



# Extending TRACKS

Issue 5 | Spring 2014

www.swlrt.org

## Preliminary design plan review underway Public comment and approval process in May & June

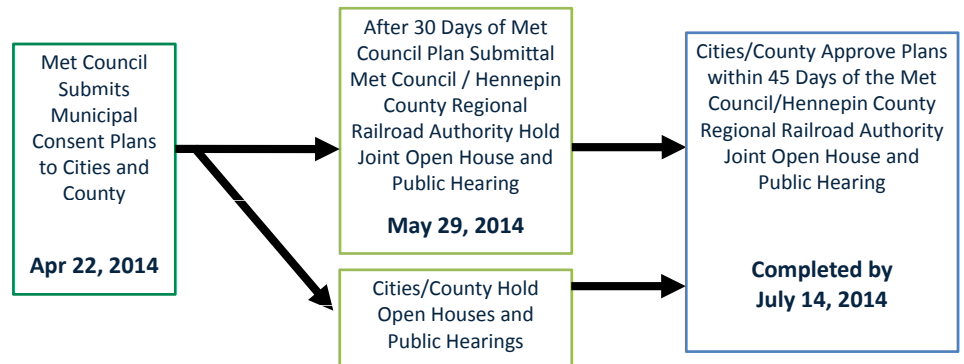
Residents and businesses along the Southwest LRT (METRO Green Line Extension) route get their chance now to review the project's recently released preliminary design plans. They can provide input on the plans to their city council members and Hennepin County commissioners for their consideration as they vote on approval of the plans.

Preliminary design plans show the footprint of the 15.8-mile light rail, including:

- General dimensions, elevations and alignment of the 15.8 miles of light rail tracks. The tracks are primarily at ground level with several bridges and tunnels, including running about a mile underground in two shallow tunnels in the Kenilworth Corridor of Minneapolis
- Approximate locations of the 16 stations, down from the original 17 due to the elimination of the 21st Street Station with the Metropolitan Council's vote to approve the project scope and budget
- Location of the operations and maintenance facility in Hopkins

On May 29, the Metropolitan Council and Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority will hold a joint public hearing. The plans include adjustments that have been made over the past year

### Municipal Consent Process



Above: Timeline for the Southwest LRT Municipal Consent process.

to the Locally Preferred Alignment as a result of public feedback and input from the county and the five corridor cities.

### What is municipal consent?

State law (Minn. Stat. 473.3994) requires this process of local review and approval for the project. This is known as the municipal consent process. During municipal consent, the public can provide comments directly to the Metropolitan Council, Hennepin County and the city councils for Eden Prairie, Minnetonka, Hopkins, St. Louis Park and Minneapolis.



Above: The preliminary design plans are labeled for reference; instructions are available on the Project's website.

## Public input led to many adjustments to Southwest LRT

### Changes are reflected in preliminary design plans

Designers of the Southwest LRT Project are proposing many adjustments to the route to coordinate with development efforts, accommodate existing businesses, improve connections and reduce property acquisitions. Below is a list by city of some of the key adjustments that the public and the five corridor cities and the county will see in the preliminary design plans.

#### Eden Prairie

Shifts Mitchell Road Station south by about 1,300 feet to Eden Prairie City Center, accommodating city's request to make this the location of the westernmost station.

Follows south side of Technology Drive, crossing Mitchell Road at grade to accommodate Mitchell Road Station at Eden Prairie City Center and then crosses Technology at grade to enter Southwest Station.

Moves LRT tracks to the south side of Technology across from the condominiums west of Southwest Station, reducing impacts to residents. Adjusts alignment entering Southwest Station, eliminating need to acquire Anchor Bank property.

Requires acquisition of Culver's and relocation of the Southwest Transit office building. Ensures Southwest Station will be a multimodal station accommodating light rail, express buses to downtown Minneapolis and the University of Minnesota, local buses, cyclists and pedestrians.

