



Contact: Laura Baenen
Communications Manager
Central Corridor LRT Project
Metropolitan Council
651-602-1797 office
612-269-4365 cell
Laura.baenen@metc.state.mn.us

Central Corridor clears last step before full federal funding

ST. PAUL – May 25, 2010 – The Central Corridor LRT Project received permission today to enter final design, the last step before award of a federal Full Funding Grant Agreement for the biggest public works project in Minnesota history.

Immediately upon receiving permission to enter final design, the project office will submit all documentation to the Federal Transit Administration for award of a Full Funding Grant Agreement. An FFGA represents the federal government's commitment to reimburse project partners for half the cost of building the \$957 million, 11-mile line connecting St. Paul and Minneapolis.

The plan requests 50 percent from the federal government, 30 percent from the Counties Transit Improvement Board, 10 percent from the state, 7 percent from Ramsey County and 3 percent from Hennepin County and lesser amounts from St. Paul, Metropolitan Council and the Central Corridor Funders Collaborative.

"The FTA's approval represents another important step in transforming this project from a 20-year-old dream into reality," said Peter Bell, chair of the Met Council. "It will mean improved access for thousands of metro area residents to employment, educational and economic opportunities all along the corridor and beyond."

When the line is completed in 2014, the Twin Cities will have 115 miles of bus and rail transitways. This includes the Hiawatha LRT line from the Mall of America to downtown Minneapolis and the Northstar commuter rail line 40 miles from Big Lake, Minn., to Minneapolis. The Central Corridor line will connect with Hiawatha at the Metrodome Station and travel its last mile over existing Hiawatha track, stopping at five downtown Minneapolis stations. All three rail lines will meet at the Target Field Station.

The Central Corridor LRT Project was able to begin advanced utility relocation work on Fourth Street in St. Paul, thanks to advance funding commitments from its partners and federal approval of this arrangement. Under this same arrangement, the project began advanced traffic improvements this month on streets around the East Bank campus of the University of Minnesota. The work is to prepare those streets for the routing of cars and trucks off of Washington Avenue to begin its transformation into a transit-pedestrian mall for LRT and buses. The FTA has agreed to reimburse the project partners for the federal share of this advanced work once it awards an FFGA.

Heavy construction will begin in August on Robert and 12th streets east of the state Capitol and north of Interstate 94. Heavy construction will start on the western end of University Avenue in spring 2011 and on the eastern end in spring 2012. For the March 10 news release about the start of heavy construction, see:

<http://www.metrocouncil.org/transportation/ccorridor/newsrel/CCLRNewsreIConstructionMar102010.pdf>

About the Central Corridor LRT Project: The Central Corridor LRT Project will link downtown St. Paul and downtown Minneapolis along Washington and University avenues via the state Capitol and the University of Minnesota. Construction will begin in late summer 2010 on the planned 11-mile Central Corridor line, with service beginning in 2014. The line will connect with the Hiawatha line at the Metrodome Station in Minneapolis and the new Target Field 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 the mayors of St. Paul and Minneapolis, commissioners from Ramsey and Hennepin counties and the University of Minnesota, provides advice and oversight. For details, see www.centralcorridor.org