

PUBLIC INFORMATION AND EIS SCOPING MEETINGS

Mankato – Mississippi River 345 kV TL Project
Proposed by Xcel Energy

MPUC Dockets No. E002/CN-22-532; E002/TL-23-157

July 8-11, 2024

Agenda

- **Introduction and Review Process** – Sam Lobby and Trevor Culbertson, Public Utilities Commission
- **Proposed Project** – Ellen Heine, Xcel Energy
- **Environmental Review** – Rich Davis, Department of Commerce Energy Environmental Review and Analysis
- **Questions and Public Comments**

Meeting purpose

Provide information about:

- The proposed project;
- The state's high voltage transmission line route permit process.

Provide an opportunity to participate in developing the scope of the EIS.

This includes:

- Commenting on potential impacts of the proposed project;
- Commenting on methods to minimize, mitigate, and avoid potential impacts; and proposing alternative routes or route segments for consideration.

Provide contact information in case there are questions later.

Government Units



The **Public Utilities Commission** is the government unit that reviews applications and issues site and route permits in Minnesota.



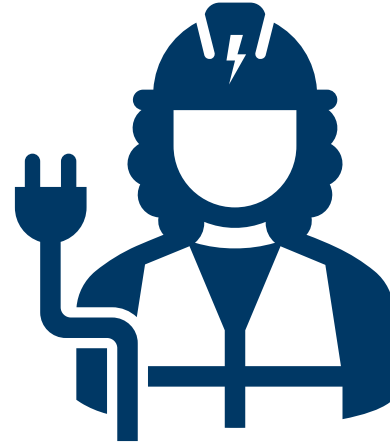
The **Department of Commerce** manages the environmental review process for the Commission and prepares an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on the proposed project.



An Administrative Law Judge from the **Office of Administrative Hearings** will facilitate a public hearing later in the process and provide a report to the Commission setting forth findings, conclusions, and recommendations on the proposed project.

Minnesota Public Utilities Commission

- Consists of five Commissioners – appointed by the Governor, confirmed by the Senate
- Regulates three service industries: electricity, natural gas, and telephone.
- Mission is to ensure safe, adequate, and efficient utility services at fair and reasonable rates.
- Provides independent professional oversight and regulation of utility service providers in a manner that is consistent with the public interest.



Project Requirements

Before the Mankato – Mississippi TL Project can be constructed, the Commission must issue a:

Certificate of Need (CN)

any high-voltage transmission line with a capacity of 300 kilovolts or more with more than one mile of its length in Minnesota.

and

Route Permit (Full Review Process)

