



Northern Lights Express

Minneapolis – Duluth/Superior Passenger Rail Alliance

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Northern Lights Express (NLX) is a proposed passenger rail project between the Minneapolis Transportation Interchange station and the City of Duluth, along Highway 65 and Interstate 35. The Minneapolis-Duluth/Superior Passenger Rail Alliance is a joint powers board formed to explore options for renewing passenger rail service on existing tracks in the 155 mile corridor.

STATUS

- Designated one of eight top priorities for development by the National Passenger Rail Study Group, headed by the U.S. Secretary of Transportation, in December 2007.
- Completed feasibility study in December 2007.
- Received \$1.1 million from the FRA in its first Capital Assistance Grant Program, which gave NLX one-third of the total planning dollars available.
- \$475,000 designated for NLX in the FY 2009 Omnibus Appropriations Bill.
- A consultant has been hired and work has begun on environmental review and documentation and associated preliminary engineering.
- \$825,000 invested by local cities and counties in the Corridor.
- \$900,000 of Minnesota bonding has been leveraged with the \$1.1 million from the FRA to start the environmental and preliminary engineering work.
- In the 2009 Minnesota legislative session, \$26 million in bonding for rail projects was passed.
- Four years into the planning process, NLX is uniquely positioned to take advantage of funding opportunities through both the 2008 Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act and the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

Proposed Use of FY 2010 Transitway Funding

Federal funding in the amount of \$3,750,000 is requested for the Railroad Corridor Transportation Plan and Environmental Study, which will include engineering and station development activities

State funding in the amount of \$13 million is requested. Of that, \$3 million will be used to match \$12 million in federal funds for engineering, legal, planning, and administration. The remaining \$10 million will be used to match \$40 million in federal funds for construction of NLX.

Federal Authorization Request

Environmental, Right-of-Way Acquisition, Preliminary Engineering, Design and Construction



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MAP

