



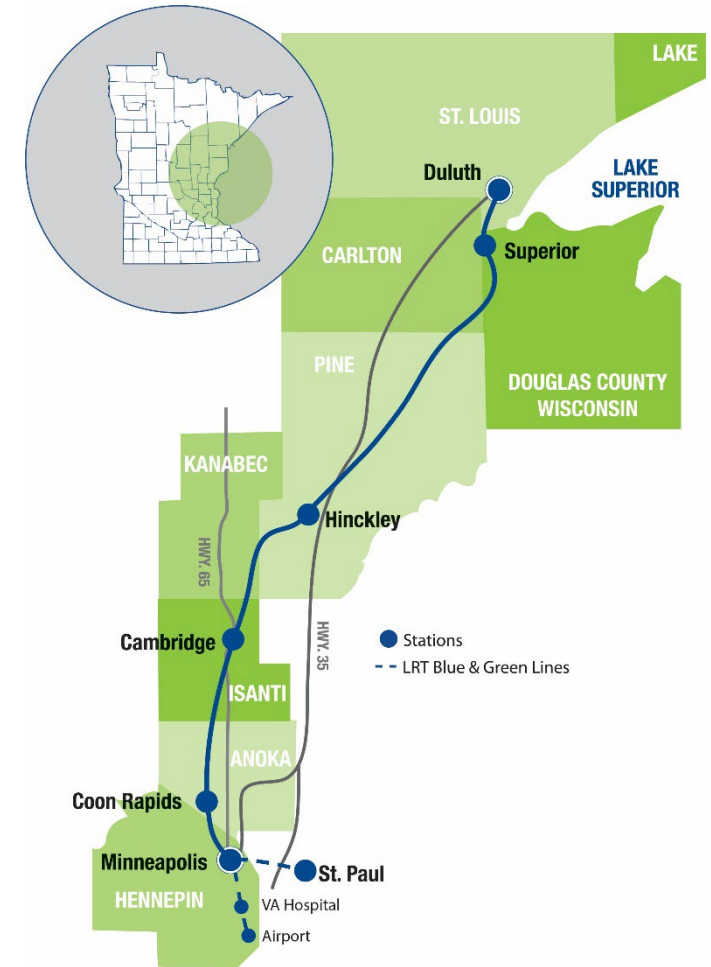
# ECRDC NLX Update

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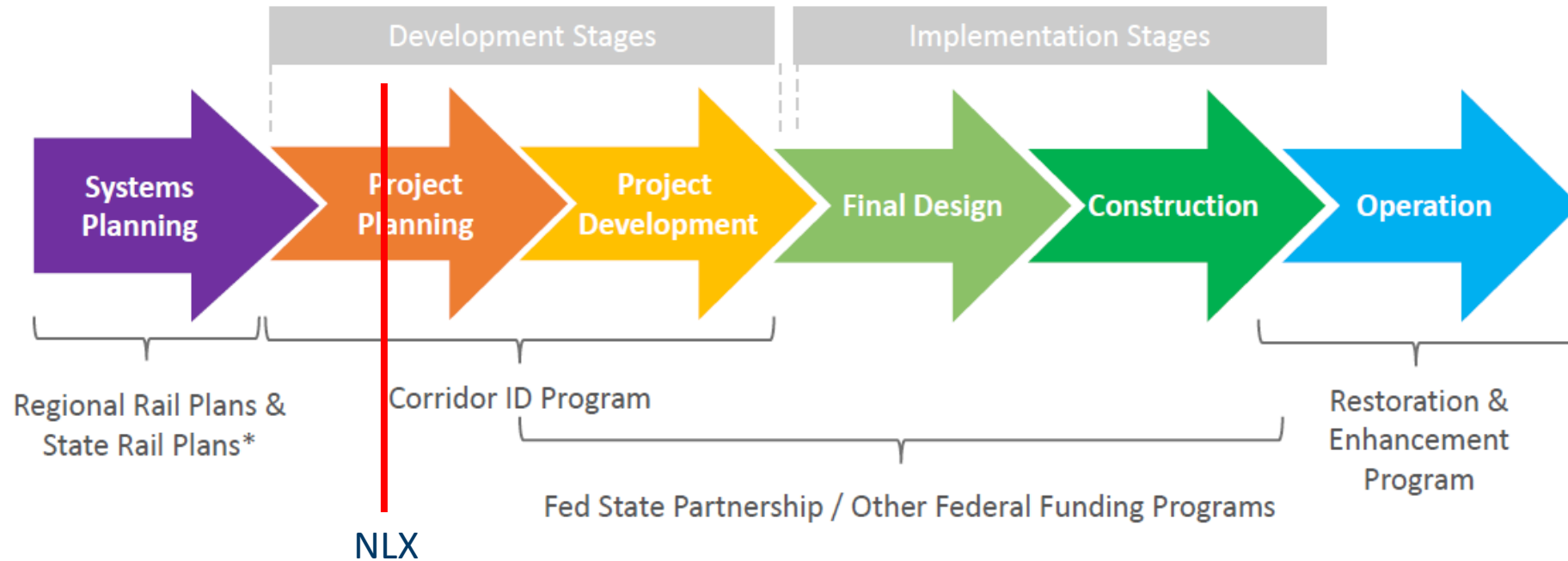
5/9/2024

