

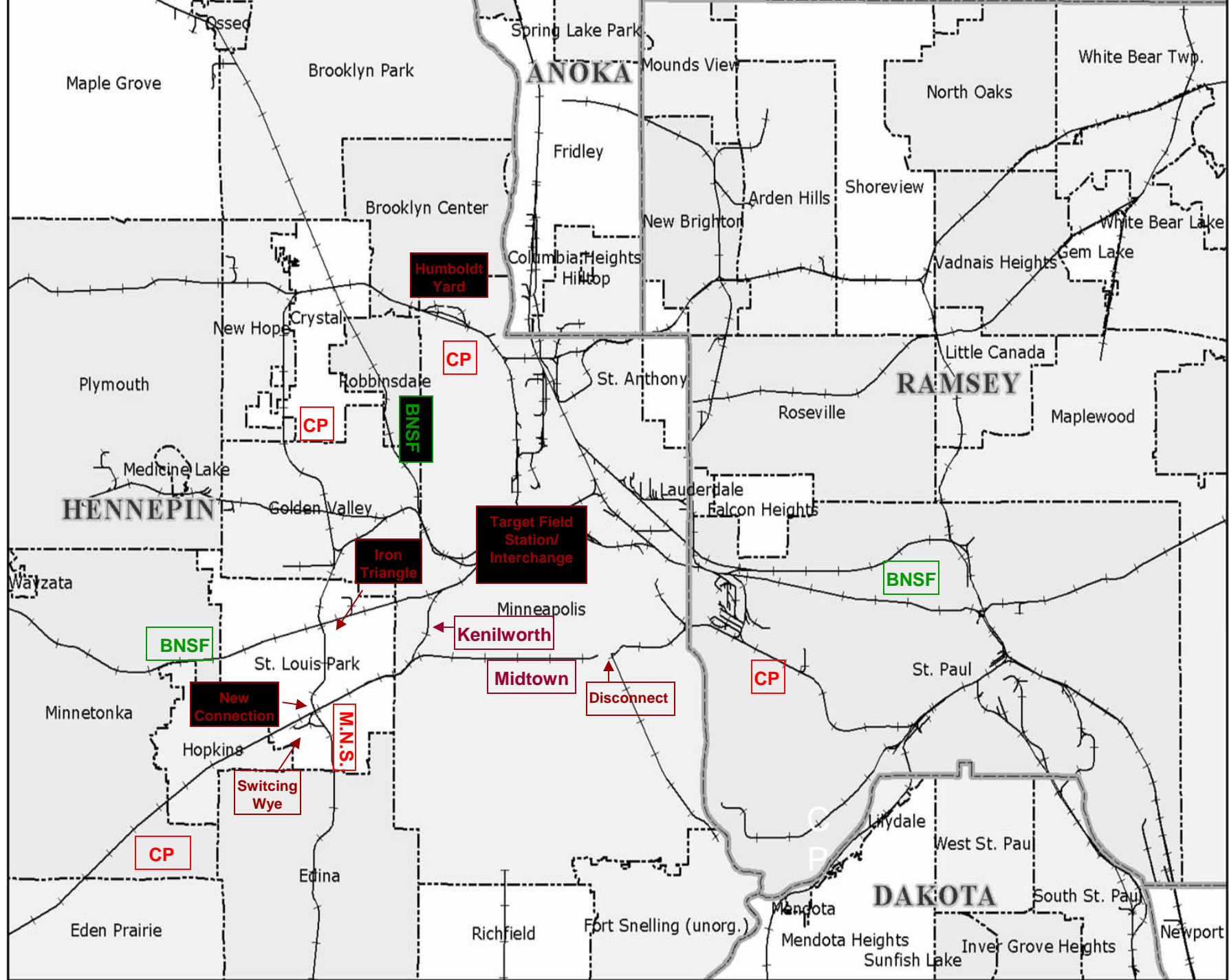
# Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority (HCRRA)

---

## STAFF REPORT ON FREIGHT RAIL RELOCATION

August 16, 2011

The origin of the current freight rail issue in St. Louis Park & Minneapolis was the severing of the freight rail line in the 29th Street/Midtown Corridor in the 1990's.



