

Attachment #1 - NLX Environmental Assessment

City of Minneapolis Comments

General Comments:

Overall:

The City of Minneapolis supports the NLX corridor, particularly the #9 alignment.

Layover Facility:

Any potential rail storage within the City of Minneapolis will need to be designed, enclosed, landscaped, and mitigated for noise and air quality impacts in a manner that meets or exceeds the standards for these items defined in the City's Municipal Code of Ordinances. A layover facility must be compatible with nearby properties, neighborhood character, and natural features.

O and M facility:

The City of Minneapolis does not support an O and M facility site within the city due to the large building footprint required for rail maintenance.

Ridership:

The EA states a ridership of 938,000 rides per year by 2020, which is a robust estimate. If projections hold true, NLX will exceed the Northstar Corridor in ridership. Refined station boarding and alighting numbers would be helpful in determining if the projected ridership numbers are accurate.

Stormwater Management:

It is expected that the NLX project will work with the city and appropriate watersheds to acquire any necessary stormwater or erosion control permits.

Specific Comments:

P. ES-7: More detail needs to be provided regarding the new connection track through the Harrison Junction in Minneapolis. The EA document states that 3,000 feet of new track is needed between the Interchange and University Avenue NE. There is limited right-of way in this area. More information is needed to determine if property will need to be acquired, to assess any noise or vibration concerns from nearby residents/businesses, and to determine if existing infrastructure (road crossings or bridges) is impacted due to the extra track.

P. ES-8: The EA document states that the Northstar Corridor Platform at the Interchange must be lengthened to 900 feet. More detail is needed. It is not clear if this project would impact the existing Cedar Lake Trail.

P. 4-4: This comment relates to the following statement: "Within the two terminal metropolitan areas, impacts to land use due to construction of new tracks would be minimal with all improvements located within or immediately adjacent to an existing active freight rail corridor."

It should be stated that in addition there are benefits to the station areas with increased economic development expected.

P. 4-5: It should be noted that the Minneapolis Warehouse Historic District is not only on the National Register but it is also a local historic district.

P. 4-8: The name of the Minneapolis comprehensive plan is *The Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth* and it was adopted in October 2009, not October 2006.

P. 4-61: Noise and vibration mitigation may be required for homes and businesses near the line. While there are currently freight trains within the NLX alignment, the new passenger trains will increase the number and frequency of trains using the BNSF Wayzata Spur and the BNSF mainline. Table 4.23 states that there is one residence within 30 feet of the proposed NLX track subject to noise and vibration impacts. This table also states that there are 4 residences within the city that are subjected to moderate noise impacts. It is expected that the project will work with these property owners to mitigate any negative impacts as the result of this project.