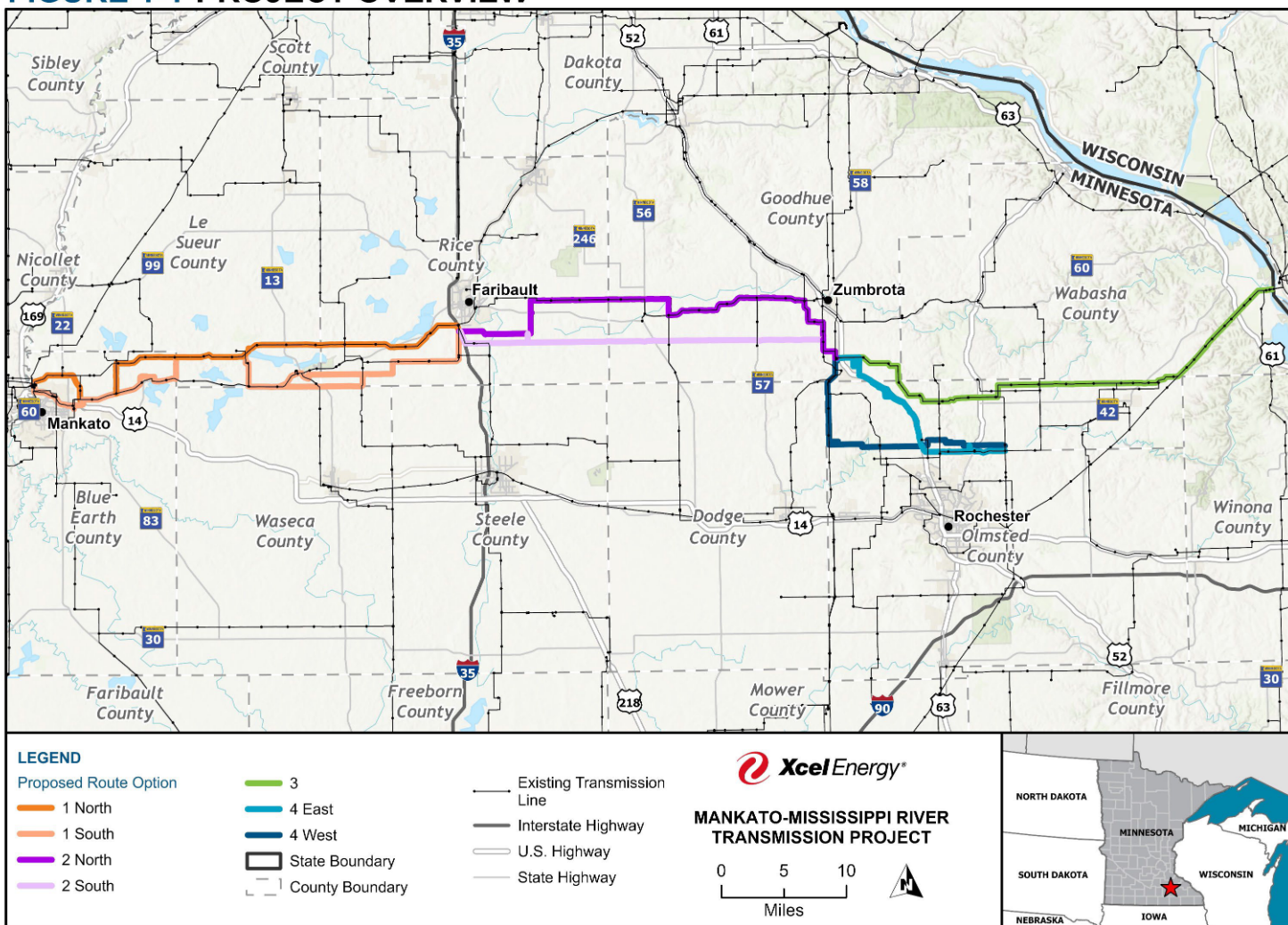
any high-voltage transmission line operating at a nominal voltage of 100 kV or more and greater than 1500 feet in length.



Proposed Project

- Xcel is proposing to build a new approx. 130-mile 345 kV transmission line and a separate new 20-mile 161 kV line.
- The proposed 345 KV line will run from Mankato to a Mississippi River crossing near Kellogg, MN. The 161 kV line will be built north of Rochester.
- Construction is planned to start in 2026 and the Project is scheduled to be in service by 2030.

FIGURE 1-1 PROJECT OVERVIEW



Timeline

Event	Date
Application Submitted	April 2, 2024
Application Accepted	June 26, 2024
Public Info Meetings	July 8-11, 2024
EIS Scoping Decision	October 2024
Draft EIS Issued	March 2025
Public Hearings	April 2025
Final EIS Issued	June/July 2025
Commission's Final Decision	September 2025

Red= Estimated Date

MINNESOTA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION FULL PROCESS





Mankato-Mississippi River Transmission Project

Overview

July 2024

Improving Transmission Infrastructure In Minnesota and the Upper Midwest

The Mankato-Mississippi River Transmission Project is one of several long-range transmission project identified by MISO, the regional grid operator, to support energy needs in Minnesota and throughout the region. Transmission line projects, like this one, strengthen the grid by:



Adding transmission capacity to accommodate increasing amounts of renewable energy generation as traditional generation resources retire.



Improving reliability and system resilience in the Upper Midwest.



Creating greater access to low-cost renewable energy.



Upgrading and updating infrastructure facilitates more jobs and increases tax revenue for cities and counties in southern Minnesota.



Supporting regional economic growth through new energy infrastructure.



