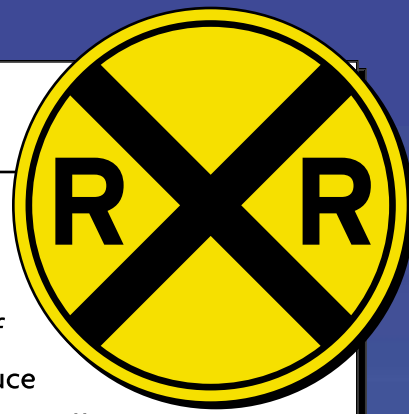


Northstar Facts



Northstar would reduce the daily hours of delay on Highway 10 by only 1% by 2020; would reduce daily hours of delay on I-94 by only 0.3%; and would reduce daily hours of delay in the entire region overall by only 0.4% (Northstar Environmental Impact Statement)

Northstar would reduce the daily vehicle miles traveled (VMT) on Highway 10 by 0.2% by 2020; on I-94 by 0.8%; in the region overall by 0.1% (Northstar Environmental Impact Statement)

Subsidy per passenger mile: Northstar commuter rail 64 cents, cars 7 cents (which includes the marginal social costs of cars such as pollution costs, accident costs, congestion costs, etc.) (Mark Delucchi, "Getting the Prices Right," Access Spring 2000: <http://www.uctc.net/access/access16lite.pdf>)

Fare revenues will cover 44% of annual operating costs; when you factor in the capital costs (annualized) fare revenues will cover only 15% of Northstar's annual costs – Northstar is 85% taxpayer-subsidized (MnDoT Office of Transit)

The number of severely congested miles on Highway 10/47 by 2020 is 23.2 with OR without Northstar (Northstar Environmental Impact Statement)

Northstar's 5,600 daily passenger trips is the equivalent of 5,000 daily vehicle trips (assuming 1.1 passengers per vehicle). To put this into context, the number of daily vehicle trips in the 7-county metro is increasing by nearly 100,000 annually. To keep congestion constant we'd need to build a new Northstar line every 18 days! (Calculated from Met Council vehicle trip forecasts)

Prepared and paid for by the **Taxpayers League Foundation**
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OFF THE RAILS ★

*Simple facts
you should know
about the
Northstar Rail
Proposal*

OFF THE RAILS

BIG LAKE



*Simple facts
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MINNEAPOLIS

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Minnesotans have heard a lot of promises lately about rail transit projects, and they sound pretty good. More choices, fewer cars, less congestion on our roads — a better quality of life. The promises sound pretty good, *but are they too good to be true?*

Riding your way out of congestion?

Minnesotans are frustrated by rising congestion levels — and with reason. The Twin Cities metro region has one of the fastest rising congestion levels in the nation. And with **one million new people expected to move into the Twin Cities** over the next 30 years, congestion will only get worse unless we plan for growth now.

Northstar's average speed is 36 m.p.h.

Citizens for Effective Transit, NCDA



Rising congestion is the problem. But is commuter rail the solution?

Let's look at the facts: according to the Northstar Corridor Development Authority, the people who want to build the train from Minneapolis to Big Lake, only about **2800** people will ride the train each day — **5600** daily trips.

That's about 2% of daily traffic on Highway 10. Less than 1% of the traffic in the Highway 10/47/194 corridor. That's not much when compared that one million people moving in, is it?

Northstar will have no impact on congestion

2020 Average Rush Hour Speeds

	Without Northstar	With Northstar
	28 M.P.H.	28 M.P.H.
	38 M.P.H.	38 M.P.H.

SOURCE: Northstar Environmental Impact Statement

How much does it cost?

Northstar Commuter Rail will have no impact on congestion or travel times in the north metro. **For most commuters, it will be as if Northstar had never been built.**

The average commuter on Northstar will cost taxpayers \$7,371 a year.

Calculated from MnDoT Office of Transit Data

That's not to say that Northstar won't have any benefits at all. Obviously, the people who choose to ride the train will do so because they believe it will improve their commute times, their quality of life, or simply reduce their stress level.

The question is, how much will it cost to get those benefits, and would it make more sense to put those dollars into better projects?

Northstar vs. Luxury Car Leases

	Annual Lease*
Annual Taxpayer Subsidy per Northstar Commuter	\$7,371
2004 Mercedes Benz SLK Convertible	\$6,540
2004 Lexus GS 300	\$6,336
2004 BMW 3-Series Sedan	\$6,192

* 5-year lease with \$0 down-payment. Source: Leasecompare.com

Consider this: according to the Minnesota Department of Transportation, the daily subsidy per passenger on Northstar will be \$31.37, meaning that the average commuter on Northstar will cost taxpayers \$7,371 a year. That's a pretty hefty cost!

In fact, it would be much cheaper to lease each Northstar commuter a new Mercedes convertible, or send two of her kids to Harvard or Princeton, than to build and operate the Northstar train!

Northstar vs. Education Costs

Northstar Commuter Lifetime Subsidy*	\$316,964
K-12 Public Education**	\$143,259
Harvard Education†	\$151,712
Princeton Education†	\$146,596

* Assumes working lifetime of 43 years.
 ** Source: NEA Rankings of the States, Estimates of School Statistics 2003; figure represents the Minnesota average public K-12 spending per pupil (ADM) in 2003 (\$11,020) x 13 years.
 † Source: Barron's Profile of American Colleges; includes tuition and room and board expenses over a 4-year period.

What else can we do?

It sounds simple, but it's rarely done: before you build something, you need to ask how much it will cost, what the benefits will be, and ask whether a better deal can be had.

With Northstar, the answers are pretty clear: **it's very expensive, doesn't buy much in terms of benefits, and other investments make a lot more sense.**

Look at the various studies: the first study on Northstar said that for every dollar invested, only 26 cents of benefit would be generated. The latest MnDoT study suggests 84 cents on the dollar return. It's as if taxpayers were throwing away money!

Is there an alternative? Yes! The Minnesota Department of Transportation has a plan on the books right NOW to expand the Highway 10/47 Corridor. It would give taxpayers a \$1.50 return for every dollar invested — **almost twice the return of Northstar.** And it would benefit every business and commuter along the corridor.

Hwy 10 Expansion is Best Bang for the Buck

	Return for every \$1 dollar spent
Highway 10 Expansion (MnDoT, 2001)	\$1.49
Northstar Rail (MnDoT, 2001)	\$0.84
Northstar Rail (Parsons-Brinkerhoff, 1998)	\$0.26

Expanding the northern highways will benefit **everyone** along the corridor. Not just 2800 people. Travel times will be cut, congestion reduced, goods transported efficiently, and economic development enhanced.

But if Northstar is built, that Highway expansion probably won't happen.



Only about **2800** people will ride the train each day...
5600 daily trips.