2010 Minnesota Comprehensive Statewide Freight and Passenger Rail Plan

Minnesota Department of Transportation
• First Statewide Comprehensive Rail Plan for MN
• Commissioned by 2008 Legislature
• Compliant with 2008 PRIIA Federal Rules
• 6 Months to prepare, 10 Months to develop Plan
• Most significant outreach and public review ever incorporated: 4 rounds of Open Houses, Policy Advisory Committee with unlimited membership, Freight and passenger technical committees, and continuous communications maintained throughout for input
Passenger Vision

- Forecast shows population and employment growth in the state will continue to increase demand on the state’s highway, air, bus systems
- Availability of new federal funds for rail investment creates a unique opportunity
- Global and national economic and environmental trends are likely to increase fuel costs and impose controls on greenhouse gas emission
- Therefore, Minnesota should develop a robust intra- and interstate intercity passenger rail system which results in improved travel options, costs, and speeds for Minnesota and interstate travelers
Accomplishing the Passenger Vision

- Develop HSR service with Mid West Regional Rail Initiative to connect the Twin Cities to the Chicago Hub Network
- Develop a regional passenger rail network connecting the Twin Cities to major regional trade centers, coordinated as part of a larger integrated regional/national multimodal system
- Use interchangeable and interoperable equipment, common facilities, fully coordinated routes, schedules in network
- All corridors serve state and full Metro area connected through the Minneapolis downtown terminal and St. Paul Union Depot
- Advance system incrementally to develop network connectivity and grow ridership in timely manner
- Advance projects simultaneously depending on readiness, funding, ROW acquisition, agreements with freight RRs
Intercity Passenger Rail

• Conventional Passenger Rail
  – Shares freight rail network
  – 79 mph or less top speed

• Incremental Improvement
  – 80 mph to 110 mph (FRA HSR threshold)

• High Speed Rail
  – Greater than 110 mph (150-220 mph)
  – Grade separation required above 124 mph
  – Partial or full segregation from freight
Principles For HSR Success:

- **Frequency** - more trains, more choice
- **Travel Times** – Twin Cities to Chicago at 110 Mph, > 5 Hrs; at 180 Mph, > 3 Hrs
- **Access** – Key station locations, direct urban service
- **Connectivity** – Regional Mobility
  - Varied train services; locals, express, overnights
  - Bus feeders and transit hubs
  - Direct airport links
- **Amenities** – Trains, stations, connections
Rail Improvement Benefits

• High speed passenger rail, 100-500 mile length, offers improved travel time, capacity, reliability, predictability in major corridors
• Positive benefits for energy use, environmental impacts, economic development, jobs, land use, modal and transit connections
• Positive return on investment, 1.5-2.5 times more than cost
• Bridge, bottleneck, track upgrades to handle 25 mph/286K freight minimums, HSR system improve MN competitiveness
• Improving rail options, expanding intermodal capacity saves roads & complements capacity of road, waterway, air, and public transit systems
Estimated System Costs & Revenues
(Phase I passenger & freight system – 2009 $)

- Total system capital investment by 2030 = $6.2-9.5B
- Freight portion of total = $2.2-4.5B – 74% private
- Passenger portion of total = $4.0-5.1B – 50-80% Federal
- Annualized non-federal share = $78-180M
- Gross Annual Operating cost = $143-182M
- After farebox revenues, annual subsidy = $41-95M
- Farebox recovery ratio = 48-69%
Initial Results of Plan

- Minnesota Passenger Rail Forum convened
- Mn/DOT Office of Passenger Rail formed
- $26 Million Passenger Rail bonding passed
- Partnership with State of Wisconsin
- Federal grants for St. Paul Union Depot, MWRRI planning
- Plan adoption, 2/9/2010, signals Mn/DOT transition to multimodal transportation department
Implementing the Plan – What comes next:

• Prepare initial planning and environmental assessments on all corridors of passenger system to establish eligibility for projects (i.e., MWRRI Alternatives Analysis)

• Pursue federal funding applications for all projects that are in state of readiness (NLX, St. Cloud) – ongoing funding stream

• Formalize operating agreements with partner states and regional compacts, railroads, funding partners

• Advance implementation plans for design, engineering, contracting, equipment and facility procurement, operations, and continuing incremental improvements
Long Range Targets

• More transportation capacity & choices
• Reduced travel times and costs, and increased convenience for large share of population
• Increasing rail mode share in key corridors
• Enhanced usefulness of all public transportation modes, incl. transit, bus, air
• Reduced or eliminated operating subsidies as ridership increases
• Better economic competitiveness for region
• Improved environment, energy use, national security
Moving Forward

• **Corridor Advocates**
  – Build support/ momentum for corridor development

• **Mn/DOT Passenger Rail Office**
  – Manage corridor projects, create corridor development plans partner with other study activities

• **Legislature**
  – Address funding issues and establish institutional framework to develop, manage and operate the system
Questions ?