

Rochester-Twin Cities

# Passenger Rail Corridor Investment Plan and Tier 1 EIS



## Scoping Booklet and Draft Scoping Decision Document

July 2014



**SCOPING BOOKLET**  
**For**  
**ROCHESTER–TWIN CITIES PASSENGER RAIL CORRIDOR INVESTMENT PLAN**  
**AND TIER 1 EIS**  
**(ZIP RAIL)**

Minnesota Department of Transportation  
St. Paul, Minnesota

**RGU and Proposer:** Minnesota Department of Transportation

**RGU Contact:**

Praveena Pidaparathi, AICP  
Planning Director – Passenger Rail Office  
Minnesota Department of Transportation  
395 John Ireland Boulevard, MS 470  
St. Paul, MN 55155

**The address to which written comments should be sent:**

Minnesota Department of Transportation  
Passenger Rail Office  
ATTN: Zip Rail  
395 John Ireland Boulevard, MS 470  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Email comments to: [info@goziprail.org](mailto:info@goziprail.org)  
Telephone comments to: (651) 366-3195

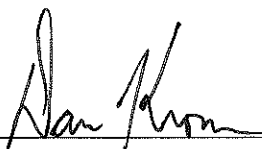
The Scoping Booklet comment period extends from July 7, 2014 to August 6, 2014.

**RGU CERTIFICATION:**

**I hereby certify that:**

- The information contained in this document is accurate and complete to the best of my knowledge;
- This document describes the complete project; there are no other projects, stages or components other than those described in this document, which are related to the project as connected actions or phased actions, as defined at Minnesota Rules, parts 4410.0200, subparts 9c and 60, respectively;
- Copies of this document are being sent to the entire EQB distribution list.

6/27/14  
Date

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Director, Passenger Rail Office



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## PREFACE

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The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT), and the Olmsted County Regional Railroad Authority (OCRRA) have initiated the environmental review process for the Rochester-Twin Cities Passenger Rail Corridor (Zip Rail). Federal funding will be pursued for this project from the FRA. As a result the FRA, as the lead federal agency for this project, is required to undertake environmental review in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

As the local public agency sponsoring the project, MnDOT, as the Responsible Governmental Unit (RGU), and OCRRA must also comply with the requirements of the Minnesota Environmental Policy Act (MEPA). The FRA, MnDOT, and OCRRA have determined that the Zip Rail project may have significant environmental impacts.

## REGULATORY BACKGROUND

This booklet summarizes the regulations that guide the environmental analysis process and the characteristics of a “tiered” environmental review process. As the state and local public agencies sponsoring the project, MnDOT and OCRRA must comply with both the federal and state environmental review requirements.

## TIERED ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS

The Federal Railroad Administration uses a tiered EIS process for its NEPA studies. The level of detail proposed for assessing potential impacts reflects that this project is anticipated as Tier 1 of a two-tier environmental review process.

In the Tier 1 EIS, the technical analysis is less detailed and considers impacts to the corridor as a whole and evaluation of impacts at a qualitative level. A Tier 1 EIS addresses questions related to the type of service being proposed, including cities and stations served, route alternatives, service levels, type of operations, ridership projections and major infrastructure components. Environmental analysis is completed at a higher level, but detailed site information is conducted at the Tier 2 environmental level, when the alignment and related service information has been determined and more specific project boundaries can be developed to determine effects.

The tiered environmental review process used by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) reflects that the scale and scope of most rail projects are typically very large. As a result, it is more practical to conduct a two-step environmental review with step 1 (Tier 1) staying at a higher level and step 2 (Tier 2) focused on a more refined assessment.

Given FRA’s tiered approach, the environmental information provided in this Scoping Booklet is less detailed than a typical scoping booklet, but appropriate for a corridor level study as would be conducted with the Tier 1 EIS. This Scoping Booklet is the first step in the Tier 1 EIS process.

This Scoping Booklet provides information about the formal “Scoping” process required under both federal and state environmental review. Within this booklet you will find a description of the Scoping process, information on the scope and contents of the Tier 1 EIS, and information on how you can get involved in the Scoping process.



You will have the opportunity to review the Scoping information and offer your comments in person, at one of three meetings, or in writing during the public comment period via email, U.S. mail, or voicemail.

Website: [www.goziprail.org](http://www.goziprail.org)

Email comments to: [info@goziprail.org](mailto:info@goziprail.org)

Voicemail: 651-366-3195

U.S. Mail:

Minnesota Department of Transportation  
Passenger Rail Office  
ATTN: Zip Rail  
395 John Ireland Boulevard, MS 470  
St. Paul, MN 55155

***The 30-day comment period on this Scoping Booklet will begin on July 7, 2014 and will remain open through August 6, 2014.***

#### **Minnesota Environmental Policy Act (MEPA)**

*The state's environmental review program is based on MEPA, which established a formal process for investigating the environmental impacts of major projects that are anticipated to require an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). This Scoping Booklet addresses the requirements of the state environmental review process as administered by the Minnesota Environmental Quality Board.*

#### **Summary of Minnesota and Federal Environmental Review Regulations**

#### **National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969**

*The Act establishes national environmental policy and goals for the protection, maintenance, and enhancement of the environment and provides a process for implementing these goals within the federal agencies. All federal agencies are required to prepare detailed statements assessing the environmental impact of and alternatives to projects significantly affecting the environment.*



**Formal public scoping meetings are scheduled for the following dates and locations**

**Open House #1:**

Tuesday, July 29, 2014

5:00 to 7:00 PM

Heintz Center

Commons Area

Rochester Community and Technical College

1926 College View Road East

Rochester, MN

**Open House #2:**

Wednesday, July 30, 2014

5:00 to 7:00 PM

Inver Grove Community Center

Community Room 2

8055 Barbara Ave.

Inver Grove Heights, MN

**Open House #3:**

Thursday, July 31, 2014

5:00 to 7:00 PM

Kenyon-Wanamingo High School

Commons Area and Auditorium

400 6th St.

Kenyon, MN

To request an ASL or foreign language interpreter for the public meetings call 651-366-4720.\*

To request other reasonable accommodations for the public meetings call 651-366-4718.\*

Or email requests to [ADArequest.dot@state.mn.us](mailto:ADArequest.dot@state.mn.us).\*

\*Please submit request at least seven days prior to the public meeting.

To request a document in an alternative format call 651-366-4718 or email your request to

[ADArequest.dot@state.mn.us](mailto:ADArequest.dot@state.mn.us).



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## WHAT IS THE ZIP RAIL PROJECT?

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The Rochester-Twin Cities Passenger Rail Corridor Project (Zip Rail) is a proposed high-speed passenger rail connection between Rochester, Minnesota and the Minneapolis/St. Paul Metropolitan Area (Twin Cities). The project is located in the counties of Dakota, Dodge, Goodhue, Hennepin, Olmsted, Ramsey and Rice.

Proposed termini include downtown Rochester at the south end of the approximate 100-mile corridor, with Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport (MSP) and/or St. Paul Union Depot at the north end of the corridor. At the north end of the corridor, Zip Rail would also connect to the existing light rail transit at MSP (Metro Blue Line) and/or the existing light rail transit at Union Depot (Metro Green Line).

Zip Rail is planned as express train between Rochester and the Twin Cities. As part of the evaluation process, an intermediate station is under consideration in southern Dakota County. No other intermediate stops are under consideration at this time.

With no existing direct rail connection between Rochester and the Twin Cities, the proposed corridors would predominately include new or “greenfield” rail right-of-way and new rail construction, located to the maximum extent practicable along existing public or railway right-of-way. Travelling at speeds of 150+ mph, these corridors would be sealed, with no at-grade crossings. Travel times between Rochester and the Twin Cities would be approximately 45-50 minutes.

The Zip Rail study area is highlighted in Figures 1 and 2.

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## WHAT IS SCOPING?

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Scoping is the process of determining the content of the Tier 1 EIS. As the first step in the Scoping process, interested members of the public, including individuals and groups, as well as representatives of affected Native American tribes and local, state, and federal governmental agencies, are invited to participate in the evaluation of the Zip Rail environmental impacts.

The purpose of Scoping is to confirm the purpose and need for the project, identify appropriate alternatives that could address project needs, focus on potentially significant issues that should be studied in the Tier 1 EIS, and eliminate issues that are not significant and/or have been addressed by prior studies.

Public participation in the Scoping process for the project is encouraged. Three public meetings will be held to allow for members of the public to learn about the project and voice their opinions about issues that should be considered during Scoping.

At the Scoping meetings it would be most helpful to hear your thoughts or concerns about the project’s purpose and need, the range of alternatives to be evaluated, the evaluation methods to be used, and the potential impacts of the alternatives considered.

Your comments may also propose alternatives that may better meet the project’s purpose and need with fewer adverse environmental impacts.



Figure 1. Project Location

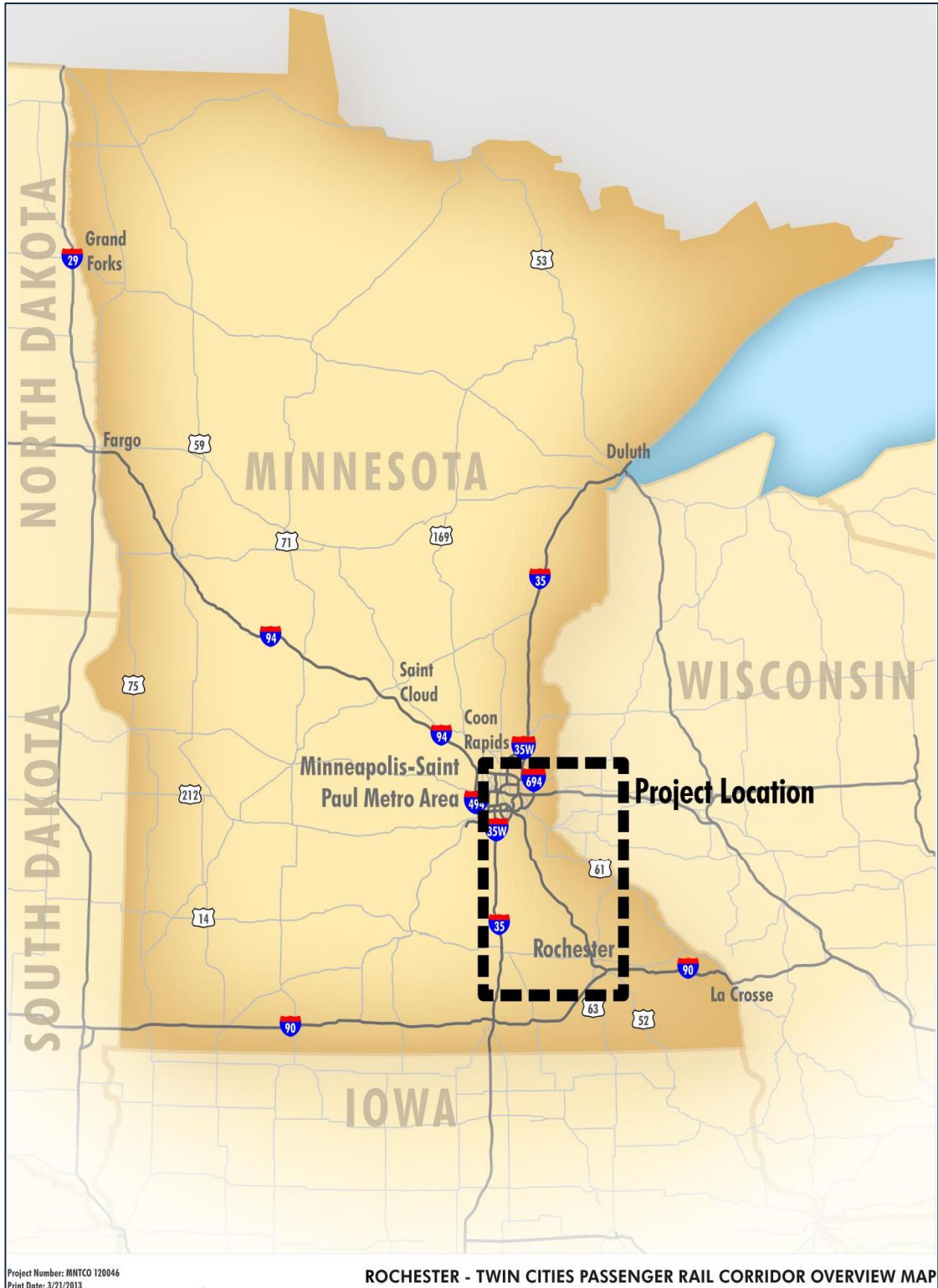
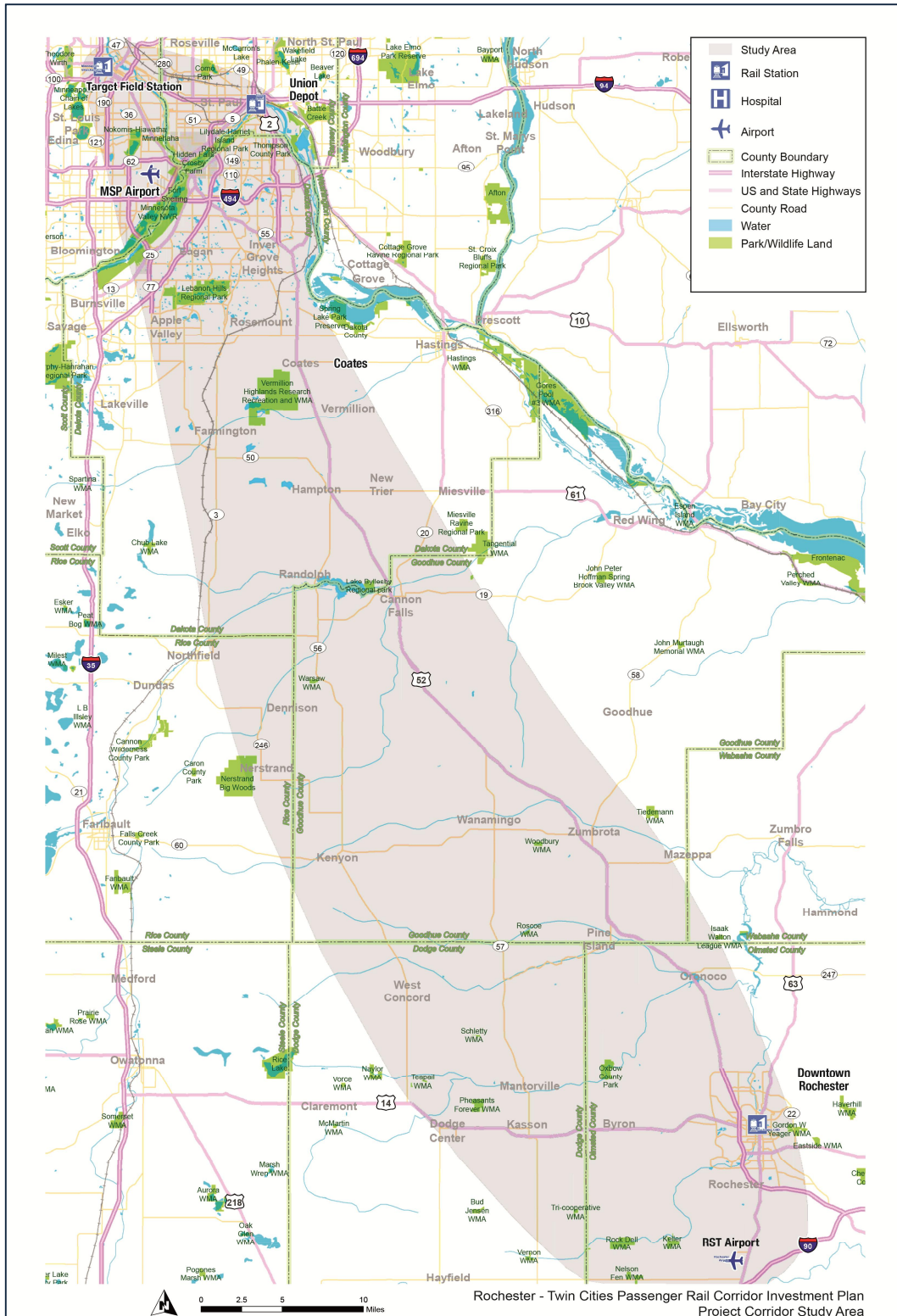