# Freight Rail Studies

---

1. TCWR Freight Rail Realignment Study, TKDA, 2009
2. Evaluation of TCWR Routing Alternatives, Amphar Consulting, 2010
3. Analysis of Freight Rail/LRT Coexistence, R L Banks, 2010
4. Freight Rail & LRT Coexistence, HDR Engineering, 2009
5. Freight Rail Technical Memoranda : to the City of St. Louis Park, S.E.H., 2011
6. MN&S Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW), to MN Dept of Transportation (MnDOT), Kimley-Horn & Associates 2011

# TCWR Freight Rail Realignment Study, TKDA, 2009

---

Evaluated 6 potential routes for rail service between southern/western suburbs & St. Paul

Kenilworth Corridor – retain freight rail service in the active Kenilworth Corridor

Midtown Corridor – reinstate freight rail service in the Midtown Corridor

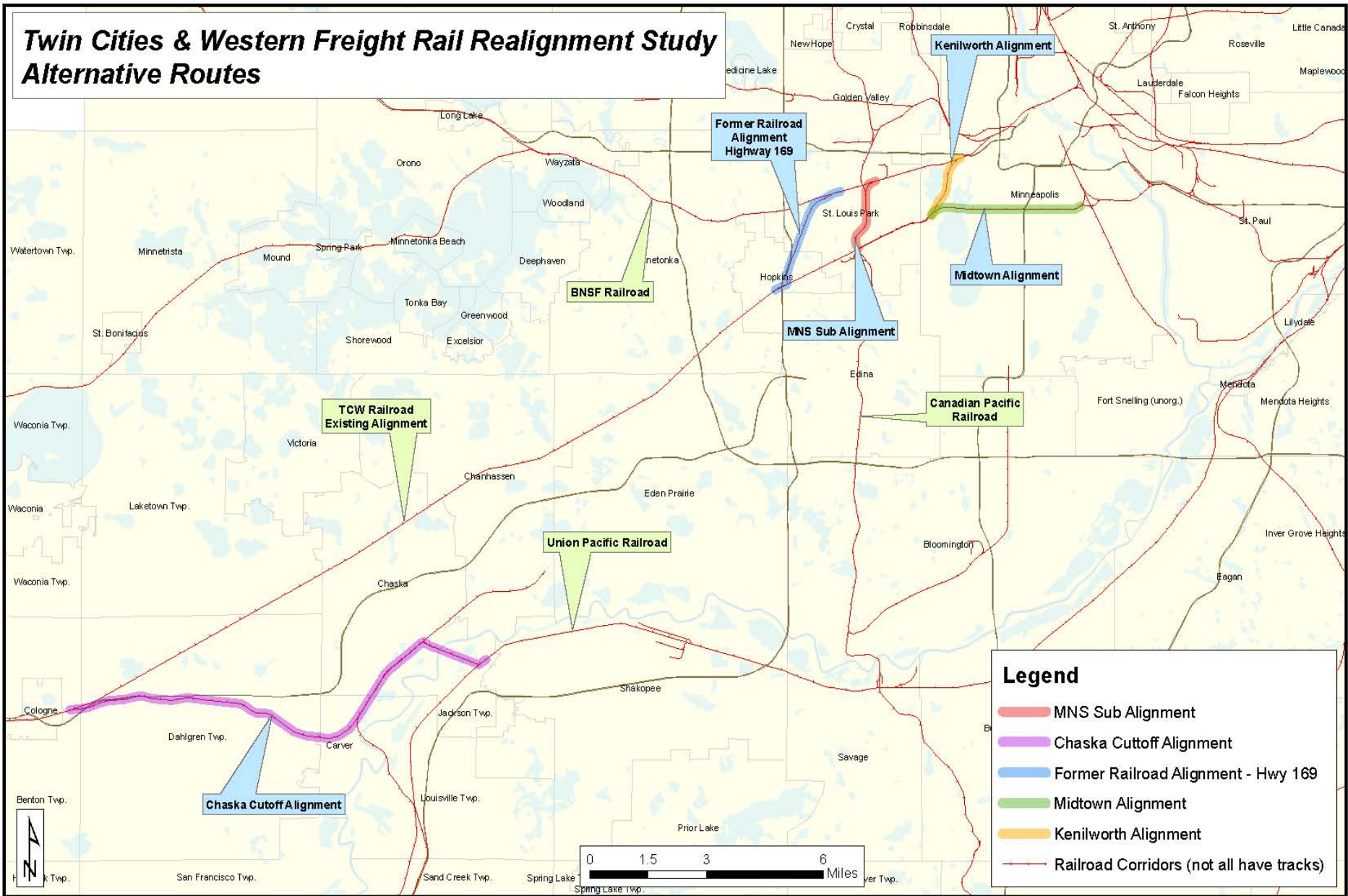
MN&S Line – relocate freight rail service to the active MN&S Line

