

# Making Tracks



Fall 2013



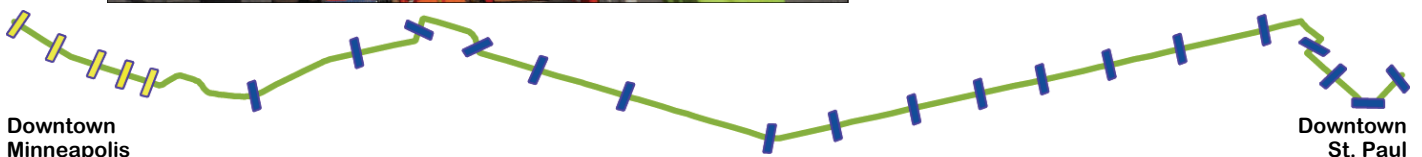
## Faces of Rondo

Crews (bottom left) installed low-relief sculpted portraits of 17 current and former Rondo residents, including photographer and filmmaker Gordon Parks, in October at the Victoria Street Station.

His niece, Dorothea Burns, and nephew, Kofi Bobby Hickman, admire the likeness of their famous uncle by station artist Foster Willey (top left).

Mrs. Burns (bottom right) is also among the Faces of Rondo.

Crews will finish installing all station art by spring.



Downtown  
Minneapolis

Downtown  
St. Paul



View (top) of the operations and maintenance facility at the east end of Fourth Street in St. Paul.

Federal Transit Administration officials (bottom) toured the facility in October.

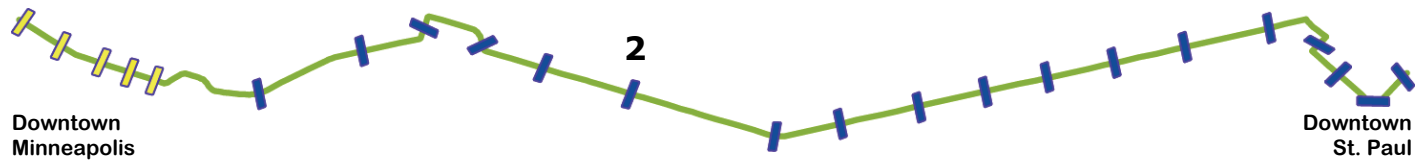
**Operations & maintenance facility ready for workers in early 2014**

Lowertown St. Paul will greet about 100 new workers early in the new year when employees move into the METRO Green Line’s operations and maintenance facility at 340 North Broadway.

This is where light rail vehicles will be cleaned, maintained and stored overnight when the line begins service in mid-2014. Before then, employees at the operations and maintenance facility will maintain and operate new LRVs once they begin test runs into downtown St. Paul later this year.

So far, 95 of the planned 177 workers have been hired to run the line.

Construction of the Green Line is now 97 percent complete. Service will begin in mid-2014 before July’s Major League All-Star game at Target Field. The outcome of LRV testing will determine the opening date.





## Biking safety

Bicyclists wait in an existing bike box for a green light at 15th and University avenues on the East Bank. A Metro Transit bus waits behind the bike box and behind the advanced stop bar.

## Transit-pedestrian mall getting extra safety features: bike boxes

Six bike boxes are being added this fall to Washington Avenue intersections on the East Bank in Minneapolis before the opening late this year of the transit-pedestrian mall to pedestrians, bicyclists, buses and emergency vehicles.

According to the city of Minneapolis' website, a bike box is a type of advanced stop bar that is used at some signalized intersections. A website feature, "Understanding Bicycle Markings in Minneapolis," says the bike box includes an advanced stop line for motorists to wait behind and a marked space for bicyclists to wait in.

When the traffic signal is red, motorists must wait behind the bike box and behind the stop line. Bicyclists are allowed to ride into the bike box and wait for a green signal. When the traffic signal turns green, motorists must yield to bicyclists before proceeding or making a turn.

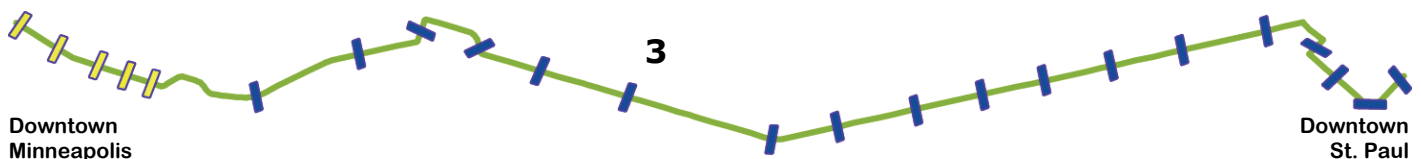
The purpose of the bike boxes at Church, Union, Harvard and Walnut streets is to allow bicyclists to wait at the front of the traffic queues so they are more visible to motorists. This is to improve the safety of bicyclists at intersections.

When you drive:

- If the traffic signal is red, you must wait behind the bike box and behind the advanced stop bar.
- When the traffic signal changes to green, you must yield to bicyclists who are waiting in the bike box.
- Look for additional bicyclists who may be approaching on your side.

When you bike:

- As you approach an intersection with a bike box, you may ride up to the front of the traffic queue. If the traffic signal is red, you may wait in the bike box.
- When the traffic signal changes to green, you may signal your turn and proceed through the intersection.



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## Buses returning Dec. 7 to Washington Avenue on U of M campus

Metro Transit and other regional public transportation providers will resume bus service Dec. 7 on Washington Avenue through the University of Minnesota’s East Bank campus.

