



Minnesota Rail Service Improvement Program (MRSI)

Megan Neeck | Program Manager
Office of Freight & Commercial Vehicle

January 2022

Agenda

Time	Topic
1:00-1:10	Welcome and Introductions
1:10-1:15	Timeline
1:15-1:25	MRSI Instructions
1:25-1:40	MRSI Application & Required Documents
1:40-2:00	Q & A

Welcome and Introductions

- My Name is Megan Neeck and I am the new MRSI Program Manager in the Office of Freight and Commercial Vehicle.
- Been with MnDOT for 9 years, spent the last 5 years with the Office of Transit & Active Transportation.
- Excited to learn more about rail!



- **January 27, 2022:** Solicitation informational meeting
- **February 4, 2022:** Questions due to MnDOT
 - Send all questions to Megan Neeck, megan.neeck@state.mn.us
- **February 14, 2022:** MnDOT responds to questions
 - All questions and answers will be posted on the website
- **March 1, 2022:** Deadline to submit complete applications to MnDOT
- **April 30, 2022:** Anticipated project selection and notification of awards

MRSI Program & Purpose

- The Minnesota Rail Service Improvement Program (MRSI), established in 1976, strengthens Minnesota's shipping economy by providing financial assistance to improve freight rail service in the state.
- The program was originally established to provide loans and loan guarantees.
- In 2017, grants for freight rail service improvement projects that support economic development were added in accordance with [Minnesota Statutes §222.50, Subdivision 6.](#)

Funding available:

- \$6,500,000 of state general funds.
- State general funds come from the state's primary cash revenue source (taxes, etc.)
- Previous solicitations were funded with general obligation bonds which is debt-based funding.
- Applicants are not required to provide a funding match. However, applicants are encouraged to pursue funding from a variety of sources. This application requests information on non-MRSI funding sources and MnDOT will consider this information in the application scoring.

Who Can Apply?

- Eligible applicants include railroads, rail users and political subdivisions of Minnesota and the federal government that seek to complete a major improvement or rehabilitation of railroad rights-of-way or other railroad facilities.

Eligible Projects

- Eligible Projects: *Examples*

- Railroad tracks and turnouts (track rehabilitation, new track construction for short lengths, track extensions, etc.)
- Railroad bridge construction or rehabilitation (286,000-pound upgrades or replacement of bridges that have reached the end of their useful life)
- Fixed railroad loading and unloading facilities which are used primarily for the shipment of goods by rail
- Railroad components of intermodal facilities (i.e. railroad tracks, turnouts and any fixed assets that facilitate the direct loading and unloading of railcars)

- Ineligible Projects: *Examples*

- General maintenance
- Railroad locomotives, rolling stock, vehicles and other mobile equipment
- Utility hookup
- Incomplete or phased projects that are not fully funded through the construction phase
- Engineering, design and right-of-way acquisition costs

Project Selection & Scoring

- Preference will be given to projects that can begin rail facility construction before the end of **2022**.
- Project selection for the MRSI Grant Program follows a two-step process.
 1. Evaluated for completeness and to determine whether the applicant entity, project type, budget and anticipated completion date meet eligibility requirements for funding under the MRSI Grant Program.
 2. A project selection committee will review and score eligible applications based on the information provided in the applications (see below).

Quantitative and qualitative scores to all eligible applications. Projects are scored in seven (7) categories using a 130-point scale (total maximum number of points).

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Project Summary	Rail Service Impacts	Economic Impacts	Equity	Environmental Impacts	Project Readiness	Project Funding
15 Pts.	30 Pts.	30 Pts.	15 Pts.	15 Pts.	5 Pts.	20 Pts.

MRSI Application

- MRSI Grant Program applications must be submitted electronically via e-mail to:
 - FreightPlans.DOT@state.mn.us
 - The application form, signed certification page, and all required attachments (see list below) must be received by MnDOT by **5 p.m. Central Time on March 1, 2022.**
- The preferred method of electronic submission is for applicants to fill out the interactive fields in the PDF application form, save and return the PDF document electronically to the above e-mail address. The certification page must be signed by the authorized person and returned electronically. Applicants can either digitally sign the certification page, or print, sign and scan it.

MRSI Application

- If you can't fit your answer into one or more of the boxes on the application, please attach a separate document with your complete answer with the application. Please label it with the application question number.
- After reading the instructions and looking over the application, email Megan any questions you have.
 - Megan.neeck@state.mn.us

Required Documents

- In addition to the application form, the following must be included with the application:
 - A plat map showing the parcel(s) where the project will be located.
 - A detailed map, site plan, sketch or other depiction of the project site and its surrounding area, including all transportation access facilities and rail-highway grade crossings within or near the general vicinity of the site.
 - Construction plans or sounding reports to the extent they have been developed.
 - If the application is for a shipping facility, a letter of support from the railroad(s) that will serve it. This letter should document the railroad's commitment to serve the site as proposed.
 - If an environmental review is required and is completed, a copy of the final environmental document signed by the appropriate federal and/or state agency.
 - Audited financial statements from your organization for the past two years.
 - Letters of funding commitment from any "secured" funding sources for the project as listed in the Project Funding table on this application (Question 28).

- All questions must be submitted to MnDOT by **February 4, 2022**.
 - megan.neeck@state.mn.us
- The questions and answers (FAQ document) regarding this application will be posted on MnDOT's MRSI Program Web Page on **February 14, 2022**.

Next solicitation opens late summer/early fall 2022.

Funds available: \$6.5M state general funds available for solicitation in July 2022

More information to come!

Q & A

- Any Questions?



- Website: <https://www.dot.state.mn.us/ofrw/railroad/mrsi.html>

Thank you again!



Megan Neeck

Megan.neeck@state.mn.us

Ph. 612-358-3379