Figure 2. Project Corridor Study Area



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## WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS SCOPING BOOKLET?

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The purpose of this Scoping Booklet is to inform the public and regulatory agencies about the proposal to implement High-Speed Passenger Rail service (“Zip Rail”) between Rochester and the Twin Cities, and provide information on how individuals and organizations are able to comment on the process, the alternatives being considered, and the analysis completed to date.

The Zip Rail study area includes an approximately 100-mile corridor between Rochester and the Twin Cities and is being examined for potential high speed rail service. The study area includes Dakota, Dodge, Goodhue, Hennepin, Olmsted, Ramsey and Rice counties and various termini, or end points, in the Twin Cities and Rochester area. There is no continuous existing railroad connection between the Twin Cities and Rochester, so many of the potential corridors would create new or “greenfield” transportation routes.

Within this booklet are an overview of the purpose and need for the Zip Rail project, a description of the potential alternatives, the environmental issues being considered, the next steps in the study, and details on how you can comment on and participate in the ongoing planning process.

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## WHY SHOULD WE CONSIDER BUILDING THIS PROJECT? WHAT BENEFITS COULD IT PROVIDE? (PURPOSE AND NEED)

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### PURPOSE STATEMENT

The purpose of the project is to study potential reliable and safe passenger rail transportation alternatives that would meet forecasted population and economic growth mobility demands in the Southeast Minnesota corridor between Rochester and the Twin Cities area. The system would connect the Twin Cities and Rochester by providing a convenient and cost effective transportation alternative. The project is being developed to:

- Provide intercity passenger rail service linking the regional economic center of Rochester and the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area economic hub
- Provide travel options for the growing population and accessibility to population centers
- Improve safety, convenience and travel time
- Complement the plans of the Midwest Regional Rail Initiative (MWRRI) and *Minnesota Comprehensive Statewide Freight and Passenger Rail Plan*

### NEED ELEMENTS

The project need for expanded transportation options in this corridor is based on the following elements:

- Increase in population and employment in Rochester, the Twin Cities and Southeast Minnesota
- Anticipated travel demand to accommodate growth in economic generators and attractions such as the Mayo Clinic and University of Minnesota as well as services and industries that will support those facilities

- Limited direct and convenient transportation connectivity opportunities for the corridor between Rochester and the Twin Cities

The development of world-class and internationally recognized medical facilities in Rochester, along with its agribusiness and high-tech industrial base, make the city a significant economic engine in the north central United States. The Twin Cities, also a base of high-tech industry, and the main transportation hub in the north central states, marks the importance of the economic connection between these cities. Transportation connections between these cities are primarily based on the private automobile with few commercial transportation options. The Mayo Clinic in Rochester draws patients and their companions from around the nation and the world, and constitutes a primary need for transportation options not based on the private automobile. The project needs to meet existing and future transportation connectivity demands of the corridor

between Rochester and the Twin Cities in a manner that is competitive with other modes of transportation. As the population, employment, and number of visitors grow along the corridor, especially in the Twin Cities and Rochester, the number of people travelling between these locations will increase, creating increased demand on existing transportation. The existing roadway system in the corridor is anticipated to experience capacity needs resulting from current and future economic growth; a rail option would provide a means to address those needs into the future.

#### PROJECT BACKGROUND

Over the last two decades, several previous studies have been conducted with respect to the feasibility of the Zip Rail project.

Please see Table 1 below for further information on these studies. The complete studies are available for reference at [www.goziprail.org](http://www.goziprail.org).

**Table 1. Previous Studies**

Study	Year	Findings
<i>Tri-State High Speed Rail Study</i>	1991	Evaluated the potential for high speed rail between the Twin Cities and Chicago, through Rochester and Wisconsin.
<i>Tri-State II High Speed Rail Feasibility Study</i>	2000	Alternatives between the Twin Cities, Rochester and Winona had the best benefit/cost ratio of those studied and should be implemented following the incremental upgrading of the existing Amtrak route.
<i>Rochester Rail Link Feasibility Study</i>	2003	A high-speed rail link would provide an effective transportation connection between Rochester and the Twin Cities to help link these cities to the rest of the Midwest.
<i>Tri-State III High Speed Rail Study: Minnesota Segment Assessment</i>	2009	Supported Twin Cities to Chicago service through Rochester on a new alignment as compared to the “River Route” identified in MWRRI.
<i>Minnesota Comprehensive Statewide Freight and Passenger Rail Plan</i>	2010	The Rochester–Twin Cities Rail Corridor was identified in the plan as a Priority 1 corridor in the recommended Minnesota and Regional passenger rail system.

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## WHAT ALTERNATIVES HAVE BEEN STUDIED?

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### ALTERNATIVES DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

After the purpose and need was established, the next step in the Zip Rail study process was to define the full range (“Universe”) of alternatives. This step addresses the question, “what alternatives might address the problem?” Based on the review of previous studies, field reviews performed by the project team, and stakeholder input, a universe of alternatives was developed (see Figure 3). Previous planning studies and the purpose and need also helped to identify the five locations that would be considered as termini, or end points, for the service:

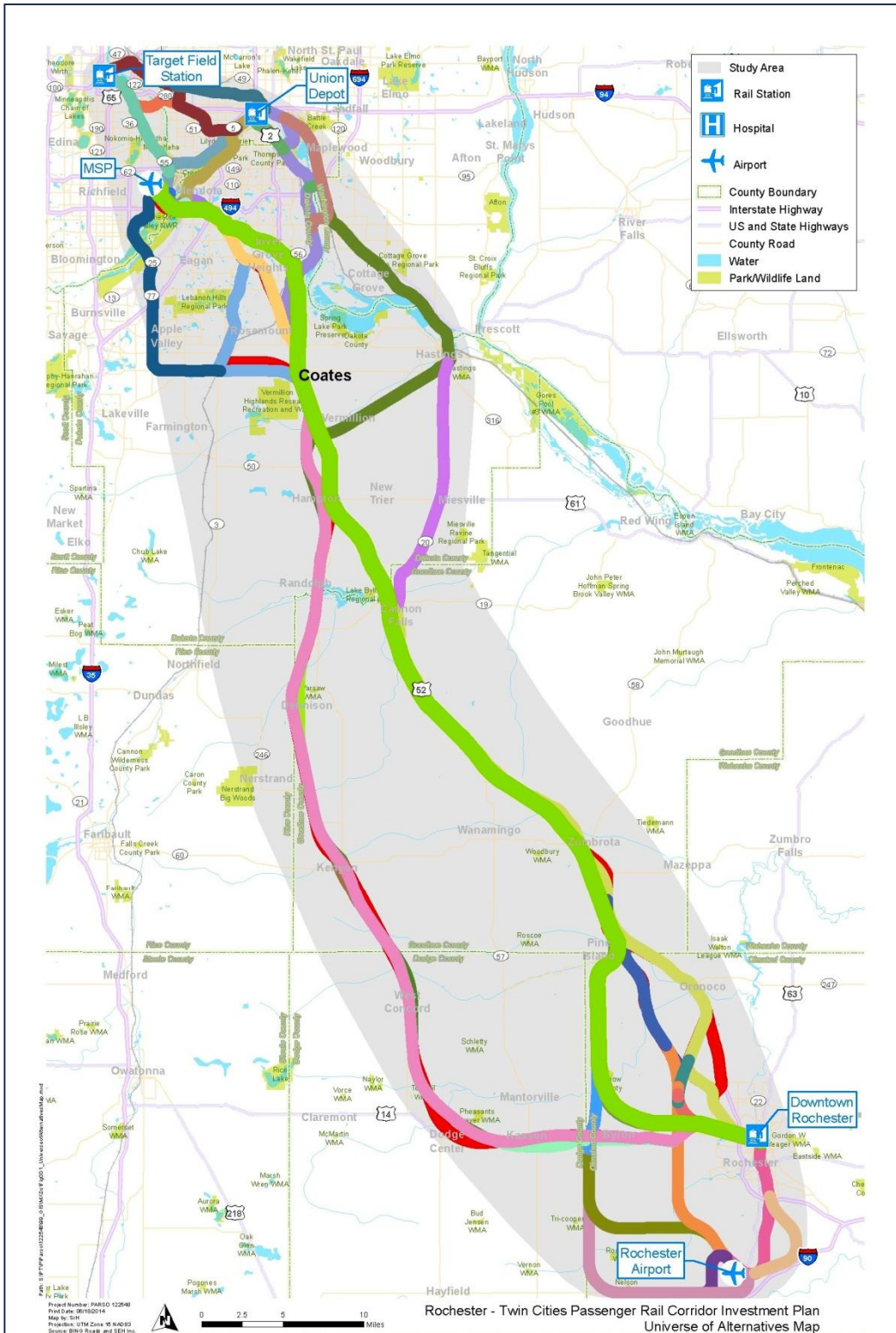
- Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport (MSP)
- Target Field Station in Minneapolis
- Union Depot in St. Paul
- Downtown Rochester
- Rochester International Airport (RST)

Figure 3 below shows the 45 individual segments in the universe of alternatives. When combined into full end-point to end-point alternatives, the segments produced more than 1,200 separate alternatives. To facilitate the initial evaluation and screening, the project area was divided into north and south segments, with the boundary at Coates, Minnesota.

South of Coates, alternatives under consideration included potential corridors in the vicinity of US 52 on the east and a corridor running west from Rochester and then north in the vicinity of MN 56. North of Coates, the alternative segments include one grouping that extends northwest toward MSP and another grouping extending north toward the Union Depot.

As part of the evaluation process, a No-Build alternative is included and carried through the alternatives evaluation. The No-Build alternative reflects existing conditions, and includes all currently planned and programmed improvements in the project area over the next 20 years. The No-Build alternative would be a base of comparison to the potential Build alternatives.

Figure 3. Universe of Alternatives



## ALTERNATIVES SCREENING PROCESS

### SCREENING CRITERIA

The project team developed a specific set of criteria for evaluating each of the alternative segments and recommending which should advance for further consideration. The first step was to determine whether each alternative met the purpose and need for the project. Alternatives that did not meet the purpose and need were discarded.

After this, the alternatives were screened through a two-step evaluation process. Level 1 evaluation criteria were based on general project performance and impacts for all identified segment alternatives. In Level 2, more detailed performance criteria and impact data were applied to full end-to-end (Twin Cities to Rochester) corridor alternatives. For purposes of this multi-step screening process and for the environmental analysis the following definitions and parameters were established:

- **Corridor** – Each alternative is considered within the context of a study corridor. The corridors are one mile wide (½ mile either side of a conceptual centerline). This width allows for flexibility as the design proceeds and provides opportunities to minimize impacts to existing land uses and environmental resources.
- **Alignment** – An alignment is the actual location of the right-of-way footprint that would be secured to construct the high-speed rail line. Specific alignments would not be identified until later in the environmental process (Tier 2 NEPA phase).

