacement, track installation and the structural elements of all 18 stations by the end of this year, said Mark Fuhrmann, program director for New Starts rail projects. "Overall, the project remains on schedule to open in 2014 and is within budget," Fuhrmann said.

Work installing the electrical, signaling and communications systems as well as testing the operation of trains will occur in 2013 and 2014 before revenue service begins in 2014. Exactly when service will begin depends on how the testing goes.

Since heavy construction in late summer 2010, crews have:

- Relocated about eight miles of public utilities so they won't be under the tracks and any work on them in the future won't disrupt rail service.
- Removed and replaced five miles of roadway, sidewalks, curbs and gutters from building front to building front.
- Installed 3.5 miles of the 10 miles of double track.
- Begun work at 15 of the 18 station locations.
- Completed nearly two-thirds of the work on the Washington Avenue Bridge. Traffic is expected to resume this summer on the outside lanes of each side of the bridge in their final single-lane each way configuration. Double tracks will be installed in the inside lane each direction of the bridge.
- Completed 35 percent of the work on the operation and maintenance facility in Lowertown St. Paul.
- Completed construction of the Interstate 35W flyover in Minneapolis where Central Corridor tracks will join Hiawatha LRT tracks. (Passengers will be able to continue their trip into downtown Minneapolis on the same train from the Metrodome to Target Field Station.)
- Demolished the former Bremer Bank and completed the skyway connection over Fifth Street in St. Paul.
- Completed two of the foundations for the 14 traction power substations that will convert electricity into a form that can be used to power the trains.
- Assembled the shell of the first new light rail vehicle, which is expected to arrive this fall in Minnesota.





Contractor performance improves by halfway mark

Local officials and the business community are taking note of improvements made by project staffers and Walsh Construction, the contractor for the seven-mile St. Paul portion of the line.

"There is no doubt that construction is difficult for businesses along the corridor," said Commissioner Jim McDonough, chair of the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority. "As heavy construction enters a second full year, the project has found creative ways to limit the impact of road and sidewalk closures, minimizing impacts on businesses."

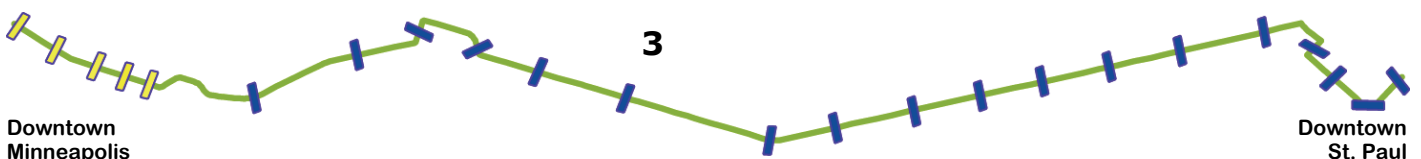
Kari Canfield, president and executive director of the Midway Chamber of Commerce, also has noticed improvement.

"We are observing increased communication from Walsh and have even received positive feedback about that from some of our members," Canfield said.

As a result of the many improvements, the Central Corridor Project Office awarded a \$40,000 incentive or 80 percent of the available \$50,000 incentive to Walsh for the quarter ended March 31. The amount is up from the last quarter when Walsh earned \$27,500 or 39 percent of the total incentive available of \$70,000. Project director Rich Rovang concurred with staff's recommendation for the higher award in the quarter just ended because Walsh performed above and beyond the required specifications.

Walsh's first quarter 2012 incentive award closely mirrors that for the project's other main contractor, Ames-McCrossan Joint Venture. The project office awarded AMJV, which is building the line's western three miles in Minneapolis, \$16,327 or nearly 82 percent of the available \$20,000 incentive for the quarter ended March 31 based on the panel's recommendation. AMJV received \$18,150 last quarter or 72.6 percent of the \$25,000 incentive available.

(more)





LRT construction...(continued from page 2)

Walsh's improvements included:

- Meeting with all businesses with access to University Avenue in advance of construction and arranging for alternative temporary access.
- Starting work earlier in the season.
- Nearly tripling its workforce during first quarter of this year compared to first quarter last year.
- Accommodating special events.
- Reducing idle work zones by staging utility and roadwork more efficiently.
- Decreasing the time that traffic is detoured and expediting reconstruction of intersections by fully closing some less heavily used intersections.
- Making pedestrian paths more visible and safer for people with disabilities.
- Improving access to businesses through more routine inspections of pedestrian crossings and construction zones to ensure that safety barriers and curb ramps are in place.