Continues east on a bridge to cross Technology, crosses Prairie Center Drive on a new LRT bridge to an alignment between Bachman's and Costco to reach the adjusted Eden Prairie Town Center Station location.

Shifts Town Center Station about 1,200 feet south from Technology to just north of the city's water tower within the town center area. Allows Town Center Station to be built in a more walkable area of Eden Prairie's Town Center.

Realigns LRT tracks to follow Flying Cloud Drive instead of Technology Drive, crossing Interstate 494 on a much shorter LRT bridge.

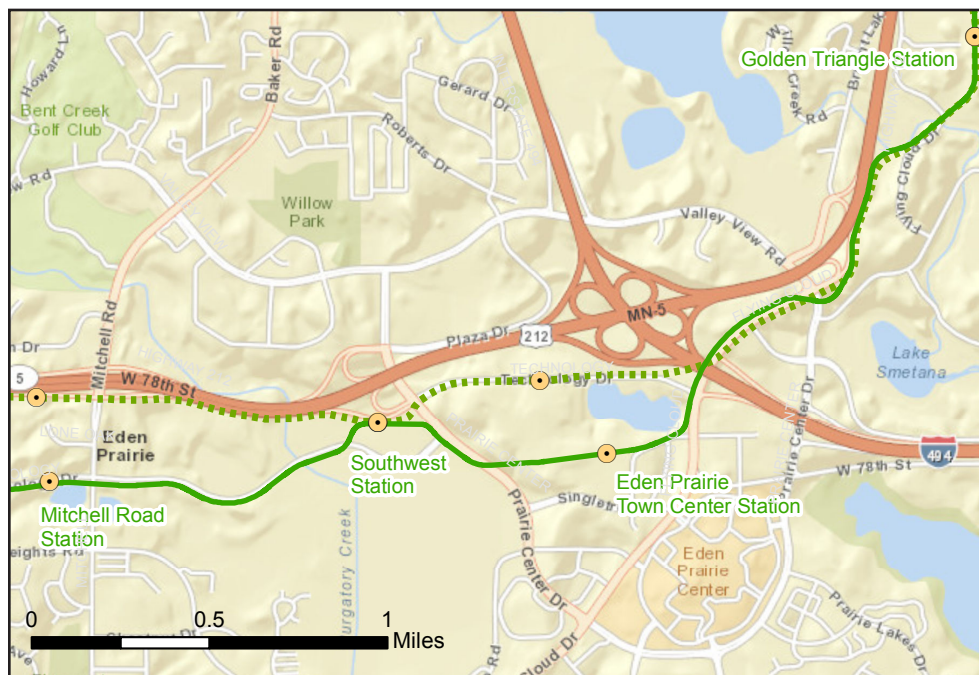
Shifts LRT bridge from Viking Drive and Flying Cloud intersection to Valley View Road and Flying Cloud intersection.

Replaces at-grade LRT crossing of Flying Cloud at Nine Mile Creek with LRT bridge over Flying Cloud and Nine Mile Creek to minimize wetland and traffic impacts.

Relocates Golden Triangle Station from south side of West 70th Street to north side for better visibility and redevelopment potential.

Lengthens LRT bridge and adjusts where LRT will cross Trunk Highway 212, eliminating need to build a tunnel under Shady Oak Road and to close and reconstruct Shady Oak Road a second time just after the city finishes reconstructing it.

Lowers elevation at City West Station to better coordinate with development of UnitedHealth Group's new 6,600-employee campus, eliminating need for an elevated station with elevator and stairs.



Above: Tracks and stations in Eden Prairie were shifted south (solid line) from the original design (dashed line).

**Changes** continued on page 3

**Changes** from page 2

**Minnetonka**

Builds a tunnel for LRT tracks under Trunk Highway 62 south of Opus Station, reducing property acquisitions. Makes minor adjustments of roadways in Opus business park.

Moves Opus Station a few hundred feet south to accommodate station area planning.

Shifts alignment north of Opus Station to avoid wetland impacts and reduce tree impacts near Claremont apartments.