- **Right-of-Way** – As noted above, the specific right-of-way footprint for each alternative would not be identified until later in the environmental process (Tier 2 NEPA phase). It is assumed that an approximately 200-foot right-of-way envelope would be evaluated for the selected alternative in the Tier 2 NEPA phase.

It is important to emphasize that the alternatives development and evaluation process during the Tier 1 phase is set at a high level of analysis. This allows for consideration of a large number of alternatives while keeping the analysis manageable. Enough information is gathered to facilitate informed decision making while setting the stage for more detailed analysis during the Tier 2 NEPA process.

### LEVEL 1 SCREENING

Level 1 screening evaluated the alternative segments using the following criteria:

- **Redundancy:** Locations where there are multiple options that reflect the same relative service area were identified.
- **Preliminary Travel Time:** Rough estimates were developed for the proposed service using approximations of average speeds over major route segments. Travel time estimates would be refined as part of the Service Development Plan process (described in greater detail later in this section).
- **Impacts to the Built Environment:** Potential impacts to adjacent land uses were evaluated in both urban and rural settings in order to avoid and minimize impacts.

- **Impacts to the Natural Environment:** Known critical environmental resources were identified including lakes, rivers, parks and other critical areas. The number of potential water crossings was also quantified.

In addition to the reduction in alternatives from Level 1 screening, the study team collected input from cities, counties and other stakeholders within the study area. The list of alternatives recommended for further study was refined to reflect local planning efforts regarding both transportation and land use. Matching all of the individual segments together produced a total of 15 end-to-end alternatives for evaluation as part of Level 2. In each case, these alignments lie within a one mile wide corridor, with the anticipation that any future alignment would likely have a right-of-way of approximately 200 feet. At this level of study, however, broader corridors are examined to allow for flexibility and minimizing impacts.

#### LEVEL 2 SCREENING

With the reduced number of alternatives for Level 2 consideration, more detailed evaluation was possible. Criteria applied in Level 2 included:

- **Travel Time:** Travel time estimates for each alternative were refined from the work completed as part of the Level 1 screening. The estimates were developed based on assumptions including route length, travel speed, curve radii, and other route-specific information.
- **Top Speed:** Alternatives were evaluated using the same route specific information studied in the Travel Time criteria.

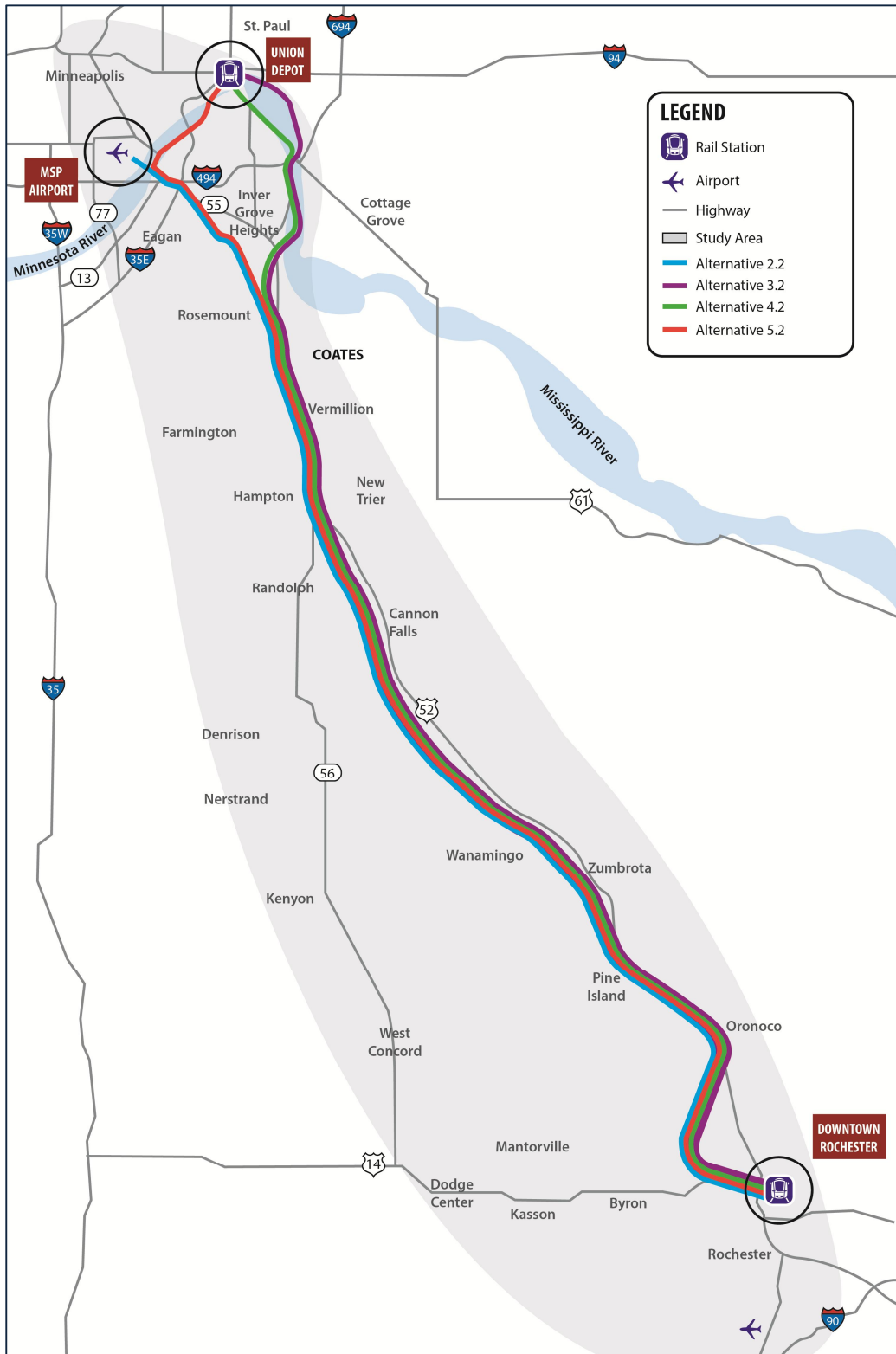
Calculations were developed for each alternative to determine its potential top speed.

- **Consistency with Local Planning:** Alternatives were evaluated based on their consistency with local planning efforts regarding both transportation and land use.
- **Connectivity:** Alternatives were evaluated to assess their connectivity to other passenger rail and multimodal passenger service.
- **Ridership Projections:** High-level projections for annual riders were developed using factors such as travel time, connectivity to other intercity passenger rail, and reliability and frequency of service (i.e., more train sets/round trips).
- **Potential freight rail conflicts:** Alternative corridors were evaluated based on the difficulty of implementation and anticipated costs that would be expected for a host railroad to accommodate high-speed passenger rail service on their property.
- **Social, Economic and Environmental (SEE) Factors:** A more formalized consideration of key SEE factors was included in Level 2. Examples include high level estimates of impacts to wetlands, parklands, and residential neighborhoods (both right-of-way and noise concerns). The assessment was consistent with state and federal environmental requirements and is the foundation for more detailed analysis in the Tier 1 EIS.

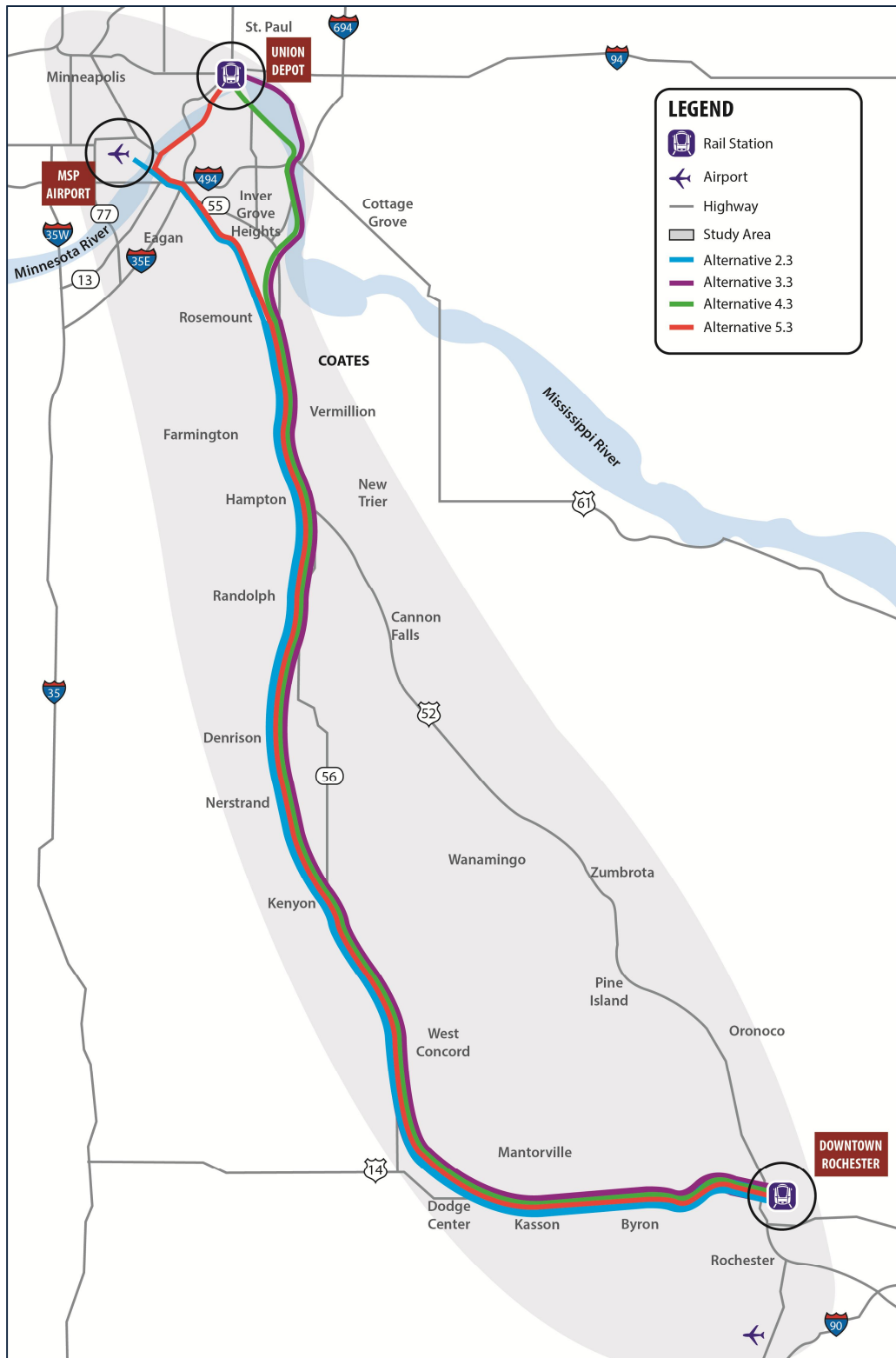
The result of the Level 2 evaluation was the identification of eight potential corridors that are recommended to be carried forward for scoping and potentially into the environmental process (see Figures 4 and 5).



**Figure 4: Alternatives to be advanced into the Tier 1 EIS (East)**



**Figure 5: Alternatives to be advanced into the Tier 1 EIS (West)**



## CORRIDORS FOR FURTHER STUDY IN THE TIER 1 EIS

Figures 4 and 5 illustrate the remaining alternatives that are proposed to be carried forward for further study in the Tier 1 EIS. As shown in the figures, the various end-point to end-point alternatives have common segments. To facilitate the description, the study area has been divided into north and south segments.

### *NORTHERN SEGMENT - COATES TO TERMINALS IN THE TWIN CITIES (MSP AND/OR UNION DEPOT)*

Extending north from Coates, which represents the area where all the alternatives combine to a single corridor, the alternatives eventually split with two options extending northwest toward MSP and two options continuing north to Union Depot.

#### MSP OPTIONS:

These alternatives extend northwest from the Coates area along County Road 71 through Rosemount and Inver Grove Heights, transitioning to a corridor parallel to the existing Canadian Pacific Railway (CP) in Eagan and Minnesota Highway (MN) 149, then northwest to the I-494 corridor. From this point there are two options; one is to continue across the Minnesota River Valley with a new bridge on or adjacent to I-494 to provide a direct connection to MSP. The other alternative includes a station in the area of Pilot Knob Road and I-494. From the station, passengers could transfer to a shuttle to connect to MSP or continue on the train northeast to the Union Depot, using the Union Pacific Railroad (UP) alignment

and entering Union Depot from the west. A variation to this option would be high-speed rail service to both MSP and the Union Depot which would preclude the need for a transfer station near Pilot Knob Road.

#### UNION DEPOT OPTIONS:

North from Coates, the Union Depot options extend along the west side of the Pine Bend Refinery and then run parallel to the UP rail corridor through Inver Grove Heights. The options continue north on the UP rail corridor to the vicinity of I-494. Near I-494 the options split with one crossing the Mississippi River on a new bridge and joining the CP corridor on the east side of the river. From there, the alignment would either share track or construct a new track through the existing rail corridor and rail yard, and enter Union Depot from the east. The second option for connecting to Union Depot continues along the west side of the Mississippi River on the UP rail corridor and crosses the river in the vicinity of the Robert Street Bridge in Downtown St. Paul.

### *SOUTHERN SEGMENT - COATES TO DOWNTOWN ROCHESTER*

South of Coates there are two primary options, as shown in Figures 4 and 5. The first extends southeast roughly paralleling US Highway (US) 52, and the second extends south in the general proximity of the MN 56 corridor before turning east along the US 14 corridor into Rochester.

