Northland Reliability Project

Supporting a reliable, resilient and flexible energy grid

To maintain a continuous supply of safe and reliable electricity, Minnesota Power and Great River Energy are investing in transmission infrastructure to enhance the stability of the regional electric system and support a reliable, resilient and flexible electric grid as energy resources continue to evolve. The energy resources we use to serve our customers and members are changing, and the regional power grid we use to deliver that energy needs to change, too.

Project needs

The Northland Reliability Project will ensure the power grid in northern and central Minnesota continues to operate safely and reliably as energy resources in Minnesota and the regional power system continue to evolve. This project is also part of a large "Long Range Transmission Plan" portfolio approved by MISO, the region's grid operator, to support grid reliability across the Midwest. As generation resources shift from fossil fuels to more renewables, the Northland Reliability Project is one part of the solution to:

- Provide support to the energy grid as more renewable energy is brought online and coal operations cease at existing power plants
- Improve ability to withstand more frequent extreme weather events
- Increase capacity to safely and reliably deliver more clean energy from where it's produced to where it's consumed by utility customers and power cooperative members
- Meet future energy needs by enabling transfer of many types of power generation to many locations to meet the long-term needs of our customers and members

Regulatory process participation

In August 2023, we submitted a Certificate of Need and Route Permit application to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (PUC) that identified a proposed route. The PUC held Public Scoping meetings on October 23 - 27, 2023, with public comments accepted through November 21, 2023. In 2024, the Minnesota Department of Commerce will develop and publish a draft Environmental Assessment for review. A public hearing will be held in later 2024.

You can subscribe to receive updates from the PUC. Visit **edockets.state.mn.us** and enter the docket number you're interested in tracking. For information on the Certificate of Need use docket 22-416 and for information on the Route Permit use docket 22-415.

Schedule

2022
Project planning and initial stakeholder engagement

2023
Routing, public engagement and permitting

2024 – 2026
Permitting, engineering, environmental surveys, real estate and public engagement

What to expect:

- Project real estate team initiates right-of-entry discussions with landowners for property access to conduct field surveys
- Project survey teams conduct biological, cultural, and wetland resources surveys
- PUC permitting (EA and Public Hearing) and construction access planning
- *Construction on Segment 2 may begin in 2025*

2027 – 2030
Construction

2030
Anticipated in-service

**The schedule is subject to change.*

Minnesota Power and Great River Energy have a successful history of joint development and ownership of projects that support the reliability of our electric grid to meet the needs of our communities.

October 2023

Northland Reliability Project

Our routing process

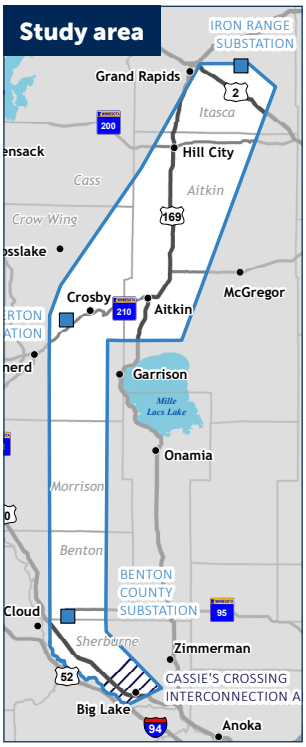
We followed a multi-phased routing process for the Northland Reliability Project. The state of Minnesota has statutes and rules that guide the route development process and help minimize a project's impact to human settlement and the environment. Input from you, local leaders and agencies, as well as our own expertise, was critical in the development of the route we proposed in our application.

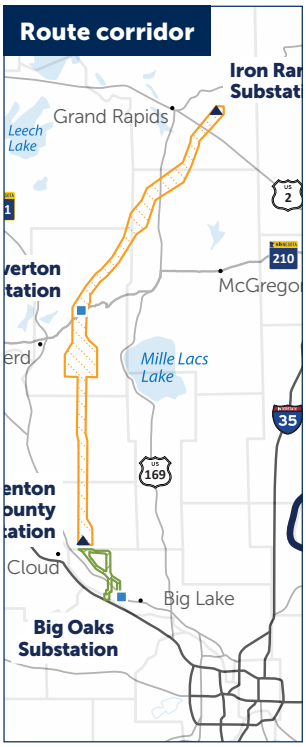
Study area (Fall 2022)
- Stakeholder workshops

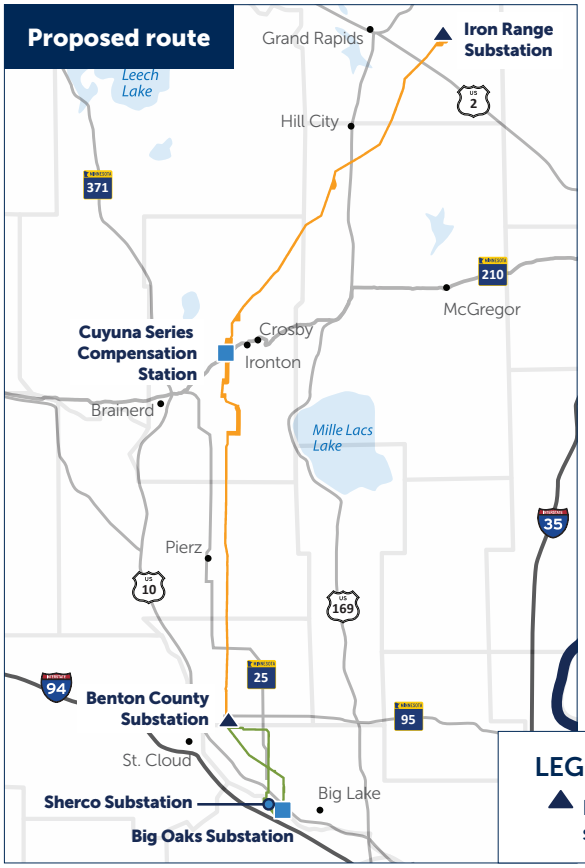
Route corridor (January 2023)
- Phase 1 of public engagement

Preliminary route (May 2023)
- Phase 2 of public engagement

Proposed route (August 2023)
- Filed with Public Utilities Commission







Segment one

Approximately 140 miles of new 345-kV double-circuit transmission lines will be constructed primarily near existing transmission line corridors, from Minnesota Power's Iron Range Substation in Itasca County to Great River Energy's Benton County Substation near St. Cloud.

Segment two

A 20-mile 230-kV line will be replaced with two 345-kV circuits along existing transmission corridors from the Benton County Substation to a new Big Oaks Substation in Sherburne County that will be built as part of a separate project. A 20-mile 345-kV line will also be replaced along existing transmission corridors from the Benton County Substation to the Sherco Substation in Sherburne County.

Other

In addition to the transmission line, the Northland Reliability Project will expand the Iron Range Substation near Grand Rapids and the Benton County Substation near St. Cloud. A new Cuyuna Series Compensation Station will be built in Crow Wing County near the existing Riverton Substation.

LEGEND

Expand existing substations | New substation | Segment one | Segment two

Connect with us

Questions? We want to hear from you.

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