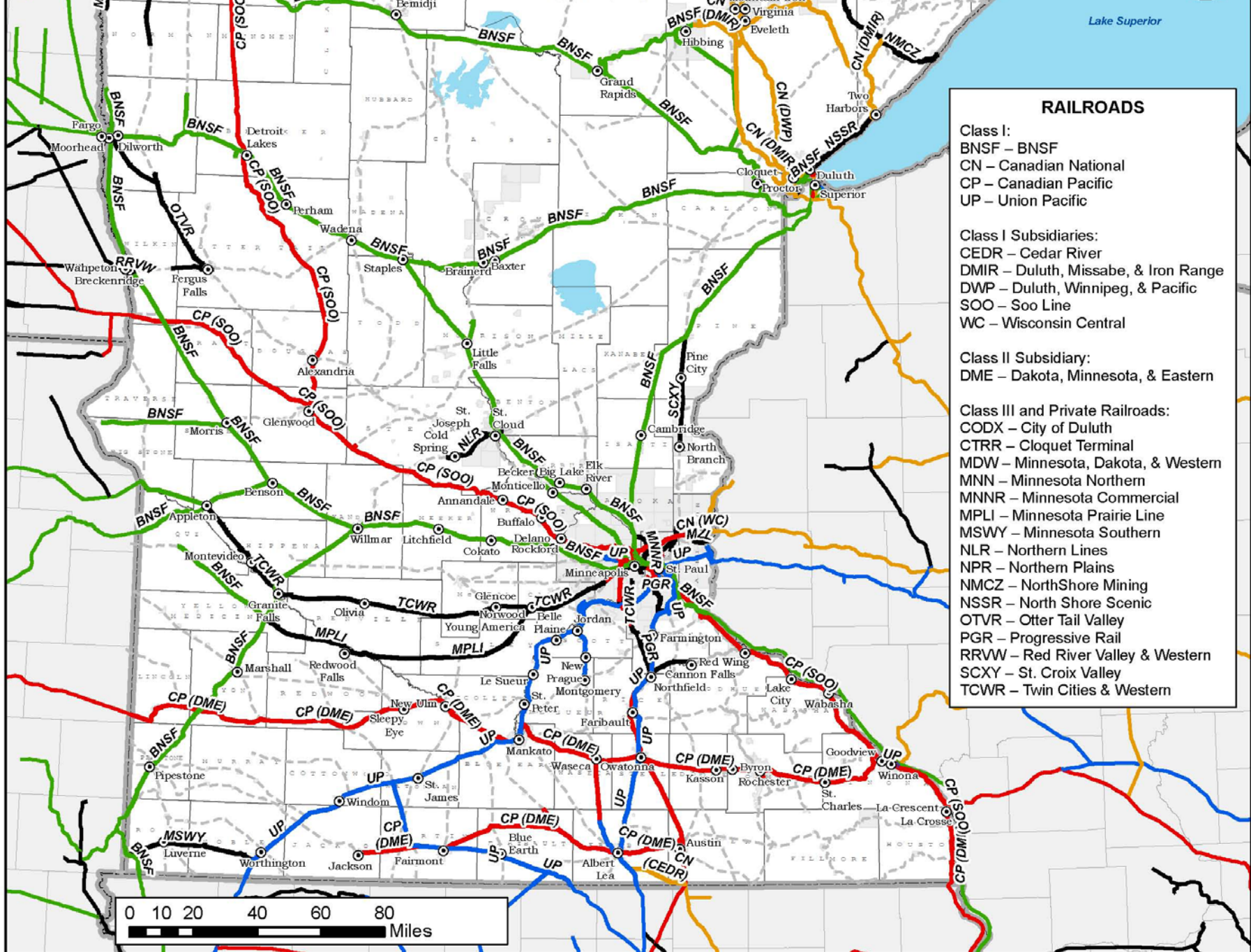
Chaska Cut-off – reinstate freight rail service via Chaska