#### EASTERN CORRIDOR (US 52):

Though paralleling US 52, this is primarily a greenfield corridor. Following the US 52 right-of-way was determined to be impractical because of the curves and hills prevalent along the highway corridor, the limited available right-of-way, and the numerous intersecting roads including several interchanges. As a result, the proposed corridor extends west of US 52, at times adjacent to the existing highway and elsewhere several miles to the west. The corridor was defined with a focus on minimizing impacts to existing land uses and environmental features, while maximizing the ability to attain and maintain true high-speed rail operations (150+ mph).

Between Pine Island and Oronoco the corridor is adjacent US 52. Immediately south of Oronoco the corridor departs the US 52 corridor extending southwest to follow a corridor near US 14 into Rochester.

#### WESTERN CORRIDOR (MN 56):

This corridor continues south from Hampton roughly paralleling MN 56. This is a greenfield corridor that travels in close proximity to MN 56 mostly along an abandoned rail right-of-way. The proposed corridor would extend along the east side of the communities of Randolph, Kenyon, and West Concord prior to reaching Dodge Center where the corridor turns east and follows the US 14 corridor into Rochester. The corridor was also defined with a focus on minimizing impacts to existing land uses and environmental features, while maximizing the ability to attain and maintain true high-speed rail operations (150+ mph).

#### CORRIDOR TERMINALS:

As illustrated in Figures 4 and 5 the proposed terminal stations are downtown Rochester on the south end and MSP and/or Union Depot in the Twin Cities. The Rochester International Airport and Target Field Station have been removed from consideration as primary terminals for this study. Preliminary ridership forecasting indicated relatively light demand to and from the Rochester International Airport as a primary terminal. A rail link between downtown Rochester and the Rochester International Airport could be considered in the future as part of any Zip Rail extension planning.

The Target Field Station was removed from consideration because it is being addressed as a high-speed rail terminal as part of the Twin Cities to Milwaukee/Chicago High Speed Rail Study. Depending on the results of that process, access from the Zip Rail corridor to the Target Field Station would be provided through Union Depot via a high-speed rail link or the Metro Green Line. Access from MSP to the Target Field Station is provided via the Metro Blue Line. A link to Target Field Station could be considered in the future as part of any Zip Rail extension planning.

#### SERVICE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

At the outset of passenger rail projects, questions are always asked about where the train will stop, how long will it take to get there and how many trains will there be per day. All of these questions will be addressed in the Service Development plan (SDP).

The SDP will be a detailed implementation plan for the proposed Zip Rail project. It will provide a platform to develop new service to meet the growing travel needs of the public.

The SDP will evaluate the business case for the project and will inform the alternatives analysis in the Tier 1 EIS. The SDP for this project will be developed based on the preferred alternative(s) identified in the Tier I NEPA document (except where the No-Build alternative is preferred).

The SDP will incorporate and reflect the business case for investment in the corridor supported by technical information relative to impact evaluations, public input, cost estimates, and financial capacity analysis. This report would be prepared using the conceptual engineering and the selection of a preferred alternative(s) as identified in the Tier 1 NEPA document.

Specifically, the SDP would include more detailed information in the following areas:

- **Operations Modeling:** Passenger rail operating plans will address line capacity, train movements, equipment cycles and servicing, train storage facilities, station facilities and crew requirements. This effort is necessary to help determine how many train sets will be needed, when they will run and how they will pass each other along the route. Service planning starts with the recognition that the proposed service provided must match the market demand.

Ridership forecasting would be used to evaluate alternative schedules, service frequencies, travel times, and reliability. The SDP would incorporate planning

and modeling efforts, as required, tailored to the local conditions.

- **Station & Access Analysis:** One of the major decisions for a passenger rail project is where to locate stations. This part of the SDP addresses that issue. Station locations, conditions, and opportunities in passenger rail service would be evaluated. This would include a site analysis, and consideration of available amenities and importantly, intermodal connections.
- **Demand & Revenue Forecasts:** This part of the SDP is performed to determine how much revenue can be generated by the project either by passenger fares, advertising or other private resources. This will help determine how much tickets will cost among other considerations.
- **Operational Financial Performance:** Operational financial performance is analyzed to determine whether farebox revenue and other revenue would be sufficient to offset operations and maintenance costs. The goal for the project is to avoid operating subsidies from state and local funding sources.
- **Conceptual Engineering & Capital Programming:** The project team will work with OCRRA, MNDOT, Amtrak and other railroads to develop capital costs estimates for proposed major investments, and their implementation. This information is used to guide later project planning to grow and develop the proposed service.

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## SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, AND ENVIRONMENTAL (SEE) ISSUES

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### ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES IDENTIFICATION

Information for completing the environmental issues identification was gathered through a variety of sources including literature reviews, field investigations, and GIS data analysis. Regulatory agencies and local governments provided important input through participation in Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meetings and the agency coordination meetings held in 2013 and earlier in 2014. Additionally, public information meetings in the summer of 2013 were held to present preliminary information and provide an opportunity for the public to provide input regarding key issues and potential impacts related to the project. Information gathered in these meetings contributed to the development and evaluation of the alternatives.

This section provides an overview of the environmental subject areas included in this Tier 1 EIS Scoping Booklet. The level of detail is limited at this stage, with further assessment to be conducted during the Tier 1 EIS process.

### LAND USE

The project study area is defined by a broad range of land use types from the Twin Cities to Rochester. The northern segment of the study area extends through a mix of urban and suburban land use settings including residential, commercial, light industrial, and parks/open spaces. Land uses gradually become less dense when traveling south from the Twin Cities suburbs. From

southern Dakota County to the northwest portion of Olmsted County, land use is predominantly rural agricultural and open space with smaller cities spaced five to ten miles apart. The southern end of the study area extends into the Rochester metropolitan area with mixed residential densities, commercial, office, and light industrial land uses.

The proposed alternatives were defined using existing and/or historical transportation corridors to the extent practicable in an effort to minimize impacts to residential and agricultural land uses. In many cases, to meet the service objectives of providing a high-speed rail service and to manage capital costs, greenfield corridors have been defined.

In general, the western alternatives south of Coates extend through a slightly greater proportion of rural agricultural land uses as compared to the eastern alternatives. However, given the current level of definition, there are no differentiating land use-related features distinguishing the range of alternatives. The Tier 1 EIS would more closely address potential land use impacts by quantifying the amount of agricultural land and residential land use that each alternative traverses, and would consider impacts related to severing of farm fields, and noise and access impacts.

### GEOLOGY/SOILS

The study area includes a broad range of geological and soil conditions that could affect construction of rail lines. The areas of greatest concern include those areas susceptible to erosion, areas where there is a presence of karst topography, and areas subject to groundwater flow along the

Decorah Edge. The Decorah Edge is a unique geologic feature comprised of shale rock that extends northwest to southeast through Goodhue and Olmsted counties. The Decorah Edge in combination with the karst topography that extends west from the Decorah Edge represent the greatest areas of concern related to erosion, groundwater flow and groundwater recharge. These karst topography issues are most prominent in the southern portion of the study area. These specific locations would be identified in the Tier 1 EIS and the degree to which each alternative extends through these locations would be quantified. The following web link provides additional information regarding karst topography and the Decorah Edge:

[http://www.forestry.umn.edu/prod/groups/cfans/@pub/@cfans/@forestry/documents/asset/cfans\\_asset\\_262714.pdf](http://www.forestry.umn.edu/prod/groups/cfans/@pub/@cfans/@forestry/documents/asset/cfans_asset_262714.pdf)

## WATER RESOURCES

The study area contains a variety of water resources including but not limited to:

- Mississippi River
- Minnesota River
- Vermillion River
- Lake Byllesby
- Cannon River
- Zumbro River

Both southern corridors require new crossings of the Vermillion, Cannon, and Zumbro rivers in rural areas. At the north end of the corridor, potential crossings of the Mississippi and Minnesota rivers may be required. These crossings may be new bridges, rehabilitated existing bridges, or expansion of existing river crossing bridges.

The Tier 1 EIS would quantify the number of water crossings required for each alternative and identify other potential water resource impact issues such as whether any resource has special designation (i.e. wild and scenic) which may limit the feasibility of introducing a new crossing.

The study area also includes a broad range of wetland resources including lakes, rivers, streams, and different wetland types. The majority of potentially affected wetlands are concentrated along the river and lake basins. Conversely, many of the agricultural areas have been tilled therefore wetlands are somewhat limited. Based on the one-mile wide corridors defined to date, there are no substantial differences in wetland impacts among the remaining alternatives. Wetland analysis would be further refined in the Tier 1 EIS.

## CONTAMINATION/HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

The project study area does not contain disproportionate concentrations of known hazardous material sites. Review of existing databases would be conducted in the Tier 1 EIS to better determine the potential for issues throughout the entire study area.

## FISH, WILDLIFE, PLANT COMMUNITIES

The greatest concentration of fish and wildlife communities occurs in the rural open spaces and rivers and lakes throughout the study area. Documented rare, threatened, and endangered species and habitat in the MnDNR Natural Heritage Program (NHP) database, as well as records from the regional non-game wildlife specialist and the County distribution of Minnesota's Federally-Listed Threatened, Endangered,

Proposed, and Candidate Species would be compiled and presented in the Tier 1 EIS.

## HISTORIC PROPERTIES

There are several prominent historic properties in the study area. In the Twin Cities area, the corridors are near Fort Snelling, the historic village of Mendota and the Union Depot in St. Paul, and other properties. Farther south in the corridor, there are properties in rural areas including farmsteads, and individual properties in communities that would be identified.

One major historic property is the Nansen Agricultural Historic District in Goodhue County's Sogn Valley, near MN 56 and County Highways 14 and 49. The Nansen District contains 30 farms representative of Norwegian immigrant settlement in the nineteenth century and is one of the few rural historic districts in Minnesota.

In accordance with both state and federal provisions, the Tier 1 EIS would focus on identifying the known cultural resources listed on or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, including architectural and archaeological resources.

## ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Executive Order 12898 requires the assessment of impacts from a proposed project on minority and low-income populations. The Tier 1 EIS will identify if any minority and/or low-income populations are present in the project area based on current population data (2010 census and county data). Information to complete the initial assessment will include demographic data and the ongoing public involvement program. The Tier 2 environmental process

will complete the Environmental Justice assessment by evaluating whether disproportionate project impacts may occur to these populations.

## VISUAL

The land uses in the study area consist of a range of urban, suburban, and rural characteristics. The level of visual setting change introduced by any alternative would also be influenced by whether the alternative follows an existing rail corridor, highway alignment, or is a greenfield. In general, residential and park land uses are considered most visually sensitive. The amount of these land use types adjacent to each alternative would be quantified in the Tier 1 EIS.

## AIR QUALITY

The scope of this proposed project does not indicate that negative air quality impacts from transportation-related emissions would likely be expected. In addition, this project is considered to have low potential to result in Mobile Source Air Toxics (MSAT) effects, that is, none of the proposed alternatives are expected to result in meaningful differences in MSAT emissions.

## NOISE AND VIBRATION

Each of the project alternatives has the potential to introduce noise and vibration issues. The level of impact is dependent on train technology, frequency, speed, and the location of sensitive receptors. As noted in the Land Use section, the study includes both suburban and rural land uses that are especially sensitive to noise and vibration issues. For the Tier 1 EIS, noise and



vibration contours would be defined to determine how many sensitive land uses (i.e. residences) are potentially impacted by each alternative.

## TRANSPORTATION

Because this study is focused on provision of high-speed rail, it is necessary to incorporate information developed as part of the Service Development Plan discussed previously. The SDP provides information on ridership, service frequencies, travel times, station and facilities planning, revenue analysis and capital, operating and maintenance costs. This information is the business case for the project, and would provide supporting information for analyzing the environmental impacts in each corridor in the Tier 1 EIS.

The preliminary rail corridor alternatives for this study were identified by maximizing use of existing and historical railroad and highway transportation corridors to the extent practicable in order to reduce impacts to the overall transportation system. However, given the scope of the proposed project alternatives it is anticipated there would be some impacts associated with changes in vehicular traffic volumes or traffic congestion.

Depending on the alternative, there would also be changes in roadway access including potential to sever existing local roads. However, it is expected that higher level roadways, including state and county roads, would not be affected. Ongoing coordination would occur with the cities and counties along the corridors to recognize current and future roadway plans that could work in conjunction with rail planning.

Portions of the proposed rail corridors may also fall within the state's airport coordination areas that have been identified for each airport in the state. When alignments are closer to airports, they may fall within the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) Runway Protection Zones (RPZ), requiring additional evaluation by FAA.

The Zip Rail project has identified the need for ongoing coordination in the Tier 1 EIS with the following airports:

- Minneapolis-St. Paul International
- St. Paul Downtown
- South St. Paul
- Dodge Center
- Stanton

## CUMULATIVE POTENTIAL EFFECTS

Given the scope of the proposed project there likely are other reasonably foreseeable projects that would be implemented prior to or after construction of the Zip Rail project. As part of the Tier 1 EIS process, these projects would be identified and the nature of the cumulative potential effects would be documented.

## OTHER POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

### RIGHT-OF-WAY

As noted in the Land Use section, where practical, the alternatives were developed to maximize use of existing public and/or transportation related corridors to reduce right-of-way acquisition and impacts to study area land uses. However, given the size of the study area and scope of the

proposed alternatives some right-of-way acquisition and potential relocation of commercial businesses and/or residential properties would likely be required. The analysis in the Tier 1 EIS would be based on alternative corridors that are one-mile wide. These broader corridors allow for greater flexibility in avoiding or reducing impacts as the process and details advance. Using these one-mile wide corridors, a right-of-way assessment would be conducted as part of the Tier 1 EIS.

