



Northstar completed, Central Corridor under way, SW Corridor fully designed

What's working

The Northstar line is on schedule and will likely open in November 2009.

- The Big Lake maintenance facility is basically done.
- The Fridley station has received funding.
- Thanks to the Northstar line, light rail is extended to the ballpark.
- A lot of track work on Fifth Street is done.
- We're doing our best not to disrupt local businesses. The hard hat special provided discounts to people patronizing businesses impacted by construction.

The Central Corridor line is on schedule.

- The Central Corridor is viewed as the premier east metro project.

- Minneapolis doesn't face the same level and types of community impacts with the Central line as we had with the Hiawatha Line.

The pace of the Southwest line is going well.

- This is clearly the next line. The suburbs are excited about having the line.
- The Southwest line will have higher ridership than the Hiawatha Line.

Minneapolis has a good reputation.

- We can put shovels in the ground. We're quicker than large agencies. Minneapolis has a good reputation — that's a huge resource for a city.

What isn't working

The Northstar line faces political and funding challenges.

- Politically, having Minneapolis viewed as a hub is a problem — it just raises the east metro's concerns. Saint Paul doesn't want to be a spoke in our hub.
- Northstar is entirely Metropolitan Council operated, and the Met Council is looking at continuing operational shortfalls. It raises the question of whether the Met Council should be running things outside of its jurisdiction.
- We're concerned about bus service opt-outs and service and route cuts.
- The Bottineau Corridor transit options are still under consideration.

- The City's challenge is the traffic impacts. How do we maintain emergency vehicle access on Washington Avenue? We can do all the modeling we want, but we won't know how it will *really* work until it's done.
- The Central Corridor will completely reshape part of the city. Ideally, we should be talking about how it will reshape where we put people, but we don't have the time or the money to pay for that. We're just trying to survive.

The Central Corridor's incredibly aggressive timeline is both good and bad.

- It's getting done, but there's a lot of collateral damage along the way. We have to decide if the environmental mitigation is adequate. If we comment, we stir the pot. It's a fine balance: we want the corridor, but we also want to address environmental mitigation.
- The University of Minnesota could throw a wrench in the project by saying it doesn't like the current alignment. There could be a massive delay if it argues against the alignment.
- The problem with the speed of the review is there's no advance information. We're presented with the information and asked to comment on it. Although there are some areas where the City and the University of Minnesota agree, it's hard to coordinate our positions and keep to the schedule. We have to advocate for our own interests.

The Southwest line faces alignment and funding questions.

- Minneapolis still has to resolve the issue around the two different alignments. The suburbs are impatient, and, if we don't decide, they could decide for us. Other interests have a veto card. We need to sort out our issues, but we're hampered by the fact that the data isn't available yet. Better data will help us make a better decision. A big factor is ridership forecasting and that won't be ready until spring.
- Funding is in question. It will cost around \$1 billion and will require federal, state and regional rail money. The schedule will be impacted by the lack of money or be accelerated by new federal funding guidelines.

We lack funds for Hiawatha Line improvements.

- We need to maximize pedestrian connections at Hiawatha Line stations. The pedestrian and bike master plans will help, but the problem always comes back to lack of funding.
- The Franklin Avenue Station could be so much better, but we have no money.

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What isn't working *continued from previous page*

We don't have the resources to deal with the wide implications of projects.

- We're always playing catch-up. How do we manage multiple systems at once? We don't manage projects — we're supporters.
- Because we look at stations instead of systems, we lose sight of development-related needs and details such as water, sewer, lights, etc. Then we realize it's all more expensive

than we first thought. Developers just look at the immediate surface and don't see water and sewer implications or the big work involved with utility relocation. We don't project the development's impact on the intersection that's three miles away.

- Station area funding shouldn't fall so heavily on the City; it should fall on the project, but that's not likely to happen.

What should be done next

Support the Northstar line.

- Support the east metro in generating projects.
- Take advantage of opportunities related to the extension from Big Lake to St. Cloud.

Integrate the Central Corridor line.

- Use study teams to determine if these stations are accessible and integrate the stations into small area plans. Create a funding mechanism to accomplish this.

Move ahead on the Southwest line.

- Manage the politics and control expectations so we can sort out our alignment issues. Determine which alignment will have the best development potential.
- Embrace the 2015 date, even though the funding is in question.

Examine infrastructure costs and implications.

- Improve the development review process to set a clear policy on infrastructure costs related to development.
- Create a new local source of money for local infrastructure improvements. Tap private sector partners to help us figure that out. The private sector gets that it just can't be all government.

- Consider the impact of development on nearby areas and infrastructure; rethink nearby systems and leverage projects to deal with development impacts.
- Maximize bike and pedestrian connections.
- Use small area planning.
- Use the 2010 group for visioning.

Involve the private sector.

- The City depends too little on the private sector for station design. Look to the private sector for funding and design because, in the long run, it's good for business.

Carve out space for train maintenance.

- Trains are great, but we need space for maintenance stations on the perimeter of downtown. The impound lot is a key piece. Relocating the impound lot will be painful, but we need the space.

Be advocates instead of responders.

- If the City doesn't take an active role, we aren't protecting our interests. Constitutionally, local governments have the highest authority. We could leverage that.
- Be ready on four or five projects at once because a lot of things — a new administration, the quest for energy independence, etc. — are lining up to support transportation initiatives.

"If we're not shovel-ready, we'll lose out."

- Public Works employee
