

ALL ABOARD MINNESOTA



Passenger Rail Service - FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q1. What are the capital costs required to get the 2nd Train running; how much would Minnesota pay?

Answer - Current figures are in a range of \$55M to \$72.3M. These include track and signal upgrades to enable the service, professional services, and contingency planning. These costs do not include equipment which would could be existing equipment leased from Amtrak. The capital costs would be split primarily equally between Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Illinois; up to \$24M each, of which 70% would be Federal matching grants *

Q2. How much would the 2nd Train cost to operate?

Answer – Estimated cost is \$12.45M annually. 55% of this cost would be covered by fares, \$6.85M. Minnesota, Wisconsin and Illinois would cover the remaining 45% or \$5.6M per year.* Experience with similar corridor trains, such as Chicago-Milwaukee shows revenues fully cover operating costs as ridership increases. A way to fund operating costs for Minnesota's portion would be to shift money that railroads pay the state in property taxes from the general fund, and create a special passenger rail fund. Taxes would not increase, and the railroads would be in favor, as it would be money coming back to them.

Q3. What are the next steps for the 2nd Train; when could it run?

Answer - Next steps, once funding is approved by the legislature, is to complete environmental analysis studies, and update the service plan. Once these studies are done, the state can apply for Federal matching grants for infrastructure work described in Q1 above. This work could be completed within the next two to three years.

Q4. What are the Capital costs to enable Twin Cities to Duluth service?

Answer - MnDOT's current estimate is between \$500-600M, which includes new stations, railroad infrastructure upgrades, signaling, and grade crossing upgrades. See the enclosed Northern Lights Express brochure for more information about this service. *

Q5. What are the next steps for Twin Cities to Duluth service; when could it run?

Answer - All of the environmental assessments, and design studies have been completed by MnDOT, and the project is called “shovel ready.” Meaning that once the state approves funding and gains Federal matching dollars, construction described in Question 3 can begin. This work is estimated to take approximately two years.

Q6. What public support is there for more passenger rail service in Minnesota?

Answer – There is great support in Minnesota for more passenger rail service. The United Transportation Union conducted a statewide survey of Minnesotans in 2019 and found that 72% of Minnesotans support more regional intercity passenger rail service (to cities like Fargo, Duluth, Winona, etc.) and 65% supported the 2nd Train.*

Q7. Are passenger trains more efficient than cars and planes?

Answer – Yes, Amtrak diesel and electric trains are 32.6% more energy efficient than cars and 12% more energy efficient than commercial aviation. Also, railroads require much less footprint than other modes, which reduces costs. For example, 300 miles of railroad requires less land than one single commercial metropolitan airport, and one two track railroad can haul as many people in one hour as 16 lanes of highway! *

Q8. What is more cost effective, funding more passenger rail service, or funding more highways, and airports – commercial aviation?

Answer – Typically funding more passenger rail service is less expensive than building more highways or airports. Since the proposed passenger rail routes in Minnesota will use existing railroad infrastructure, there is much less investment. For example, to fully reconstruct a road in the Twin Cities metro costs \$7.5M a mile. Minnesota is planning to spend \$21B over the next 20 years on roads and bridges. The \$30M investment in the MnDOT state rail plan is a fraction of these costs and will get people out of cars, reducing road maintenance, accidents and environmental costs. *

** Q5 Source – DFM Group Statewide Railroad Issues Survey March 2019*

** Q6 Source – Rail Passengers Association “Passenger Trains, an Energy and Climate Solution”*

** Q8 - \$7.5M stat – Twin Cities.com; \$21B road cost - MnDOT*

** All other stats cited are from MnDOT, WisDOT, and the Great River Rail Commission*

**For more information about passenger rail in Minnesota, visit our web site;
allaboardmn.org**