Routing Process

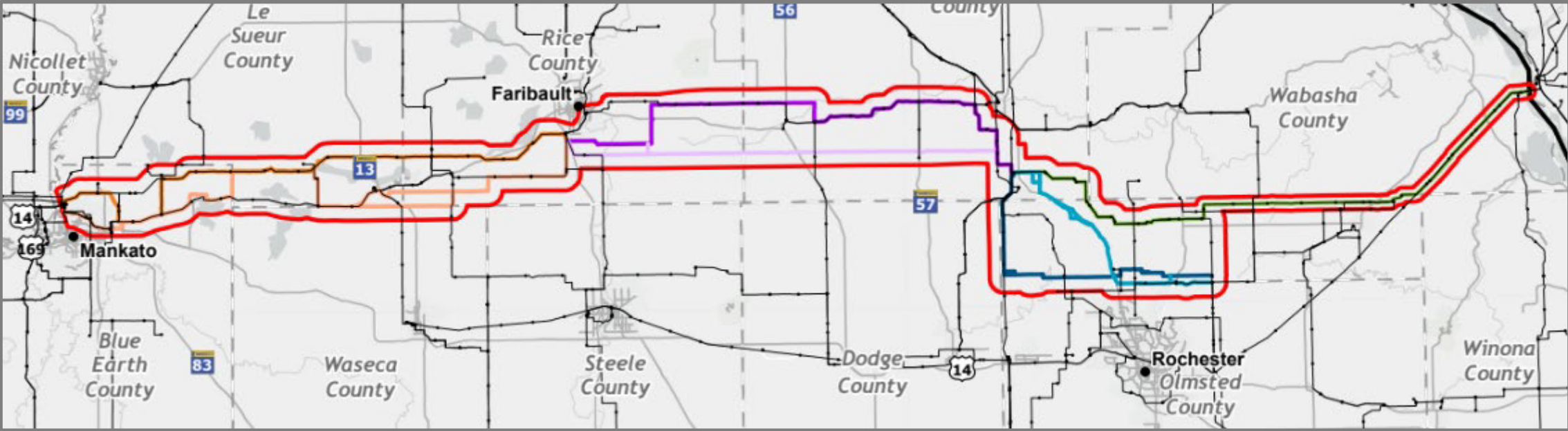
Development of proposed routes used a multi-step analysis to identify route alternatives that minimize impacts to humans and the environment.

The process generally involved:

- Developing preliminary route options using available desktop mapping data and layers.
- Refining preliminary route options based on:
 - Field verification
 - Feedback from landowners, the public, local governments, Native American Tribes and resource agencies

Project Map

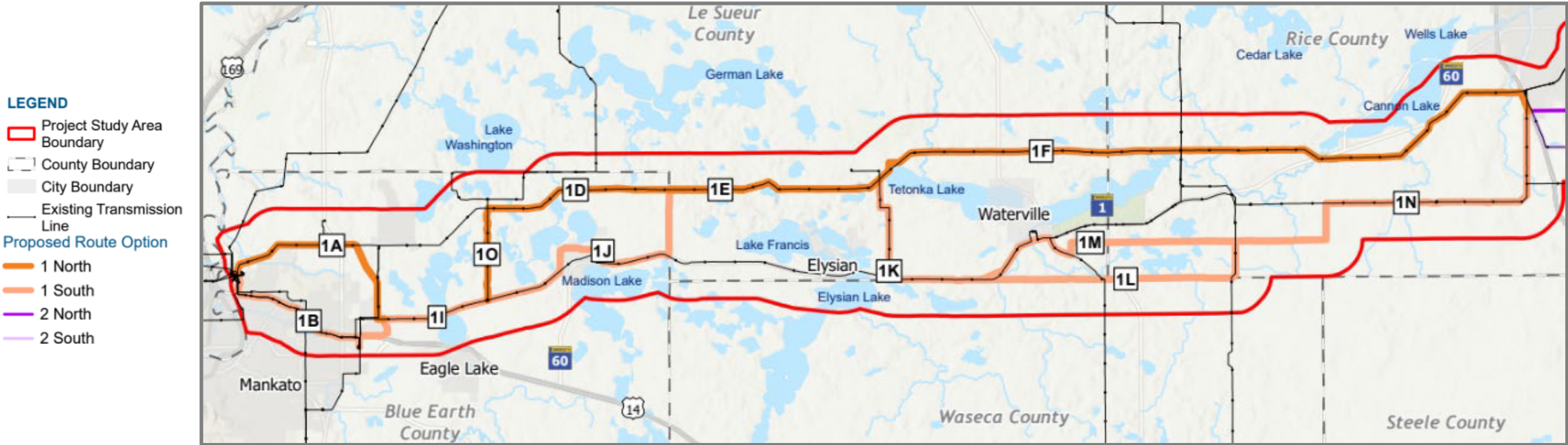
One project with four distinct segments.



