

Making Tracks



August 2009

Four Pages



Metropolitan Council Authorized Representative Greg Sorensen is on the scene during utility relocation work on Fourth Street in downtown St. Paul to resolve concerns from businesses and the public about the work's effect on them. He is equipped with a BlackBerry/cell and can be reached at greg.sorensen@metc.state.mn.us or 612-807-8142. For more information about the work, see fourth story below under the headline: Carl Bolander & Sons to relocate public utilities on 4th.

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Extra station promised; new budget, contract OK'd

A promise to fund an additional station, approval of a budget of up to \$941 million and award of a contract to start public utility relocation in downtown St. Paul capped a banner month for the Central Corridor LRT Project.

August's other big developments included:

- The Federal Transit Administration's approval of the project's plan in its Final Environmental Impact Statement to mitigate adverse impacts created by the project.
- The FTA's agreement to reimburse the project's funding partners for 50 percent of the cost of relocating public utilities under Fourth Street in downtown St. Paul if the federal agency approves a Full Funding Grant Agreement next year.
- The Metropolitan Council's approval of the adequacy of the FEIS as required under state law.

These actions allowed the project to apply for federal permission to enter final design later this fall.

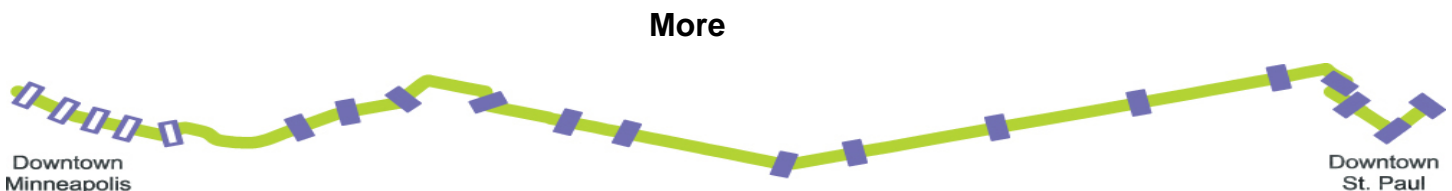
"This month's developments signal the strength of our bid to secure federal funding to build the Twin Cities' second light rail transit line," Metropolitan Council Chair Peter Bell said.

When the Central Corridor line opens in 2014, it will create a 60-mile passenger rail network in the greater Twin Cities area. Central Corridor and Hiawatha LRT and Northstar commuter rail all will terminate at the new Minneapolis Multimodal Station adjacent to the new Minnesota Twins stadium at the western edge of downtown Minneapolis. Central Corridor LRT will be the busiest rail line with 42,000 daily riders forecast in 2030.

St. Paul commits to fund additional station

The city of St. Paul intends to commit \$5.2 million to the Central Corridor LRT Project budget to pay for building one of three additional infill stations.

Ramsey County commissioners said they will go to their board to fund a Federal Transit Administration-required environmental review of how an additional station would affect the project.



Scope, other changes lead to new \$941 million budget

In late July, the Federal Transit Administration issued its annual adjustment for the Cost Effectiveness Index. The Met Council then voted in August to incorporate scope elements previously not included worth about \$14 million and additional financing expense of \$9 million. These actions resulted in a revised project budget of up to \$941.3.

Project elements that will be funded out of the inflation adjustment dollars include:

- Façade improvements to the existing Diamond Products building in Lowertown St. Paul that will be converted to the Central Corridor operations and maintenance facility (\$1.5 million)
- Acquisition of the vacant Bremer Bank building and site for the diagonal 4th and Cedar Street station (\$7.8 million).
- University of Minnesota vibration and electro-magnetic interference mitigation (\$4.8 million)

Also in August, the FTA awarded the 2009 federal grant in the amount of \$24.75 million (\$19.8 million federal) to the Met Council to advance design and engineering on the Central Corridor. This is part of the overall federal participation for the project. It is another signal from the FTA that the project is well positioned to secure a Full Funding Grant next year.

Carl Bolander & Sons to relocate public utilities on 4th

The Metropolitan Council awarded a \$12.5 million advanced utility contract to Carl Bolander & Sons to relocate public utilities on Fourth Street in downtown St. Paul.

The contract has a 15 percent Disadvantaged Business Enterprise goal, which Bolander has committed to meet.

To learn what streets, sidewalks and parking spots are open and closed during the relocation work through late fall, visit <http://www.metrocouncil.org/transportation/ccorridor/construction/updates.htm> for the latest Construction Update.

For additional localized questions about the work, contact Greg Sorensen at greg.sorensen@metc.state.mn.us or 612-807-8142 BlackBerry/cell. Sorensen is the on-site liaison between work crews and the public. For non-construction questions, contact downtown St. Paul community outreach coordinator Dana Happel at dana.happel@metc.state.mn.us or 651-602-1953.

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Appraisals beginning for right-of-way acquisitions

The Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) will begin contacting affected property owners in September about necessary temporary easements and minimal permanent easements and acquisitions for the Central Corridor LRT line.

The Federal Transit Administration's issuance of a Record of Decision in August allowed this work to get underway.

Most of the acquisitions will be for temporary easements for construction, not permanent easements. That is because Central Corridor LRT trains will run in the street, unlike the Hiawatha LRT trains that operate largely on dedicated right of way.

Permanent easements, for example, will be needed for the operation and maintenance facility in Lowertown St. Paul and for traction power substations, which are comparable in size to intermodal truck containers, and signal bungalows, which are a little larger than phone booths. Traction power substations and signal bungalows are LRT support elements.

MnDOT is responsible for the appraisals and acquisitions. Property owners are able to get their own appraisal at the cost of the Metropolitan Council, which is in charge of building the Central Corridor LRT line. The process will follow state and federal guidelines.

Appraisal contracts will be assigned in September and reviewed in December. MnDOT staffers will make offers in January 2010. They will receive titles and take possession in July 2010.

The public can direct specific questions about the process to Central Corridor Project Office staffers Rebecca Parzyck at rebecca.parzyck@metc.state.mn.us or 651-602-1933 or Dan Soler at dan.soler@metc.state.mn.us or 651-602-1971.

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 would begin in 2010 on the planned 11-mile Central Corridor line, with service beginning in 2014. The line would connect with the Hiawatha LRT line at the Metrodome station in Minneapolis and the Northstar commuter rail line, which will begin operation in late 2009, at the new Minneapolis Multimodal Station. 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 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.

Questions or comments? Call 651-602-1645 or email centralcorridor@metc.state.mn.us
For more information, visit: www.centralcorridor.org

