Minnesota Comprehensive Statewide Freight and Passenger Rail Plan

Southern Rail Corridor Open Houses

July 21-23, 2009



presented by

Cambridge Systematics, Inc.
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TKDA, Inc.

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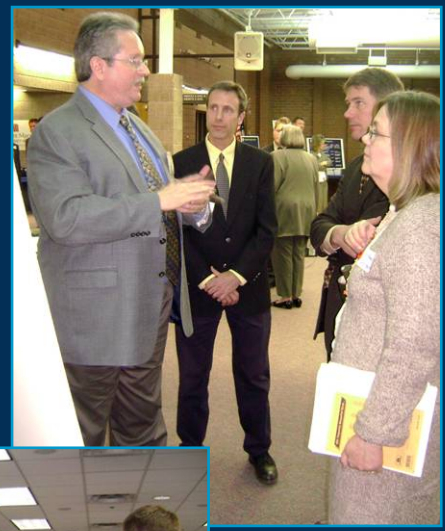
Public Open House Meetings

- Two rounds of meetings
  - April – introduction to project
  - October – preliminary recommendations
- Locations
  - St. Cloud
  - Rochester
  - Duluth
  - Minneapolis-St. Paul
  - Red Wing
  - Mankato
  - Moorhead





Comments from Open Houses
By Theme

- Strong support for new passenger rail service and belief that demand will be sufficient
- New passenger rail services cannot degrade existing freight services, which need more investment
- Decisions should not only be driven by existing land use patterns, growth forecasts, or energy assumptions
- Concern about how to balance data-driven approach and inevitable political influence on ultimate decisions





Comments from Open Houses
By Location

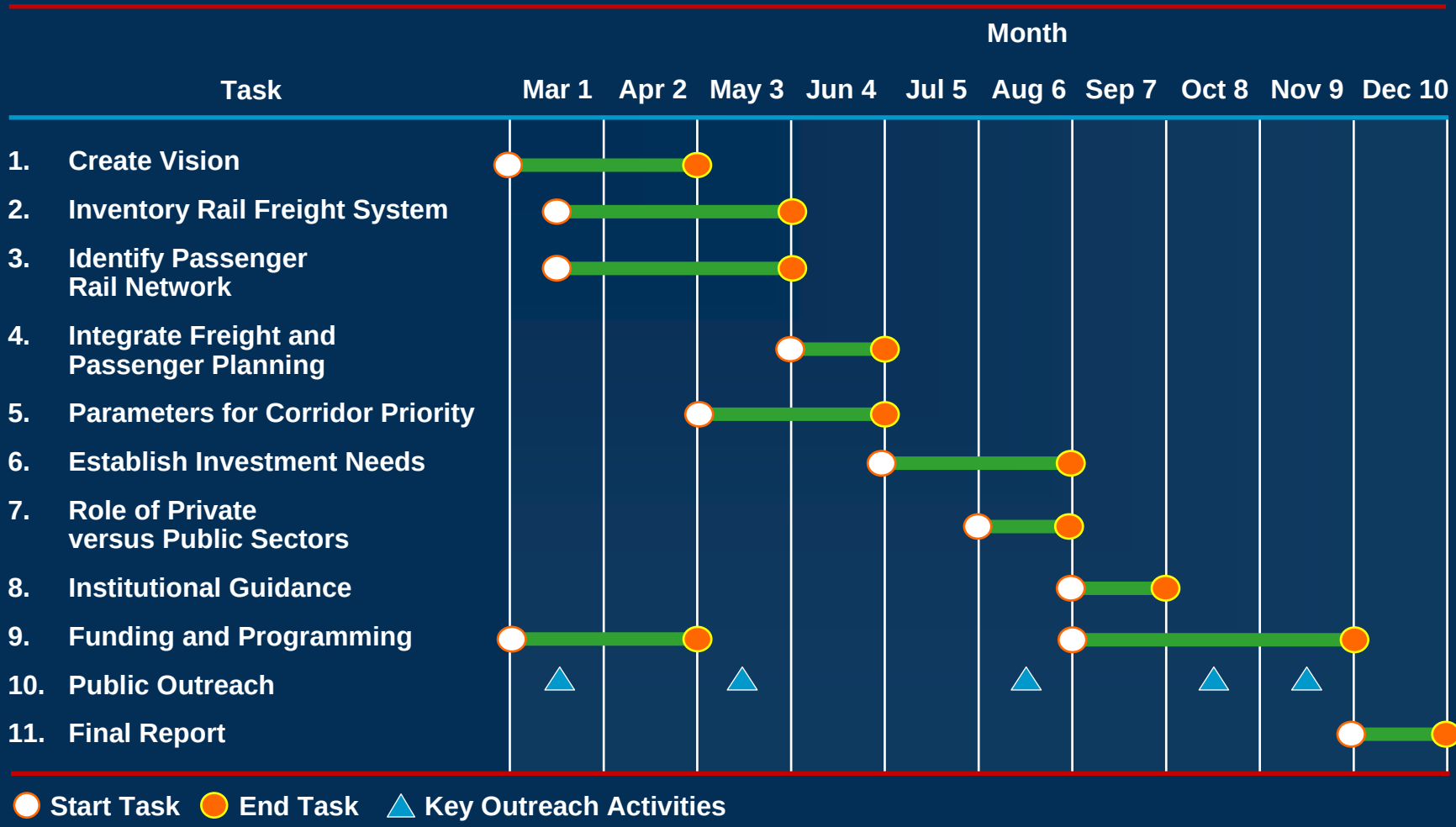
- St. Cloud – extend Northstar; consider the relationship between freight and passenger rail
- Rochester – connect to MWRRI; Southern Rail Corridor issues
- Duluth – dedicated alignment for Northern Lights Express; use union labor to operate
- MSP – connectivity between St. Paul and Minneapolis
- Red Wing – MWRRI should use River Route
- Mankato – passenger rail to St. Paul
- Moorhead – more investment in freight rail

