



# MnDOT Passenger Rail Update

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# Where We Are Today: Current Service

- **Intercity**

- Borealis (St. Paul-Chicago) – 1 daily round trip, ***stated service May 21, 2024!***
- Empire Builder (Chicago-Seattle/Portland) – 1 daily roundtrip

- **Commuter**

- Northstar (Big Lake-Minneapolis) – 3 daily roundtrips (weekdays) plus event service

- **Heritage/Tourist**

- Lake Superior & Mississippi (Duluth) – seasonal, service varies
- Northshore Scenic (Duluth-Two Harbors) – seasonal, service varies
- Osceola & St. Croix Valley (Osceola, WI-Marine on St. Croix) – seasonal, service varies

# Planning the Future: National

- **FRA Long-Distance Study**

- MnDOT participated
- Identifies **four** routes to/through Minnesota
  - Chicago-Seattle (North Coast Hiawatha)
  - Twin Cities-San Antonio
  - Twin Cities-Denver
  - Twin Cities-Phoenix

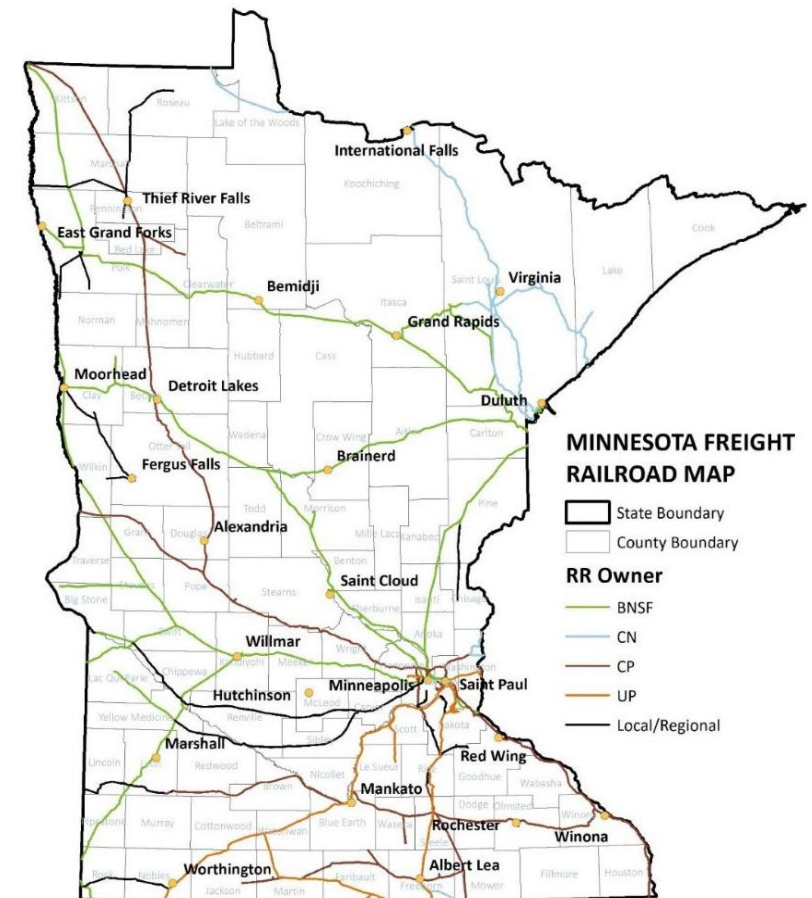


Source: FRA

# Planning the Future: Statewide

- **State Rail Plan**

- Update is in progress
- Plan for both freight and passenger rail
- ***Will guide future MnDOT passenger rail efforts***
- Passenger rail considerations
  - Connecting Minnesota and the region
  - Growth and changes in travel demand
  - System capacity, reliability, convenience, safety, and performance
  - Leveraging investment to support accessibility, economic growth, and expand mobility
- To learn more – <https://talk.dot.state.mn.us/state-rail-plan>



