

News Release



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AMTRAK FEASIBILITY STUDY OF ADDITIONAL SERVICE BETWEEN ST. PAUL AND CHICAGO SHOWS PROMISE

CHICAGO and ST. PAUL, Minn. – A study about the feasibility of an additional daily passenger train between Minneapolis, St. Paul or St. Cloud to Chicago is now available. The study was conducted by Amtrak on behalf of the Minnesota and Wisconsin departments of transportation (MnDOT and WisDOT) and La Crosse County, Wisc.

The study concluded that the route between St. Paul and Chicago is the most feasible for initial service with potential extensions to Minneapolis and St. Cloud. It recommends an environmental review of the project, which would have a robust public involvement component and provide eligibility for federal funding. MnDOT, WisDOT and LaCrosse County are determining how to fund this step. The study is at: <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/passengerrail/>.

The purpose of the second daily train is to provide improved eastbound reliability and increased train frequency. The study includes an assessment of schedules, ridership, revenue, infrastructure investments, operating costs, and equipment needs associated with adding a second daily train between Minnesota and Chicago. The study assumes the second round trip train would use the same route as the current *Empire Builder* service between Chicago and St. Paul with the addition of a Milwaukee Airport Rail Station stop.

Annual ridership on the additional daily train, with a morning departure from Chicago and a mid-day departure from St. Paul, is estimated at about 155,000 passengers. This is an increase over the current *Empire Builder* ridership of approximately 104,000 between St. Paul and Chicago, with departures from St. Paul in the morning and Chicago in the afternoon. The top speed for passenger trains in this corridor is 79 mph.

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There are anticipated capital investment costs for infrastructure capacity improvements, with a planning level cost estimate of approximately \$95 million for the Chicago to St. Paul scenario. The St. Cloud and Minneapolis scenarios had higher infrastructure costs. If new equipment is used, there would be an additional \$46.4 million cost.

The study estimates annual state operating support (the difference between ticket revenue and operating and capital equipment costs) for the Chicago to St. Paul initial service would be approximately \$6.6 million. The cost share among the funding parities for the service would be determined at a later date. Current federal regulations limit Amtrak participation to covering the first 15 percent of the operating cost. Estimates are in 2014 dollars.

About Amtrak®

Amtrak is America's Railroad®, the nation's intercity passenger rail service and its high-speed rail operator. Amtrak and its state and commuter partners move people, the economy and the nation forward. Formally known as the National Railroad Passenger Corporation, Amtrak is governed by a nine member board of directors appointed by the President of the United States and confirmed by the U.S. Senate. Anthony R. Coscia is board chairman and Jeffrey R. Moreland is vice chairman. In FY 2014, nearly 31 million passengers traveled on Amtrak on more than 300 daily trains – at speeds up to 150 mph (241 kph) – that connect 46 states, the District of Columbia and three Canadian Provinces. Enjoy the journey® at Amtrak.com or call 800-USA-RAIL for schedules, fares and more information. Like us on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/Amtrak), Follow us on Twitter ([@Amtrak](https://twitter.com/Amtrak)) and check out our blog at blog.amtrak.com.

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