Due to [METRO Green Line](#) (Central Corridor LRT) construction, buses have been detoured since May 2011 from Washington Avenue between Pleasant and Oak streets. The return is aligned with significant schedule and routing changes on bus routes throughout the Twin Cities. Bus service on Washington will return to pre-May 2011 levels, with some 1,200 trips each weekday on more than 20 routes operated by [Metro Transit](#), [University of Minnesota](#), [Minnesota Valley Transit Authority](#), [Southwest Transit](#) and [Maple Grove Transit](#).

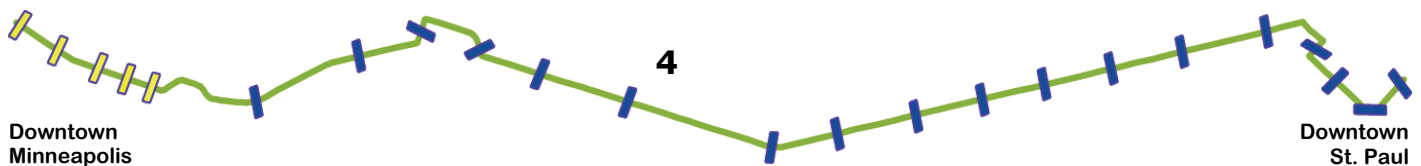
Beginning Dec. 7, only transit buses, light-rail trains (now undergoing testing), emergency vehicles and bicycles will be permitted on the new Washington Avenue transit-pedestrian mall between Walnut and Church streets. In this area, buses and trains will operate jointly on light-rail tracks at restricted speeds. Bicycles and emergency vehicles will share outside traffic lanes. During rail disruptions, buses will also use these outside lanes. Bus stops in both directions are located at Coffman Union and Oak Street. Buses do not stop at the METRO Green Line East Bank Station. Routes, maps, schedules, safety tips and more will be regularly updated at [metrotransit.org/washington](http://metrotransit.org/washington).

Although joint operation of buses and trains on tracks is new to the Twin Cities, it is not uncommon in other transit systems. Bus drivers will require special certification in order to operate on the three-block transit-pedestrian mall. Training of hundreds of bus operators for certification, which consists of both classroom and on-site driving exercises, began in mid-October and will continue into December.

Members of the university community, particularly those who have never experienced bus traffic on Washington, are encouraged to learn about transit safety, including where to cross streets and to avoid station and pedestrian areas that are closed during testing. Safety reminders and videos are available by visiting [metrotransit.org/washington](http://metrotransit.org/washington). Outreach staff are available to meet with groups to provide safety presentations in person.

Use of public transportation is very popular at the university. Students used more than 44,000 U-Pass semester-based fare cards to take 5.1 million rides in 2012. In addition, 1,500 faculty and staff have taken well over a half million rides with Metropass fare cards this year. Both the U-Pass and Metropass programs offer unlimited rides at discounted fares. U-Passes for the spring 2014 semester go on sale Dec. 5.

The [METRO Green Line](#), the region’s second light-rail line, is scheduled to open in mid-2014.



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## Central Corridor small business loan program wins award

The [Ready for Rail Forgivable Loan Program](#) won an award this fall at The Art of Collaboration – 2013 Twin Cities Community Development Awards hosted by Twin Cities Local Initiatives Support Coalition and Metropolitan Consortium of Community Developers (MCCD).

Knowing the construction of light rail in the Central Corridor would have a significant impact on small businesses, the program provided a modest safety net for businesses that showed a loss in sales due to the construction.

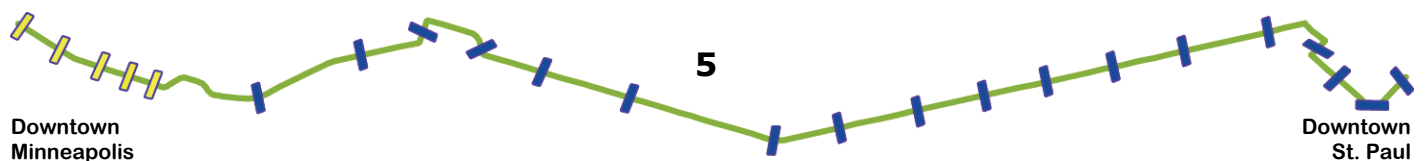
More than \$3.6 million was loaned to 200 businesses. The no-interest loans ranged from \$1,105 to \$20,000. Nearly two-thirds of the businesses assisted were owned by people of color.

One indicator that the program met its objective is that University Avenue has seen a net gain of businesses. The Metropolitan Council provided \$2.5 million to support the program.

The program was administered by the Saint Paul Housing and Redevelopment Authority, joined by the Council, city of Minneapolis, Central Corridor Funders Collaborative, MCCD and the Neighborhood Development Center.

Since March 2011, out of more than 1,400 businesses identified on the entire corridor:

- 122 businesses have opened
- 90 business have closed
- 24 have moved within the corridor
- 28 have moved off of the corridor





**Construction updates** — Weekly construction updates ceased with the end of heavy construction in late 2012. Updates will be issued monthly or as often as warranted in 2013. To see updates, please visit the [www.centralcorridor.org](http://www.centralcorridor.org) homepage and click on News. Sign up for construction updates, news releases and newsletters by scrolling to the bottom of the homepage and entering your email address in the white ENewsletter Sign Up box.

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

**Follow us at:** [www.twitter.com/cclrt](http://www.twitter.com/cclrt)

**For general questions or comments** - Call 651-602-1645 or email [centralcorridor@metc.state.mn.us](mailto:centralcorridor@metc.state.mn.us)

**About the project:** The METRO Green Line (Central Corridor LRT) 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 line, and service will begin in mid-2014. The line will connect with the METRO Blue 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](http://www.centralcorridor.org)

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