



NATIONAL AND GLOBAL CONNECTIONS

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IV. NATIONAL AND GLOBAL CONNECTIONS

MINNESOTA STATEWIDE POLICY PLAN

I. National and Global Connections

A. Maintain and strengthen Minnesota’s strategic multimodal connections to the Upper Midwest, the nation, and the world

1. Public Roles in Rail and Water Transport

- a. Mn/DOT will evaluate Minnesota’s rail and port systems, identify state investment priorities, define potential implementation roles and responsibilities, and promote coordination among industry partners.
 - i. Continue to invest in rail and port infrastructure. Mn/DOT will aid in this effort by continuing to administer the Minnesota Rail Service Improvement (MRSI) and Port Development Assistance programs, supporting the 2008 federally authorized program for improvements to inland waterways, and continuing to ensure that these investments are cost-effective.
 - ii. Develop a Minnesota freight and passenger rail plan. The plan will create a vision for both passenger and freight rail services in Minnesota, establish investment needs, identify a potential passenger system network, determine the role of private and public sector entities, set parameters for corridor priorities, and identify potential funding sources. The plan will comply with expected federal state rail plan guidelines and requirements in order to expedite development and funding for proposed and future projects. This Statewide Transportation Policy Plan will be amended with the findings from the rail plan.
 - iii. Perform trade-off analyses that investigate the economic feasibility of using rail or water transport to minimize impacts to highways. This includes consideration of Minnesota’s portion of a regional, high-speed passenger rail network (e.g., the Midwest High-Speed Rail Initiative) if funding is available and commitments from adjacent states are in place.
 - iv. Investigate and support, where cost-effective, the maintenance or enhancement of intermodal (rail-truck) container service in the Twin Cities and in Greater Minnesota. Potential enhancements include facility and service expansion or relocation, consistent with state and regional priorities that provide expanded market opportunities and increased

competitiveness for Minnesota businesses. Other potential enhancements include seeking the National Highway System (NHS) Intermodal Connector designation for eligible highways leading to intermodal terminals.

2. Partnerships in Highway, Rail, and Water Transport
 - a. Mn/DOT will continue to work with multistate and national groups as well as Minnesota's congressional delegation to support national policies and projects that are critical to Minnesota's economy.
 - i. Continue to participate in multistate transportation corridor coalitions to seek support for improvements on key transportation corridors that connect with or serve Minnesota. This includes the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Mississippi Valley Freight Coalition in the Midwest, the Northwest Passage Coalition focused on I-90 and I-94, as well as groups organized around the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Seaway and Mississippi River.
 - ii. Meet periodically with Departments of Transportation from neighboring states to discuss mutual transportation issues. Examples of issues include updating major jurisdictional transportation plans, developing support for the modification and harmonization of truck size and weight laws (e.g., corridor-specific, regional permitting could provide an interim approach until higher-level legislation can be developed), and actively coordinating the development of proposals for rail-highway intermodal terminals that consolidate demand across political boundaries.
 - iii. Encourage a strong federal role in developing and establishing a comprehensive, integrated national freight policy.
 - iv. Work with representatives from other state agencies (e.g., Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development), neighboring states and provinces, and at the national level to establish a structure for regular, on-going, working-level dialogue regarding mutual transportation related issues.
 - v. Actively engage private industry (e.g., timber, sugar beet) and freight organizations (e.g., Minnesota Freight Advisory Committee and Minnesota Shippers Association) to better understand specific freight transportation system needs, consider potential solutions (including public-private partnerships), and implement actions where appropriate.
3. Minnesota Air Transport
 - a. The Metropolitan Airports Commission, the Metropolitan Council, Mn/DOT and other agencies will work to strengthen Minnesota's national and global air transport system, including maintaining the Minneapolis-Saint Paul International Airport as a major passenger hub.

MINNESOTA AVIATION SYSTEM PLAN

- I. Land Use
 - A. Support land use decisions that preserve mobility and enhance the safety of transportation systems
- II. Cost-Effectiveness
 - A. Provide cost-effective transportation options for people and freight

MINNESOTA COMPREHENSIVE STATEWIDE FREIGHT AND PASSENGER RAIL PLAN

I. Freight Rail

- A. Minnesota should develop a balanced multimodal freight system which can respond to increased regional and international economic competition, constrained highway capacity, environmental challenges, a diverse customer base, and rising energy costs
 - 1. Infrastructure
 - i. Continue to make improvements to the condition and capacity of Minnesota's primary railroad arterials to accommodate existing and future demand.
 - ii. Address critical network bottlenecks.
 - iii. Upgrade main line track (all Class I-III railroads) to 25 mph minimum speed, as warranted.
 - iv. Improve the network (all Class I-III railroads) to support the use of 286,000 pound railcars throughout.
 - 2. Planning and Policy Development.
 - i. Maintain and ensure broad access to competitive freight rail services for shippers throughout the State.
 - ii. Better integrate rail into the public planning process.
 - 3. Existing Rail Programs
 - i. Build upon the existing Minnesota Rail Service Improvement Program (MRSI), including an increase in the maximum loan amount in excess of the current \$200,000 ceiling.
 - ii. Expand the Rail/Highway Grade Crossing program.
 - iii. Actively manage preserved rail corridors held in the State Rail Bank and evaluate for possible future transportation uses.

