



## Request for City Council Committee Action From the Department of Public Works

**Date:** January 10, 2012

**To:** Honorable Sandra Colvin Roy, Chair Transportation & Public Works Committee

**Subject:** **High Speed Rail from Milwaukee to Minneapolis**

**Recommendation:**

Adopt a resolution supporting the Milwaukee to Minneapolis High Speed Rail Route #1 alignment (existing Amtrak alignment) as part of the High Speed Rail Corridor to Chicago project.

**Previous Directives:**

None

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**Approved by:**

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Steven A. Kotke, P.E., City Engineer, Director of Public Works

**Presenters:** Donald Pflaum, Transportation Planner 673-2129

<b>Reviews:</b>	Permanent Review Committee (PRC):	Not Applicable
	Civil Rights Affirmative Action Plan:	Not Applicable
	Policy Review Group (PRG):	Not Applicable

**Financial Impact**

No budget impact

**Community Impact**

Neighborhood Notification: No

City Goals: Integrated, multi-modal transportation choices border to border

Comprehensive Plan: Meets comprehensive plan goals

Zoning Code: NA

**Background Information**

The Minnesota Department of Transportation recently completed the Draft Alternatives Selection Report for the proposed Twin Cities to Milwaukee section of the High-Speed Intercity Passenger Rail corridor to Chicago. As part of this report, route alignment, capital costs, travel time, and station locations have been evaluated. Based on the analysis conducted, the Federal Railroad Administration has approved Route #1 as the most reasonable and feasible passenger rail alternative.

Route #1 is the existing Amtrak route that passes through Milwaukee, Watertown, Portage, Tomah, La Crosse, Winona, Hastings, St. Paul, and Minneapolis (see Attachment #1). This route is consistent with the Statewide Rail Plan and is the most cost effective option. It is assumed that the corridor will be gradually built-out as funding becomes available. Route #1 from Milwaukee to Minneapolis is 337 miles in length, has a travel time of 4 hours 35 minutes, and will cost \$2.4 billion to construct (\$7.1 million/mile). When implemented, the maximum speed of the trains will be 110 mph, however many segments will be limited to a 90 mile per hour maximum speed.

MnDOT has hosted two public meetings (Stillwater on December 12, 2011 and Winona on December 13, 2011) in addition to a webinar on December 14, 2011 to gather public feedback. The public comment period is from December 12, 2011 to January 12, 2012.

The next step in this project is to prepare a draft Tier 1 EIS document showing the preferred passenger rail alternative. The alternatives within this document are evaluated based on conceptual engineering, track concepts, capital cost estimates, a station location analysis, an environmental analysis, ridership, operational costs, and the assessment of benefits. Once agency reviews and public involvement hearings have been held, a final Tier 1 EIS document will be completed. A draft Record of Decision (ROD) will be completed, and once approved by the Federal Railroad Administration, a final Record of Decision (ROD) will be issued. Construction timelines and phasing will be dependant on available funding.

#### **Attachments**

Attachment #1 – Map of Recommended Alignment