

MANKATO – MISSISSIPPI RIVER TRANSMISSION PROJECT

INFORMATION SHEET
MINNESOTA

May 2025

About

The Mankato-Mississippi River Transmission Project is part of a portfolio of long-range electric transmission projects identified by the regional grid operator, Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO), to improve reliability, make the grid more resilient during extreme weather, and ensure customers receive the electricity they need to power their homes and businesses. The project will deliver new low-cost renewable energy and provide other regional benefits by building new and more resilient “backbone” electric transmission infrastructure to serve customers.

Project Details

The Mankato-Mississippi River Transmission Project includes about 120 miles of new and upgraded 345 kilovolt (kV) transmission lines between the existing Wilmarth Substation near Mankato, Minnesota, and a connection point at the Mississippi River near Kellogg, Minnesota.

It also includes building about 20 miles of new 161 kV transmission lines between the existing North Rochester Substation near Pine Island, Minnesota, and an existing transmission line northeast of Rochester, Minnesota, which is being relocated from its existing alignment to install the new 345 kV infrastructure.

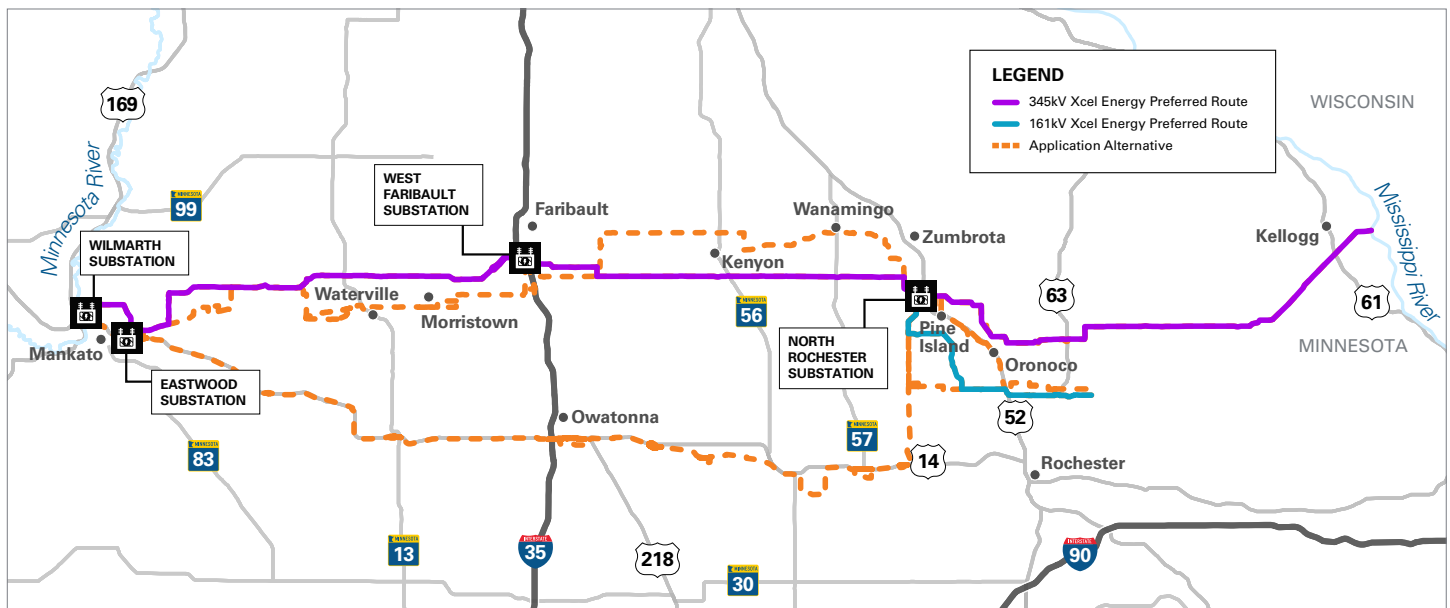
Routing Process

Our route selection process is a multi-step analysis that identifies route alternatives with minimal impacts to humans and the environment. Preliminary routes were evaluated to identify potential impacts, including proximity to residences, opportunities to share corridors (including roads and other transmission lines), impacts to agriculture, locations of protected lands and resources, aesthetics, and other concerns.