Highway 169 – reinstate freight rail service along the Highway 169 Corridor

Western Connector – reroute freight rail service to the active Western Connector

# Twin Cities & Western Freight Rail Realignment Study Alternative Routes





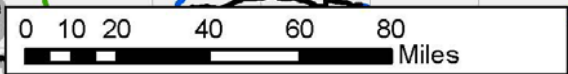
### RAILROADS

**Class I:**  
 BNSF – BNSF  
 CN – Canadian National  
 CP – Canadian Pacific  
 UP – Union Pacific

**Class I Subsidiaries:**  
 CEDR – Cedar River  
 DMIR – Duluth, Missabe, & Iron Range  
 DWP – Duluth, Winnipeg, & Pacific  
 SOO – Soo Line  
 WC – Wisconsin Central

**Class II Subsidiary:**  
 DME – Dakota, Minnesota, & Eastern

**Class III and Private Railroads:**  
 CODX – City of Duluth  
 CTRR – Cloquet Terminal  
 MDW – Minnesota, Dakota, & Western  
 MNN – Minnesota Northern  
 MNNR – Minnesota Commercial  
 MPLI – Minnesota Prairie Line  
 MSWY – Minnesota Southern  
 NLR – Northern Lines  
 NPR – Northern Plains  
 NMCZ – NorthShore Mining  
 NSSR – North Shore Scenic  
 OTVR – Otter Tail Valley  
 PGR – Progressive Rail  
 RRVW – Red River Valley & Western  
 SCXY – St. Croix Valley  
 TCWR – Twin Cities & Western



# TCWR Freight Rail Realignment Study, TKDA, 2009

---

## Findings/Conclusions:

MN&S recommended with appropriate mitigation for impacts

## Rationale:

- ❖ MN&S is an active freight rail line
- ❖ Required freight rail agreements exist
- ❖ Few permits required
- ❖ Provides flexibility for future freight rail operations
- ❖ Relatively low cost



# Evaluation of TCWR Routing Alternatives, Amphar Consulting, 2010

---

In-depth analysis of 4 alternative routes for TCW operations  
in response to St. Louis Park Council resolution 10-071

Midtown Corridor – reinstate freight rail service in the Midtown Corridor

Chaska Cut-off – reinstate freight rail service via Chaska

Highway 169 – reinstate freight rail service along the Highway 169  
Corridor

Western Connector – reroute freight rail service to the active Western  
Connector

# Evaluation of TCWR Routing Alternatives, Amphar Consulting, 2010

---

## Findings/Conclusions:

None of the four routes would be a viable permanent location for freight rail service between southern/western suburbs & St. Paul

## Rationale:

- ❖ Negative impacts on freight rail operations
- ❖ High capital costs
- ❖ Significant acquisitions/displacements
- ❖ Requirement for lengthy segments of new track construction
- ❖ Challenges to secure necessary permits & agreements

# Analysis of Freight Rail/LRT Coexistence, R L Banks, 2010

---

Analysis of the viability of coexistence of freight rail,  
light rail & commuter bike trail

- ❖ Freight rail, LRT & Trail at-grade
- ❖ Freight rail & LRT at-grade, trail relocated
- ❖ Freight rail & LRT at-grade, trail elevated
- ❖ Freight rail & trail at-grade, LRT elevated
- ❖ Freight rail & trail at-grade, trail in tunnel
- ❖ Freight rail & LRT share single track, trail at-grade
- ❖ Freight rail, LRT (Single track) & trail at-grade

# Analysis of Freight Rail/LRT Coexistence, R L Banks, 2010

---

## Findings/conclusions:

None of the alternatives were considered to be viable.

