

Draft Public Involvement Plan

Identification of Potential Passenger Rail Alternatives Milwaukee-Twin Cities Corridor

Prepared for:
Minnesota Department of Transportation
Wisconsin Department of Transportation

Prepared by:
Quandel Consultants, LLC

Version: November 22, 2010

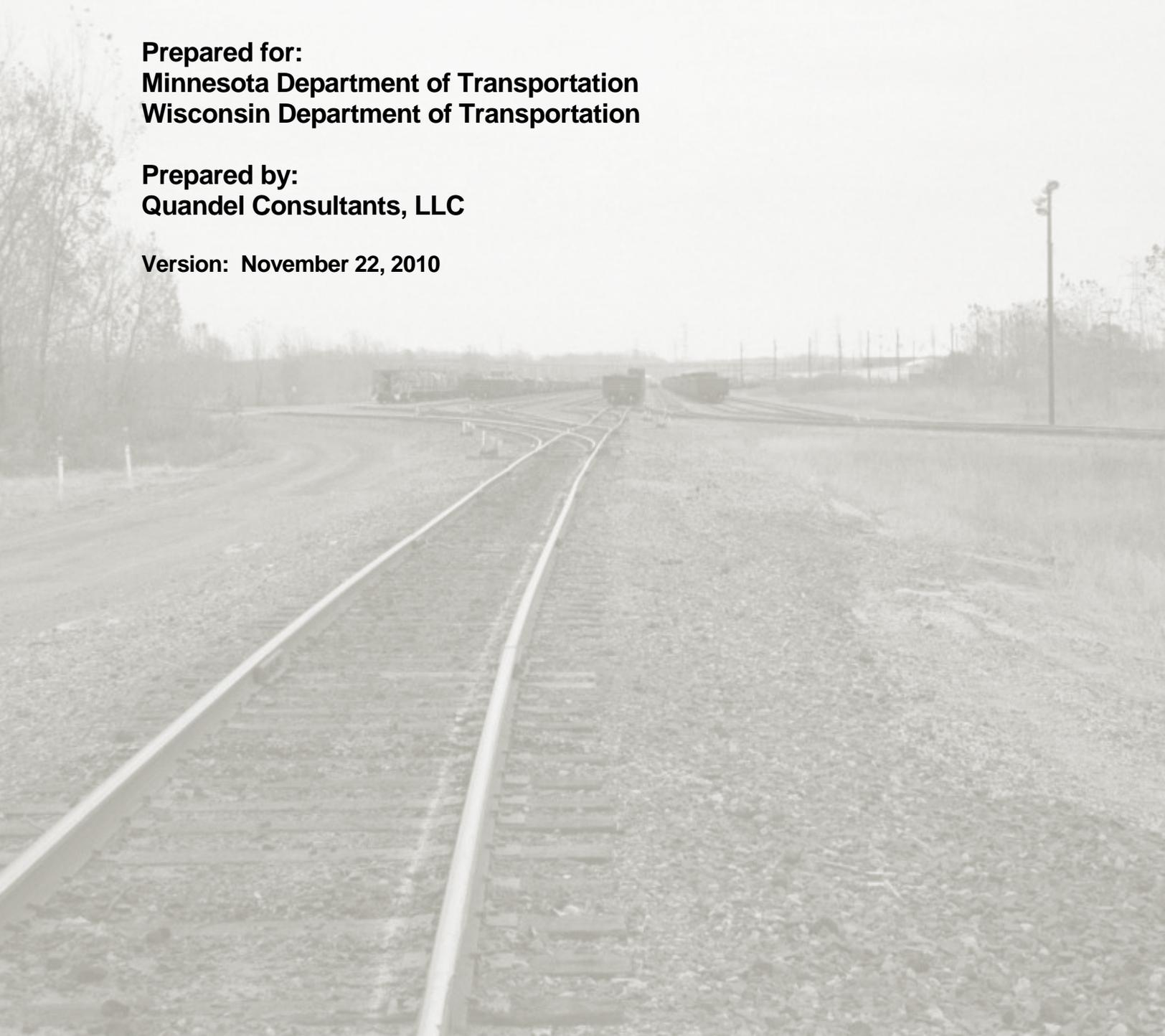


TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1.0 Public Involvement Plan1-1
 - 1.1 National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Process1-1
 - 1.2 Project Description.....1-1
 - 1.3 Project Team.....1-2
 - 1.4 Contact Database1-2
 - 1.5 Agency Coordination1-2
 - 1.6 Freight Railroad Coordination.....1-2
- 2.0 Project Stakeholders2-1
- 3.0 Public Involvement Activities3-1
 - 3.1.1 Public Involvement Meetings3-1
 - 3.1.2 Public Officials Informational Meetings.....3-2
 - 3.1.3 Citizens Informational Workshops3-2
 - 3.1.4 Small Group Meetings/Speaker’s Bureau.....3-2
- 4.0 Public Involvement Communication4-1
 - 4.1.1 Agency Database.....4-1
 - 4.1.2 Newsletters.....4-1
 - 4.1.4 Media Outreach.....4-2
 - 4.1.5 Project Website4-2
 - 4.1.6 Project Email Address.....4-2

Appendix A - List of Cities that are Project Stakeholders



1.0 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN

The Public Involvement Plan (PIP) for the Milwaukee-Twin Cities High-Speed Rail Corridor Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will serve as a plan for outreach efforts to stakeholders, review agencies, the news media, public officials, and the general public throughout the project. The goals of the PIP are to engage the public in a meaningful and transparent way and to build community consensus around recommendations.

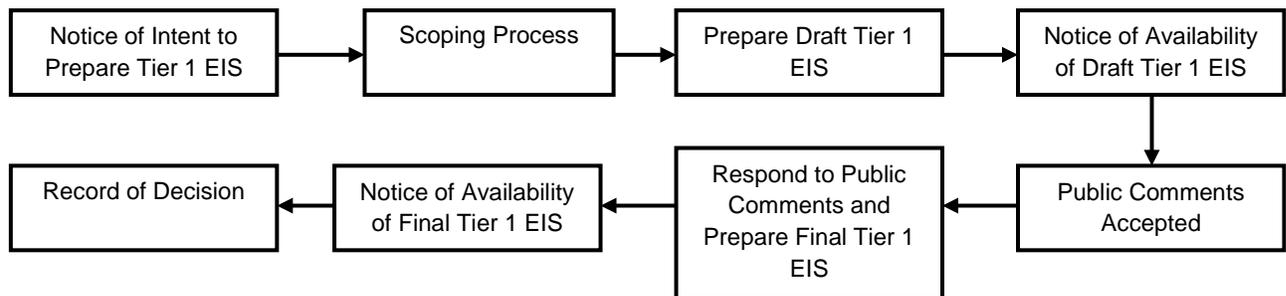
The plan will contain a series of public involvement and educational activities that will include: interactive/informational workshops; educational materials and displays; briefings for federal, state, and local elected officials; small group meetings; media outreach strategy; creation of a web page; creation and maintenance of a comment/response database; creation and maintenance of a public outreach database; an agency coordination effort; and assistance to Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) with a project steering committee.