Project Segments

Segment 1

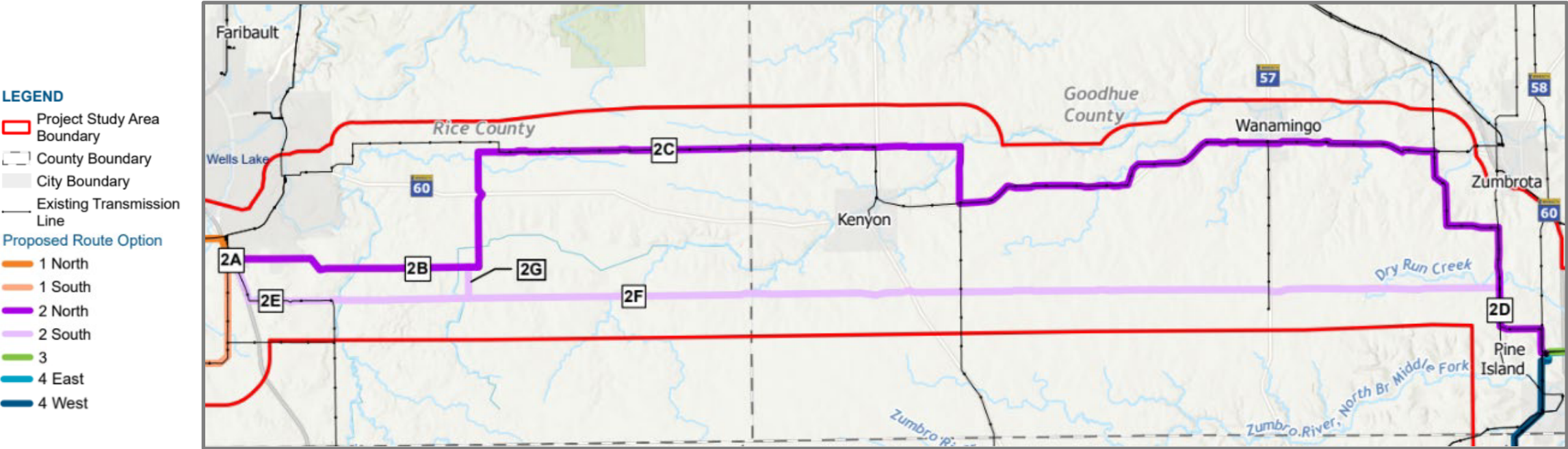
Build about 40 miles of 345 kV transmission lines in existing transmission corridors between the Wilmarth Substation in Mankato and near the West Faribault Substation in Faribault.