# Corridors: Twin Cities-Fargo/Moorhead

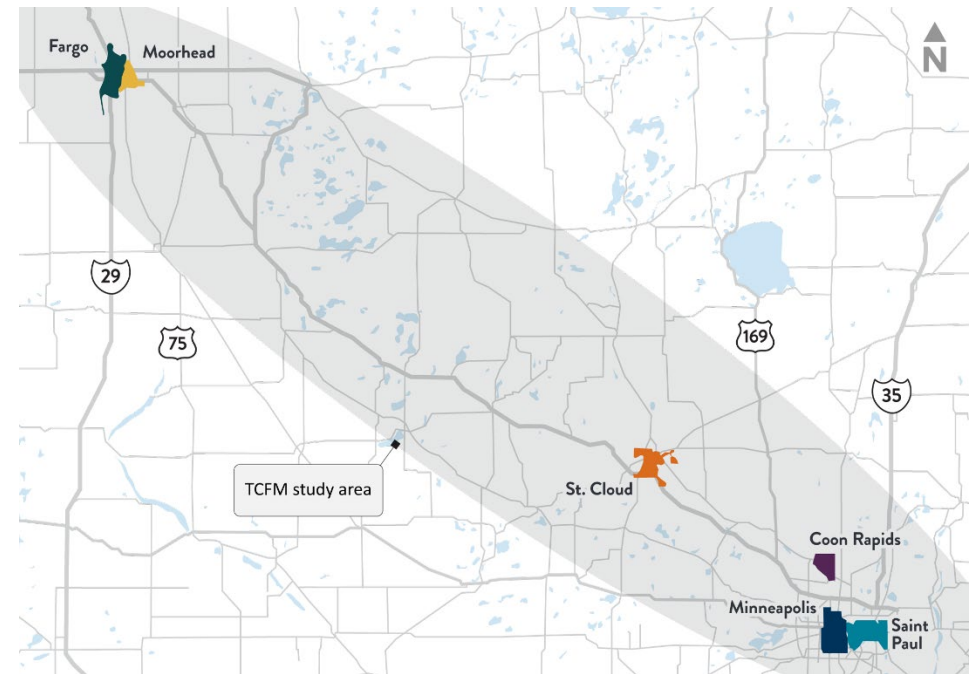
- Two studies requested by the Legislature in 2023
- **Study 1 – Northstar Commuter Rail Extension to Saint Cloud**
  - Determined steps and costs to develop, implement and operate a service extension from Big Lake to Saint Cloud
    - Low and high-level service alternatives
    - Assumed phased implementation to start service sooner
  - Feb 15, 2024 – Report submitted to the Legislature



# Corridors: Twin Cities-Fargo/Moorhead

- **Study 2 – Twin Cities-Fargo/Moorhead**

- Needs to look at multiple things
- Main purpose – *evaluate options for developing transit and rail service improvements on the corridor, including connections beyond*
  - Alternatives will consider a range of options that include both bus and rail
- Feb 1, 2025 – Report due to the Legislature



