

Mn/DOT's Approach to the Economic Recovery Program - Freight Infrastructure

January 29, 2009

The State's freight transportation infrastructure represents a mixed private and public responsibility across the modes of highway, rail, water and air. Mn/DOT administers freight-specific infrastructure programs focused on project delivery in three areas: highway/rail grade crossing safety, rail line rehabilitation and preservation, and port development. In addition, Mn/DOT conducts multi-modal freight planning to identify system wide needs, including capital investment needs. These programs and planning activities assist Mn/DOT and its stakeholders in responding to funding opportunities, including federal programs such as the economic recovery program.

Due to the uncertainty of economic recovery funding availability for meeting freight transportation needs, a scalable program of potential freight projects has been developed by the Department that can be implemented relatively rapidly. This program includes:

- Highway/rail grade crossing improvement projects on freight rail lines programmed for future years in the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).
- Highway/rail grade crossing improvement projects, including grade separation, on current and planned passenger rail corridors, including high-speed lines.
- Rail rehabilitation capital needs identified through the Minnesota Rail Service Improvement Program.
- Port development capital needs identified in the Minnesota Port Development Program.
- Truck-related freight and safety projects.
- Other freight projects identified through the planning process or locally requested.

Highway/Rail Grade Crossing Safety (Federal Section 130 and 1103 Programs)

This is an existing program within the federal highway program; projects are currently programmed in the STIP. Approximately 75 projects are currently identified in the STIP for years 2010, 2011 and 2012. Some or all of these projects could be accelerated upon funding availability. It is assumed that federal economic stimulus funds would cover 100% of project costs without a local 10% match.

In addition, Minnesota has a federally-funded program for improving rail crossings on the designated Midwest High-Speed Rail Corridor between La Crescent and St. Paul (existing CP/Amtrak line). Planned grade crossing improvements and grade separations could be accelerated.

There is also a need for replacement of traffic advisory signs at grade crossings around the state, particularly at approximately 1000 crossings where regional

and shortline railroads operate. The Department would purchase the materials and contract with the smaller railroads for installation.

Implementation: These projects require field diagnostic reviews, railroad cost estimates, railroad agreements, design work, ordering and installation of equipment, and any associated roadway construction activity. Railroad agreements should be achievable within 90, 120 and 180 day increments; construction could begin within nine months with completion in approximately one year.

INVESTMENT:

Grade-Crossing Safety Improvements **\$33,000,000**

** Detailed project list attached*

Rail Rehab/Rail Relocation

Recovery funds could be used to implement projects currently unfunded in the Minnesota Rail Service Improvement Program. In addition, the Department has facilitated the application of several locally requested rail projects for funding by the Federal Railroad Administration and is aware of other locally requested projects. These projects could also be accelerated.

Implementation: Rail rehab projects normally could be under contract within 120 days and projects completed within 6-12 months, depending upon the size and scope of the project. Mn/DOT typically administers and manages the construction of these projects.

INVESTMENT:

Various Projects **\$10,000,000**

Minnesota Prairie Line—continued rehab **\$10,000,000**

Port Development

Capital investment needs for public port development have been identified by the Minnesota Ports Association. The Minnesota Port Development Program administered by Mn/DOT does not currently have funding to address these needs. If Federal funds are available for these kinds of improvements, the projects could be accelerated.

INVESTMENT:

Various Projects (attached comprehensive needs) **\$10,000,000**

Implementation: Contracts with the Port Authorities could be executed within 120 days. The Port Authorities are responsible for project implementation. Typically such projects can be constructed within 3-6 months.

Truck Weight Enforcement and Safety Inspection

A recently completed study identifies needed repair and restoration of State of Minnesota Truck Weigh Stations, including building rehab. While the study has not yet been finalized, a minimum of \$5 million to refurbish and upgrade existing facilities is needed. \$2.5 million of these projects could be under contract within 180 days.

Implementation: Mn/DOT would be responsible for implementing these projects. There are no known barriers.

INVESTMENT: \$2,500,000

TOTAL FREIGHT INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT \$48,500,000