

Central Corridor

News Release



Central Corridor LRT Project

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

Additional station promised; new budget, contract approved

ST. PAUL – Aug. 28, 2009 – 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 developments included:

- The Federal Transit Administration's approval last week of the project's plan in its Final Environmental Impact Statement to mitigate adverse impacts created by construction.
- The FTA's agreement this week 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 Wednesday 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.

More

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 announced Wednesday it intends to commit \$5.2 million to the project budget to pay for building one of three additional infill stations. Ramsey County commissioners said they will go to their board to fund an FTA-required environmental review of how an additional station would affect the project.

Project scope & budget changes

In late July, the FTA issued its annual adjustment for the Cost Effectiveness Index. The Met Council then voted Wednesday to incorporate scope elements previously not included worth about \$14 million and additional financing expense of \$9 million. This 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 mitigation (\$4.8 million)

Also this month, 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.

More

Contract awarded

The council on Wednesday awarded a \$12.5 million advanced utility contract to Carl Bolander & Sons to relocate public utilities in downtown St. Paul. The contract has a 15 percent Disadvantaged Business Enterprise goal, which Bolander has committed to meet.

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 will begin in 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 soon-to-be opened Northstar commuter rail line 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 the mayors of St. Paul and Minneapolis, commissioners from Ramsey and Hennepin counties and the University of Minnesota, provides advice and oversight. For more information, visit <http://www.centralcorridor.org>