Project Segments

Segment 2

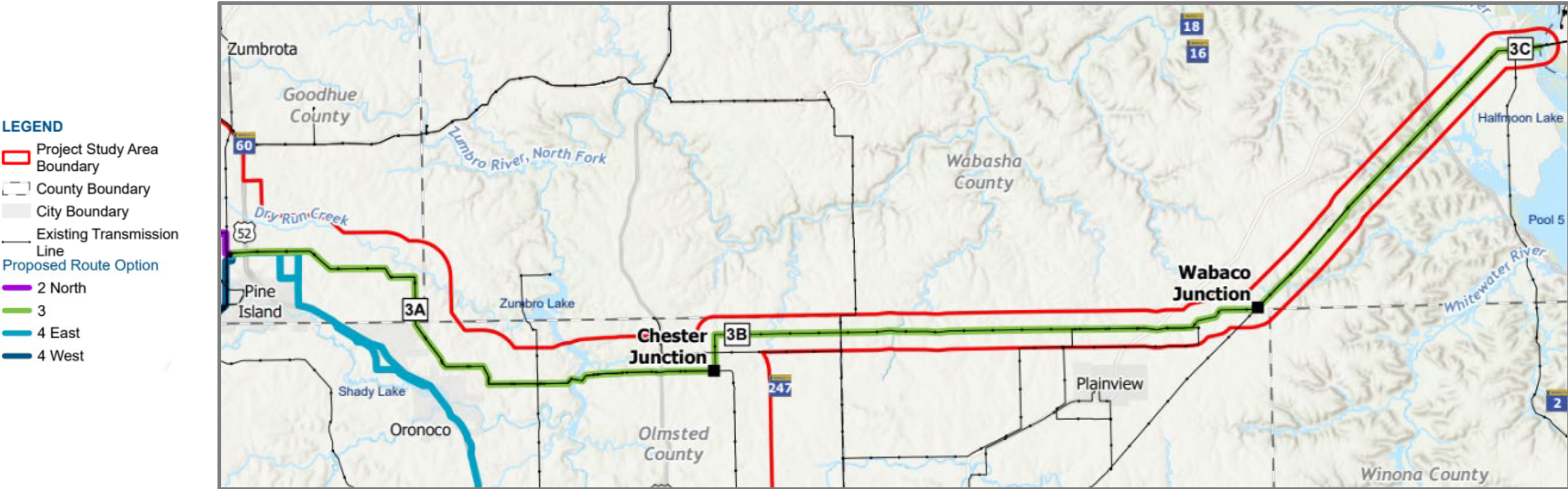
Build about 35-40 miles of 345 kV transmission lines in either a new corridor and/or in existing transmission corridors from near the West Faribault Substation to the North Rochester Substation near Pine Island.



Project Segments

Segment 3

Convert about 26 miles of 161 kV line to 345 kV line and install about 16 miles of new 345 kV line on existing structures between the North Rochester Substation and the Mississippi River.

