



Great River Rail Commission

2024 Work Plan and Budget: Approved September 7, 2023

1. Passenger and Freight Rail Advocacy Activities

The Great River Rail Commission (Commission) will work with the Minnesota Department of Transportation, Amtrak, state and local government stakeholder partners, and others to continue the advancement and development of more frequent and faster passenger train service between Chicago and Saint Paul along the Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago Rail Corridor. To accomplish this, the Commission will do the following:

- Monitor progress and offer guidance on the development and implementation of the Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago Second Train and other passenger rail service initiatives.
- Provide a means for public engagement and an outlet for public information during the development and implementation of the Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago Second Train and other passenger rail studies where public engagement is part of the work scope.
- Monitor progress and offer guidance on freight rail studies that impact the Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago Rail Corridor and rail activities in the United States that could have an impact on the Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago Second Train.
- Provide comments on the draft Minnesota State Rail Plan during its update cycle.

General activities will be led by Commission staff working with agency staff to advise the Commission on when its involvement is needed.

2. Legislative Advocacy and Coordination

As needed, the Commission will continue to develop policy positions and work cooperatively with the Minnesota Department of Transportation and other passenger rail stakeholders to continue the advancement and development of more frequent and faster passenger train service in the Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago Rail Corridor. To accomplish this, the Commission will do the following:

- Lobby the Minnesota legislature and the Governor's Office in support of Minnesota Department of Transportation passenger rail project and program funding requests and policy initiatives, or to write separate bills.
- Develop advocacy materials and messaging to support Minnesota Department of Transportation passenger rail project and program funding requests and policy initiatives, or separate bills written by the Commission.
- Lobby the Minnesota legislature and Governor's Office in opposition to funding cuts or policy initiatives that could be detrimental to the Commission's position on passenger rail in the Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago Rail Corridor.
- Attend legislative hearings and arrange for Commission members to testify.
- Advocate for rail crossing improvements and other improvements that improve speed, safety and reliability of passenger and freight trains.
- Advocate for customer service staff and capital investments at stations to provide a better customer experience.





- Coordinate lobbying efforts and advocacy efforts with government affairs staff from the Minnesota Department of Transportation, Amtrak, state and local government stakeholder partners, and others.
- Consider membership in similar advocacy organizations such as the Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Commission and Rail Passengers Association.

Advocacy and legislative coordination activities will be led by Commission staff working with the Chair to identify which items merit Commission involvement. If Commission involvement is merited and time allows, the items will be brought to the Commission for discussion. If time does not allow, the Chair will determine whether the Commission shall be involved. In all instances, the Chair shall be the first option as spokesperson for the Commission.

3. Public Engagement

The Commission's public engagement activities will be developed to promote and increase public awareness of the Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago Second Train and any future phases of work, the larger Midwest Regional Rail Plan as it connects to and complements passenger rail service in the Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago Rail Corridor, and the importance of investing in more frequent and faster passenger rail service. These activities will be separate from but often coordinated with the public engagement activities by Minnesota Department of Transportation, Amtrak and others. Specific Commission activities will include:

- Promote the Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago Second Train to build awareness of the service and boost ridership.
- Promote the implementation of additional proposed passenger rail service in the Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago Rail Corridor that is shown in the Federal Railroad Administration's Midwest Regional Rail Plan and Amtrak's Connects US plan.
- Maintain and update the Commission website and social media channels. Send e-newsletters to a list of key stakeholders and news releases to media.
- Develop advocacy materials for distribution to legislators, key stakeholders, and the public.
- Revise the Strategic Communications Plan as needed, including maintaining and updating a list of key stakeholders and media.
- Assist in planning and holding special events, including presentations to civic and community groups throughout the Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago Rail Corridor.
- Support for similar advocacy organizations (e.g., All Aboard Minnesota).
- Facilitate meetings of the Business Roundtable groups in the Twin Cities, Red Wing, Winona, and La Crosse and assist in their development into an advocacy subcommittee to the Commission.
- Maintain communications with the Commission, area media, other passenger rail advocacy groups and the public about Commission meetings and outreach events, state legislation and federal laws affecting passenger rail funding and policy, and other news related to passenger and freight rail.





Public engagement activities will be led by Commission staff working with the Commission's public communications consultant. Public engagement strategies will continue to be discussed with the Chair before being brought to the Commission.

4. Management, Policy, and Administrative Activities

Commission activities will include but not be limited to the following:

- Prepare and adopt the 2025 Work Plan and Budget.
- Review insurance needs and procure appropriate insurance.
- Provide Commission and staff administration.
- Manage Commission finances and expenses.

Management, policy, and administrative activities will be led by Commission staff. The deliverables will continue to be brought before the Commission for their approval.





2024 Budget/Expenditures

Expenditure Category	Amount
Advocacy and Legislative Coordination	
- Materials	\$250
- Special Events/Mileage ¹	\$250
Subtotal	\$500
State Legislative Lobbying	\$0
Public Communications Assistance	
- Implement 2024 GRRC Work Plan	\$35,000
Management/Administration	
- Federal Trademark	\$750
- Insurance	\$1,250
Subtotal	\$2,000
Contingency	\$2,500
Total	\$40,000

¹ Travel to out of state events/conferences would be the responsibility of each individual member.

Note: Multiple Financial Parties currently have contracts with federal and state lobbyists. These lobbyists may provide federal and state lobbying services as an in-kind contribution of the Financial Party members to the Commission.





Final 2024 Revenue

Revenue Source	Amount
Federal Appropriations	\$0
Subtotal	\$0
State Appropriations	\$0
Subtotal	\$0

Financial Party	Percentage ¹	2024 Contribution
Goodhue County	11.5%	\$4,600
La Crosse Area Planning Committee	14.7%	\$5,880
Ramsey County	41.0%	\$16,400
Wabasha County	4.7%	\$1,880
Washington County	15.2%	\$6,080
Winona County	12.9%	\$5,160
TOTAL	100.0%	\$40,000

¹ Per the Amended and restated Joint Powers Agreement (adopted 2017) and rounded to the nearest tenth, the Financial Parties' contribution is based on the following formula: 50% based on the proportionate share of population among all Financial Parties; 10% based on the proportionate share of corridor mileage among all Financial Parties; 31% based on the location of existing or planned high speed passenger rail stations within the Financial Parties' jurisdiction; and 9% allocated equally among the Financial Parties.