The PIP is a dynamic document and will be updated as necessary throughout the duration of the project.

1.1 National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Process

The PIP will comply with NEPA and FRA regulations on public and agency involvement in the Tier 1 EIS process. FRA’s compliance with NEPA is depicted in its Procedures for Considering Environmental Impacts (64 Fed. Reg. 28545 (May 26, 1999)) and the Council on Environmental Quality’s (CEQ) NEPA implementing regulation (40 CFR Part 1500-1508). NEPA requirements insure that environmental information is available to public officials and citizens before decisions are made and actions are taken. Figure 1-1 illustrates the NEPA process.

Figure 1-1. NEPA Process



The purpose of the PIP is to develop and implement a process to engage the public and agencies in accordance with NEPA, FRA, and state public involvement policies.

1.2 Project Description

The Milwaukee-Twin Cities High-Speed Rail Corridor Program will result in the

completion of a Tier 1 EIS for the corridor. With guidance from the FRA, the project will identify reasonable and feasible alternatives between Milwaukee and Twin Cities that will be rigorously analyzed within the Tier 1 EIS, resulting in the selection of a preferred alternative. After the selection of the preferred alternative, a Service Development Plan for the corridor will be prepared and will include concept engineering and capital programming; detailed service plan including service frequency, timetables, general station locations, and intermodal connections; identification of infrastructure, rolling stock, and facilities improvements; financial plan; operations plan; ridership estimates; assessment of benefits; and program implementation strategy.