- **Northern Lights Express (NLX)**

- Minneapolis-Duluth – 4 daily roundtrips
- 2.5-hour travel time – competitive with driving
- Capital improvements
  - Track upgrades and new and extended sidings
  - Upgrade signals
  - Grade crossing improvements
  - New and expanded stations
- *\$194.7 million State funding provides matching dollars to seek federal funding for*
  - Final design and construction
  - Purchase locomotives and cars – NLX and the Borealis



# FRA Project Lifecycle Stages and Funding Programs



\*Regional Rail Planning and State Rail Plans may be funded through other FRA funding programs.

Source: FRA

# Development Stages: Corridor ID Program

## Step 1

- *Scoping*
- FRA funds 100% up to \$500K

## Step 2

- *Service Development Planning (SDP)*
- FRA funds 90%

## Step 3

- *Preliminary Engineering*
- *NEPA*
- FRA funds 80%

# Implementation Stages

- *Apply for Federal capital grant*
  - May need to apply for multiple grants
- **Final Design**
  - Advance engineering to 100% design
  - Public engagement
  - Determine letting method
  - Construction agreements with BNSF
  - Prepare construction documents
- **Construction**
  - Letting
  - Construction – stations, track improvements, signals, grade crossing improvements, etc.
  - Inspection, systems testing and certification
- **Equipment Procurement**
  - Concurrent to final design and construction

# Operation Stage

- *Apply for Restoration & Enhancement grant*
  - Helps fund the first few years of operation while ridership and revenue grow
- Negotiate agreements with service provider
  - Includes everything from costs, to safety and ticket pricing to on-board amenities and promotion
- Transit connections coordination
- Operations testing
  - Equipment and schedules
  - Crew qualification
- ***Start service***

# Complimentary Projects

- **Hinkley Corridor Grade Crossing Elimination and Improvement Study**
  - Same corridor as NLX
  - \$600,000 study – partially funded by a Federal Railroad Administration grant
  - Planning study to identify opportunities to define and implement a multi-year, multi-phase program to
    - Identify improvements to increase safety of motorists and pedestrians
    - Eliminate trespassing
  - Focus is on freight, with an eye towards passenger rail
  - Study timeline mid-2024 through 2025
    - Grant agreement is in process

# Complimentary Projects

- **Moving Greater Minnesota Forward Program**
  - First innovative mobility incubator in the United States
  - Focus – rural, tribal and small urban areas (less than 200,000)
  - Goal – support partners with ideas to improve mobility in Greater Minnesota
  - Selected projects receive technical support to further develop their idea
  - East Central Regional Development Commission selected for Phase 1 (idea development)
    - Explore the creation of a transfer transit station or mobility hub to connect NLX to Timber Trails Transit and Tri-CAP Transit
  - April 20, 2024 – Applications due for Phase 2 (real world testing)



# Thanks!

For more information: <http://dot.state.mn.us/nlx>

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