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Mississippi River Route Decision Brings High-Speed Rail from Twin Cities to Chicago Closer to Reality

St. Paul, Minn. – The Minnesota Department of Transportation (Mn/DOT) and the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) today announced that the Mississippi River route is the preferred alignment for high-speed passenger rail from the Union Depot in St. Paul to downtown Chicago. With the selection of the river route, Mn/DOT can begin the next phase of the study, the Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS).

In response to today's announcement, Winona Mayor Jerry Miller, chair of the Minnesota High-Speed Rail Commission, issued the following statement:

“Today's decision puts Minnesota one step closer to \$2.3 billion in economic benefits to the state's agricultural and industrial industries, as well as new opportunities for business and residential development throughout the corridor. High-speed rail through places like Winona, Red Wing and St Paul will improve freight rail capacity which will help Minnesota farmers and manufacturers get their products to market. It will also serve as an efficient link for Minnesota residents to connect to Chicago, Milwaukee, and all points in-between.”

“With the route finalized and the environmental phase of the study beginning, now is the time for state lawmakers and members of Congress to begin working together to make high-speed rail a priority in Minnesota and throughout the Midwest.”

In addition, Matt Kramer, president of the Saint Paul Area Chamber of Commerce issued the following statement:

“The Saint Paul Area Chamber of Commerce has built a grassroots coalition to support connecting St. Paul to Chicago by high-speed rail and we have been committed to making this project a reality along the river route corridor. High-speed rail will enhance both passenger and freight rail service, help attract employers, spur tourism and create new development opportunities in the region. This project brings an estimated \$2.3 billion of economic benefit that Minnesota cannot pass up.”

The next phase of the project will involve looking at 28 various criteria and the completion of a service development plan for high-speed rail, which is expected to be completed by spring 2013. Following completion of the environmental work, the next step will be to seek funding for preliminary engineering along the river route.

For more information on the Minnesota High-Speed Rail Commission, visit www.mnhighspeedrail.com or [facebook.com/mnhighspeedrail](https://www.facebook.com/mnhighspeedrail).

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About the Minnesota High Speed Rail Commission

The Minnesota High-Speed Rail Commission is one of the leading authoritative voices on high-speed rail in Minnesota. Comprised of local elected officials, the commission advocates for the development of Minnesota’s first high-speed rail line within the federally designated high-speed rail corridor that connects the Twin Cities to Madison, Milwaukee and Chicago. The commission is a strong proponent of bringing high-speed rail to the Midwest through the scenic upper Mississippi River valley.