Upcoming Meeting Dates

- PAC Meetings
  - August 14
  - November 13
- Freight and Passenger TAC Meetings
  - August 13
  - November 12
- Open Houses – second round, October, 2009
- Stakeholders Meetings – June-September, 2009



Schedule

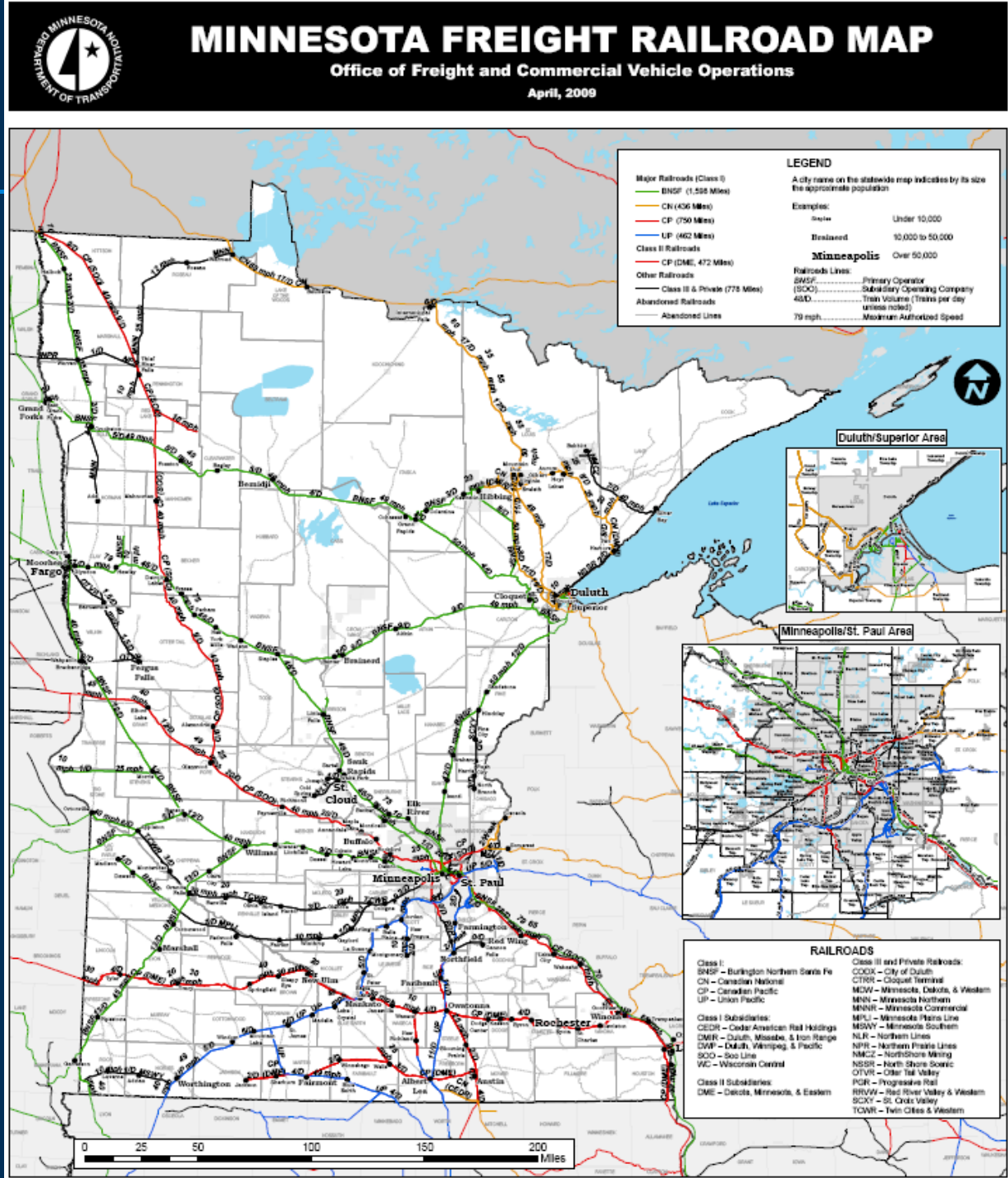

Month
Task
Mar 1
Apr 2
May 3
Jun 4
Jul 5
Aug 6
Sep 7
Oct 8
Nov 9
Dec 10
1. Create Vision
2. Inventory Rail Freight System
3. Identify Passenger Rail Network
4. Integrate Freight and Passenger Planning
5. Parameters for Corridor Priority
6. Establish Investment Needs
7. Role of Private versus Public Sectors
8. Institutional Guidance
9. Funding and Programming
10. Public Outreach
11. Final Report
Start Task
End Task
Key Outreach Activities

Draft Vision Statement

- **Rail contributes to the long-term growth and productivity of business and industry**
- **Rail knits together Minnesota communities**
- **Rail balances the State's transportation network as an alternative to highways for freight and to highways and flying for passenger travel**
- **Rail sustains the environment by reducing fuel use and greenhouse gas emissions**
- ***Therefore, Minnesota's rail program should share the benefits, costs, and risks of its evolving rail system equitably among users, regions, and public/private sectors***

