

## Green Line brings promise to Prospect Park

<http://www.metrotransit.org/green-line-brings-promise-to-prospect-park>



Jeff Barnhart is feeling a buzz, and it isn't from the caffeine served up at his coffee shop, [Overflow Espresso Café](#).

Barnhart's cheery mood is the result of the [METRO Green Line](#)'s June 14 opening. The Green Line's [Prospect Park Station](#) is located at the corner of University and 29th avenues, directly adjacent to the café and the property Barnhart manages.

"We're already feeling a buzz in the area," Barnhart said. "Everyone is feeling pretty optimistic. We're seeing a boost and I hope it's going to get even better still."

Barnhart's enthusiasm is shared by many in the Prospect Park community. Centrally located between downtown St. Paul and downtown Minneapolis, residents and business owners in the Prospect Park station area say the long-established "village in the city" will benefit from light rail in many ways.

Seniors who want to age in place will be able to get around without a vehicle. University of Minnesota students and faculty living in the area will have convenient transportation to and from campus. And housing and commercial development will be strengthened by the area's newfound accessibility.

Jeff Hensley, vice president of Minneapolis-based [Wall Companies](#), is among those who believe light rail will have a positive impact on the area surrounding Prospect Park Station. Hensley is

championing the idea of a private research park on land previously owned by ADM that sits north of the station.

If Hensley’s vision for the Minnesota Innovation Park is realized, start-ups, national and international firms working on everything from food science to robotics will eventually fill more than 1 million square feet of office, lab and light industrial space. The Green Line is a key selling point to future tenants, he said.

“It’s about instant connectivity,” Hensley said. “This is going to be one of the most accessible areas in the Twin Cities.”

Accessibility was a key reason [Surly Brewing Co.](#) decided to put their \$20 million “destination brewery” near the station. The brewery is being built on an 8.5-acre site about a block northeast of the Prospect Park Station and will open later this year.

“It’s important for us to give our patrons as many options to get there and get home as we can,” said Omar Ansari, Surly’s founder and president. “It’s part of the whole package.”

Surly is perhaps Prospect Park’s highest-profile development, but several other new developments are now in the works, promising to bring additional housing, retail and commercial development to the station area.



The historic neighborhood south of University Avenue is to be preserved, but a group of community leaders is working with the University of Minnesota and other partners to transform vacant or underused industrial property north of the station into a “living lab of 21<sup>st</sup> century urban living” with a mix of green space, multifamily housing, retail and commercial space.

Dick Gilyard, a ten-year Prospect Park resident involved in the planning effort, said the Green Line is a key to making that vision a reality.

“It’s a permanent stroke that signals the community has invested in this system that will be there,” said Gilyard, part of the community development group [Prospect Park 2020](#). “That’s an absolute magnet that gives confidence to investors.”

Ahead of those larger projects, light rail will have an immediate impact on Prospect Park residents who can use the train to get to work, shop or reach other destinations along the corridor.

Richard Davis, a spokesman for Minneapolis Public Schools, said students, parents and staff at [Pratt Community School](#) are eager to use the Green Line to get to and from the school.

The K-5 school sits just south of the station and is in the same building as the Pratt Community Education Center, which offers program for families and adults.

“More and more students across Minneapolis are taking advantage of light rail as an alternative means to get to and from school on a daily basis,” Davis said. “This is a tremendous tool for them to use to ensure that they arrive safely and on time.”

Marji Miller, the executive director of [Southeast Seniors](#), said the Green Line will be a great benefit to the Prospect Park seniors the organization works with. The non-profit provides a variety of services to seniors who want to continue living at home.

Miller said around two-thirds of the seniors the organization works with rely exclusively on public transportation or get transportation help from friends, family and volunteers.

“For people who want to remain in their homes as long as possible transportation is a huge issue,” Miller said.

Cedar Phillips voluntarily gave up her car as a way to save money and now regularly takes the bus to her job at the [Textile Center](#) on University Avenue. Phillips hopes light rail will make her commute easier when the weather is bad or there is a large event that slows traffic.

She won’t just use the Green Line for commuting, though. Phillips said she plans to take the train to meetings during the day and to visit the businesses, parks and restaurants that line the light-rail corridor.

“I’m looking forward to exploring St. Paul,” she said. “My husband and six-year-old are already planning day trips.”

### **Prospect Park Station At a Glance**





**Connecting bus routes:** [Route 16](#), which will provide local service on University Avenue between Stadium Village Station and downtown St. Paul.

**Public art:** Minneapolis artist [Janet Lofquist](#)'s station artwork weaves together Prospect Park's residential and industrial heritages. Decorative aluminum bands wrap station poles and include cut-outs in the pattern of the nearby Witch's Tower. The platform concrete is colored in earth tones and includes the outlines of large flax seeds, which were historically stored in the grain silos north of the station. "I wanted to bring in that element of industry that existed on the north side of University Avenue but also consider the residential element," Lofquist said. "In some ways, these elements are at odds. But I found a way to weave together that story in an abstract way." Lofquist also created the artwork for [10th Street Station](#) and Robert Street Station. [Learn more](#).

**Area landmarks:** [Tower Hill Park](#) (home to the Witch's Hat water tower), [Pratt Community School](#), [Luxton Recreation Center](#), [Textile Center](#), [U.S. Post Office](#), University of Minnesota, TCF Bank Stadium, East River Parkway and Mississippi River

**Bike-ped connections:** The University of Minnesota Transitway, open only to bicyclists, transit and emergency vehicles, can be accessed a block north of the station. The transitway connects the U of M's Minneapolis and St. Paul campuses, the Minneapolis riverfront, Como Park, Roseville and Falcon Heights. Bicyclists can travel between Prospect Park Station and the Seward neighborhood using bicycle lanes on 27th Avenue SE and the Franklin Avenue Bridge. There are also bicycle lanes on 27th Avenue SE between University Avenue and the U of M

Transitway. A [Nice Ride kiosk](#) is located at University Avenue and 29th Avenue SE, immediately east of the station.

**Neighborhood group:** [Prospect Park East River Road Improvement Association](#)

Monday, May 12, 2014 12:00:00 AM Categories: [METRO Green Line Minneapolis Station Spotlight](#)