#### PARK AND RECREATIONAL PROPERTIES

The study area includes numerous park and recreational properties ranging from federal and state level resources to local parks. Some of the most prominent resources in the study area include:

- The Mississippi River (Corridor Critical Area)
- The Minnesota River National Wildlife Refuge
- Fort Snelling State Park
- Vermillion Highlands Research Recreation and Wildlife Management Area (WMA)
- Lake Byllesby Regional Park
- Cannon Valley State Trail
- Warsaw WMA
- Douglas State Trail
- Richard J. Dorer Memorial Hardwood State Forest

The Tier 1 EIS would verify the location of all known resources in order to avoid, or minimize any impact to the park and recreational properties.

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## HOW CAN I PARTICIPATE IN THE ZIP RAIL SCOPING PROCESS?

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### SCOPING MEETINGS

Scoping meetings are planned to provide opportunities for the public to learn more about the project, ask questions, and provide input. Meetings will be held at three different locations:

#### **Open House #1:**

Tuesday, July 29, 2014  
5:00 to 7:00 PM  
Heintz Center  
Commons Area  
Rochester Community and  
Technical College  
1926 College View Road East  
Rochester, MN

#### **Open House #2:**

Wednesday, July 30, 2014  
5:00 to 7:00 PM  
Inver Grove Community Center  
Community Room 2  
8055 Barbara Ave.  
Inver Grove Heights, MN

#### **Open House #3:**

Thursday, July 31, 2014  
5:00 to 7:00 PM  
Kenyon-Wanamingo High School  
Commons Area and Auditorium  
400 6th St.  
Kenyon, MN

***The 30-day comment period on this Scoping Booklet and Draft Scoping Decision Document will begin on July 7, 2014 and will remain open through August 6, 2014.***

The Scoping Meeting Notice will be published in local newspapers and in the *EQB Monitor*.

Those attending the public scoping meetings will be able to view project materials, listen to an informational presentation, discuss issues with Zip Rail team members, and present any comments they may have in verbal and/or written form. Stenographers will also be available to record individuals' comments separately.

### PUBLIC OUTREACH PROGRAM

The Zip Rail program seeks to provide the public and agencies with accurate information about the project and its progress, using convenient and varied methods to provide that information and engage stakeholders and the public to help define the issues to be evaluated in the program. This will enable the project team to develop, screen and select alternatives in a manner that reflects public priorities for improved service. Every effort will be made to accommodate persons with disabilities and non-English speakers in the public involvement process and to accurately document public comments and responses in accordance with state and federal requirements.

Numerous outreach meetings and presentations with public boards and other stakeholders were held from March 2014 through June 2014 to provide information and updates and receive feedback and comments prior to development of this Scoping Booklet.



These meetings and presentations included the following organizations:

- Zip Rail Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)
- Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)
- Metropolitan Council Transportation Committee
- Metropolitan Airports Commission Staff
- MnDOT Aeronautics
- Rochester-Olmsted Council of Governments (ROCOG)
- Dakota County Regional Railroad Authority
- Dodge County Board of Commissioners
- Goodhue County Board of Commissioners
- Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority
- Olmsted County Regional Railroad Authority
- Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority
- Rochester City Council Committee of the Whole
- UMore Park Development, LLC/ University of Minnesota
- Flint Hills Resources/Pine Bend Refinery
- Canadian Pacific Railway (CP)
- Union Pacific Railroad (UP)
- CONDAC – Dakota County

## NEXT STEPS

The Draft Scoping Decision Document (DSDD) is provided as an appendix to this Scoping Booklet and is available at [www.goziprail.org](http://www.goziprail.org). At the conclusion of the 30-day scoping review period, a Final Scoping Decision Document will be prepared and posted on the Zip Rail

website, ([www.goziprail.org](http://www.goziprail.org)). The report will summarize the overall results of the scoping process, including comments received, and identify the alternatives that would be studied in the Tier 1 EIS.

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## WHY IS AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT NECESSARY? HOW LONG WILL THE PROCESS TAKE?

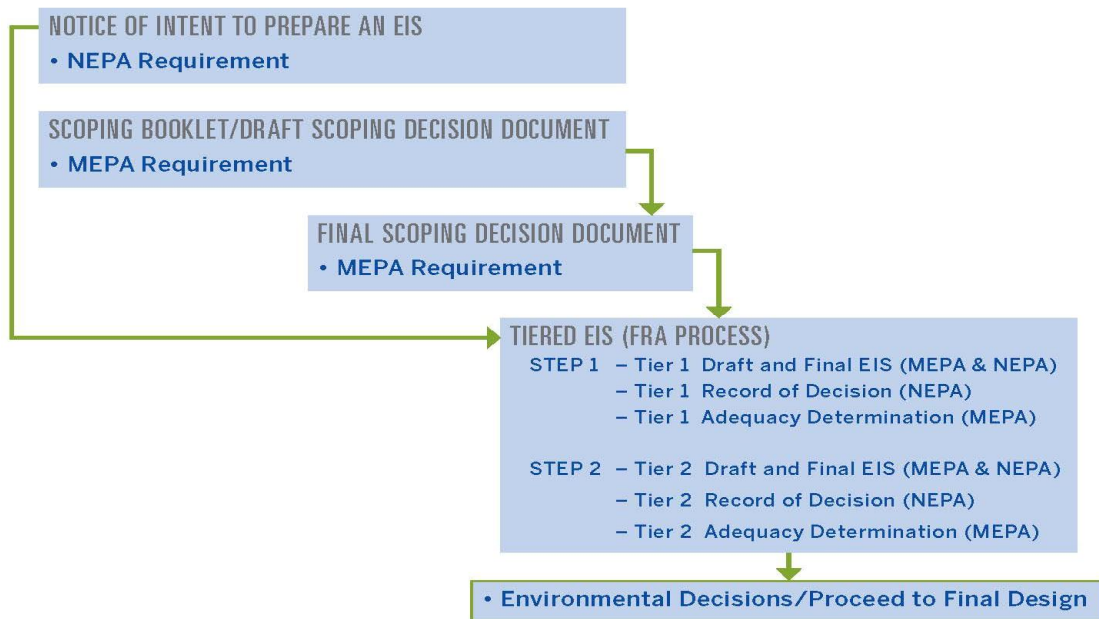
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Due to anticipated federal funding for the Zip Rail project, and the fact that the project may have significant environmental impacts, the FRA is required to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). MnDOT and OCRRA will also conduct this review in compliance with the Minnesota Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) and Minnesota Rules Chapter 4410.

The Tier 1 EIS process occurs in three stages – Scoping, Draft Tier 1 EIS and Final Tier 1 EIS – and culminates in a federal Record of Decision under NEPA and a state Determination of Adequacy under MEPA. Each of the three stages includes publication of a document for public comment and narrows the number of alternatives, with the Final Tier 1 EIS identifying one or more Preferred Alternatives for the project.

This Tier 1 process will be completed in 2015. The Tier 2 environmental process may require an additional 36-42 months to fully evaluate the project impacts.

**Figure 6. MEPA and NEPA Environmental Review Process Sequencing**




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## HOW WILL MY COMMENTS BE USED?

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### WILL THEY MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

Your comments can make a difference. Comments received during the Scoping period will be used to finalize the Zip Rail purpose and need, refine the proposed alternatives, and identify environmental topic areas to be analyzed in the Tier 1 EIS and their method of analysis. You can find out how all comments were addressed by reviewing the Final Scoping Decision Document, which will provide a summary of the Scoping process, comments received, and response to comments that will be published after the Scoping public comment period ends.

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## WHAT HAPPENS AFTER SCOPING IS COMPLETED?

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### CAN I STILL BE INVOLVED?

The Scoping process is the beginning of the environmental review process. Although the formal Scoping period ends on August 6, 2014, opportunities for involvement in the Tier 1 EIS will continue. Additional community meetings will be scheduled during the preparation of the Draft Tier 1 EIS and materials will be posted to the project website for community review and comments.

Following publication of the Draft Tier 1 EIS another series of formal public meetings will be conducted to receive your comments on the findings of the Draft Tier 1 EIS and the recommendation for the preferred alternative(s).

***APPENDIX A  
DRAFT Scoping Decision Document***

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## INTRODUCTION

This Draft Scoping Decision Document (DSDD) has been prepared as part of the state environmental review process (Minnesota Environmental Policy Act, MEPA) to fulfill requirements of Minnesota Rules Chapter 4410.2000. The DSDD is distributed to federal, state, and local agencies and the public to provide an opportunity for review and comment prior to the preparation of a Scoping Decision Document (SDD). A 30-day comment period will begin when the availability notice for the DSDD is published in the Minnesota Environmental Quality Board (EQB) *Monitor*. A series of three Scoping Meetings will be held during the 30-day comment period (as required by Minnesota Rules Chapter 4410.2100 Subpart 3), which will provide an opportunity for the public to comment on the DSDD. A final scoping decision will be made by the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) under MEPA, after the public scoping meeting and at the end of the 30-day comment period.

The 30-day comment period on the Scoping Booklet and Draft Scoping Decision Document will begin on July 7, 2014 and will remain open through August 6, 2014. Federal funding will be pursued for this project from the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA). As a result the FRA, as the lead federal agency for this project, is required to undertake environmental review in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

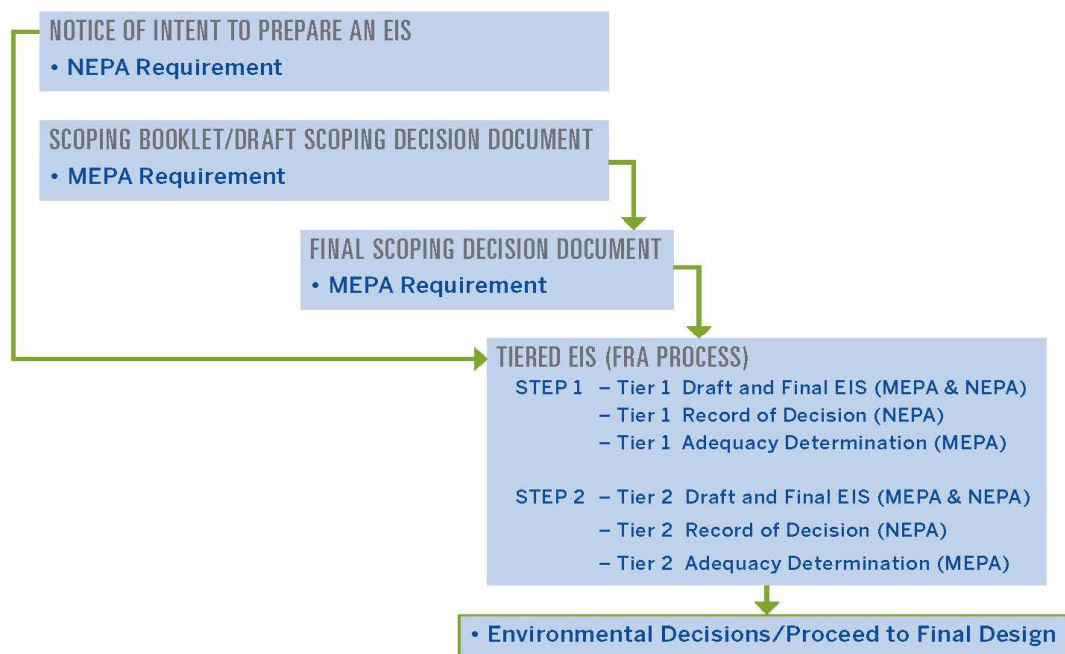
As the local public agency sponsoring the project, MnDOT, as the Responsible Governmental Unit (RGU), and Olmsted County Regional Rail Authority (OCRRA) must also comply with the requirements of the Minnesota Environmental Policy Act (MEPA). The FRA, MnDOT, and OCRRA have determined that the Zip Rail project may have significant environmental impacts.

The Federal Railroad Administration uses a tiered EIS process for its NEPA studies. The level of detail proposed for assessing potential impacts reflects that this project is anticipated as Tier 1 of a two-tier environmental review process.

In the Tier 1 EIS, the technical analysis is less detailed and considers impacts to the corridor as a whole and evaluation of impacts at a qualitative level. A Tier 1 EIS addresses questions related to the type of service being proposed, including cities and stations served, route alternatives, service levels, and types of operations, ridership projections and major infrastructure components. Environmental analysis is completed at a higher level, but detailed site information is conducted at the Tier 2 environmental level, when the alignment and related service information has been determined and more specific project boundaries can be developed to determine effects.

Figure 1 below illustrates the various steps and sequencing of the combined MEPA and NEPA processes.

**Figure 1. MEPA and NEPA Environmental Review Process Sequencing**



The tiered environmental review process used by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) reflects that the scale and scope of most rail projects are typically very large. As a result, it is more practical to conduct a two-step environmental review with step 1 (Tier 1) staying at a higher level and step 2 (Tier 2) focused on a more refined assessment.

Given FRA's tiered approach, the application of MEPA differs somewhat from the more commonly applied procedures of Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) led transportation projects. With a federal tiered EIS process, the environmental review typically associated with a State Scoping Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) occurs during the federal Tier 1 phase. Likewise, the level of review synonymous with the State EIS occurs during the federal Tier 2 NEPA phase. Following completion of the scoping process, a Tier 1 EIS will be prepared in accordance with the findings of the Final Scoping Decision Document.

This Draft Scoping Decision Document describes the purpose of and need for the proposed action; the process followed in the development and evaluation of alignment alternatives; the potential social, economic, and environmental impacts and discussion of the methodology that will be used to address each issue in the Tier 1 EIS.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Rochester-Twin Cities Passenger Rail Corridor Project (Zip Rail) is a proposed high-speed passenger rail connection between Rochester, Minnesota and the Minneapolis/St. Paul Metropolitan Area (Twin Cities). The project is located in the counties of Dakota, Dodge, Goodhue, Hennepin, Olmsted, Ramsey and Rice.