What to expect from construction this year by area:

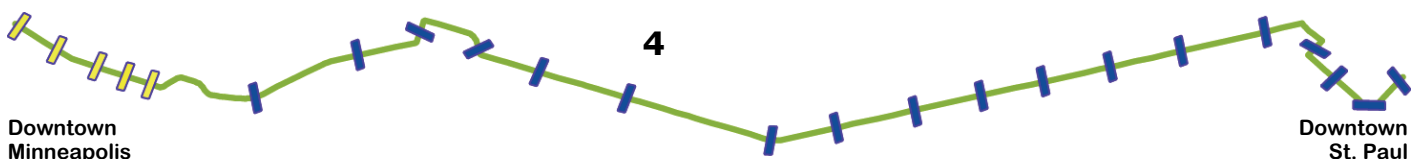
West Bank: <http://tinyurl.com/82smjde>

East Bank/Stadium Village: <http://tinyurl.com/7bu6csc>

Prospect Park: <http://tinyurl.com/7a78snn>

University Avenue East—St. Paul: <http://tinyurl.com/7pbzds4>

Cedar Street and Central Station: <http://tinyurl.com/7nsu5dw>





A sign for Hamline Station apartments and retail is posted on the former Midway Chevrolet site on University Avenue by the Hamline Avenue Station which is under construction. The affordable housing and commercial project received \$2.45 million from the Metropolitan Council in April.

Met Council awards funds to spur job growth along Central Corridor line

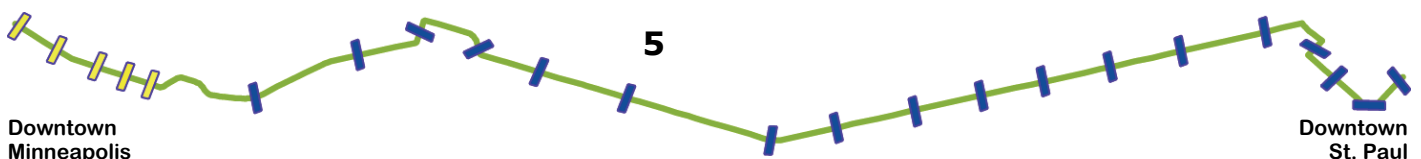
Several grants approved in late April by the Metropolitan Council will support new development along the Central Corridor LRT line.

They include development of two mixed-use buildings near the Hamline Avenue Station in St. Paul that will include affordable family and workforce rental housing, retail space and a central plaza on the site of the former Midway Chevrolet.

Minneapolis received a grant for redevelopment near the Prospect Park Station with mixed-income rental housing, including housing for intergenerational residents, designed to be energy efficient, walkable and bike friendly.

In all, the Met Council approved nearly \$15.4 million in grants in April to 17 projects that will help to promote economic development and jobs along transit corridors, where there is, or will be, transit infrastructure and high-frequency transit service. Communities awarded funding are Anoka, Apple Valley, Eden Prairie, Hopkins, Minneapolis, Minnetonka, Richfield, St. Louis Park and St. Paul.

The funds are the first to be awarded from a new category of grants within the Livable Communities program to advance Transit-Oriented Development (TOD). For the full release, see: <http://www.metrocouncil.org/news/2012/TODgrantsApril25.htm>





"As a construction inspector representing the Metropolitan Council AND a resident of St. Paul, I work hard to be respectful of the public during the most disruptive parts of construction. I appreciate the mutual respect I've seen from other construction staff and from St. Paul's residents."

**Jason Jaworski,
Metropolitan Council
construction inspector**

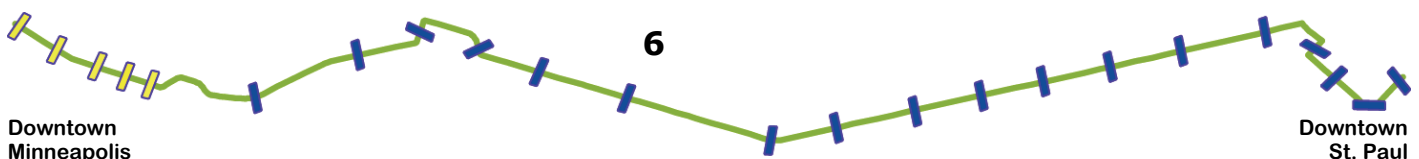
Construction isn't a show-stopper for Fitzgerald, History Theater

Construction inspector Jason Jaworski for the Central Corridor LRT Project knows the show must go on.

At Jaworski's direction, Walsh Construction switched from jack-hammering to grinding March 30 to prevent interference with a theater performance at the Fitzgerald Theater. It was the second time in a week that Jaworski stepped into to save the day for a local theater.

In the March 30 incident, a Fitzgerald representative alerted crews 15 minutes before the start of a program that was to be recorded. The representative feared construction noise would interfere with the recording quality.

