Twin Cities to Chicago – 2nd Train Feasibility Study 5-13

Corridor Description

National Railroad Passenger Corporation (Amtrak) is conducting a feasibility study for the provision of one additional state-sponsored intercity passenger rail service in the Chicago, IL – Milwaukee, WI - St. Paul, MN - Minneapolis, MN - St. Cloud, MN corridor for MnDOT and WisDOT. With a few moderate exceptions, the route being studied essentially follows that of Amtrak's current Empire Builder trains between Chicago, IL and St. Cloud, MN. The study assumes that east of St. Paul, MN station stops will be the same as those of the Empire Builder service. However, within the Twin Cities area and beyond to St. Cloud, four different termini (St. Paul, Minneapolis, St. Cloud via Mpls., and St. Cloud via Fridley) are being studied to reflect a different combination of station stops. The study will analyze schedules, infrastructure requirements, operating costs, and rolling stock. Ridership and revenue forecasts will be developed based on current timetable speeds up to 79 mph, where practical.

Project Status and Timeline

The feasibility study is expected to be completed by August 2013.

Project Phase	Date(s)
Began feasibility study	May 2012
RTC modeling task added	April 2013
Expected completion date	August 2013

When Congress passed the Passenger Rail Improvement and Investment Act of 2008 it changed the way that passenger rail service is funded. Services that are not "long distance" trains (500 plus miles and not part of Amtrak's core network) are the states responsibility to capitalize and to provide operating subsidies. If a daily train is proven to be feasible, Minnesota, Wisconsin and Illinois will be responsible for a portion of capital costs, and operations costs not generated by revenue.

FUNDING COMMITMENTS

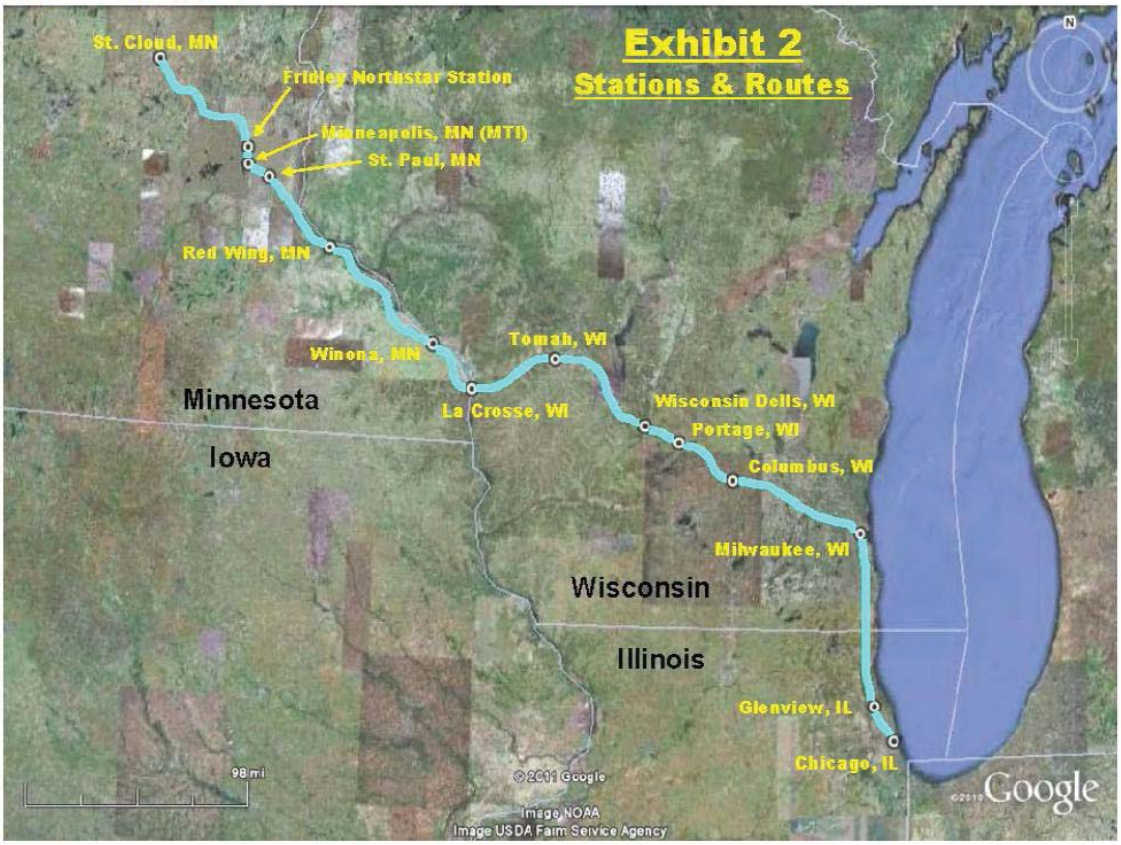
Below is a breakdown of funding sources used for the feasibility study.