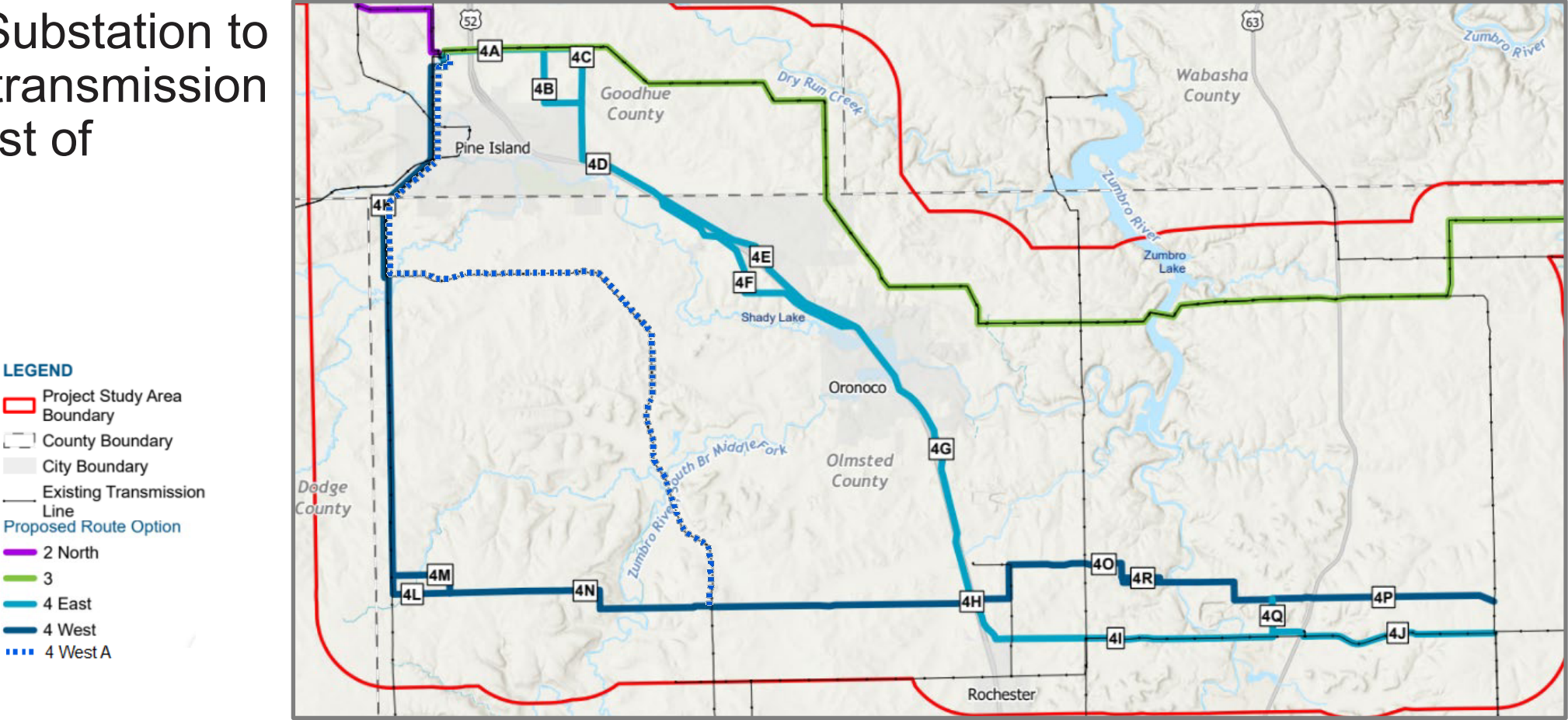


Project Segments

Segment 4

Build about 20 miles of a new single-circuit 161 kV line from the North

Rochester Substation to an existing transmission line northeast of Rochester.



Project Partners

- We're working with utility partners to develop portions of the project.
- **Development details:**
 - Xcel Energy will develop and own the infrastructure in Segments 1 and 2.
 - All project partners will participate in Segments 3 and 4.
 - All segments will be permitted together.
 - Dairyland Power will develop and permit a related project separately: the relocation of the 161 kV portion east of Plainview.



Anticipated Project Schedule



2022

- Project identified by MISO



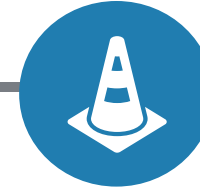
2023 - 2024

- Route development process begins
- Public and stakeholder engagement
- Preliminary engineering
- Submit Certificate of Need and Route Permit Application



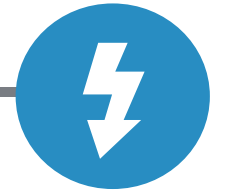
2024-2026

- Minnesota permitting review (including public engagement)
- Final engineering
- Negotiate with landowners to secure easements
- Obtain other required permits
- Continued public and stakeholder engagement



2026-2030

- Construction



2030

- In-service and restoration

Working with Landowners

Easement

Easements are a permanent right authorizing a utility to use the Right-of-Way (ROW) to build and maintain a transmission line.

Landowners are paid fair market value for the easement and can continue to use the land for most purposes so long as their use does not interfere with the operation and maintenance of the transmission line.

Right-of-Way

A right-of-way (ROW) is the actual land area acquired for a specific purpose, such as a transmission line, roadway or other infrastructure.

Land uses in the easement area may be restricted based on types of activity, but after construction, agricultural activities can continue outside of the small area occupied by the transmission structures.