II. Passenger Rail

- A. Minnesota should develop a robust intrastate and interstate intercity passenger rail system which results in improved travel options, costs and speeds for Minnesota and interstate travelers
 - i. Continue to participate in the Midwest Regional Rail Initiative (MWRRI) and support the development of sustained 110 mph service for connections from the Twin Cities to Wisconsin and the Chicago Hub Network.
 - ii. Develop an intrastate intercity passenger rail network connecting the Twin Cities with viable service to major outlying regional centers.
 - iii. Connect all services eventually to both the new Minneapolis downtown terminal and St. Paul Union Depot.
 - iv. Advance corridors incrementally and simultaneously with Mn/DOT's support; sequencing depending on financing, ROW acquisition and agreements with freight railroads.
 - v. In Phase II, rail connections should be established to additional intercity and commuter rail markets in Wisconsin and Minnesota, and to an interstate/I-35 Corridor, Red River Valley, Eastern plains, and Canada.

ST. CLOUD APO 2035 TRANSPORTATION PLAN

I. Investments

- A. Maximize Transportation Investments for Movement of People and Freight

- a. Provide for system connectivity
 - i. Provide improved system connectivity.
 - ii. Provide additional system capacity.
 - iii. Address the most congested facilities.
 - iv. Advance investment strategies of the MN freight & passenger rail plan.
 - v. Provide improved system connectivity & improved system capacity.

METROPOLITAN COUNCIL 2030 TRANSPORTATION PLAN

I. Transportation System Investment

A. Investments in Regional, National and Global Connections

1. The Metropolitan Council, Mn/DOT and other agencies will pursue transportation investments that will strengthen the Twin Cities connections with other regions, the nation and other countries and contribute to the economic development and competitiveness of the Twin Cities region.
 - a. Interregional and National Highway Connections
 - i. Mn/DOT, the Council and other agencies will pursue a strong and efficient highway system that connects travelers and freight with other regions in Minnesota and other states.
 - b. Intercity Passenger Rail and Bus Connections
 - i. Mn/DOT, the Metropolitan Council and other agencies will pursue improved regional and national connections using alternative transportation modes such as intercity passenger rail (including high-speed rail) and bus service.
 - c. Freight Connections
 - i. Mn/DOT, the Metropolitan Council and other agencies will pursue improved freight connections between the Twin Cities and other regions through improved state highways, interregional rail service, a strong air freight system and the Mississippi River system.
 - d. Connections by Air
 - i. The Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC), the Metropolitan Council, Mn/DOT and other agencies will work to maintain a strong airport system, including maintaining the Minneapolis-St. Paul airport as a major passenger hub.

II. Aviation

A. Aviation and the Region's Economy

1. Availability of adequate air transportation is critical to national and local economies in addressing globalization issues and airline alliances that have increased competition and the need for improved international market connectivity.
 - a. MSP as a Major Hub
 - i. Public and private sector efforts in the region should focus on continued development of MSP as a major international hub.
 - b. Region as Aviation Industry Center

- i. State and regional agencies, in cooperation with the business community, should define efforts to be a major aviation-industry center in terms of employment and investment, including the ability to compete for corporate headquarters and specialized functions.
- c. Air Passenger Service
 - i. The MAC should continue to pursue provision of a mix of service by several airlines with frequent passenger flights at competitive prices to all regionally-preferred North American markets and major foreign destinations.
- d. Air Cargo Service
 - i. The MAC should pursue provision of air cargo infrastructure and air service for the region with direct air freight connections to import/export markets providing trade opportunities for the region's economy.
- e. Provide State-of-the-Art Facilities
 - i. State-of-the-art facilities should be made available by airport sponsors at the region's airports, commensurate with their system role, to induce additional aviation services and provide additional jobs, thereby enhancing the region's economy.
- f. Competition and Marketing
 - i. Decisions by aviation partners on provision of facilities and services to improve regional economic capabilities, should be based upon periodic updating and refinement of airport economic impact studies and surveys, a MAC commercial air-service competition plan and on-going airport marketing efforts.