Freight Rail

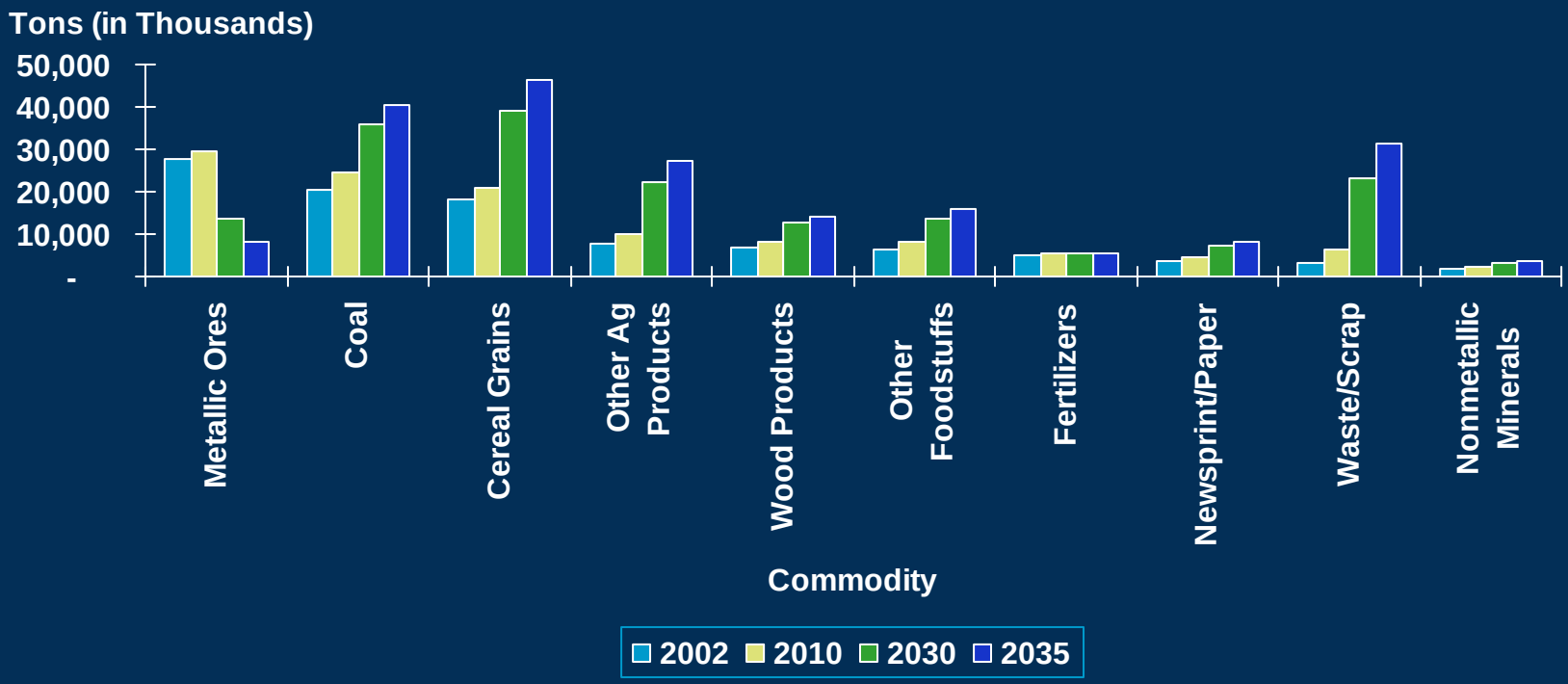
- 4 Class I Railroads
- 16 Short Line Railroads
- 4,500 Public Grade Crossings
- 8th Highest Rail Miles in Nation



Top MN Rail Commodities
Current and Projected

