



MnDOT Northeastern Minnesota Transportation Update

FIELD HEARING

**Of the Minnesota House of Representatives
Transportation Finance & Policy Division**

December 11, 2019

Twin Ports Interchange (TPI) 2020-23



Project goals

- **Enhance safety by eliminating blind merges and left exits**
 - Move left exits to the right
 - Relocate merges
- **Replace aging infrastructure**
 - Reconstruct weight restricted and non-redundant bridges
 - Reduce maintenance and closures
 - Eliminate some bridge structure
- **Improve freight mobility**
 - Allow oversize/overweight freight on the Interstate
 - First and last mile to port

Project Budget vs. Project Cost

Project Budget \$343M

Project Cost Estimate \$443M

- How do we manage the budget gap?
- MnDOT will need to defer some planned work in order to stay within our available budget
- MnDOT and FHWA want to ensure use of the BUILD grant, so we will continue to move forward with a portion of this project in 2020



Portions deferred

- Garfield Avenue/I-535 Interchange
- Highway 53 bridge from West Superior Street to 19th Avenue West

Blatnik Bridge Replacement



- Blatnik is one of two bridges that connects Duluth and Superior, and is Minnesota's second longest bridge
- Carries 33,000 cars per day; primary commuter route between Duluth and Superior, Wisconsin
- Jointly owned and managed by MnDOT and WisDOT
- MnDOT is project lead agency

Blatnik Bridge Replacement

Project needs

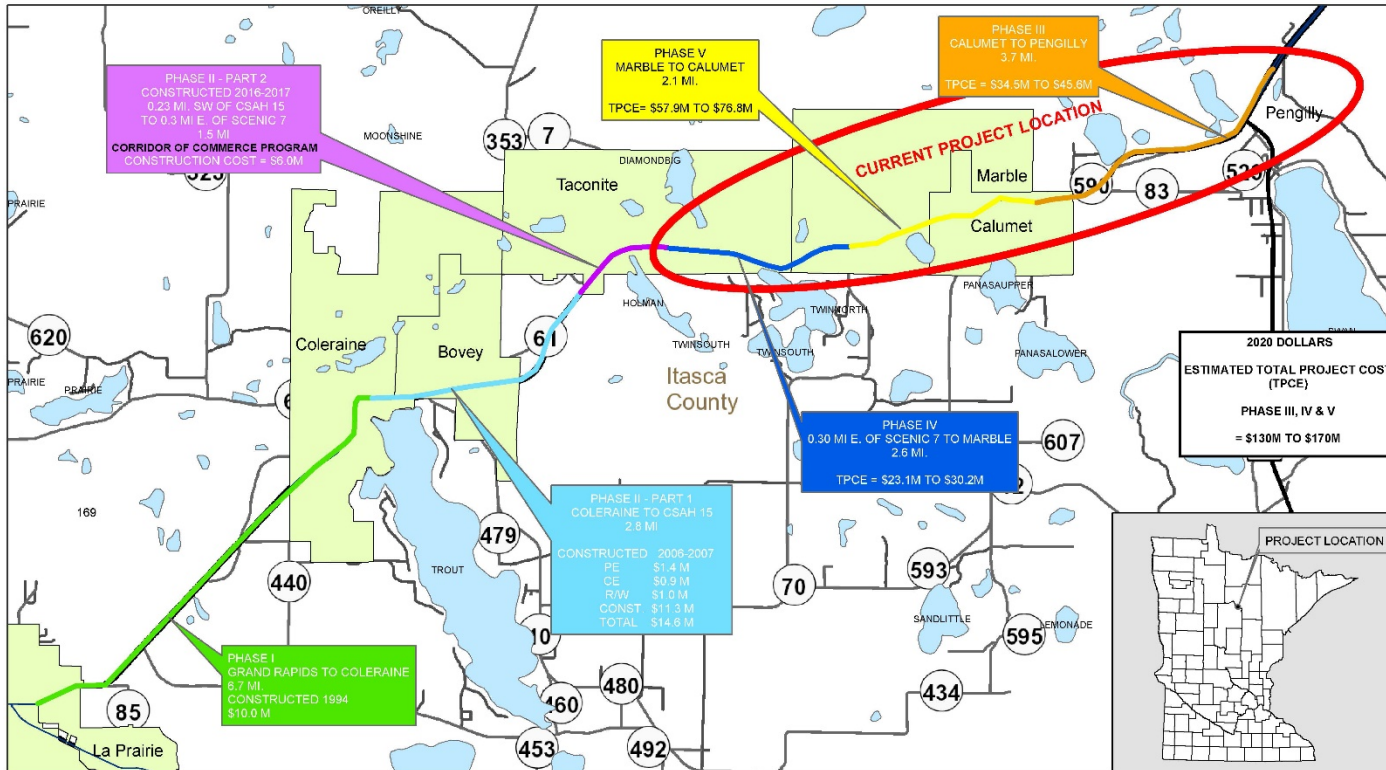
- Significant deterioration in truss elements
- A safety inspection is required every year
- Reactionary structural repair needed every 4 years
- Non-redundant bridge structure
- Permit load restricted