Source	Committed	Committed (for RTC modeling task)	TOTAL	Share
Minnesota DOT	$25,000	$37,500	$62,500	50%
Wisconsin DOT	$20,000	$37,500	$57,500	46%
LaCrosse County, WI	$5,000		$5,000	4%
TOTAL	$50,000	$75,000	$125,000	100%

LEAD AGENCY

Minnesota Department of Transportation

MAP – STUDY AREA



Twin Cities to Milwaukee/Chicago High Speed Rail Corridor Program 5-13

Corridor Description

The Twin Cities to Milwaukee corridor is a segment of the approximately 435-mile high-speed passenger rail corridor between Minneapolis-St. Paul and Chicago, which in turn is part of the Chicago Hub Network, one of 10 designated regional high-speed rail systems in President Obama's vision to build a network of high-speed rail corridors across the United States. The Twin Cities to Chicago corridor is one of several major branches in the hub-and-spoke passenger rail system centered in Chicago as identified in the Midwest Regional Rail Initiative (MWRRI) plan.

Project Status and Timeline

As part of broader MWRRI studies, the Twin Cities to Milwaukee project has recently completed an alternatives analysis to identify one route – the existing Amtrak route servicing Minneapolis, St. Paul, Hastings, Red Wing, Winona, La Crosse, Tomah, Portage, Watertown, and Milwaukee – as the reasonable and feasible passenger rail alternative. A Tier 1 Environmental Impact Study (EIS) and Service Development Planning activities started in October 2011 and both are expected to be completed by end of 2014. They will develop ridership estimates as well as cost estimates for capital investments and annual maintenance. The following table summarizes actual and projected timing of key project milestones.

MILESTONE	DATE
Alternatives Analysis (MWRRI Phase 7)	2009 – 2011
Reasonable and Feasible Passenger Rail Alternative Concurrence (FRA)	November 2011
Minnesota Scoping and RTC Modeling	June 2013 through October 2013
Union Depot to MTI AA/RTC Modeling	June 2013 through March 2014
Tier 1 EIS and Service Dev. Planning	October 2011 through December 2014
Preliminary Engineering and Tier 2 EIS	Jan 2015 through June 2017

If sufficient funding can be secured, final design, construction, and vehicle procurement will take place upon completion of the Tier 2 EIS. Operations could commence late 2019.

FUNDING COMMITMENTS

Below is a breakdown of funding sources being used for the Tier 1 EIS and the Service Development Planning. Funding for all phases of Preliminary Engineering and the Tier 2 EIS has not yet been identified, and they have an estimated a full cost of $50 million. Work will occur as funding is identified and made available.

Source	Committed ($M)	Proposed ($M)	TOTAL ($M)
FRA (Tier 1 EIS Grant)	0.6	--	0.6
State of Minnesota (Tier 1 EIS Grant match)	0.6	--	0.6
State of Minnesota (MN Scoping)	0.09	--	0.09
State of Minnesota (RTC Modeling)	0.22	--	0.22
State of Minnesota (Union Depot to MTI Alt. Analysis/RTC Modeling)		0.5	0.5
TOTAL	**1.51**	**0.5**	**2.01**

PARTNERING AGENCIES

Minnesota Department of Transportation

Federal Railroad Administration

MAP