# Corridors: Minneapolis-Duluth/Superior

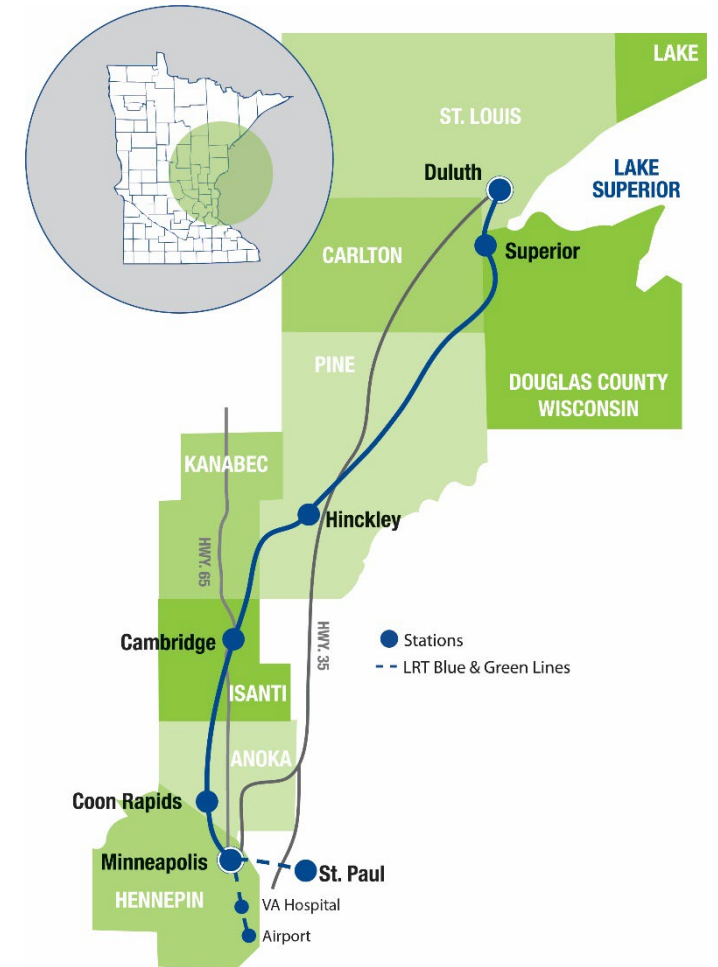
- **Minneapolis – Duluth/Superior**

- 2024

- Late March – FRA obligated Corridor ID Step 1 grant
- April/May – Prepared the Project Management Plan
- Summer – Completed an FRA required gap analysis
- Fall – Prepared scope, schedule and budget to update the Service Development Plan (SDP)

- 2025

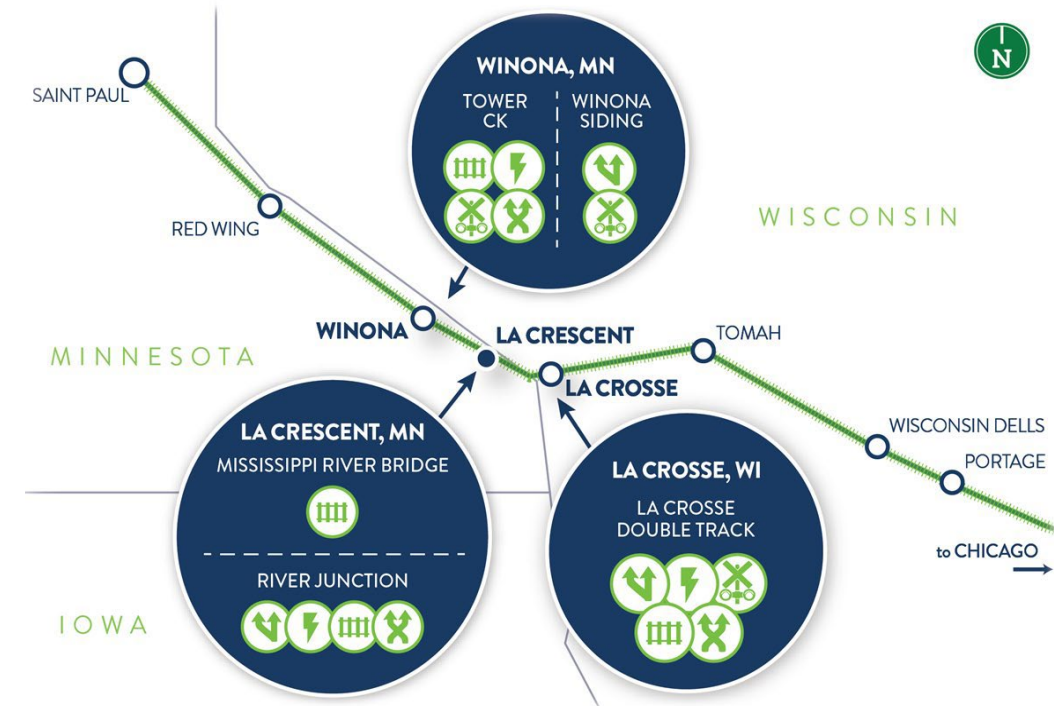
- Winter – Work with FRA to finalize and approve SDP scope, schedule and budget
- Spring – Obligate Corridor ID Step 2 grant
- Summer – Contracting and begin update the SDP



# Corridors: Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago

## • Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago Construction

- Capital improvements for the Borealis
  - *CPKC generously allowed the Borealis to begin service before construction was completed*
  - Will help improve performance
- Construction locations – La Crosse, La Crescent and Winona
- Currently in final design
- Construction 2026-2027
  - Some work may start sooner





# Thanks!

**Greg Mathis**

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