Proposed termini include downtown Rochester at the south end of the approximate 100-mile corridor, with Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport (MSP) and/or St. Paul Union Depot at the north end of the corridor. At the north end of the corridor, Zip Rail would also connect to the existing light rail transit at MSP (Metro Blue Line) and/or the existing light rail transit at Union Depot (Metro Green Line).

Zip Rail is planned as express train between Rochester and the Twin Cities. As part of the evaluation process, an intermediate station is under consideration in southern Dakota County. No other intermediate stops are under consideration at this time.

With no existing direct rail connection between Rochester and the Twin Cities, the proposed corridors would predominately include new or “greenfield” rail right-of-way and new rail construction, located to the maximum extent practicable along existing public or railway right-of-way. With trains travelling at speeds of 150+ mph, these corridors would be sealed, with no at-grade crossings. Travel times between Rochester and the Twin Cities would be approximately 45-50 minutes. The Zip Rail study area is highlighted in Figures 2 and 3.

## PURPOSE AND NEED

The purpose of the project is to study potential reliable and safe passenger rail transportation alternatives that would meet forecasted population and economic growth mobility demands in the Southeast Minnesota corridor between Rochester and the Twin Cities area. The system would connect the Twin Cities and Rochester by providing a convenient and cost effective transportation alternative. The project is being developed to:

- Provide intercity passenger rail service linking the regional economic center of Rochester and the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area economic hub
- Provide travel options for the growing population and accessibility to population centers
- Improve safety, convenience and time of travel
- Complement the plans of the Midwest Regional Rail Initiative (MWRRI) and *Minnesota Comprehensive Statewide Freight and Passenger Rail Plan*

The project need for expanded transportation options in this corridor is based on the following elements:

- Increase in population and employment in Rochester, the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area, and Southeast Minnesota
- Anticipated travel demand to accommodate growth in economic generators and attractions such as the Mayo Clinic and University of Minnesota as well as services and industries that will support those facilities
- Limited direct and convenient transportation connectivity opportunities for the corridor between Rochester and the Twin Cities

The development of world-class and internationally recognized medical facilities in Rochester, along with its agribusiness and high-tech industrial base, make the city a significant economic engine in the north central United States. The Twin Cities, also a base of high-tech industry, and the main transportation hub in the north central states, marks the importance of the economic connection between these cities. Transportation connections between these cities are primarily based on the private automobile with few commercial transportation options. The Mayo Clinic in Rochester draws patients and their companions from around the nation and the world, and constitutes a primary need for transportation options not based on the private automobile.

The project needs to meet existing and future transportation connectivity demands of the corridor between Rochester and the Twin Cities in a manner that is competitive with other modes of transportation. As the population, employment, and number of visitors grow along the corridor, especially in the Twin Cities and Rochester, the number of people travelling between these locations will increase, creating increased demand on existing transportation. The existing roadway system in the corridor is anticipated to experience capacity needs resulting from current and future economic growth; a rail option would provide a means to address those needs into the future.

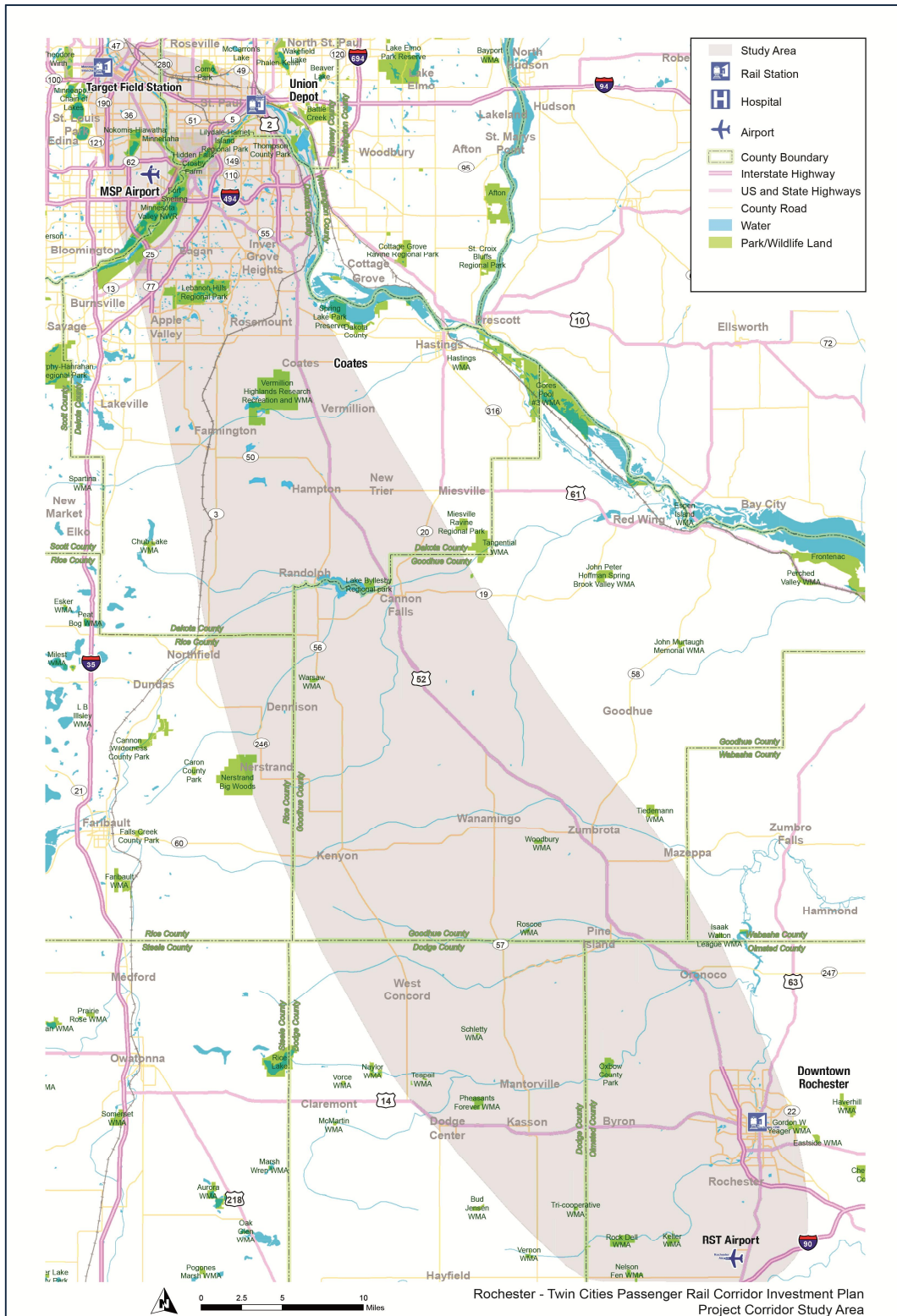
Figure 2. Project Location



Project Number: MNTCO 120046  
Print Date: 3/21/2013

ROCHESTER - TWIN CITIES PASSENGER RAIL CORRIDOR OVERVIEW MAP

Figure 3. Project Corridor Study Area



## PROJECT COST, FUNDING SOURCE, AND SCHEDULE

Specific cost estimates have not been performed for the various alternatives recommended for further study. More detailed cost estimating efforts will be performed for the preferred alternative(s) selected as a result of the Tier 1 environmental efforts.

The current phase of project study has been funded by the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) and the Olmsted County Regional Railroad Authority (OCRRA). Funding for future phases of project work has not yet been secured. It is anticipated that the project will ultimately include funding from local, state, federal and private sources.

The Tier 1 environmental document is scheduled for completion in 2015. Subsequent phases of project work have not yet been scheduled. The future schedule of work will depend on funds identified and secured for the individual phases of work.

## RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENTAL UNIT AND PROJECT MANAGER

MnDOT is the project proposer and Responsible Governmental Unit (RGU) under Minnesota Rules Chapter 4410.0500 for the purposes of this Draft Scoping Decision Document, and for the Tier 1 EIS, with respect to State environmental review requirements.

MnDOT Project Manager:

Praveena Pidaparathi, AICP  
Planning Director – Passenger Rail Office  
Minnesota Department of Transportation  
395 John Ireland Boulevard, MS 470  
St. Paul, MN 55155

## ALTERNATIVES TO BE STUDIED IN THE TIER 1 EIS

The Rochester-Twin Cities Passenger Rail Corridor Investment Plan Scoping Booklet described a universe of alternatives that were initially identified for study. Based on the alternatives screening process discussed in the Scoping Booklet, the over 1,200 potential alternative combinations were screened to 8 Build Alternatives proposed to be studied in the Tier 1 EIS, as described below and illustrated in Figures 4 and 5. A final decision regarding the number of alternatives to be studied will be made based on input received from the public, agencies and others during the scoping public comment period.

In addition, the No-Build Alternative will be carried through the Tier 1 EIS process. The No-Build Alternative reflects existing conditions, and includes all currently planned and programmed improvements in the project area over the next 20 years. The No-Build Alternative would be a base of comparison to the potential Build Alternatives.

As shown in Figures 4 and 5, the various end-point to end-point alternatives have common segments. To facilitate the description, the study area has been divided into north and south segments.

#### NORTHERN SEGMENT - COATES TO TWIN CITIES TERMINALS: MSP AND/OR UNION DEPOT

Extending north from Coates, which represents the area where all the alternatives combine to a single corridor, the alternatives eventually split with two options extending northwest toward MSP and two options continuing north to Union Depot.

##### ***MSP Options***

These alternatives extend northwest along County Road 71 through Rosemount and Inver Grove Heights, transitioning to a corridor parallel to the existing Canadian Pacific Railway (CP) in Eagan and Minnesota Highway 149, then northwest to the I-494 corridor. From this point there are two options; one is to continue across the Minnesota River Valley with a new bridge on or adjacent to I-494 to provide a direct connection to MSP. The other alternative includes a station in the area Pilot Knob Road and I-494. From the station, passengers could transfer to a shuttle to connect to MSP or continue on the train northeast to the Union Depot, using the Union Pacific Railroad (UP) alignment and entering Union Depot from the west. A variation to this option would be high-speed rail service to both MSP and the Union Depot which would preclude the need for a transfer station near Pilot Knob Road.

##### ***Union Depot Options***

Continuing north from Coates, the Union Depot options extend along the west side of the Pine Bend Refinery and connect with the UP rail corridor through Inver Grove Heights. The options continue north on the UP rail corridor to the vicinity of I-494. Near I-494 the options split with one crossing the Mississippi River on a new bridge and joining the CP rail corridor on the east side of the river. From there, the alignment would either share track or construct a new track through the existing rail corridor and rail yard, and enter Union Depot from the east. The second option for connecting to Union Depot continues along the west side of the Mississippi River on the UP rail corridor and crosses the river in the vicinity of the Robert Street Bridge in Downtown St. Paul.

#### SOUTHERN SEGMENT - COATES TO DOWNTOWN ROCHESTER

South of Coates there are two primary options, as shown in Figures 4 and 5. The first extends southeast roughly paralleling US 52, and the second extends south in the general proximity of the MN 56 corridor before turning east along the US 14 corridor into Rochester.

##### ***Eastern Corridor (US 52)***

Though paralleling US 52, this is primarily a greenfield corridor. Locating the service adjacent to, or within the US 52 right-of-way is not feasible because of curves and hills prevalent along the highway corridor, the limited available right-of-way, and the numerous intersecting roads including several interchanges. As a result, the proposed corridor extends west of US 52, at



times adjacent to the existing highway and elsewhere several miles to the west. The corridor was defined with a focus on minimizing impacts to existing land uses and environmental features, while maximizing the ability to attain and maintain true high-speed rail operations (150+ mph).

Between Pine Island and Oronoco the corridor is generally adjacent to US 52. Immediately south of Oronoco the corridor departs the US 52 corridor extending southwest to follow a corridor near US 14 into Rochester.

***Western Corridor (MN 56)***

This corridor continues south from Hampton roughly paralleling MN 56. This is a greenfield corridor that travels in close proximity to MN 56 mostly along an abandoned rail right-of-way. The proposed corridor would extend along the east side of the communities of Randolph, Kenyon, and West Concord prior to reaching Dodge Center where the corridor turns east and follows the US 14 corridor into Rochester. The corridor was also defined with a focus on minimizing impacts to existing land uses and environmental features, while maximizing the ability to attain and maintain true high-speed rail operations (150+ mph).

***Corridor Terminals***

As illustrated in Figures 4 and 5 the proposed terminal stations are downtown Rochester on the south end and MSP and/or Union Depot in the Twin Cities. The Rochester International Airport and Target Field Station candidate terminals have been removed from consideration as part of this study process. Preliminary ridership forecasting indicated relatively light demand to and from the Rochester International Airport. A rail link between downtown Rochester and the Rochester International Airport could be considered in the future as part of any Zip Rail extension planning.

The Target Field Station was removed from consideration because it is being addressed as a high-speed rail terminal as part of the Twin Cities to Milwaukee/Chicago High Speed Rail Study. Depending on the results of that process, access from the Zip Rail corridor to the Target Field Station would be provided through Union Depot via a high-speed rail link or the Metro Green Line. Access from MSP to the Target Field Station is provided via the Metro Blue Line. A link to Target Field Station could be considered in the future as part of any Zip Rail extension planning.