**Hopkins**

Locates operations and maintenance facility at Fifth Street South and 16th Avenue South, which is midway on the alignment for operational efficiency. Earlier versions of the alignment identified multiple candidate sites for this facility.

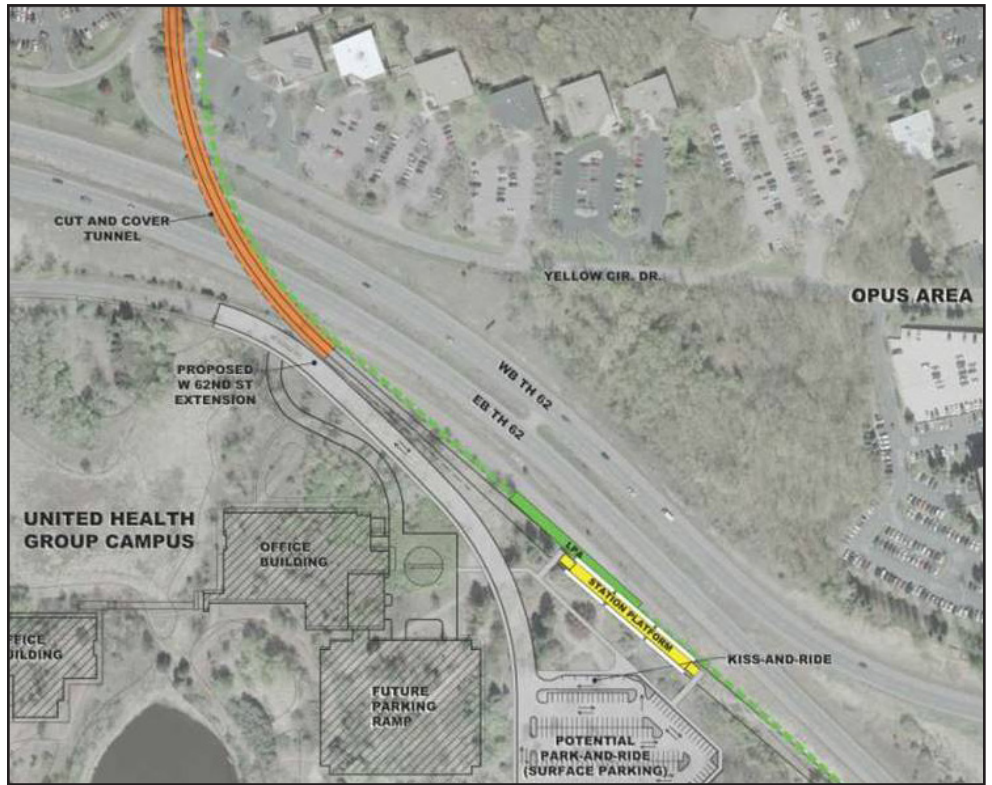
Adjusts LRT tracks to bring Shady Oak Station closer to Excelsior Boulevard to accommodate station area planning, improve visibility of the station from Excelsior Boulevard and reduce property acquisitions.

Repurposes existing Metro Transit park-and-ride for public space to improve connection between downtown Hopkins and Hopkins Station.