Jaworski made a similar adjustment March 23 for the nearby History Theater after a patron informed workers outside that they could hear the jack-hammering from LRT construction on Cedar Street through the walls. A performance of "Coco's Diary" was scheduled to start in 15 minutes. As the contractor switched to grinding, Jaworski continued to monitor the noise and vibration impacts of the utility relocation excavation along Cedar.



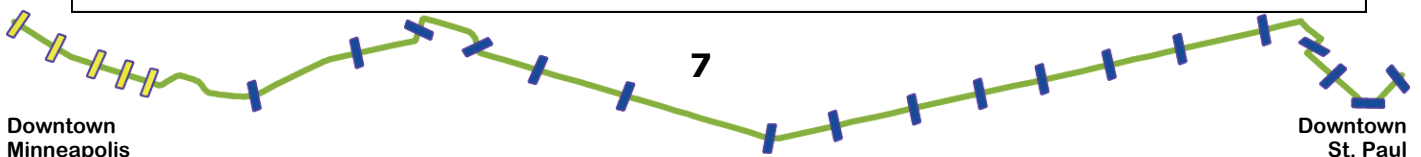
University Avenue East—Hamline to Rice

Yes, we're open!

The Ronald M. Hubbs Center for Lifelong Learning, 1030 University Ave. W in St. Paul, uses a variable message to let people know it remains open while the Lexington Parkway Station goes up in front of it.



Homi Mexican restaurant, 864 University Ave. W in St. Paul, uses a simple window sign to let passersby know it is open and parking is available behind the restaurant, which is in front of the future Victoria Street Station. See: <http://www.homirestaurant.com/>



University Avenue East—Hamline to

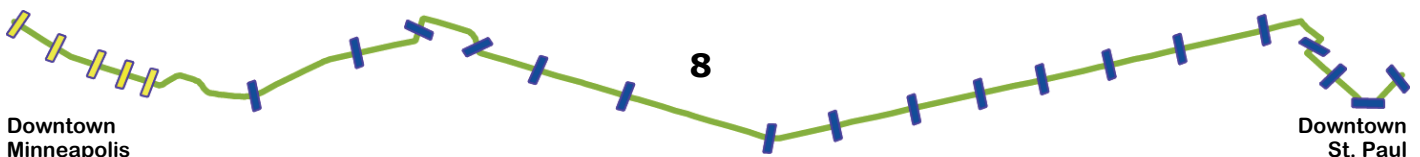


Filipino food to go

Jun Maniago operates a Filipino food stand, Lutong Meken, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays in Phil-Oriental Imports at 789 University Ave. W. There is a parking lot on the west side of the building. His specialties include whole roast pork sold by the pound and bakery goods such as purple yam cake. See: <https://www.facebook.com/Lutong.Mekeni>

Yes, we have parking!

Ocean Spa has parking in the back and on the side of its building even though the south side of University Avenue is closed in front of its building due to LRT construction. Ocean Spa is at 1094 University Ave. W by the Lexington Parkway Station.



University Avenue West—Emerald to Hamline

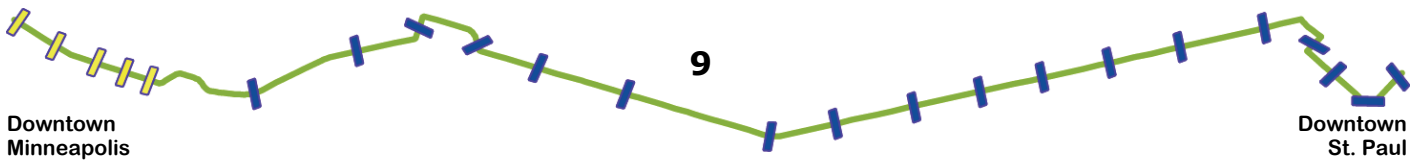


Before and...

University Avenue between Fairview and Snelling avenues in spring 2011 before construction work that removed and replaced the roadway, sidewalks, curbs and gutters.

...after

Now look at University between Fairview and Snelling! New roadway and sidewalks with pavers, new curb and gutter, vintage-looking streetlights and new trees. And getting to the tax preparer is a little easier!



Downtown
Minneapolis

Downtown
St. Paul

University Avenue West—Emerald to Hamline

Beauty shop gets facelift

Roni's Beauty Supply, 1571 University Ave. W. in St. Paul, is open despite façade work and LRT construction. See:

<http://www.ronisbeauty.com/>

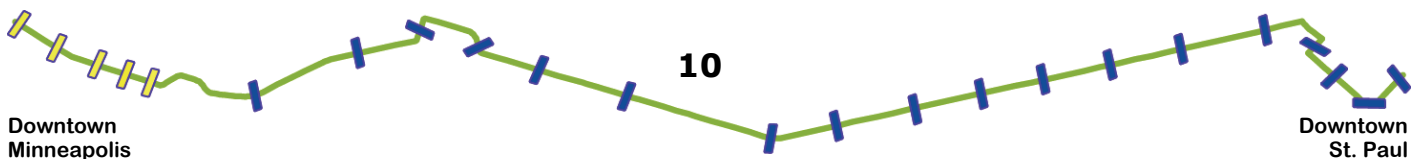


How about some beer to go with that paint?