Preliminary Data

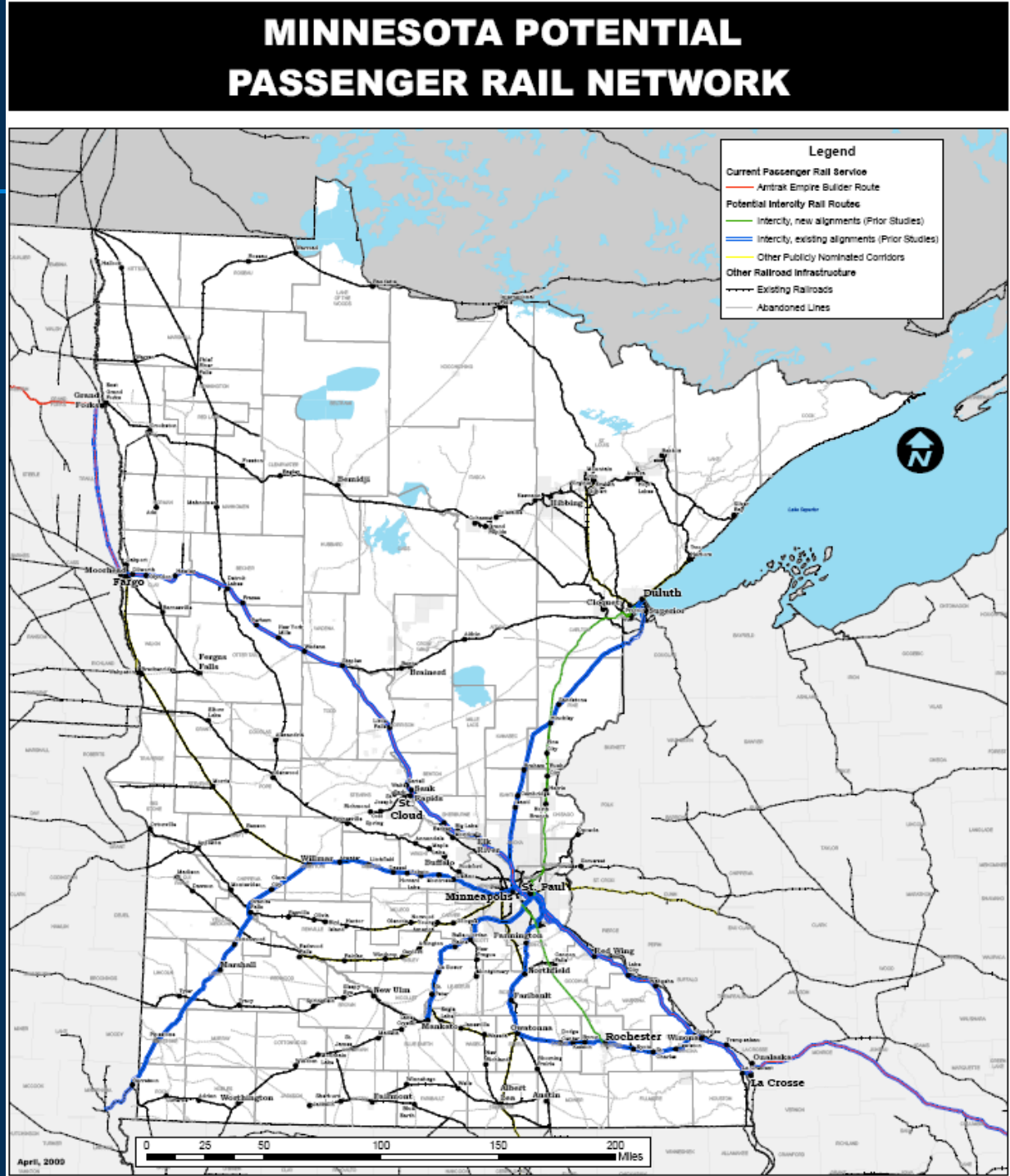
- In 2002, top 10 commodities accounted for 84% of tonnage
- Predicted shift in top commodity in 2035, from metallic ores to cereal grains



