



Minnesota Department of Transportation

News Release

Office of Communications

MS 150
395 John Ireland Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Date: Sept. 22, 2009

Contact: Donna Lindberg
651-366-4268

To be released: Immediately

Mn/DOT seeks public input for Minnesota's first statewide rail plan

ST. PAUL, Minn. — Members of the traveling public, transportation stakeholders, rail providers and local government officials are invited to provide input for development of the Minnesota Department of Transportation's 2009 Comprehensive Statewide Freight and Passenger Rail Plan at the second and final round of public open houses scheduled at seven locations statewide.

"We appreciate the feedback on the rail plan that we have received to date, and encourage additional members of the public to attend one of these open houses to give us their ideas about rail issues that affect their lives and businesses," said Transportation Commissioner Tom Sorel.

The plan, mandated by the 2008 Minnesota Legislature, will provide guidance for statewide rail initiatives and investments and will make Minnesota eligible for federal funding. Public input received from these open houses, a series of stakeholders meetings and ongoing commentary will help Mn/DOT develop a draft of the plan that identifies:

- An overall vision for effective use of the state's rail network and its future development.
- Public and private sector roles for use of rail in the state's transportation system.
- Priority intercity and high-speed passenger rail corridors for travel within and beyond Minnesota.
- Ways to enhance national and international freight access to markets, services and logistics.
- Measures and guidelines for public investments in rail assets and services.
- Requirements for Minnesota's participation in national rail initiatives, programs and resources.

There will be a brief presentation on the Minnesota Comprehensive Statewide Freight and Passenger Rail Plan planning process at each open house. After the presentation, Mn/DOT officials and national rail consultants will be on hand to discuss current and future rail programs, answer questions and take input.

-more-

2009 Minnesota Comprehensive Statewide Freight and Passenger Rail Plan open house schedule

ST. CLOUD	Mn/DOT Office and Training Center 3725 - 12th St. N. St. Cloud	5-7 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 6
ROCHESTER	Rochester Community/Technical College Heintz Center 1926 Collegeview Drive SE Rochester	5-7 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 7
RED WING	Red Wing Main Library Foot Room 225 East Ave. Red Wing	5-7 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 8
TWIN CITIES METRO	St. Paul Union Depot 214 East 4 th Street St. Paul	5-7 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 14
DULUTH	Duluth Union Depot and Transportation Museum – Great Hall 506 W. Michigan St. Duluth	5-7 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 15
MOORHEAD	Minnesota State Community and Technical College Room C-118 1900 28 th Ave. S. Moorhead	5-7 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 21
MANKATO	Best Western N. Mankato 1111 Range St. Mankato	5-7 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 22

For more information about open houses, call Mn/DOT's Office of Passenger Rail at 651-366-3199.

Public input received will be presented to advisory and steering committees and key community, industry and government officials in November 2009. The Minnesota Comprehensive Statewide Freight and Passenger Rail Plan will be completed by Dec. 31, 2009, and then presented to the Minnesota Legislature. The completed plan will be included in the Minnesota Statewide Transportation Policy Plan and will enter into required state and federal reviews in January 2010.

For information, go to <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/planning/railplan/>.

To request these documents or information in an alternative format call 651-366-4718 or e-mail ADArequest@dot.state.mn.us.

To request an ASL interpreter at an open house, call 651-366-4720. To request other reasonable accommodations, call 651-366-4718; the Minnesota Relay Service toll-free at 1-800-627-3529 (TTY, Voice or ASCII) or 711, or e-mail your request to ADArequest@dot.state.mn.us.

#####