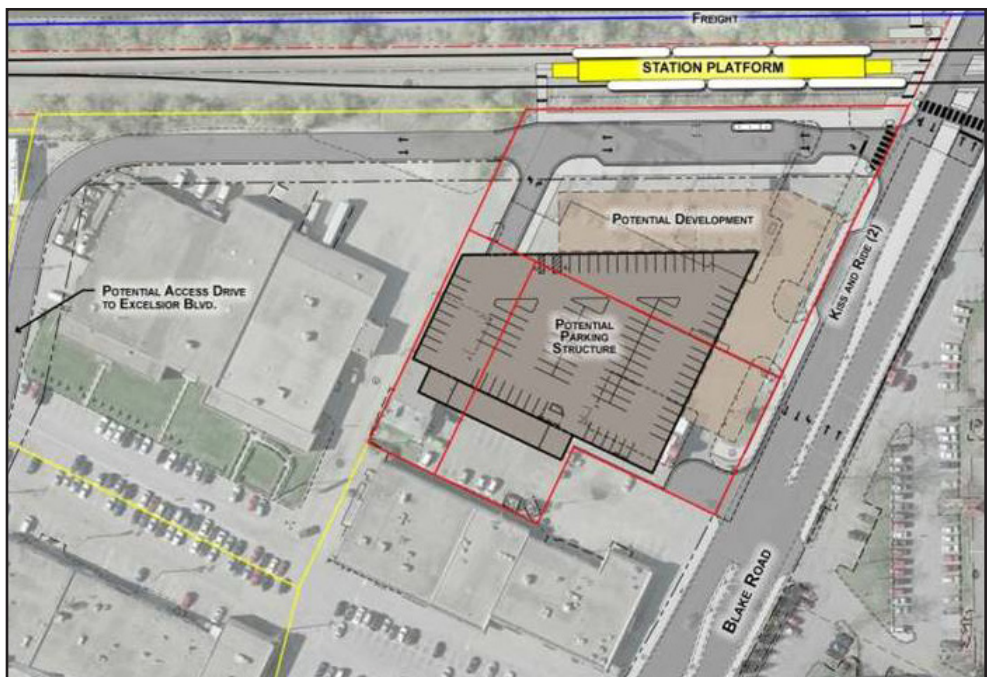
Realigns and lengthens LRT bridge over Excelsior Boulevard by the Cargill campus to accommodate an LRT track crossing over the Canadian Pacific Railway (CP) tracks, placing LRT on the south side of the freight rail tracks.

Moves Blake Station to south side of CP freight tracks and builds structured parking ramp south of the station to accommodate future development.

**Changes** continued on page 4



Above: Southwest LRT will cross under Highway 62 in a tunnel (orange) between City West Station (yellow) and Opus Station (not shown) in Minnetonka.



Above: The site of a proposed new park-and-ride structure for the Blake Road Station in Hopkins features space for potential commercial development.

**Changes** from page 3**St. Louis Park**

Realigns Louisiana Station to the south of existing Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority property. Lowers the station off the existing rail corridor berm to existing street level, eliminating need for an elevated path to the station. Moves station 600 feet east of Louisiana Avenue on Oxford Street to accommodate the city's request to bring the station closer to existing businesses. Adds a trail underpass beneath the rail corridor berm between the station and the Cedar Lake Trail.

Eliminates the at-grade shift in the Cedar Lake Trail alignment at Wooddale Avenue and adds a trail bridge on the east side of Beltline Station to cross over LRT and freight rail tracks, locating the trail on the south side of the rail corridor.

**Minneapolis**

Adds an elevator-stairway tower on each side of the West Lake Street bridge to accommodate station access and bus connections to the West Lake Station.

Maintains freight rail tracks in the Kenilworth Corridor and adds two shallow tunnels for LRT tracks. The south light rail tunnel would extend from just north of West Lake Street to approximately 400 feet south of the Kenilworth channel. The north tunnel would extend from approximately 600 feet north of the channel to approximately 1,000 feet north of 21st Street.

Eliminates the LRT bridge over Cedar Lake Parkway and places LRT in the south tunnel under Cedar Lake Parkway.

Between the north and south tunnels, LRT trains will emerge for 20 seconds crossing the channel on a new bridge that combines the LRT tracks and the Kenilworth Trail.

Locates new freight rail bridge over the channel west of new LRT and trail bridge to accommodate freight rail alignment at the channel.

Eliminates 21st Street Station due to cost of building an underground station within the north LRT tunnel.

Replaces existing at-grade freight rail/trail crossing with a grade-separated trail overpass for North Cedar Lake Regional Trail connection to Kenilworth and Cedar Lake Trail.