## Rationale:

- ❖ Adverse transportation system impacts
- ❖ Adverse community impacts
- ❖ Significant number of required acquisitions/displacements
- ❖ Challenges to secure required permits, agreements & approvals

# Supplemental analysis of co-location of freight rail & LRT, TKDA & HDR, 2009

---

In response to St. Louis Park staff request, further analysis of freight rail & LRT co-location potential in the Kenilworth corridor to further inform policy makers & the public

## Findings/conclusions:

**TKDA** concluded that coexistence of the freight rail & LRT lines would require acquisitions in excess of \$100 million & potential additional crossing of freight rail & LRT, concluding that co-location is not viable in the Kenilworth corridor

**HDR** concluded that due to space constraints & required property acquisitions it was not viable for freight rail, light rail & the commuter bike trail to coexist in Kenilworth corridor

# S.E.H. Analysis, 2011, conducted for the City of St. Louis Park

---

Reviewed & analyzed previously conducted freight rail studies for the City Council

Focused on 4 alternatives or scenarios:

- ❖ Kenilworth: co-location of freight rail, LRT & trail
- ❖ Kenilworth: co-location of freight rail & LRT with the trail moved
- ❖ Western connector: Utilizing freight rate subsidies for TCW to operate on routes west of the metropolitan area
- ❖ MN&S

# S.E.H. Analysis, 2011, conducted for the City of St. Louis Park

---

## Findings/conclusions:

- ❖ The western connector was found to be infeasible - it would add substantially to the operating costs for TCW & would limit TCW's ability to transport grain to the port in Savage
- ❖ The western connector was found to be potentially viable for coal trains only

# S.E.H. Analysis, 2010, conducted for the City of St. Louis Park

---

Co-location of freight rail & LRT in the Kenilworth corridor – issues needing resolution:

- ❖ Parkland impacts
- ❖ LRT interface,
- ❖ Highway 100 crossing,
- ❖ Trail alignment,
- ❖ Southwest LRT DEIS,
- ❖ Land acquisition requirements,
- ❖ LRT station impacts &
- ❖ Midtown streetcar/connector impacts.



# S.E.H. Analysis, 2011, conducted for the City of St. Louis Park

---

## Comparisons between MN&S & Kenilworth:

- ❖ Grade Change
- ❖ Curves
- ❖ Right - of Way (ROW)
- ❖ At-grade crossings
- ❖ Housing / Land Use
- ❖ Wooddale and Beltline Station

# MN&S Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW)

---

Prepared for the Minnesota Department of  
Transportation, Kimley-Horn, Inc., 2011

The EAW was prepared to assist the state (MnDOT) in determining if there are significant impacts of re-routing freight rail from Kenilworth to MN&S that require the preparation of an environmental impact statement (EIS).

# MN&S Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW)

---

EAW identified multiple mitigation measures to address noise, vibration & safety impacts that would be included in the MSN project.

Also states that “The HCRRA will work with the City of St. Louis Park & project stakeholders to review & evaluate feasible & prudent mitigation measures ... that go beyond the mitigation measures committed to ... in this EAW...”

# MN&S Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW)

---

MnDOT Determination:

- ❖ “that the proposed action does not have the potential for significant environmental impact.”
- ❖ Environmental Impact Statement is not required.

# HCRRA Staff Analysis & Conclusion

---

Analysis focused on four areas:

- ❖ Freight rail operations & neighborhood improvements
- ❖ Transportation System Impacts/Benefits
- ❖ Economic Development/Transit Oriented Development (TOD)
- ❖ Southwest LRT Project

# HCRRA Staff Analysis & Conclusion

---

Staff evaluation & conclusion reflects a **preponderance of considerations** rather than reliance on one or two factors such as engineering or cost.

The **most viable** & therefore preferred route for **freight rail** is the **MN&S** line in St. Louis Park & the preferred location for **LRT** is in the **Kenilworth** corridor along with the Kenilworth Bike Trail - absent freight rail.

Copies of the draft staff report &  
presentation available at:

<http://www.hennepin.us/freightrail>