

NEWS ADVISORY

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ST. PAUL – Feb. 1, 2011 – Traffic changes will occur the last weekend in February around the Washington Avenue Bridge so preparations can begin for replacing the vehicle deck and adding tracks for Central Corridor Light Rail Transit trains.

On Feb. 26 and 27, crews will remove medians at the east and west ends of the bridge and on Washington Avenue near Church Street and near Cedar and 19th avenues in preparation for traffic controls that will be installed March 2. Traffic will be reduced from two lanes each way to one lane each way on the north side of Washington from Cedar to Church. Traffic west of Cedar and east of Church will have normal traffic patterns of two lanes each way.

Crews then will erect equipment so construction can begin on the bridge in late March.

One lane will be maintained in each direction on the bridge during construction. Traffic will be restricted to one lane in each direction on the north side of the bridge while crews remove the vehicle deck on the south side this year. In 2012, traffic will be shifted to the newly built south side while the vehicle deck is removed on the north side.

Cyclists and pedestrians on the upper deck of the bridge will use the north side this year and be shifted to the south side in 2012.

Meanwhile, crews have been working on the piers under the bridge off of West River Parkway in Minneapolis since late 2010. There are no anticipated impacts from this work to pedestrian and bike paths along the parkway nor are there anticipated impacts to those traveling on the bridge or under it via the parkway. Work in 2011 and 2012 will include adding girders and other design elements to strengthen the bridge.

Heavy construction on Washington Avenue on the East Bank will begin after classes end in mid-May. At that time, vehicles will be removed from the avenue between Pleasant and Oak streets during construction. The avenue will be converted into a transit-pedestrian mall from Pleasant to Walnut streets with two tracks in the middle and one lane on each side for emergency vehicles and cyclists. This work will continue through 2012.

More detailed information will be made available online at www.centralcorridor.org and distributed via a weekly electronic construction update. The public can sign up for these updates online at: <http://www.metrocouncil.org/transportation/ccorridor/CCLRTSubscribe.htm>

For answers to frequently asked questions about the bridge and the LRT route on Washington Avenue through the University of Minnesota, see: <http://www.metrocouncil.org/transportation/ccorridor/ccWABfaq.htm>

About the Central Corridor LRT 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 University of Minnesota. Construction began in 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 new Target Field Station. The Metropolitan Council would 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. 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 details, visit www.centralcorridor.org