1.3 Project Team

The Minnesota Department of Transportation (Mn/DOT) and the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) are working in cooperation with the FRA to complete the Tier 1 EIS for the corridor. The project team consists of Mn/DOT as the lead agency and WisDOT and FRA as cooperating agencies, Quandel Consultants, LLC as the alternatives analysis and part 1 of public involvement lead, and an unnamed consultant as the lead on conceptual engineering, environmental analysis and documentation, part 2 of public involvement, selecting the preferred alternative, and service development planning.

1.4 Contact Database

A database of elected officials, public officials, agency staff, and key public stakeholders, will be established and maintained. The database will be used to provide the public with information concerning progress on the project and for notifying the public of meetings and workshops.

The initial mailing list will not attempt to include all of the adjacent property owners in the study corridors. The mailing list will be built using data obtained from key public agencies. Public officials will also be asked to provide community leader names during the initial telephone contact. Included in the database will be civic/social service agencies as identified in the community outreach research.

1.5 Agency Coordination

As part of the scoping process, agency coordination meetings will be held to discuss issues related to the project as identified by affected Federal, State, local agencies, and Native American Tribes. An agency scoping meeting will be held for affected Minnesota agencies in St. Paul, MN and an agency scoping meeting will be held for affected Wisconsin agencies in Eau Claire, WI. Those taking part in the agency coordination meetings will be able to provide input on environmental issues that require consideration in the Tier 1 EIS.

1.6 Freight Railroad Coordination

A Freight Railroad Coordination Plan will be produced under the contract to perform Tier 1 EIS work for the Milwaukee-Twin Cities High-Speed Rail Corridor Program.

Coordination activities within the plan will be similar to those in the PIP.

2.0 PROJECT STAKEHOLDERS

Identifying project stakeholders is an essential part of the public involvement plan. Identifying stakeholders will ensure that all affected parties are aware of the project and have the opportunity to comment or inquire about the project. Just as the public involvement plan is a “living document” and is subject to change throughout the project, the stakeholders may also change. Below is a preliminary list of stakeholders.

1. Federal Agencies
 - a. Federal Railroad Administration
 - b. U.S. Fish and Wildlife
 - c. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
 - d. U.S. Army Corp of Engineers
 - e. National Park Service
2. State Agencies
 - a. Minnesota Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)
 - b. Wisconsin Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)
 - c. Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
 - d. Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
 - e. Wisconsin Bureau of Equity and Environmental Services
 - f. Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED)
 - g. Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (PCA)
 - h. Minnesota Environmental Quality Board
3. Minnesota Counties
 - a. Dakota County
 - b. Dodge County
 - c. Goodhue County
 - d. Hennepin County
 - e. Olmsted County
 - f. Ramsey County
 - g. Rice County
 - h. Steele County
 - i. Wabasha County
 - j. Washington County
 - k. Winona County
4. Wisconsin Counties
 - a. Sauk County
 - b. Iowa County
 - c. Winnebago County
 - d. Fond du Lac County
 - e. Waukesha County
 - f. Jefferson County
 - g. Dodge County
 - h. Green Lake County

- i. Columbia County
 - j. Vernon County
 - k. La Crosse County
 - l. Grant County
 - m. Juneau County
 - n. Marquette County
 - o. Wood County
 - p. Portage County
 - q. Jackson County
 - r. Buffalo County
 - s. Chippewa County
 - t. Dunn County
 - u. St. Croix County
 - v. Monroe County
 - w. Adams County
 - x. Marathon County
 - y. Clark County
 - z. Pepin County
 - aa. Pierce County
 - bb. Washington County
 - cc. Ozaukee County
 - dd. Milwaukee County
 - ee. Dane County
 - ff. Outagamie County
 - gg. Eau Claire County
 - hh. Trempealeau County
 - ii. Waupaca County
 - jj. Crawford County
 - kk. Richland County
5. Minnesota Native American Tribes
- a. Indian Affairs Council
 - b. Prairie Island Indian Community
 - c. Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe
 - d. Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community
6. Wisconsin Native American Tribes
- a. Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council
 - b. Bad River Band of the Lake Superior Chippewa
 - c. Forest County Potawatomi Community
 - d. Ho-Chunk Nation
 - e. Lac Courte Oreilles Band of the Lake Superior Chippewa
 - f. Lac du Flambeau Band of the Lake Superior Chippewa
 - g. Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin
 - h. Oneida Tribe of Indians
 - i. Red Cliff Band of the Lake Superior Chippewa
 - j. Sokaogen Chippewa (Mole Lake) Community

