



Twin Cities to Milwaukee High Speed Rail Corridor to Chicago Tier 1 EIS

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Tier 1 EIS (Environmental Impact Statement)

- ▶ Evaluate only the one build alternative (existing Empire Builder route) along with the no-build alternative
- ▶ Identify environmental consequences and measures necessary to mitigate environmental impacts
- ▶ Conceptual engineering, station location analysis
- ▶ Track concepts – Route assessment using high rail completed from Milwaukee to Red Wing
- ▶ Ridership – Rail Traffic Controller (RTC) modeling Milwaukee to Minneapolis to validate conceptual engineering for potential capacity upgrades
- ▶ Capital cost estimate, Operating cost



St. Paul to Minneapolis segment

- ▶ Union Depot to Target Field Station
 - Vital link to intercity passenger rail network
 - Heavy freight rail usage (5% nation's rail traffic daily)
- ▶ Integrated into TC to Mil. HSR Tier 1 EIS
 - Alternatives analysis identified the preferred alignment
 - RTC modeling extended to Minneapolis
- ▶ Regional maintenance facility study will be done separately



St. Paul to Minneapolis segment

- ▶ Identified the “South Route” as the preferred route between St. Paul and Minneapolis for additional analysis in Twin Cities to Milwaukee Tier 1 EIS



Tier 1 EIS timeline

- ▶ Milwaukee to Twin Cities segment:
 - Tier 1 EIS to be completed by early 2016
 - Preliminary engineering 2016–2018
 - Design and construction 2018–2020
- ▶ Service begins – 2020*

* Subject to funding availability, successful negotiations with railroads, securing necessary federal approvals, minimal environmental mitigation factors, ability to secure necessary R/W, identified operating and maintenance funding, equipment availability, and continued legislative support.





Evaluation of a Second Daily Passenger Train between Minnesota and Chicago

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Second Train Study

- ▶ MnDOT, WisDOT and La Crosse County requested Amtrak to complete a feasibility study of adding a second daily intercity passenger train between the Twin Cities (or St. Cloud) and Chicago, IL.
- ▶ Existing Empire Builder route through Illinois and Wisconsin, with several end points in Minnesota.
- ▶ The purpose of a second daily train is to offer more options to travelers in the corridor by providing better eastbound reliability and increased train frequency.

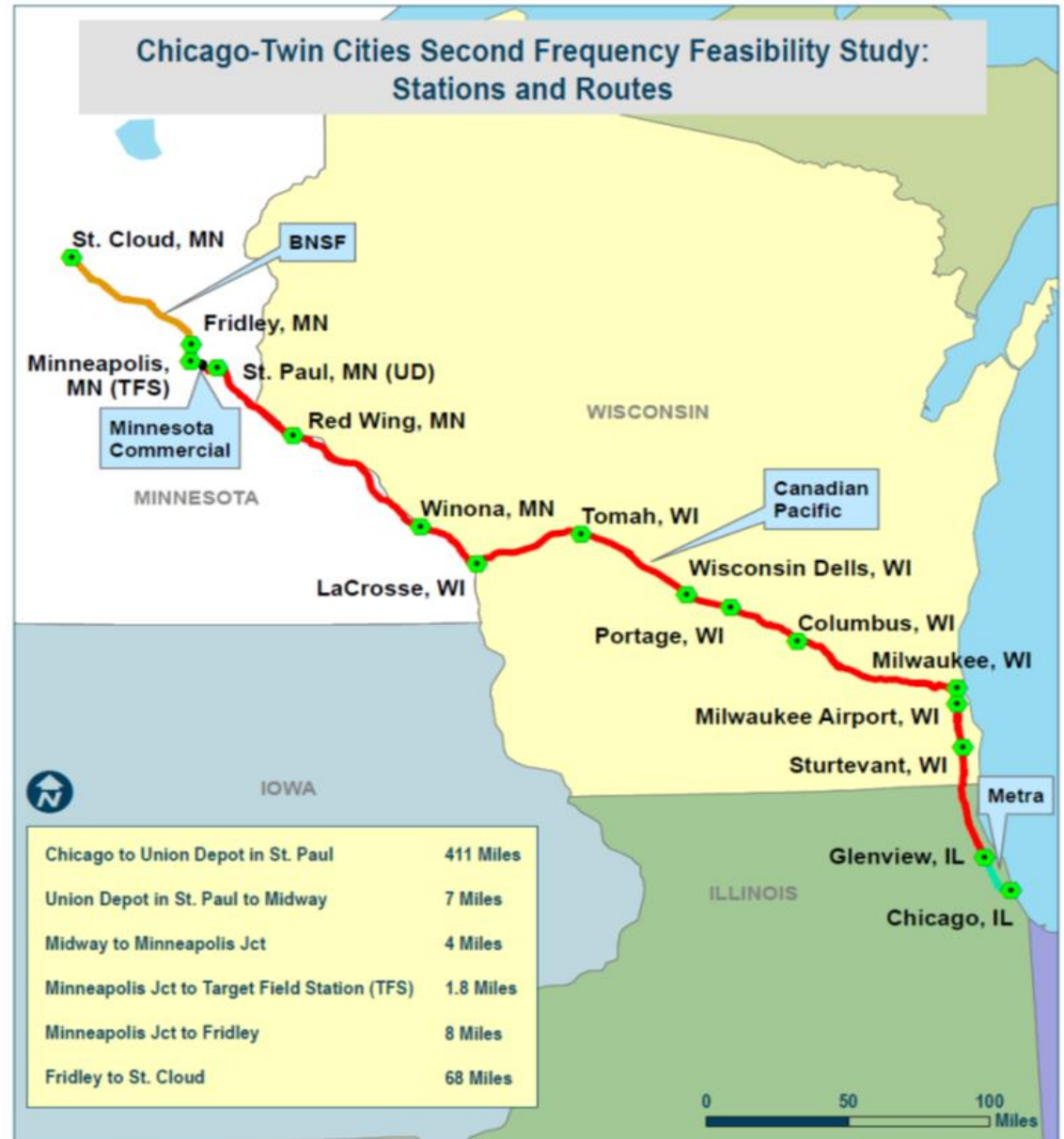


Corridor Study Area

Railroads:

- BNSF
- MN Commercial
- Canadian Pacific
- Metra
- 499.8 miles

Note: Sturtevant and Glenview are current Hiawatha stops



Second Train Study Benefits

- ▶ Potential mobility benefits of the proposed service include:
 - more reliable service with better on-time performance (particularly eastbound)
 - more convenient travel times for shorter, regional trips
 - more seating capacity on the corridor relieving pressure during peak periods
 - improved connections between other trains, intercity buses, local public transit, and air service



Purpose of the Study

- ▶ A high level, order-of-magnitude assessment of schedules, ridership, revenue, infrastructure investments, operating costs, and equipment needs associated with adding a second daily train
- ▶ This assessment will assist the project sponsors in determining whether or not to move the project to the next steps toward implementation.



Study Options

- ▶ Existing stations served by the Empire Builder plus Milwaukee Airport
- ▶ Terminal Station scenarios in Minnesota
- ▶ Schedules are designed to complement the current Empire Builder schedule, with arrival and departure times at the endpoints that maximize ridership potential.
- ▶ The annual ridership for all scenarios compares favorably with annual ridership on existing state-supported intercity passenger rail routes in other states with one round-trip per day.



Recommendations

- ▶ MnDOT and WisDOT staff recommend moving forward with the next phase of study to fulfill environmental requirements and be eligible for federal funding.
 - determine environmental clearance of infrastructure improvements
 - further operations modeling and railroad coordination
 - establish a service development plan