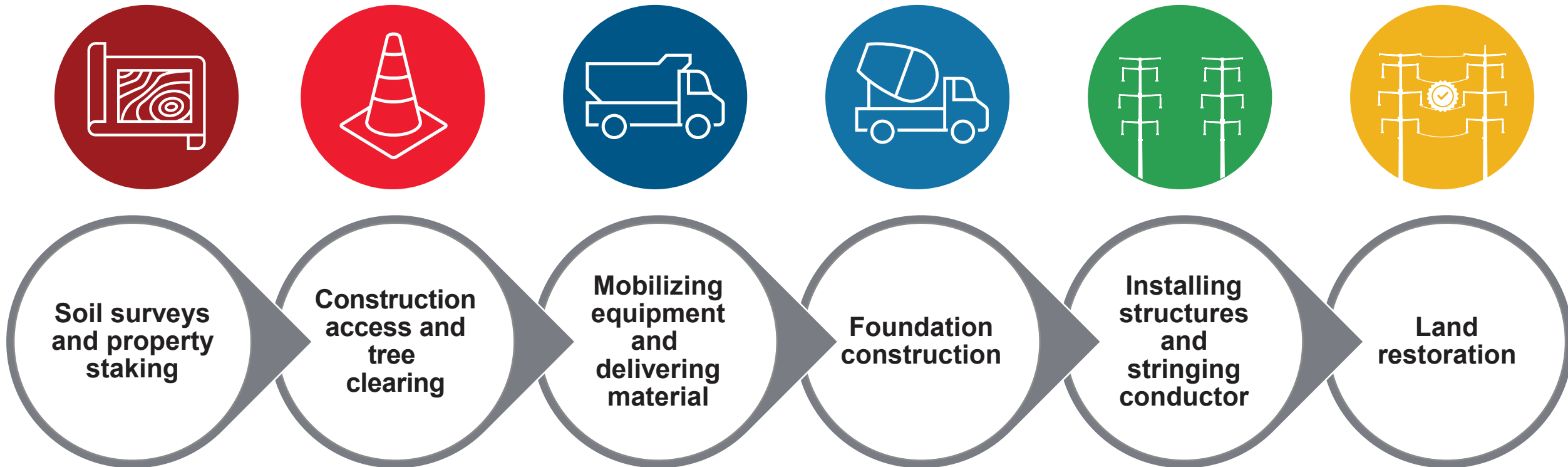
Transmission Line Infrastructure

Our anticipated design includes:

- Steel transmission structures
- Single-pole style for most structures
- Typical pole height is 100-150 feet, depending on the terrain
- **345 kV segments**
 - Typical ROW width is 150 feet
 - 800 – 1,200 feet between structures
- **161 kV segments**
 - Typical ROW width is 80 – 100 feet
 - 300 – 500 feet between structures

Typical Construction Process

Our typical transmission line construction process includes the following steps:



CONNECT WITH US!

If you have questions or need more information, our team will collect your feedback through our website, email and hotline. We'll respond to your comment as quickly as possible.

- Visit: mmrtproject.com
- Email: contact@mmrtproject.com
- Call: 800-853-3365



Mankato to Mississippi River Transmission Project Environmental Impact Statement Scoping Meeting Docket #s 22-532 (CN) and 23-157 (Route Permit)

Richard Davis Environmental Review Manager

Richard.davis@state.mn.us

85 Seventh Place East, Suite 280, St. Paul, MN 55101-2198
MMRT Project - EIS Scoping Meeting

1. Department of Commerce's Role – Environmental Review
2. Scoping
3. Recommending Alternatives
4. How to Comment
5. Questions and Comments

Environmental Review

The Department of Commerce conducts environmental review for transmission lines on behalf of the Commission

Objective analysis of the project

- Evaluate potential human and environmental impacts
- Identify strategies to avoid, minimize, or mitigate impacts
- As a neutral third party, we do not advocate – just the facts
- Goal is information that:
 - Is used for understanding the project and impacts
 - Informed decision-making

Environmental Impact Statement

The Department of Commerce will prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) for the project.

An EIS:

- Describes the proposed project and any alternatives.
- Studies potential human and environmental impacts.
- Identify strategies to avoid, minimize, or mitigate impacts
- Lists impacts that cannot be avoided.
- Does not advocate for or against the project.

