

Subject Northstar Commuter Rail extension project

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Overview

This bill makes appropriations to the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) for project development to extend Northstar Commuter Rail service to St. Cloud. The appropriations consist of (1) \$850,000 from the general fund in fiscal year 2020, as onetime funds; and (2) an unspecified amount (to be determined) from general obligation bond proceeds.

The general fund appropriation is for assessment and analysis of the project, and is onetime funding. The appropriation from bond proceeds is for predesign and design work, with any remaining funds available for some subsequent project development steps including engineering and environment analysis, and land acquisition.

Once necessary project development is performed, MnDOT is directed to seek to begin negotiating with BNSF Railway Company on using additional rail track (Northstar operates on BNSF track under an agreement with the company).

The bill also requires legislative reports from MnDOT on the commuter rail extension project, with various reporting details specified. The first report is due by October 1, 2020, and a revised report is due by October 1, 2021.