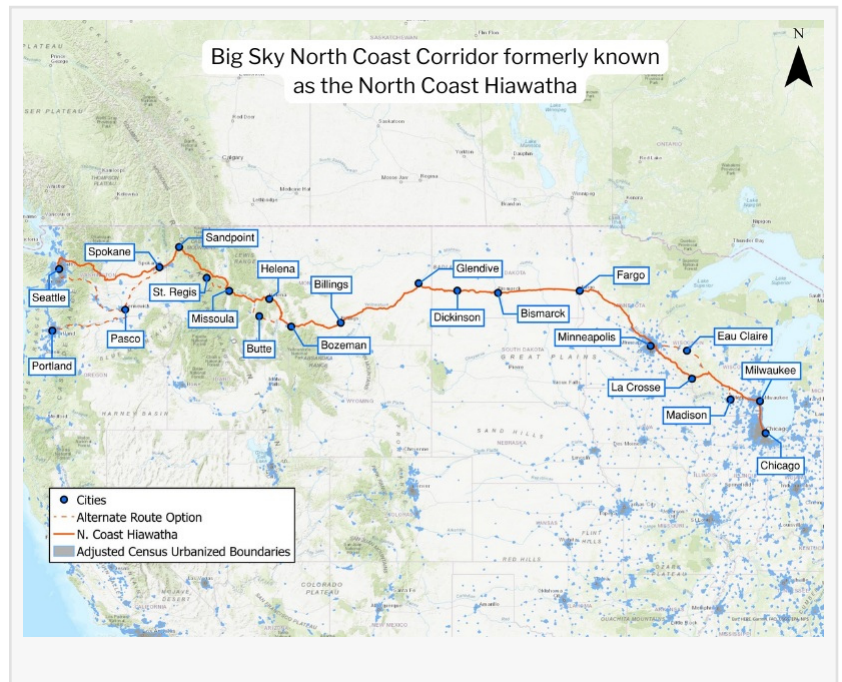


# Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority Welcomes Bismarck-Mandan MPO to Government Partners Program

BILLINGS, MT, UNITED STATES,  
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[EINPresswire.com/](https://EINPresswire.com/) -- The Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority (BSPRA) is pleased to announce that the Bismarck-Mandan Metropolitan Planning Organization (BMMPO) has unanimously voted to join its Government Partners Program. This collaboration highlights a shared commitment to revitalizing passenger rail service and enhancing regional connectivity across the Northern Plains.



The BMMPO, representing Bismarck, Mandan, Lincoln, Burleigh County, and Morton County, brings a unified regional perspective to BSPRA's efforts. Their participation reflects growing support for sustainable transportation solutions that promote economic growth and strengthen communities.

"We are thrilled to welcome the Bismarck-Mandan MPO into our Government Partners Program," said Dave Strohmaier, Chairman of BSPRA. "Their involvement is a significant step toward restoring passenger rail service that will benefit communities across the region."

"Bismarck's rich history is deeply connected to the railroad, and the potential for renewed rail service across North Dakota, including here in the Capital City, is truly exciting," said Bismarck Mayor Mike Schmitz. "Passenger rail service can enhance daily life for our residents, strengthen our infrastructure, and boost tourism opportunities. With the Bismarck-Mandan Metropolitan Organization leading this effort, it's clear this initiative isn't just a win for Bismarck—it's a victory for the entire Capital Community."

The Government Partners Program enables municipalities and regional organizations to actively engage in BSPRA's mission to restore and enhance passenger rail service along the historic North

Coast Hiawatha route, now known as the Big Sky North Coast Corridor. Partners are vital in planning processes, advocating for federal support, and ensuring local priorities are integrated into rail infrastructure development.

“The Bismarck-Mandan MPO recognizes the restoration of passenger rail service as an important opportunity for our region,” said Kimberly Riepl, Transportation Planner for the BMMPO. “Passenger rail will extend and enhance our transportation network, creating essential connections for residents and visitors. This initiative promises substantial benefits for our communities, including economic growth and a more connected regional system. We look forward to collaborating with BSPRA to realize this vision.”

The addition of the BMMPO highlights the growing momentum behind passenger rail initiatives in the Northern Plains. Alongside Dickinson and Jamestown, the BMMPO strengthens North Dakota’s role in restoring daily passenger rail service across the state. The proposed restoration of rail service offers numerous benefits, including job creation, economic development, and tourism growth. It also improves access to healthcare, education, and business opportunities in a region with limited air service and challenging winter travel conditions. Passenger rail provides a reliable, safe, and sustainable alternative that connects urban, rural, and tribal communities.

BSPRA remains committed to working with stakeholders across multiple states to build a cohesive transportation network that supports economic growth, community development, and sustainable travel.

For more information about the Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority and the Government Partners Program, please visit [www.bigskyrail.org](http://www.bigskyrail.org) or contact BSPRA Chairman Dave Strohmaier at 406.529.5580 or BSPRA Executive Director Jess Peterson at 406.850.1592.

#### ABOUT THE BIG SKY PASSENGER RAIL AUTHORITY

The Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority (BSPRA) is a Montana state government subdivision and the state's largest transportation district. It comprises 18 member counties and ex officio members from three tribal nations, Amtrak, the Montana Department of Transportation, BNSF Railway, and the AFL-CIO. The BSPRA is committed to re-establishing safe, reliable, and sustainable passenger rail service across southern Montana and the Big Sky North Coast Corridor, extending from Seattle to Chicago (formerly known as the North Coast Hiawatha).

Kim E Whittemore  
Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority  
+1 781-258-1116

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