

The NCDA provides regular updates to supporters on new information about the Northstar Commuter Rail project. For more information, go to www.mn-GetOnBoard.com.

State, Northstar and BNSF Sign Key Agreement

The state of Minnesota, the Northstar Corridor Development Authority (NCDA) and BNSF Railway Company (BNSF) signed a key agreement March 7 that defines Northstar's rights to operate along BNSF train tracks between Big Lake and downtown Minneapolis.

This completes NCDA negotiations with BNSF, achieving one of the final Federal Transit Administration requirements necessary to secure federal matching funds for construction of the project.

As a result of the successful negotiations: A purchase and sale agreement provides the state the right to use BNSF train tracks for commuter rail in perpetuity. A joint use agreement between BNSF and the Metropolitan Council outlines the terms and conditions for use of the track. And a service agreement identifies the terms under which BNSF may commit to operate the trains. A cooperation agreement also was approved recently that provides that the Metropolitan Council will be in charge of overseeing Northstar operations. The Metropolitan Council currently operates Hiawatha LRT, which will connect with Northstar in downtown Minneapolis.

For more information on the agreement, visit "News and Updates" at www.mn-GetOnBoard.com.

President Bush Recommends Northstar Funding

President George W. Bush recommended federal funding for construction of the Northstar Commuter Rail project as part of his fiscal year 2008 budget. The budget recommended a total of \$9.4 billion for transit programs nationwide to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA).

"President Bush's recommendation positions Northstar well among the very competitive list of public transit projects seeking final federal approval," said Dan Erhart, chair of the Northstar Corridor Development Authority (NCDA). "We're hopeful the FTA will approve federal matching funds for Northstar this summer so construction can continue toward Northstar's planned opening in late 2009."

In the coming months, Northstar project engineers will complete the final design phase and address FTA questions. It is hoped that the FTA will recommend to Congress this summer that Northstar receive a full funding grant agreement. The agreement must undergo 60 days of congressional review before it can be approved. The President's budget recommendation ensures that Northstar can continue through this process.

Construction Updates and Next Steps for Northstar

The Northstar Corridor Development Authority (NCDA) is finalizing the steps of the Northstar project necessary to secure a 50 percent funding match from the federal government later this year. In the meantime, preliminary construction has already begun to make way for Northstar. On Jan. 4, \$32 million in bonds were sold to allow for the purchase of easements from BNSF for use of its train tracks.



Here's more progress you can expect in the coming months:

- Completion of utility relocation for and the start of construction on a four-block extension of the Hiawatha Light Rail line to connect with Northstar in downtown Minneapolis.
- Construction of stations and park-and-ride lots in Big Lake, Elk River, Anoka, Coon Rapids/Riverdale and downtown Minneapolis; the NCDA is seeking remaining funding for the Fridley station.
- Construction of a vehicle maintenance facility in Big Lake.
- Negotiations to buy locomotives and passenger train cars.

For continual updates on construction progress, visit "Construction Updates" at www.mn-GetOnBoard.com.

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2007 Minnesota Legislative Session

While the state's bonding for Northstar was approved by the Legislature in 2005 and 2006, legislators will consider the following items this session:

- \$250,000 to work on Phase Two to extend Northstar to the St. Cloud/Rice areas.
- A sales tax exemption on construction costs, commuter rail trains and fuel.

NCDA Has New Leadership

Anoka County Commissioner Dan Erhart and Sherburne County Commissioner Ewald Petersen recently assumed positions as the new chair and vice chair, respectively, of the Northstar Corridor Development Authority (NCDA).

Erhart replaces Benton County Commissioner Duane Grandy, who served as the NCDA chair since 2003 before retiring in December. Erhart served as vice chair in 2006. Both Erhart and Petersen have been members of the NCDA since 1997.

"I can't say enough about the tremendous leadership Duane provided on behalf of the Northstar Commuter Rail project," Erhart said. "He engineered this project through very complicated local, state and federal approval processes. We're all looking forward to a successful opening in late 2009."

Commissioners Erhart and Petersen assumed their new positions in January. For a complete list of NCDA members, click on "Overview" at www.mn-GetOnBoard.com.

Mark Your Calendars: Northstar Night at the Twins Aug. 3, 2007



Representatives from Northstar Corridor chambers of commerce presented an honorary "ticket to ride" to Twins President Dave St. Peter (left) on the field before the Sept. 9, 2006 Twins game.

The Minnesota Twins will host another Northstar Night on Friday, Aug. 3, at its game against the Cleveland Indians.

The Northstar Corridor Development Authority is planning a pre-game event and a dedicated seating section for Northstar fans during the game. You'll also get a chance to learn more about Northstar's progress during an on-field presentation and other opportunities.

Last summer's Northstar Night was a great success. Northstar supporters were part of a sell-out crowd of fans who cheered on the Twins to victory against Detroit on Sept. 9.

So mark your calendar for Aug. 3 and come on out for a new Minnesota tradition with Northstar and the Twins! Watch for more details coming soon.

Find Out How Much You'll Save by Riding Northstar Commuter Rail

New to the Northstar Web site:

In one quick step, the Northstar Commuter Calculator will reveal your savings from riding Northstar when it opens late in 2009. Just point and click! Go to www.mn-GetOnBoard.com and follow the "How Much Will I Save?" link.



The Calculator also includes computer-animated video of the train and every planned Phase One Northstar station so you can get a preview of Northstar.



The Commuter Calculator contains many computer-animated videos of Northstar, such as this one of the planned Coon Rapids/Riverdale Station.