Minnesota State Rail Plan

We have adopted the State Rail Plan (PDF)!

Minnesota State Rail Plan

In May 2026, MnDOT released the updated Minnesota State Rail Plan (PDF). The plan shapes the future of Minnesota's rail infrastructure and investments and is part of the Minnesota GO 50-Year Vision for Transportation. The State Rail Plan builds on the Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan and provides direction for the role Minnesota's freight and passenger railroads will play in achieving the overall vision over the next two decades.

The updated State Rail Plan identifies needs to improve safety, expand services and improve transportation options throughout Minnesota so people and cargo can get where they need to go. The plan advances several key initiatives to support an updated vision for rail infrastructure and service in Minnesota, including:

- Detailing additional funding needs to support freight rail operations
- Updating the process to analyze the expansion of passenger rail in new or additional corridors throughout the Midwest
- Expanding passenger rail service by extending or adding more service along existing corridors, such as potentially expanding the Borealis or building the Northern Lights Express (NLX) lines.
- Identifying capital improvement projects necessary to enhance reliability, speed or improve capacity in existing passenger rail corridors.

The plan is an important tool in MnDOT's effort to secure federal grants and inform state funding decisions by identifying needs and project recommendations. The content reflects months of extensive outreach with railroads, local governments, tribes, the public and other key stakeholders, with a goal of improving the safety, capacity and reliability of the current rail system that includes more than 4,000 miles of rail lines.

The State Rail Plan adopts the six major objectives of the Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan, which are:

1. Transportation Safety
2. System Stewardship
3. Climate Action
4. Critical Connections
5. Healthy Equitable Communities
6. Open Decision Making



Excerpt from Minnesota State Rail Plan.

The planning process

The goal in developing the plan was to provide an overall vision for effective use of the state's freight and passenger rail network and its future development over the next 20 years.

Technical memorandums and project documents

- Minnesota State Rail Plan Executive Summary (PDF)
- Minnesota State Rail Plan Comment Period Summary Report (PDF)
- Minnesota State Rail Plan Tech Memo 1 (PDF)
- Minnesota State Rail Plan SWOT - Tech Memo 2 (PDF)
- Minnesota State Rail Plan - Vision and Action Plan - Tech Memo 3 (PDF)
- Minnesota State Rail Plan Public Engagement Plan (PDF)

Related areas

- Minnesota GO
- About railroads in Minnesota
- Freight Rail
- Passenger Rail
- Freight maps, data, and tools

Past plans

- Minnesota State Rail Plan 2015 (PDF)

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Sign up for State Rail Plan email updates

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Website feedback

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