

Transit brings Twin Cities together at Westgate Station

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Kirk Postonik spent nearly two decades living in Mexico car-free. So when he moved back to the Twin Cities three years ago, he looked to maintain that lifestyle by living somewhere he could easily use transit.

Postonik now lives in downtown St. Paul, where he is a short walk away from the METRO Green Line's [Central Station](#). His workplace, [Portico Healthnet](#), is just 12 stops to the west, in the Court West Building just south of the Green Line's [Westgate Station](#).

"That was one of the features I really liked – knowing that I would be able to take light rail to work," Postonik said recently from Portico's top-floor office, which overlooks the station area.

Postonik is among many who live, work or play near the Westgate Station and will make use of the [Green Line](#).

Located at the Green Line's geographic high point and on the border of Minneapolis and St. Paul, the station is surrounded by multi-family housing, offices and small businesses. Nearby rail yards and streetcars also brought industry to the area, which continues today.

For the past seven years, Caty Rentmeester has worked at the [Dunn Brothers](#) that sits immediately south of Westgate Station. When Green Line trains go into service, she'll be

able to walk to Western Avenue Station and commute by train. Dunn Brothers' Minneapolis office will also be accessible by light rail.

"I'll be able to walk right up to the station, so I'm pretty excited," Rentmeester said.



To celebrate the arrival of light rail, the coffee shop is creating a Green Line blend and planning to offer commemorative mugs.

Tenants at [University Enterprise Laboratories](#) (UEL) will also benefit from the arrival of light rail. Just a few blocks north of the station, the shared workspace is used by around 30 emerging biotech and life science companies who together employ nearly 300 people.

Many of those working at UEL come from the University of Minnesota so will be able to travel between UEL and campus by train. The U of M's main campus is a mile west of Westgate Station and served by Stadium Village, East Bank and [West Bank](#) stations.

Greg LaSalle, UEL's property manager, said tenants are also looking forward to having a light-rail connection to Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport (Green Line customers can transfer to the [METRO Blue Line](#) in downtown Minneapolis).

"These companies are looking for investment and strategic partners and a lot of the time that requires people to travel here," LaSalle said. "The fact that you can get here from the airport will be big."

Light rail will also be big to [AccountAbility Minnesota](#), which offers tax and financial planning services to low-income residents from its offices on University Avenue near Westgate Station. More than 5,000 people visit AccountAbility's University Avenue site for tax help every year. Several hundred people also volunteer at the location.

"We are definitely excited," said Stacy Opitz, AccountAbility's marketing and communications director. "Around a quarter to a half of our clients take transit so I have to imagine a good number of them will take the Green Line to get here."

The students Jackie Knight works with at the [Youth Performance Company](#) are also heavily reliant on light rail and will be able to ride the train to the theater company's class and rehearsal space, on University Avenue immediately west of Westgate Station.

Knight said many of the 500-plus teenagers who go to the Youth Performance Company get to the site by bus and will benefit from light rail. While the project has taken time to come together, Knight said the sight of trains on the corridor has led to excitement about the opportunities light rail will bring.

"You kind of forget that this is going to happen, but once it does it will be very exciting and fantastic," she said. "We're hoping it's going to change our lives in a great way."

Westgate Station At a Glance



Connecting bus routes: [Route 16](#), with service every 20 minutes between downtown St. Paul and the University of Minnesota. [Route 67](#) will connect with Raymond Avenue Station and continue south to the Seward neighborhood and the METRO Blue Line's Franklin Avenue

Station; customers can board Route 67 on University Avenue, approximately a half-mile east of Westgate Station.

Public art: [Andrea Myklebust and Stanton Sears](#) took their inspiration from the neighborhood's industrial heritage, creating bronze and granite works that showcase a variety of wheel types. The stations include sculpted elements depicting an International Harvester tractor wheel and a wheel from a 1920s Willy-Overland car. A sculpture of wheels used by transit vehicles in the corridor will be installed this spring. Carved lettering in the pavement also provides directional arrows pointing towards Minneapolis and St. Paul. Myklebus and Sears created similar work for the Green Line's [Union Depot](#) and Raymond Avenue stations. [Learn more.](#)

Area landmarks: [Tower Hill Park](#), Hampden Park, Luxton Park, [East River Parkway](#) and the Mississippi River, [Pratt Community Center](#), [Jennings Community Learning Center](#), Court International, Westgate Business Center, [University Enterprise Laboratories](#), [Minnesota Geological Survey](#), [Fraser Child & Family Center](#), KSTP

Bike-ped connections: The University of Minnesota Transitway runs east-west between the U of M's Minneapolis and St. Paul campuses and is located north of the station; Raymond Avenue was recently [rebuilt north of University Avenue](#) with bike lanes and pedestrian improvements.

Neighborhood groups: [St. Anthony Park Community Council](#), [Prospect Park East River Road Neighborhood](#)

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