Public input helps to shape the scope of what the EIS contains. The Scope is essentially the Table of Contents, and focuses the EIS on the most relevant information needed to make informed decisions:

- Are there other ways to meet the stated need for the project, for example, a different size project or a different type of facility?
- What potential human and environmental impacts of the proposed project should be considered in the EIS?
- Are there any methods to minimize, mitigate, or avoid potential impacts of the proposed project that should be considered in the EIS?
- Are there any alternative routes or route segments that should be considered in the EIS to address or mitigate potential impacts associated with the proposed project?
- Are there any unique characteristics of the proposed project area that should be considered in the EIS?

Route Alternatives

Explain your alternative:

- Describe an anticipated impact;
- Suggest an alternative; and
- Discuss how the alternative mitigates the anticipated impact.

Suggestions must be:

- Submitted on-time;
- Meet the need for the project; and
- Feasible.

If you suggest an alternative, EERA staff will make a recommendation whether to include the alternative in the scope of the EIS.

If carried forward it will be studied and the PUC could select it.

Xcel Energy would then have the power of eminent domain to construct that alternative.

In addition to route alternatives, the EIS must also study system alternatives to the project.

These include projects of a different:

- Size,
- Type, and
- Timing.

The EIS will study a no build alternative – it will study what happens if the project is not constructed.

How to Comment

- Verbal comments at today's meeting
- Complete and submit a comment sheet (Handout)
- Comment online:
<https://apps.commerce.state.mn.us/eera/web/page/home#comment>
- Mail or Email a Comment:
Richard Davis
Minnesota Department of Commerce
85 7th Place East, Suite 280
St. Paul, MN 55101
richard.davis@state.mn.us
- Comment Period Ends: **August 1, 2024**

Topics for Comment

- Are there other ways to meet the stated need for the project, for example, a different size project or a different type of facility?
- What potential human and environmental impacts of the proposed project should be considered in the EIS?
- Are there any methods to minimize, mitigate, or avoid potential impacts of the proposed project that should be considered in the EIS?
- Are there any alternative routes or route segments that should be considered in the EIS to address or mitigate potential impacts associated with the proposed project?
- Are there any unique characteristics of the proposed project area that should be considered in the EIS?

Comments and Questions – Etiquette

- One speaker at a time
- Please state and spell your name for the court reporter
- Please limit comments to five minutes
- Maintain respect for others
- Direct your comments / questions to the scope of the environmental impact statement

Written Comment Period

Written comments will be accepted through **August 1, 2024**

Online: <https://apps.commerce.state.mn.us/eera/web/page/home#comment>

Email: richard.davis@state.mn.us

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

Please focus your comments on the following:

- Are there other ways to meet the stated need for the project, for example, a different size project or a different type of facility?
- What potential human and environmental impacts of the proposed project should be considered in the EIS?
- Are there any methods to minimize, mitigate, or avoid potential impacts of the proposed project that should be considered in the EIS?
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- Are there any unique characteristics of the proposed project area that should be considered in the EIS?

Contacts

Public Utilities Commission

Cezar Panait, Regulatory Engineer
cezarc.panait@state.mn.us or 651-201-2207

Trevor Culbertson, Public Advisor
trevor.culbertson@state.mn.us or 651-201-2200

Department of Commerce

Rich Davis, Environmental Review Manager
richard.davis@state.mn.us or 507-380-6859

Xcel Energy

Ellen Heine, Principal Siting and Permitting Agent
ellen.l.heine@xcelenergy.com or 612-330-6073

Additional Information

Department of Commerce Website:

<https://apps.commerce.state.mn.us/web/project/15507>

Full Case Record: See all documents filed in this docket by visiting: mn.gov/puc, select *eDockets*, enter the year and the docket number 22-532 for the CN or 23-157 for the route permit, and select *Search*.

Subscribe to the Docket: Receive email notification when new documents are filed in this matter at <https://www.edockets.state.mn.us/EFiling>, select *Subscribe to Dockets*, and follow the prompts.

Survey



Give Us feedback on this public meeting by scanning the QR code

or going to the link:

<https://tinyurl.com/MPUCS>

*This survey is NOT a means to submit a public comment. Staff can help you file a comment using a different process and form.