

# Livable and Sustainable Communities

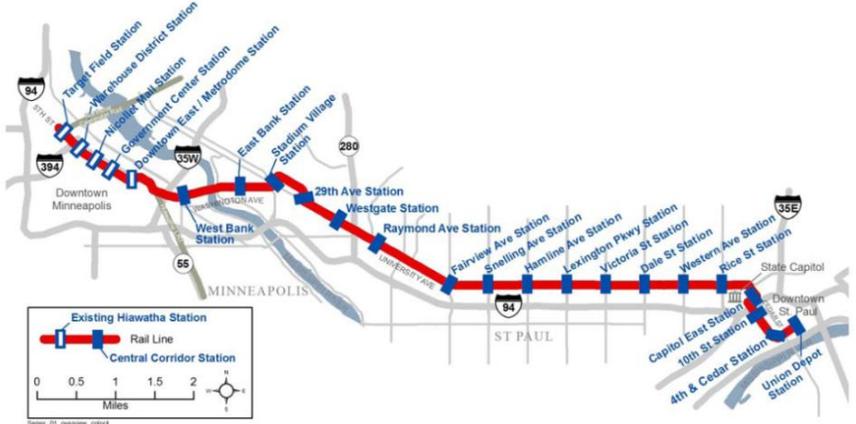
Regional Case Studies – Region V

Fall 2010

## Central Corridor Light Rail, Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN



Hiawatha Light Rail (Source: Metropolitan Council)



Central Corridor Map (Source: Metropolitan Council)

**Location:** Minneapolis – St. Paul, Minnesota (*Urban*)

**Project Type:** Urban light rail; operated by the Metropolitan Council (MetroTransit)

### Funding:

Total transit cost \$957M (construction estimate)

- FTA New Starts
- Counties Transit Improvement Board
- State of Minnesota
- Ramsey and Hennepin Counties
- City of St. Paul
- Metropolitan Council
- Central Corridor Funders Collaborative

### Project Description:

The Central Corridor, a new 11-mile light rail line, will connect the central business districts of Minneapolis and St. Paul with connections to the University of Minnesota, the State Capitol complex, and neighborhoods along Washington and University Avenues. The second light rail line in the region, the Central Corridor will extend the service network by providing connections to the Hiawatha Line (light rail) and the Northstar (commuter rail).

The Central Corridor will run in existing street right-of-way, serving 18 new stations and five stations in downtown Minneapolis already served by the Hiawatha Line. Community-based Station Area Land Use Plans with support from numerous local partners and Federal agencies promote transit oriented mixed use development and innovative energy initiatives, such as recycling industrial waste heat to serve new development. The transit investments are also attracting other private and public investments to the corridor.

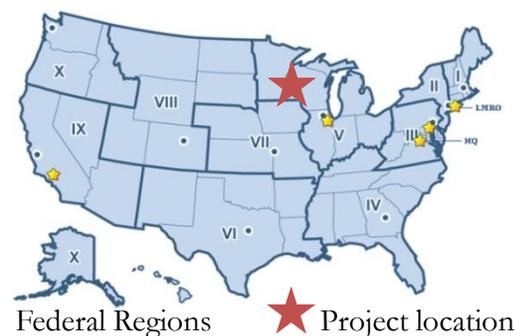
Building upon existing planning and transit investments, the Metropolitan Council and partners were recently awarded a HUD Sustainable Communities Regional Planning grant for activities including: community outreach; comprehensive planning and support along transit corridors; economic/workforce development, alternative energy, housing energy efficiency, and green infrastructure; strategies for affordable housing along transitways; data collection and evaluation, and visualization and scenario planning. The grant is for \$5 million; total cost, including local and leveraged funds, would be \$32.6 million.

### Federal Partners:

- Federal Transit Administration (FTA)
- Dept. of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

### Project's Livability Goals:

- ✓ Provide more transportation choices
- ✓ Promote equitable, affordable housing
- ✓ Value communities and neighborhoods
- ✓ Coordinate policies and leverage investment



# Central Corridor Light Rail, Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN

## Community Outreach:

More than 25,000 people have participated in 1,150 public meetings since September 2006. There have been outreach efforts in English, Hmong, Somali, Spanish, French, Vietnamese, Oromo, and American Sign Language. The public has shaped the project and helped improve pedestrian access and enhance station area safety and security. Sustained community activism ensured service to low-income neighborhoods. MetroTransit will continue outreach during construction to support business owners and maintain pedestrian and bicycle access. The partners will explore ways to continue outreach to ensure that development in the corridor extends equitably to all neighborhoods and businesses.

## Key Community Partners:

- The Cities of St. Paul and Minneapolis
- Ramsey and Hennepin Counties
- Minnesota Housing Finance Agency
- Central Corridor Funders Collaborative
- Business Resources Collaborative
- Alliance for Metropolitan Stability
- Capital Region Watershed District
- Minnesota Center for Neighborhood Organizing
- UMN Centers for Transportation Studies and Urban & Regional Affairs
- Center for Transit Oriented Development
- McKnight Foundation
- St. Paul Foundation
- Ford Foundation
- Living Cities
- Stops for Us Coalition
- Nexus Community Partners



Outreach with bus riders

(Source: Metropolitan Council)

## Livability Highlights:

*Provide more transportation choices:* The rail line provides a new transportation option for residents and businesses to access central Minneapolis, St. Paul, other destinations in the two cities, connecting to the broader Metropolitan Area. Corridor plans emphasize nonmotorized transportation and safety, including sidewalk construction and tree planting.

*Promote equitable, affordable housing:* Improved transit lowers household transportation costs, benefitting all residents and supporting Environmental Justice principles. There are ongoing efforts by state, regional, and local governments to retain and increase options for affordable and mixed income housing in the Central Corridor. Affordable housing near transit and reducing barriers to location- and energy-efficient mortgages support fair and equitable housing.

*Enhance economic competitiveness:* The light rail will benefit employers and job seekers, linking workforce centers, businesses, job training, and local residents, especially minorities and low income people, with corridor job opportunities and emerging industry and small business development. It will also connect to recreational, health, and other services. A proposed corridor-wide District Energy system to distribute alternative energy serving multi-family residences and commercial buildings would enhance community sustainability.

*Support existing communities:* Proposed efforts to improve housing affordability and energy efficiency focus on existing structures and affordable infill housing that maintains the character of existing residential areas.

*Coordinate policies and leverage investment:* Investments by DOT, HUD, and EPA, as well as state, regional, and local agencies, foundations, and the private sector are being leveraged for optimal outcomes “beyond the rail”. Coordinated investments maximize the potential of transit and other development to support community goals.

*Value communities and neighborhoods:* The corridor plan focuses on high quality transit service, preservation of the existing residential neighborhoods, and environmental innovations. Best Management Practices are under way for stormwater management to provide a neighborhood amenity, while facilitating high quality development and a sustainable, pleasant pedestrian environment.

## For More Information About this Project Contact:

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This case study, and others related to Livable  
and Sustainable Communities, is available at:  
[http://fta.dot.gov/publications/publications\\_10991.html](http://fta.dot.gov/publications/publications_10991.html)