Once preliminary routes were identified, we gathered input from the public, local governments, Tribes and resource agencies to help refine the routes. Your feedback was especially helpful in the development of the preliminary routes, which then underwent a more detailed comparative analysis. This work informed the selection of the proposed routes that were included in the combined Certificate of Need and Route Permit application (Applications) filed with the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (MPUC) in April 2024.

Scoping Process

Upon accepting the Applications as complete, the MPUC and Department of Commerce – Energy Environmental Review and Analysis (EERA) began the regulatory review process. This process included a public comment period



This map is a general graphic and may not show exact locations.

and public scoping meetings, during which landowners provided feedback on what issues and other potential routes should be considered as part of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) that EERA prepared for the project. Landowners and other stakeholders were able to offer alternative routes for further consideration.

In October 2024, the PUC determined the scope of the EIS that will be prepared for the project. As part of this EIS scoping decision, new route alternatives are being studied in addition to the routes proposed in the initial Route Permit Application. The PUC considered comments submitted on the scope of the EIS as well as recommendations from EERA.

EIS Process

EERA published the Draft EIS for the project in May 2025. A comment period will be opened and public hearings will be held near the project area where landowners, local officials, and other stakeholders can provide comments about the project. Comments will be accepted on the Certificate of Need, Route Permit Application, any aspects of the route segments under consideration, and the information contained in the Draft EIS. Both in-person and virtual hearings will be held in May 2025.

An evidentiary hearing will be held at the MPUC after the public hearings are completed. All public comments regarding the proposed project and the Draft EIS must be submitted to the MPUC two months after the EIS is published.

EERA will prepare and file the final EIS for the project after the comment period closes, and public evidentiary hearings are completed. Additional public and other stakeholder comments on the adequacy of the EIS are due after the final EIS is filed. The Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) overseeing the project will then prepare and file the ALJ Report, which will include findings of fact, conclusions of law and recommendations, in late 2025.

PUC Decision

The MPUC will review all information on the record, including the application and other information submitted by Xcel Energy, the draft and final EIS documents, and comments and information provided by landowners, members of the public and other stakeholders. We anticipate the MPUC will issue a decision in late 2025.

Project Benefits

This project will provide several benefits in southern Minnesota and throughout the Upper Midwest:

- Adding transmission capacity to accommodate increasing amounts of renewable energy generation as aging traditional power plants retire.
- Increasing the reliability and resilience of the energy grid by developing new high-voltage connections to key substations that serve customers.
- Enabling greater access to low-cost renewable electricity.
- Upgrading and updating infrastructure supports local businesses and industries with reliable, resilient power.
- When possible, we hire local construction workers and companies for construction services, including cement, concrete, equipment rentals and related services. Similar projects have shown that hundreds of workers and companies participate in these projects, providing benefits to the local economy.
- Building new transmission lines encourages construction of wind and solar power to bring more low-cost renewable electricity to help meet the electric needs of our state. These projects provide construction jobs, lease revenue for farmers and increased tax base to support communities.

Schedule

The timing of this project's next steps, while subject to change, is expected to be the following:

Spring 2025

- Draft EIS published
- Draft EIS comment period
- Public hearings on Draft EIS

Summer 2025

- Final EIS published
- Final EIS comment period

Fall 2025

- ALJ report published

Later 2025

- PUC final decision

2025 – 2026

- Detailed engineering
- Easement negotiations with landowners
- Other permitting activities
- General public and stakeholder engagement

2026 – 2028

- Construction

2028

- In-service and restoration

Submitting comments

After the EIS is filed, the MPUC will accept public comments regarding the proposed project and the Draft EIS. The MPUC will announce the deadline for written comments when the Draft EIS is released. You may submit comments in any of the following ways (**please include docket numbers CN-22-532 and TL-23-157 in your comments to ensure they are included in the correct proceeding**):

Email comments to Rich Davis, Environmental Review Manager with the Minnesota Department of Commerce, at richard.davis@state.mn.us. You may also email Cezar Panait and Trevor Culbertson with the MPUC at cezar.panait@state.mn.us and trevor.culbertson@state.mn.us.

Submit comments online by visiting <https://mn.gov/puc/consumers/public-comments> and following the instructions.

Mail comments to the following address:

Richard Davis
Minnesota Department of Commerce
85 7th Place East, Suite 280 St. Paul, MN 55101

QUESTIONS?

We want to hear from you. If you have questions about the project or regulatory process, please contact us in the following ways:



 **Call:** 800-853-3365

 **Visit:** MMRTProject.com

 **Email:** Contact@MMRTProject.com