Figure 4: Alternatives to be advanced into the Tier 1 – EIS (East)

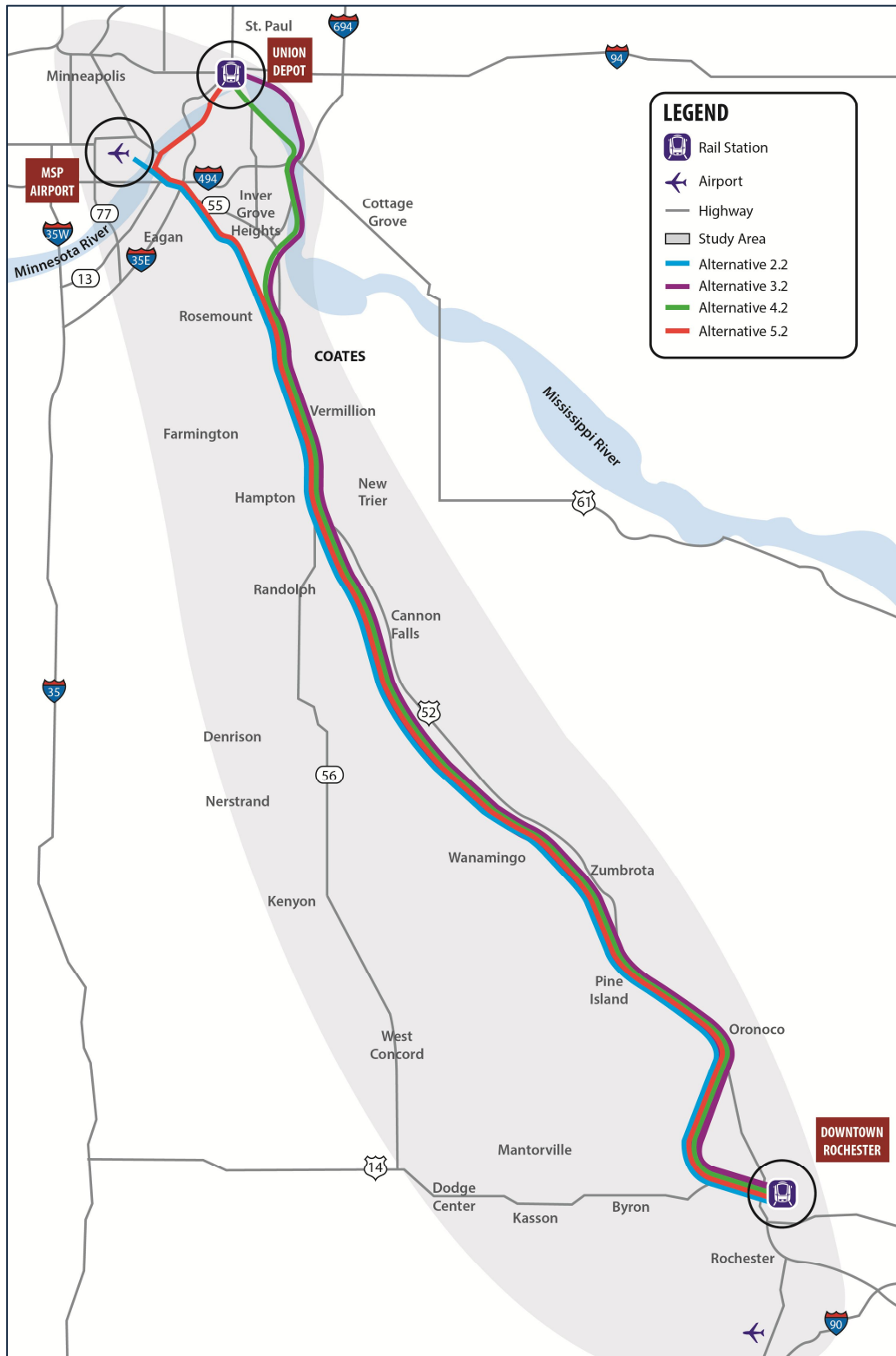
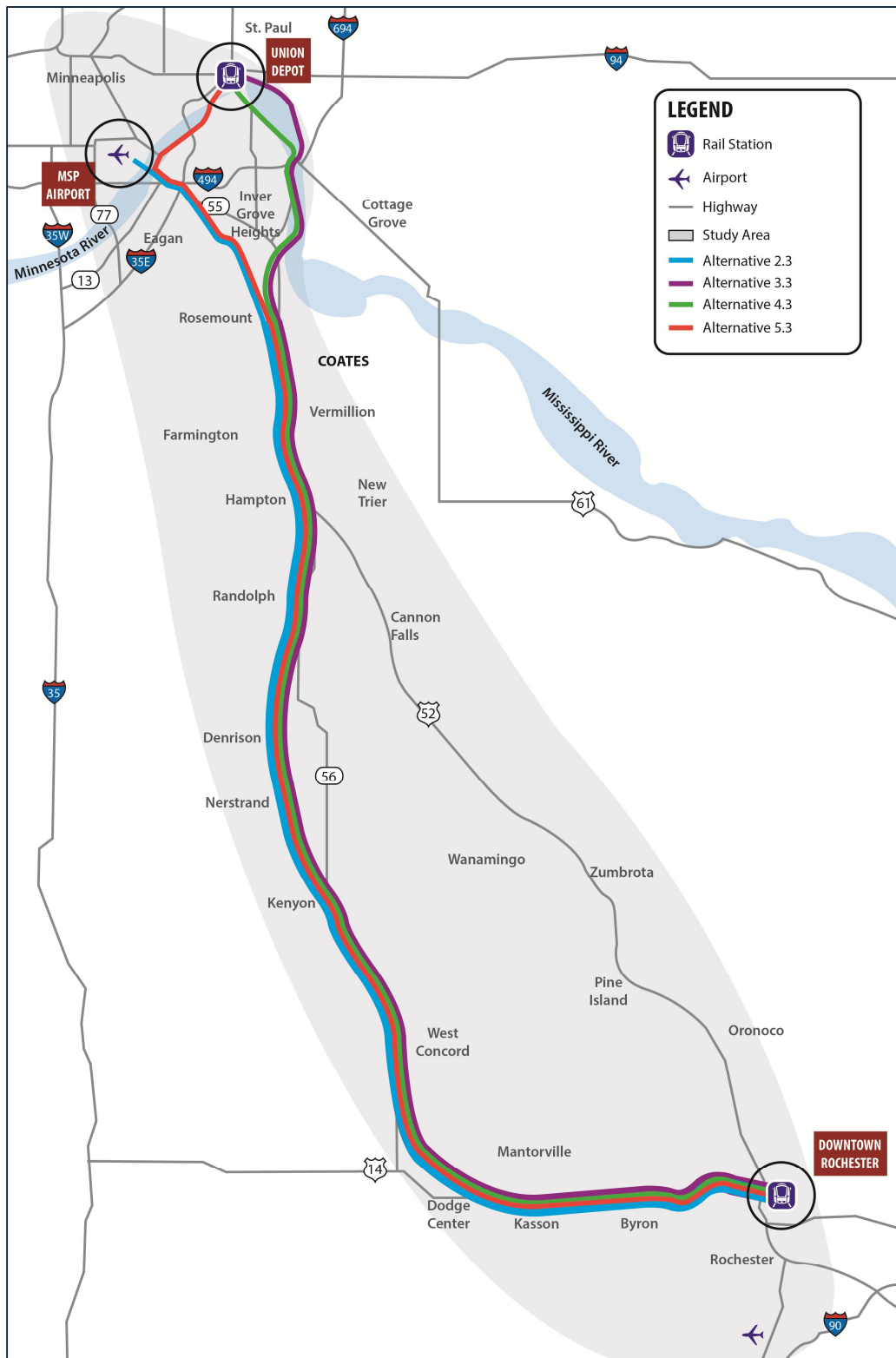


Figure 5: Alternatives to be advanced into the Tier 1 – EIS (West)



## ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED IN THE TIER 1 EIS

Information for completing the environmental issues identification was gathered through a variety of sources including literature reviews, field investigations, and GIS data analysis. Regulatory agencies and local governments provided important input through participation in Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meetings and the agency coordination meetings held in 2013 and earlier in 2014. Additionally, public information meetings in the summer of 2013 were held to present preliminary information and provide an opportunity for the public to provide input regarding key issues and potential impacts related to the project. Information gathered in these meetings contributed to the development and evaluation of the alternatives.

This section provides an overview of the environmental subject areas to be addressed in the Tier 1 EIS. The level of detail is limited at this stage, with further assessment conducted during the Tier 1 EIS process.

Based on information gathered during the scoping process the range of environmental issues typically addressed in accordance with MEPA guidelines were categorized into three areas based on the potential for significant impacts:

- Issues Requiring More Detailed Analysis in the Tier 1 EIS
- Issues Requiring Less Detailed Analysis in the Tier 1 EIS
- Issues Not Requiring Further Analysis in the Tier 1 EIS

## ISSUES REQUIRING MORE DETAILED ANALYSIS IN THE TIER 1 EIS

There are a number of issues that are expected to influence the selection of the preferred alternative. These issues will receive a greater level of attention and coordination with the public and appropriate agencies as part of the Tier 1 EIS.

### ***Land Use***

The Tier 1 EIS will examine the compatibility of the project alternatives with the existing land uses and with future land use plans in the areas through which the proposed alternatives extend. Social and community impacts are possible both from the physical impacts of the project as well as changes in access and circulation given the need to close some roads or provide for grade-separated access where roadway and rail alignments may intersect.

### ***Community Character/Cohesion***

The project alternatives introduce some potential for adverse impacts to communities along the study corridors, especially residential land uses. Specific issues that will be addressed in other sections of the Tier 1 EIS include noise and vibration, transportation system/access changes, and right-of-way impacts. This section will identify the specific location of residential neighborhoods, their proximity to the project alternatives, and the probability for adverse effects on those sensitive land uses.

### ***Community Facilities/Public Services***

The Tier 1 EIS will identify key community facilities adjacent to or in proximity to the various alternatives. These facilities include city halls, fire stations, hospitals, libraries, churches, community centers, and other institutional uses. The focus of this section will be to assess the potential for adverse effects associated with changes in access to these facilities as well as potential noise and vibration concerns.

### ***Geology/Soils***

The study area includes a broad range of geological and soil conditions that could affect construction of rail lines. The areas of greatest concern include those areas susceptible to erosion, areas where there is a presence of karst topography, and areas subject to consideration of groundwater flow along the Decorah Edge. The Decorah Edge is a unique geologic feature comprised of shale rock that extends northwest to southeast through Goodhue and Olmsted counties. The Decorah Edge in combination with the karst topography represent the greatest areas of concern related to erosion, groundwater flow and groundwater recharge. Karst topography issues are most prominent in the southern portion of the study area. These specific locations would be identified in the Tier 1 EIS and the degree to which each alternative extends through these locations would be quantified.

### ***Water Quality/Stormwater***

This section of the Tier 1 EIS will build from the analysis completed for the Geology/Soils assessment by identifying areas where erosion is of greatest concern. In addition, areas where providing storm water ponding could be particularly difficult given unique geological or soil conditions will be identified. These will include locations where karst topography is present. Coordination with applicable water resource agencies including area watersheds and the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) will be initiated.

### ***Water Resources***

Wetlands in the project study area are under the jurisdiction of the Army Corps of Engineers, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MnDNR), and local agencies administering the Minnesota Wetland Conservation Act. An impact assessment of all project alternatives will be conducted.

The assessment will focus on wetlands identified by the National Wetlands Inventory (NWI). The wetland impact assessment will be based on calculation of the area of wetland within the conceptual impact limits of each alternative. This will be performed using NWI mapping overlaid on corridors.

### ***Fish, Wildlife, Threatened and Endangered Species***

Documented rare, threatened, and endangered species and habitat in the MnDNR Natural Heritage Program (NHP) database, records from the regional non-game wildlife specialist, and the County distribution of Minnesota's Federally-Listed Threatened, Endangered, Proposed, and Candidate Species list will be reviewed for each project alternative. The information will be geo-referenced with the proposed alternatives and the number of resources within each alternative's impact area will be quantified.

Natural communities in the project study area will be classified based on GIS data and mapping. Project alternatives will be compared according to potential habitat loss and fragmentation of forested areas or sensitive vegetation like natural prairie land.

### ***Visual/Aesthetics***

The land uses in the study area consist of a range of urban, suburban, and rural characteristics. A qualitative visual assessment will be conducted using land use adjacent to each alternative as a proxy for relative visual sensitivity. For example, residential and park land uses will be considered the most visually sensitive. The assessment will identify and quantify the total amount of sensitive adjacent land uses (in miles) that are within the sightline of the proposed alternatives.

### ***Cultural Resources***

The Tier 1 EIS analysis will focus on identifying known cultural resources listed on or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, including architectural and archaeological resources. This information will be used to establish the relative potential of each alternative encountering historical and/or archaeological resources. Further analysis under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act would be carried out in the Tier 2 environmental process.

### ***Noise/Vibration***

The project alternatives have the potential to introduce noise and vibration issues. The level of impact is dependent on train technology, frequency, speed, and the location of sensitive receptors. For the Tier 1 EIS, noise and vibration contours will be defined for each alternative and applied to GIS mapping to determine how many sensitive locations are within the established noise contour boundaries. The noise contours will be based on the applicable federal and state noise criteria.

### ***Transportation***

*Highways:* A transportation system impact assessment will be completed to determine what roadway crossings will be maintained and whether they will be at-grade or grade-separated crossings. The assessment will include quantifying changes in access and connectivity in the transportation network.

