

EAST METRO

Gold Line bus rapid transit wins critical federal approval

Dedicated busway along I-94 to Woodbury would be a first in Minnesota.

By Janet Moore (<http://www.startribune.com/janet-moore/10645476/>) Star Tribune |

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The Federal Transit Administration on Friday approved moving the [Gold Line](https://www.metrotransit.org/gold-line-project) (<https://www.metrotransit.org/gold-line-project>) — a proposed \$420 million bus rapid transit line in the east metro — into a phase where the project will be eligible for federal matching funds.

The FTA officially granted the Gold Line entry into the project development phase of the federal New Starts program, which helps fund dozens of big transit projects across the country. Construction is expected to begin in 2022, with passenger service starting in 2024.

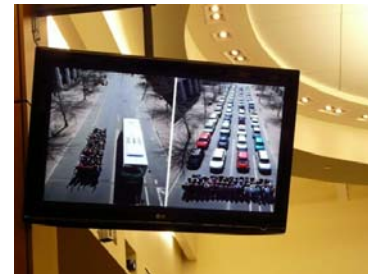
In a statement, [Gov. Mark Dayton](https://mn.gov/governor/) (<https://mn.gov/governor/>) said the Gold Line “will improve transit choices for over a half-million Minnesotans. It will connect workers with good jobs, encourage business expansions and reduce commuter congestion.”

The 9-mile line will run between [Union Depot](https://www.uniondepot.org/) (<https://www.uniondepot.org/>) in downtown St. Paul and Woodbury, traveling through Oakdale, Landfall, Maplewood and the east side of St. Paul. At Union Depot, the line will connect with the area’s broader transit network, including the Green Line light rail.

The line will have [11 stations](https://www.metrotransit.org/gold-line-stations) (<https://www.metrotransit.org/gold-line-stations>), and will be Minnesota’s first true BRT line — operating largely on a dedicated busway, parts of which will parallel Interstate 94.

U.S. Rep. [Betty McCollum](https://mccollum.house.gov/) (<https://mccollum.house.gov/>) said in a statement that the Gold Line “will provide frequent, all-day transit service in both directions to connect people who are headed to work, school, medical appointments, to pick up their kids or to get to sporting or arts events.”

The Gold Line is now approved to begin the design, engineering, environmental and community outreach needed to build the line, according to the [Metropolitan Council](https://metro council.org/) (<https://metro council.org/>), the regional planning body overseeing the project. The federal government is expected to pay about half of the project’s overall construction cost, although the price tag could change as work begins.



(http://stmedia.startribune.com/images/1487127662_10074061+1go)
DAVID PETERSON, STAR TRIBUNE

A 2017 presentation to the Washington County Board on the proposed Gold Line busway compared the number of riders who can travel

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