Centers elevator and stair tower on Penn Avenue at Penn Station to draw people from Bryn Mawr neighborhood and locates a drop off area at Wayzata Boulevard, accommodating future bus connections.

Adds elevator and stairs at Van White Station to provide access from new Van White Memorial Bridge. The site design accommodates city's plan for redevelopment of Linden Yards.

Eliminates LRT bridge over BNSF freight rail tracks west of I-94.

Eliminates LRT tracks under the Glenwood Avenue bridge. Elevates LRT to cross at-grade at Glenwood Avenue, reconstructs Glenwood Avenue bridge and adds an LRT bridge over the BNSF freight rail tracks east of Glenwood Avenue.

Builds LRT tracks at grade at Holden and Royalston Avenue intersection to prevent intersection closure.

Shifts Royalston Station to the east side of Royalston Avenue and re-aligns Royalston Avenue to accommodate truck traffic for existing businesses.

Builds LRT bridge over North Seventh Street, connecting to the Target Field Station elevated structure instead of building a tunnel for LRT under North Seventh Street.

Accommodates all bus connections on existing street network, eliminating need for any bus turnaround facilities on private property which maximizes redevelopment potential, per city and county request.

## Southwest LRT rolls out "Project Office on Wheels"

The Southwest Project Office on Wheels made its debut this winter at the Minnetonka Kids Fest at the Minnetonka Community Center.

Adults and children boarded the parked bus to learn where the light rail tracks and stations would be built from Eden Prairie to Minneapolis. The purpose of the bus is to reach busy people who can't attend public meetings to learn about the LRT project.

To request a visit by the bus and project office staff, contact Sam O'Connell, manager of public involvement, at [sam.oconnell@metrotransit.org](mailto:sam.oconnell@metrotransit.org) or 612-373-3815.



Above: Community Outreach Coordinator Dan Pfeiffer explains the planned locations of tracks and stations to a visitor.



Above: The exterior of the retired Metro Transit bus was redesigned with Southwest LRT graphics.



Above: A young visitor received a cardboard model of an LRT train.

### Plans from page 1

The Metropolitan Council, the regional railroad authority and the corridor cities are required to hold public hearings and receive comments on the preliminary design plans. Hennepin County and the city governments are required to review and approve or disapprove the plans. In May and June 2014, the county and the cities will hold separate public hearings before their city councils and the regional railroad authority vote on the plans.

The hearings will be preceded by open houses, when members of the Southwest LRT Project staff will be available to provide an overview of the Southwest LRT Project and answer questions. These meetings will deal only with the content of the preliminary design plans. Future decisions regarding issues such as station design and streetscape will be the focus of later meetings.

### Where to find the plans, how to read them

Members of the public can review the plans and submit comments directly to their city and county representatives during the municipal consent process. Plan documents are available on the Southwest LRT website and in the communities along the proposed route.

Learn about municipal consent and download plans at [www.metrocouncil.org/swlrt/municipal](http://www.metrocouncil.org/swlrt/municipal).

The Metropolitan Council has prepared a Guide to the LRT Municipal Consent Process, also available on the Project website. The Guide contains instructions for finding information in the plans and submitting comments.

## About the project

The 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 Edina. The proposed alignment includes 16 new stations and approximately 15.8 miles of double track.

The line will connect major activity centers including downtown Minneapolis, Minneapolis Chain of Lakes, Park Nicollet Methodist Hospital in St. Louis Park, downtown Hopkins, the Opus business district in Minnetonka and Eden Prairie Mall and town center. Ridership in 2030 is projected at 29,660 weekday passengers. The project will interline with the METRO Green Line, providing a one-seat ride to destinations such as the University of Minnesota, Minnesota Capitol and downtown St. Paul. It will be part of an integrated system of transitways, including connections to the METRO Blue Line, the Northstar Commuter Rail line, bus routes and proposed future transitways.

The Metropolitan Council will be the grantee of federal funds and 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 (HCRRA).

### Southwest LRT Project Office

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