Timeline

- Environmental Documentation: 2019-22
- Wisconsin Legislative Approval to Begin Final Design/Construction Phase: 2022
- Design: 2022-26
- Construction: 2027-30
- **Cost: Too Early to Know!**



Cross Range Expressway



- Environmental work completed mid-1980s
- One project every 10 years since

Planned work:

- Safety improvement from Taconite to Pengilly in 2021 (turn lanes, sight distance): \$2.5M
- Planning and environmental linkages study: public engagement, environmental scan, updated cost estimates 2020-21: \$250K

CROSS - RANGE EXPRESSWAY GRAND RAPIDS TO PENGILLY



Mission Creek Bridge Replacement



Mission Creek Bridge Replacement



- May 2017-bridge replacement began
- Inadvertent cemetery disturbance stopped work (Section 106 adverse effect)
- October 2019-cemetery recovery completed

Remaining Work:

- Delineate cemetery
- Restore and landscape disturbed area
- Determine mitigation
- Complete environmental to determine bridge replacement alternative which avoids resource
- Complete design and construct new bridge
- Estimated completion: fall 2024



Weather Resiliency

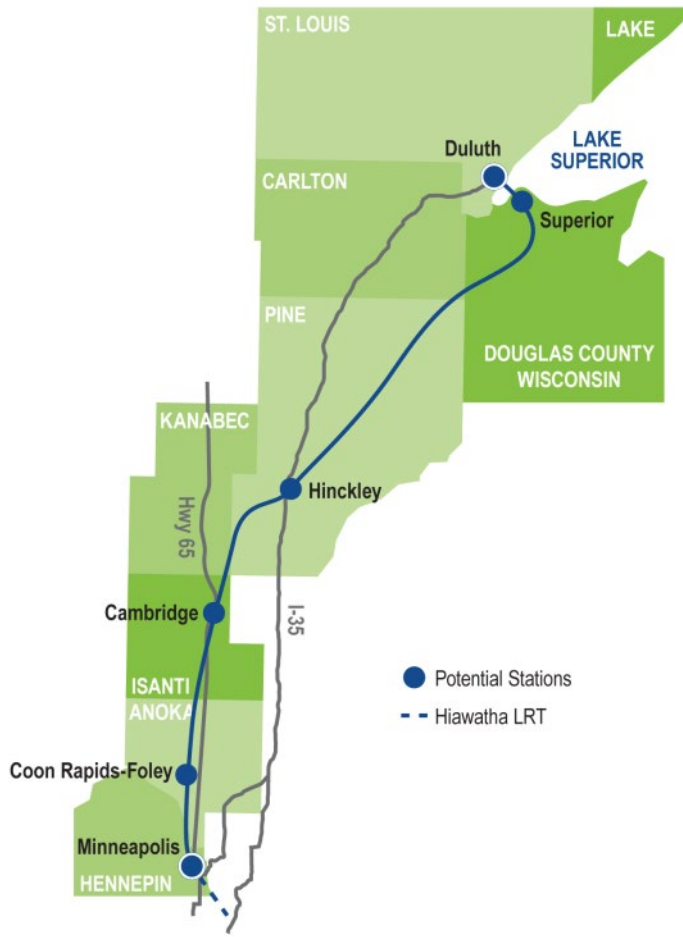


Weather Resiliency

Recent Events:

- 2012 flooding – MnDOT cost \$75+M
- Wind storms 2016 and 2017 – small impacts for MnDOT, large local impacts
- Localized flooding in 2018