Source: FAF 2.2.

Passenger Rail

- Existing Service
- Daily Amtrak Service between Chicago and Seattle/Portland
- Northstar service to start in 2009



Corridors Showing Strong Demand

Corridor	Demand Profile	Implementation Issues
MWRRI through Minnesota	Strong demand from Chicago	Good track, heavy freight train volumes, multiple states

Corridors Showing Moderate Demand

Corridor	Demand Profile	Implementation Issues
St. Cloud	Moderate demand	Good track, heavy freight volumes, new commuter trains
Rochester	Moderate demand	New route to MSP, poor track – Winona, low freight volumes
Duluth (Northern Lights Express)	Moderate demand	Fair track, modest freight, poor infrastructure near Duluth
Des Moines	Moderate demand	Fair track, modest freight volumes, multiple states
Shakopee/Mankato (Sioux Trail)	Moderate demand	Fair track, modest freight volumes
Eau Claire	Moderate demand	Fair track, modest freight volumes, multiple states

Corridors Showing Modest Demand

Corridor	Demand Profile	Implementation Issues
Red Wing, Winona, La Crosse	Part of MWRRI, intrastate demand lighter	Good track, heavy freight volumes
Willmar (Little Crow)	Modest demand to West	Fair track, modest freight volumes
Sioux Falls, Omaha	Modest demand	Fair track, modest freight volumes, multiple states
Fargo, Grand Forks	Modest intrastate demand	Existing Amtrak service, heavy freight volumes, multiple states

VISION *for* HIGH-SPEED RAIL *in* AMERICA



Rail Performance Measures

- System Performance: capacity, speed, annual production of ton/miles, ridership
- System Condition: track, bridges, crossings
- Connectivity/Accessibility: proximity to users, modes
- Safety & Security: at-grade crossings, hazmat
- Environmental: positive & negative impacts of construction and operations
- Financial/Economic: Capital costs, operations, taxes, jobs, economic development, cost/benefit comparisons

Developing Criteria for Public Rail Investment

- Ability of private sector to fully fund project
- Acceptable Cost versus Public Benefits
- Significant Utility: Good Ridership, New Service Access
- Addresses a Verified Need: Accommodates new passenger service, freight growth, or corrects bottleneck
- Exhibits Multiple Benefits: combination of intercity passenger, local/commuter, and freight operations and capacity
- Contributes to State's Priorities: Environmental and green growth goals, reduced energy use, safety, enhanced land use, improved travel options, life style and competitiveness
- Timeliness of Implementation

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