

Central Corridor

## News Release



Central Corridor LRT Project

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### **Heavy construction starts in August on Robert St. north of I-94**

ST. PAUL – March 10, 2010 -- Shovels will start digging for the Central Corridor LRT line in August east of the Capitol where work will begin on Robert and 12<sup>th</sup> streets north of Interstate 94, the Central Corridor Project Office said today. Utility relocations in this area will be done concurrently with LRT construction.

Some utility relocation work in advance of construction along University Avenue between the Westgate and Rice Street stations, as well as along Cedar Street in St. Paul, could begin this summer and fall. However, the schedule for utility relocation along University is not firmly established yet.

Heavy construction is not expected to start on the western end of University Avenue in St. Paul until spring 2011 and on the eastern end until spring 2012.

The Federal Transit Administration is expected to execute a Full Funding Grant Agreement in September. An FFGA is the federal government's commitment to reimburse half the cost of building the \$957 million line. 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, 3 percent from Hennepin County and lesser amounts from St. Paul and the Central Corridor Funders Collaborative. For construction to begin before an FFGA, the FTA will have to issue Letters of No Prejudice, which are promises to reimburse project partners for half the construction costs if the federal agency later approves an FFGA.

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## **Work divided into segments**

Work on the civil east construction package will be in segments, which will be divided into smaller portions with input from the contractor. More specific information will be available once the contractor is hired by summer and the work schedule is developed. The project's construction communication plan calls for 30-day public notification before work, excluding unforeseen circumstances, begins in any given area. The project office has created an online sign-up form for the public to fill out and submit to receive weekly construction updates and a monthly newsletter. The form is at <http://www.metrocouncil.org/transportation/ccorridor/CCLRTSubscribe.htm>

The civil east construction segments are:

- University Avenue from the city limits at Emerald Street to Hamline Avenue will be under heavy construction from March 2011 to November 2011, when road reconstruction is expected to be substantially complete.
- University from Hamline to Robert will be under construction from March 2012, with road reconstruction expected to be substantially complete by November 2012.
- Road reconstruction on Fourth Street in St. Paul will be substantially complete by November 2010. Utility relocation in advance of heavy construction began in this area last year and is expected to finish by fall.
- Work to demolish the vacant Bremer Bank building where the tracks will be built on a diagonal from Cedar Street to Fourth is anticipated to start in April 2011. Building removal and work to reconnect the skyway will be substantially completed by November 2011.
- Heavy construction on Cedar is to start in April 2011. Road reconstruction should be substantially completed by November 2012.
- Robert and 12<sup>th</sup> east and south of the Capitol should have road reconstruction substantially complete by November 2010.

## **What the work entails**

The civil east construction package includes:

- Relocating utilities necessary for the LRT trackway
- Constructing nearly seven miles of embedded double track
- Fully reconstructing streets where track is being installed
- Building 14 stations from Westgate to Union Depot
- Modifying two bridges (on University over Highway 280 and on Cedar over Interstates 94 and 35E)

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- Installing concrete paving for signalized intersections
- Building an infiltration trench for collecting storm water
- Constructing at-grade pedestrian crossings
- Demolishing the vacant Bremer Bank building, reconnecting the skyway

The project office released the civil east construction bid documents last week to qualified bidders and will open bids this spring. The Metropolitan Council will award the civil east construction contract by summer.

### **Contractor incentives**

Contractor incentives being built into the two main civil construction packages are intended to encourage responsiveness, create a partnership between contractors and the community and promote cooperation. The civil west contract, which includes work around the University of Minnesota, has a \$250,000 incentive. The civil east contract in St. Paul has a \$600,000 incentive. Quarterly incentives will range from \$10,000 to \$70,000.

The process of awarding incentives begins with the creation of construction coordinating committees. The project office will form the committees this spring to review performance standards and recommend award of incentives. The project office is recruiting interested members of the Business Advisory Council (BAC) and Community Advisory Committee (CAC) to serve on their local construction coordinating committees. The new committees, which will replace the BAC and CAC, will conduct quarterly evaluations and make recommendations. Project Director Mark Fuhrmann will approve the awards.

Evaluation criteria will include conformance with notification requirements, timely response to public concerns, maintenance of vehicle access and accessible pedestrian routes and cleanliness of construction sites.

**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 would 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 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. For details, see [www.centralcorridor.org](http://www.centralcorridor.org)

## **Central Corridor LRT Construction Questions & Answers**

### **Q. Why is construction beginning along Robert and 12<sup>th</sup> streets north of Interstate 94?**

A. It is a segment of the corridor that requires a lot of utility relocation. Work on this segment can be completed within a short period from August to December 2010.

### **Q. Why is the work on Cedar Street scheduled to take so much longer than other segments (i.e. from April 2011 to November 2012)?**

A. It's due to the sensitive nature of Minnesota Public Radio's recording studios and the neighboring historic churches, which require more care during construction so as not to disrupt the broadcast and recording operations or damage the historic church buildings and fixtures along Cedar Street. A 700-foot floating slab will be constructed under the tracks in this reach, and that will take a significant period of time.

### **Q. How many jobs will be created by the construction work?**

A. The Central Corridor LRT Project will provide for 800 direct construction and management jobs annually over the project. There will be many other ancillary impacts from the project, such as precast and ready-mix concrete jobs, manufacturing shop labor, etc. These are much more difficult to quantify, but will be significant.

### **Q. When will the schedules for the Civil West and operations and maintenance facility construction packages be announced?**

A. Those will be rolled out over spring and summer 2010.

### **Q. When will work occur on advanced traffic improvements in preparation for converting Washington Avenue into a transit-pedestrian mall?**

A. The work is scheduled to occur May through August 2010.

### **Q. Where will construction equipment be staged?**

A. We are considering staging equipment on vacant public properties on the corridor. It will be up to the contractors to identify vacant private properties for staging.

### **Q. Will all of the work for the LRT line along the St. Paul portion of the project be completed in the timeframe announced for the Civil East construction contract?**

A. No. For example, the system of overhead wires and poles will be erected later, but that work is less disruptive. And of course other contracts will be awarded for other parts of the alignment.

**Q. What will happen to the skyway connection after the vacant Bremer Bank building is demolished so the tracks can be built diagonally from Cedar to Fourth streets? Will pedestrians be able to access the Fourth and Cedar Station from the skyway?**

A. The project will reconnect the skyway before winter weather returns in late 2011. No, a vertical connection will not be constructed as part of the project from the skyway to the station.

**Q. When will construction begin on the other parts of the corridor?**

A. The Civil West construction is scheduled to be bid in late April 2010. It will involve work west of Emerald and through the University of Minnesota to the Central Corridor LRT line's connection with Hiawatha LRT tracks over Interstate 35W in Minneapolis. Other construction contract packages are:

- advanced traffic improvements (for rerouting Washington Avenue traffic prior to conversion into a transit-pedestrian mall)
- operations and maintenance facility (retrofitting a vacant factory in St. Paul into an operations and maintenance facility for LRT vehicles)
- systems installation (train signal systems, communications and traction power/electrical)
- fare collection system.

**Q. How long will any area experience day-after-day of heavy construction?**

A. No area will be under heavy construction for more than 150 consecutive days. Heavy construction consists of roadway removal, utility relocation, roadway restoration, guideway installation and sidewalk reconstruction.

**Q. Will contractors follow requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act during construction?**

A. The contract bid packages will have specific ADA requirements that contractors must meet for signage, access and traffic control.