*Freight Railroads:* Several project alternatives parallel active freight rail lines, especially in the north end of the project study area. This section will identify the specific locations where some levels of co-location with freight railroads are assumed. The ownership, operating characteristics (right-of-way, daily trains, operating speeds), coordination to date with the owners, and assumed modifications necessary to make co-location feasible will be identified.

*Aviation:* Several alternatives include a connection to MSP. The Tier 1 EIS will identify issues associated with providing rail service to MSP such as accounting for runway protection zones (RPZ's), trade-offs between at-grade and tunnel operations, and other special provisions. Coordination has already been initiated with the Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC) and it is anticipated that a substantial amount of additional coordination will be required to determine

the feasibility of a direct MSP connection. Many of these issues will require rail design details that will not be generated until the Tier 2 NEPA phase. Therefore it is anticipated that the Tier 1 EIS will document the status of ongoing coordination with MAC and any decisions that are generated from the continuing coordination.

Coordination will also be conducted with the St. Paul Downtown, South St. Paul, Dodge Center and Stanton airports, due to proximity with proposed corridors.

*Pedestrian/Bicyclist Movements:* The proposed project could have adverse impacts on pedestrian and bicycle movements such as the Douglas State Trail. The EIS will identify major facilities and describe anticipated effects of the proposed improvements on those facilities.

*Transit:* The proposed project is expected to have both beneficial and adverse impacts on transit services. Beneficial effects include expanded transit services and options. Adverse impacts may include minor disruption in transit services during construction. The transit assessment will identify any substantial differences in potential transit service impacts between the proposed alternatives.

### ***Right-of-Way and Relocation***

Given the size of the study area and scope of the proposed alternatives some right-of-way acquisition and potential relocation of commercial businesses and/or residential properties would likely be required. The analysis in the Tier 1 EIS would be based on alternative corridors that are one-mile wide. These broader corridors allow for greater flexibility in avoiding or reducing impacts as the process and details advance. Using these one-mile wide corridors, a right-of-way and relocation assessment will be conducted as part of the Tier 1 EIS.

The following information regarding households and businesses will be discussed for each alternative retained in the Tier 1 EIS.

- An estimate of the number of households to be displaced including an estimated value of properties to be acquired;
- An estimate of the number and type of businesses to be displaced;

The Tier 1 EIS will also contain a statement that (1) the Acquisition and Relocation Program will be conducted in accordance with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended, and (2) relocation resources are available to all residential and business entities without discrimination.

### ***Environmental Justice***

Executive Order 12898 requires the assessment of impacts from a proposed project on minority and low-income populations. The Tier 1 EIS will identify if any minority and/or low-income populations are present in the project area based on current population data (2010 census and county data). Information to complete the initial assessment will include demographic data and the ongoing public involvement program. The Tier 2 environmental process will complete the

Environmental Justice assessment by evaluating whether disproportionate project impacts may occur to these populations.

***Park and Recreational Properties (Section 4(f)/6(f))***

The project alternatives could potentially impact various park and recreational resources in the study area. Some of the resources include the Fort Snelling State Park, the Minnesota River National Wildlife Refuge, the Mississippi National River Recreation Area, and the Douglas State Trail. Development and evaluation of alternatives will be performed consistent with the requirements of federal Section 4(f) and Section 6(f) with the intent to avoid any conversion of these properties to transportation use. The Tier 1 EIS will verify the location of all resources and estimate the level of impact. The formalized Section 4(f) and Section 6(f) processes would occur during the Tier 2 environmental process, if necessary.

***Floodplains***

Floodplains in the study area correlate to the various river and stream crossings, including the Minnesota, Mississippi, Vermillion, Cannon, and Zumbro (North Fork, Middle Fork, and South Branch Middle Fork) rivers. The 100 year floodplain for each resource will be identified and the amount each alternative extends through the respective floodplains will be quantified to estimate the potential floodplain impact. The more comprehensive Floodplain Assessment required to address Federal and State regulations will be prepared in the Tier 2 environmental documentation.

***Wild and Scenic Rivers***

The Cannon River is designated as a State Wild and Scenic River. MnDNR staff will be contacted to determine whether there are differences in the significance of potential impacts related to where each alternative crosses the river.

***Prime and Unique Farmlands***

The study area contains soils identified by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) as being prime farmlands and unique. Soils of statewide significance are also located in the study area. County soil surveys will be consulted in conjunction with NRCS data to determine the amount of prime and unique farmlands potentially impacted by each alternative.

***Critical Areas***

The Mississippi River from the northwestern Twin Cities to the St. Croix River confluence near Hastings is a designated Critical Area. The Tier 1 EIS will identify those alternatives that parallel or cross the Mississippi River and therefore introduce the potential for impacts to this designated Critical Area.

***Contamination/Hazardous Materials***

Available data resources will be researched to identify known contamination sites. The information will be geo-referenced with the proposed alternatives and the number of sites within each alternative's impact area will be quantified.



## ISSUES REQUIRING LESS DETAILED ANALYSIS IN THE TIER 1 EIS

There are several environmental issues that are of lesser concern given the nature of the undertaking and the study area. The Tier 1 EIS will address these issues however major impacts are not anticipated.

### ***Air Quality***

The scope of this proposed project does not indicate that negative air quality impacts from transportation-related emissions would likely be expected. This project is considered to have low potential to result in Mobile Source Air Toxics (MSAT) effects, that is, none of the proposed alternatives are expected to result in meaningful differences in MSAT emissions.

### ***Cumulative Potential Effects***

Cumulative effects result from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable actions. Indirect effects are caused by the proposed action and are later in time or farther removed in distance, but are still reasonably foreseeable, such as induced changes in land use patterns, population or growth rate changes, and related effects on natural resources. Given the study corridors in the Tier 1 EIS are one-mile wide, it is not feasible to accurately account for and assess the relationship with other foreseeable projects. As a result, the assessment will focus on identifying the locations where reasonably foreseeable projects are anticipated to occur. The final determination of cumulative and indirect effects will be conducted in the Tier 2 NEPA process when the preferred alternative is identified and a more specific alignment is defined.

### ***Economics/Business Impacts***

Many of the potential positive effects of the proposed alternatives are related to station areas. Adverse effects are associated with potential right-of-way impacts and changes to access. Given the limited level of detail associated with the Tier 1 EIS, the economic assessment will focus on differences in the proposed station locations between the alternatives.

### ***Utilities***

Above ground and underground utility lines may be adversely affected by the proposed project, including pipelines and electrical power lines. For the Tier 1 EIS, major utility corridors will be identified and the interrelationship with the project alternatives and relative differences between alternatives will be discussed.

### ***Construction Impacts***

Construction impacts can include traffic congestion, noise, soil erosion, traffic detours, economic impacts, safety, utility disruption, and other issues. The construction impacts assessment will document areas where construction impacts are expected to be of greater concern including adjacent residential land uses, river crossings, state and county highway crossings, karst topography areas, and major utilities.

## ISSUES NOT REQUIRING FURTHER ANALYSIS IN THE TIER 1 EIS

Based on the assessment completed through the initial alternatives evaluation and scoping processes, the following environmental issue areas do not require additional evaluation and as a result will not be included in the Tier 1 EIS.

### ***Energy***

No major differences in energy requirements and use are anticipated amongst the proposed alternatives.

### ***Coastal Zones***

The project study area is not located within a coastal zone or coastal barrier. Therefore this issue will not be addressed in the Tier 1 EIS.

### ***Climate Change***

The climate change assessment will be deferred to the Tier 2 NEPA process when a preferred alternative is identified and more clearly defined.

### ***Relationship of Short-term Uses versus Long-term Productivity***

This issue will be deferred to the Tier 2 NEPA process when a preferred alternative is identified and more clearly defined.

### ***Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitment of Resources***

This issue will be deferred to the Tier 2 NEPA process when a preferred alternative is identified and more clearly defined.

## PUBLIC AND AGENCY INVOLVEMENT

### **State Scoping Meetings**

Scoping meetings are planned to provide opportunities for the public to learn more about the project, ask questions, and provide input. **The 30-day comment period on this Scoping Booklet and Draft Scoping Decision Document will begin on July 7, 2014 and will remain open through August 6, 2014.** The Scoping Meeting Notice will be published in local newspapers and in the *EQB Monitor*. Meetings will be held at three different locations as noted below:

#### **Open House #1:**

Tuesday, July 29, 2014  
5:00 to 7:00 PM  
Heintz Center  
Commons Area  
Rochester Community and  
Technical College  
1926 College View Road East  
Rochester, MN

#### **Open House #2:**

Wednesday, July 30, 2014  
5:00 to 7:00 PM  
Inver Grove Community Center  
Community Room 2  
8055 Barbara Ave.  
Inver Grove Heights, MN

#### **Open House #3:**

Thursday, July 31, 2014  
5:00 to 7:00 PM  
Kenyon-Wanamingo High School  
Commons Area and Auditorium  
400 6th St.  
Kenyon, MN

Those attending the public scoping meetings will be able to view project materials, listen to an informational presentation, discuss issues with Zip Rail team members, and present any comments they may have in verbal and/or written form. Stenographers will also be available to record individuals' comments separately.

### **Contact Information**

**To view the Scoping Booklet or for more information:**

[www.goziprail.org](http://www.goziprail.org)

**Email comments to:** [info@goziprail.org](mailto:info@goziprail.org)

**Voicemail:** 651-366-3195

**Or send comments by U.S. mail to:**

Minnesota Department of Transportation  
Passenger Rail Office  
ATTN: Zip Rail  
395 John Ireland Boulevard, MS 470  
St. Paul, MN 55155

### **Public Outreach Program**

The Zip Rail program seeks to provide the public and agencies with accurate information about the project and its progress, using convenient and varied methods to provide that information and engage stakeholders and the public to help define the issues to be evaluated in the program. This will enable the project team to develop, screen and select alternatives in a manner that reflects public priorities for improved service. Every effort will be made to accommodate persons with disabilities and non-English speakers in the public involvement process and to accurately document public comments and responses in accordance with state and federal requirements.

Numerous outreach meetings and presentations with public boards and other stakeholders were held from March 2014 through June 2014 to provide information and updates and receive feedback and comments prior to development of this Scoping Booklet. These meetings and presentations included the following organizations:

- Zip Rail Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)
- Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)
- Metropolitan Council Transportation Committee
- Metropolitan Airports Commission Staff
- MnDOT Aeronautics
- Rochester-Olmsted Council of Governments (ROCOG)
- Dakota County Regional Railroad Authority
- Dodge County Board of Commissioners
- Goodhue County Board of Commissioners
- Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority
- Olmsted County Regional Railroad Authority
- Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority
- Rochester City Council Committee of the Whole
- UMore Park Development, LLC/ University of Minnesota
- Flint Hills Resources/Pine Bend Refinery
- Canadian Pacific Railway (CP)
- Union Pacific Railroad (UP)
- CONDAC – Dakota County

### **Next Steps**

The Draft Scoping Decision Document (DSDD) is provided as an appendix to this report and available at [www.goziprail.org](http://www.goziprail.org). At the conclusion of the 30-day scoping review period, a Final Scoping Decision Document will be prepared and posted on the Zip Rail website ([www.goziprail.org](http://www.goziprail.org)). The report will summarize the overall results of the scoping process, including comments received, and identify alternatives that would be studied in the Tier 1 EIS.

After completion of the Final Scoping Document, the Tier 1 EIS for the project would be initiated to evaluate the various alternatives and environmental impacts, in order to identify a preferred alternative. The Tier 1 EIS process would include additional public meetings and consultation as information is developed to examine the alternatives and environmental impacts. The Service Development Plan would also be prepared and would evaluate the business case for the project and provide information to inform the analysis in the Tier 1 EIS.

The Tier 1 EIS process occurs in three stages – Scoping, Draft Tier 1 EIS and Final Tier 1 EIS – and culminates in a federal Record of Decision under NEPA and a state Determination of Adequacy under MEPA. Each of the three stages includes publication of a document for public comment and narrows the number of alternatives, with the Final Tier 1 EIS identifying one or more Preferred Alternatives for the project. This Tier 1 process will be completed in 2015.

Upon approval of the Tier 1 EIS, the project would advance to Tier 2. The Tier 2 environmental process would address site specific environmental issues, project impacts and potential mitigation measures. In addition, individual properties that could be impacted will be identified. The Tier 2 environmental process may require an additional 36-42 months to fully evaluate the project impacts.

## PERMITS AND APPROVALS

Preliminary lists of permits and approvals that may be required for the proposed project are included in Table 1.

**Table 1: Preliminary List of Permits and Approvals.**

<b>Agency</b>	<b>Permit/Approval</b>
<b>Federal:</b>	
Federal Railroad Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tier 1 EIS Approval</li> <li>• Tier 1 EIS Record of Decision</li> <li>• Section 4(f) Evaluation (if needed)</li> <li>• Section 106 Tribal Coordination</li> <li>• Section 106 Cultural Resources Determination</li> <li>• Section 7 Threatened and Endangered Species Act determination</li> </ul>
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Section 404 Permit (fill in U.S. Waters)</li> </ul>
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Section 7 Threatened and Endangered Species Consultation (if needed)</li> </ul>
<b>State:</b>	
Minnesota Department of Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scoping Booklet Approval</li> <li>• Scoping Decision Document Approval</li> <li>• Tier 1 EIS Approval</li> <li>• Tier 1 EIS Adequacy Determination</li> <li>• Wetland Conservation Act (WCA) Approvals</li> </ul>
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public Water Work Permit (if needed)</li> <li>• Groundwater Appropriation Permit (if needed)</li> </ul>
Minnesota Pollution Control Agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Construction Stormwater Permit</li> <li>• Section 401 Water Quality Certification</li> </ul>
State Historic Preservation Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Section 106 Consultation</li> </ul>