- k. St. Croix Chippewa Indians
- l. Stockbridge Munsee Mohegan Community
- 7. Minnesota Transportation Agencies/Metropolitan Planning Organizations
 - a. Dodge County Regional Railroad Authority
 - b. Olmsted County Regional Railroad Authority
 - c. Goodhue County Regional Railroad Authority
 - d. Dakota County Regional Railroad Authority
 - e. Washington County Regional Railroad Authority
 - f. Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority
 - g. Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority
 - h. Wabasha County Regional Railroad Authority
 - i. Winona County Regional Rail Authority
 - j. Rochester-Olmsted Council of Governments
 - k. La Crosse Area Planning Committee
 - l. Metropolitan Council of the Twin Cities
 - m. Transportation Advisory Board of the Twin Cities
- 8. Wisconsin Transportation Agencies/Metropolitan Planning Organizations
 - a. Fond du Lac Metropolitan Planning Organization
 - b. Madison Area Metropolitan Planning Organization
 - c. La Crosse Area Metropolitan Planning Organization
 - d. Chippewa Falls/Eau Claire Metropolitan Planning Organization
 - e. Southeastern Wisconsin Metropolitan Planning Organization
 - f. Appleton/Oshkosh Metropolitan Planning Organization
 - g. Capital Area Regional Planning Commission
 - h. Marathon County Metropolitan Planning Organization
 - i. Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission
 - j. North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission
 - k. East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission
 - l. Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission
 - m. West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission
 - n. Southwestern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

Additionally, affected cities in Minnesota and Wisconsin have been indicated as stakeholders. See Appendix A for a complete list of these cities.

3.0 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES

Public involvement activities will allow the project team to educate agencies and the public on the Milwaukee-Twin Cities High-Speed Rail Corridor Program and to receive comments and concerns. Public involvement activities include:

- Public Involvement Meetings
- Public Officials Informational Meetings
- Citizens Informational Workshops
- Small Group Meetings/Speakers' Bureau

3.1.1 Public Involvement Meetings

Three series of public meetings will occur throughout the project. Each series will be held in the following locations:

- Milwaukee, WI
- Madison, WI
- Fond du Lac, WI
- La Crosse, WI/La Crescent, MN
- Eau Claire, WI
- Rochester, MN
- St. Paul, MN

The public meetings will be held at well-known, centralized locations with easy access for people with disabilities and transit riders. Easy to read graphics, hand-outs and comment forms will be provided. The meeting format will be an open house with a presentation/general question, answer and comment segment at advertised times. Meeting notifications will be published in the local daily newspaper and at least one minority paper in each community where the public meeting is held. Printed and electronic meeting notifications (post cards or "hot cards") will be distributed by e-mail and at churches, social service agencies, libraries and at other locations where low income and/or minority populations might frequent.

The public involvement meetings will be held at the following milestones:

- **Public Involvement Meeting Series #1**—after the potential passenger rail alternatives have been identified and the notice of intent is filed. The public will be asked for their input on the project's purpose and need, the proposed universe of alternatives and other results of the Interim Alternative Selection Report.
- **Public Involvement Meeting Series #2**—after the reasonable and feasible route

alternatives have been identified. The public will be asked for their input on the results of the Alternative Selection Report including the preliminary environmental findings and narrowed route alternatives in each corridor based on travel time, market size, capital and operating costs, safety, and reliability.

- **Public Involvement Meeting Series #3**—after the preferred alternative has been selected. Includes public hearings to seek input on the draft Tier 1 EIS. The draft Tier 1 EIS includes analysis of environmental issues, socio-economic impacts, station area impacts, operating and capital costs, ridership and economic benefits, and a summary of public input.

3.1.2 Public Officials Informational Meetings

At key points in the study, meetings will be held with the local public officials. These will most likely occur prior to Public Informational Workshops and will utilize board mounted graphic exhibits prepared for the workshops. When needed and/or requested, these formal meetings with public officials will be supplemented with small group meetings.

3.1.3 Citizens Informational Workshops

A series of workshops shall be conducted within the study corridors. The workshops will identify the list of alternatives to be fully evaluated in the Draft Tier 1 EIS and the screening criteria used to eliminate the preliminary range of alternatives.