- Snow events – like last week – over 20” all at once!
- Flood mitigation in progress:
 - Replacement of South Fork of Nemadji River box culvert with bridge
 - Replacement of Mission Creek box culvert with bridge

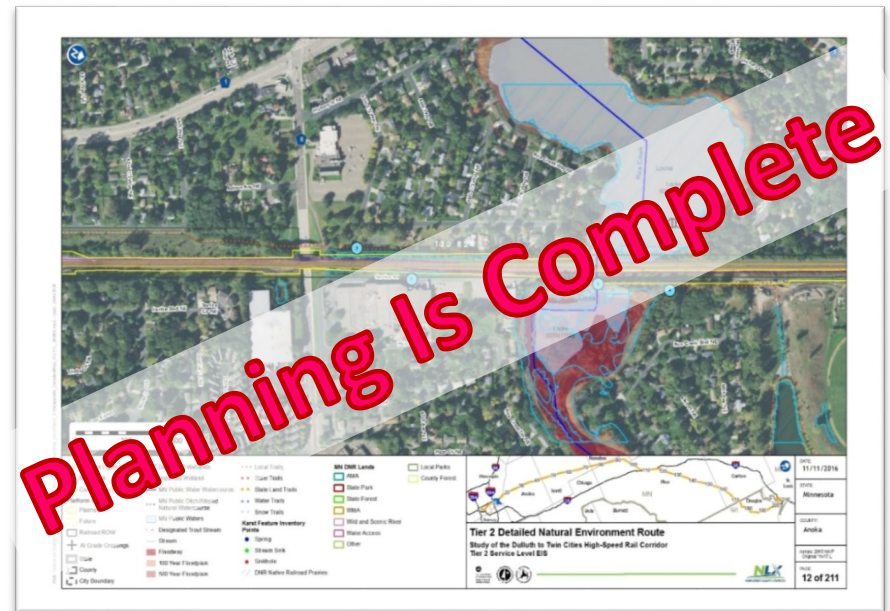
What is Northern Lights Express?



- Intercity passenger rail service
 - Between Minneapolis Target Field Station and the Depot in Duluth
- Four intermediate stations
 - Coon Rapids, Cambridge, Hinckley, Superior
- 152 miles
- Existing BNSF track
- Regional connections
- Four daily round trips
 - 90 mph top speed
 - 60 mph average speed
 - 2 ½ hour travel time (end to end)
- New modern equipment

Where Are We?

- Final Service Development Plan
 - Approved – February 2018
- Tier 2 – Project Level EA
 - Identified a preferred alignment
 - PE for required track improvements
 - Assessed impacts of the alignment footprint
 - Documented mitigation commitments
 - **FONSI – February 20, 2018**
 - **Findings of Fact – March 2, 2018**



What is Next?

- Secure capital funding
- Secure operating funding
- Complete all necessary agreements with BNSF and Amtrak
- Procure equipment
- Final design
- Construction
- Implementation of service



- **Service could begin about 2½ years from initiation of final design**



Thank you again!

Duane Hill, District Engineer

MnDOT District One

Duane.hill@state.mn.us

(218) 725-2704