Midway Liquor owner Joe Gorman relocated across from Menards on Prior after his old location about 300 feet away in the Zimmerman Building on University Avenue was sold and renters were told to move. His new location, which is technically 1955 University Ave., has been great for business.

By moving nearby, Gorman said he not only retained customers but "we have gained a lot more customers due to exposure from Menards," Gorman said. See:

www.midwayliquors.com



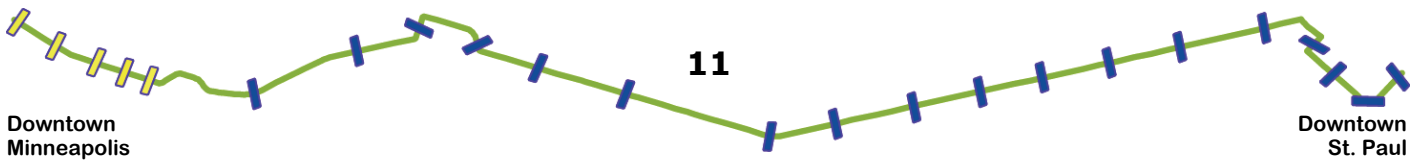
Downtown
Minneapolis

Downtown
St. Paul

University Avenue West—Emerald to Hamline



Fairview Avenue Station
Crews installed and embedded rail in concrete in April at the Fairview Avenue Station, leading to temporary lane closures on University Avenue.



Downtown Minneapolis

Downtown St. Paul

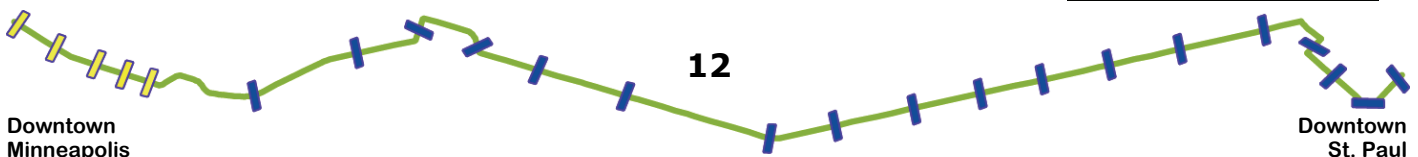
East Bank/Stadium Village



POURING IT ON—Northbound Oak Street reopened to traffic by the end of April after crews finished installing and embedding rail in concrete in the middle of the Oak Street and Washington Avenue intersection as seen in this photo taken in late March. Work is proceeding well on the Washington Avenue Bridge, too. Traffic on the bridge is expected to be restored this summer in its final configuration with one lane eastbound and one lane westbound.



The Central Corridor LRT Project uses a variable message sign to encourage passersby to support businesses in the Stadium Village area. This sign is at University Avenue and Huron Boulevard.



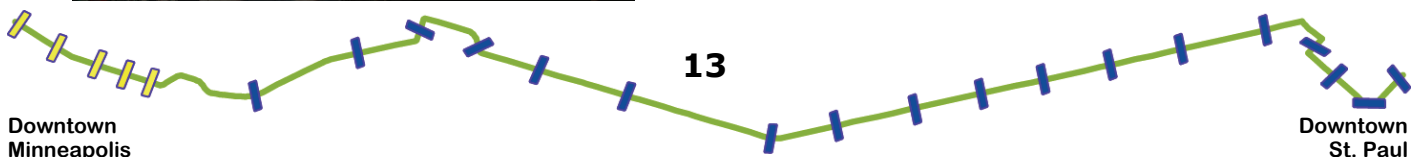
West Bank



Up, up, up

The West Bank Station goes up on the west side of the 19th Avenue Bridge (above) and the east side of the bridge (left).

Stairs and elevators will bring transit riders to and from the station on Washington Avenue between the Cedar Avenue Bridge as seen in the top photo and the 19th Avenue Bridge.





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

Weekly construction updates— Get weekly construction updates to learn how to get around during construction by entering your email address in the gray Stay Connected box at the top left 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.

24-hour construction hotline - 651-602-1404.

Follow us at: www.twitter.com/cclrt

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 St. 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 St. Paul, Metropolitan Council and the Central Corridor Funders Collaborative. For more information, visit www.centralcorridor.org