The workshops will be informal in nature to encourage one-on-one discussions of the project with the public. A short formal presentation will be made at each workshop. This formal presentation will be structured to the workshop being held and address local/regional concerns. Public concerns and comments identified during the meetings will be recorded in the comment/response database. The outreach and comment/response databases will be updated after each involvement activity. Summary minutes of the workshops will be prepared.

Project handouts for the workshops will be prepared. The handout will be developed to relate to the workshop being held and will be approved by the FRA prior to public distribution. Sign-in sheets and comment sheets to record the public's input will be provided.

The public will be notified in advance of the workshop through the use of newspaper advertisements. A press release notice through the Public Information Office will be provided regarding each workshop. Information about the workshops will also be posted on the project website.

3.1.4 Small Group Meetings/Speaker's Bureau

The purpose of the small group meetings is to provide the public with an opportunity to be informed about the project, the proposed purpose and need for the project, and the development of study corridors, and to solicit their input. These meetings will take place with a variety of community and neighborhood groups, civic, business groups, and municipalities along the corridor. Some small group meetings will be face to face meetings with local officials and business leaders as needed and could also include

outreach efforts with minority or low-income groups. It is envisioned that these meetings will take place in a variety of locations throughout the corridor.

A Speaker's Bureau will be established to accommodate small group meetings. As a part of the Speaker's Bureau, basic materials will be developed for use with small group meetings to ensure speakers have the most up to date information on the project and a consistent message is being provided to the public by speakers. Speakers will be provided for these meetings. A two-person team will be provided for each of these meetings. Informational material will be provided, mailing lists updated, and a summary of the meeting comments prepared.

4.0 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT COMMUNICATION

Public involvement communication allows the project team to inform agencies and the public about project information. Additionally, agencies and the public will be able to express concerns regarding the project. The communication methods include:

- Agency database
- Newsletters
- Fact sheets
- Media outreach
- Project website
- Project email address

4.1.1 Agency Database

The purpose of the agency database is to provide a repository for contact information for the project. The database will include contact information for key contacts within public agencies, public officials, relevant interest groups, and affected Native American Tribes.

4.1.2 Newsletters

Two issues of a newsletter for distribution to those persons on the project mailing list and to FRA officials will be prepared. Expected newsletter content is as follows:

- Newsletter #1

The first project newsletter will address alternatives development, the announcement of the availability of the Draft Tier 1 EIS, and announce the public hearing on the Draft Tier 1 EIS.

- Newsletter #2

The second newsletter will announce the selection of a preferred alternative and the release of the Final Tier 1 EIS.

4.1.3 Fact Sheets

Additionally, fact sheets will be prepared for key issues of public concern. Possible fact sheet issues could include noise/vibration, traffic/safety/grade crossings, parking, property values, economic development, station locations and design and any other relevant issue that continuously appears in the comment response database or during public outreach activities. Fact sheets will be carefully distributed to those communities in which a particular topic may be an issue. Other copies will be used as handouts at meetings and other outreach activities or used to provide project information as requested by the public.

4.1.4 Media Outreach

A media outreach strategy will be implemented including preparing for and attending editorial board briefings, press releases, meeting releases, and general outreach to both the print and broadcast media. The effort will include a periodic update of media informational packages about the project. The effort will also include the identification of the key media markets and needed media contact information. Meeting notice ads, press releases, and editorial board briefings will be prepared for major markets of the corridor. Materials developed for public workshops and events, including public information pieces will be modified and used to create media information packets.

4.1.5 Project Website

The purpose of the project website is to provide up-to-date project information to the public. The website will be updated on a regular basis and during key milestones throughout the study to ensure the accuracy of information. Mn/DOT will host the project website at <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/passengerrail/mwrrri/phase7.html>. The consultant team will be responsible for providing content for the website in consultation with Mn/DOT. Information the website will include:

- Introduction/overview page
- Technical reports/presentation/meeting materials
- Newsletters/brochures/fact sheets
- Frequently Asked Questions

4.1.6 Project Email Address

The purpose of the project email address is to provide an additional form of communication between the project team and the public. The project email address has been established by Mn/DOT to seek questions and comments from the public. The email address is: MWRRIPhase7@state.mn.us. All comments will be documented and, as appropriate, responded to.