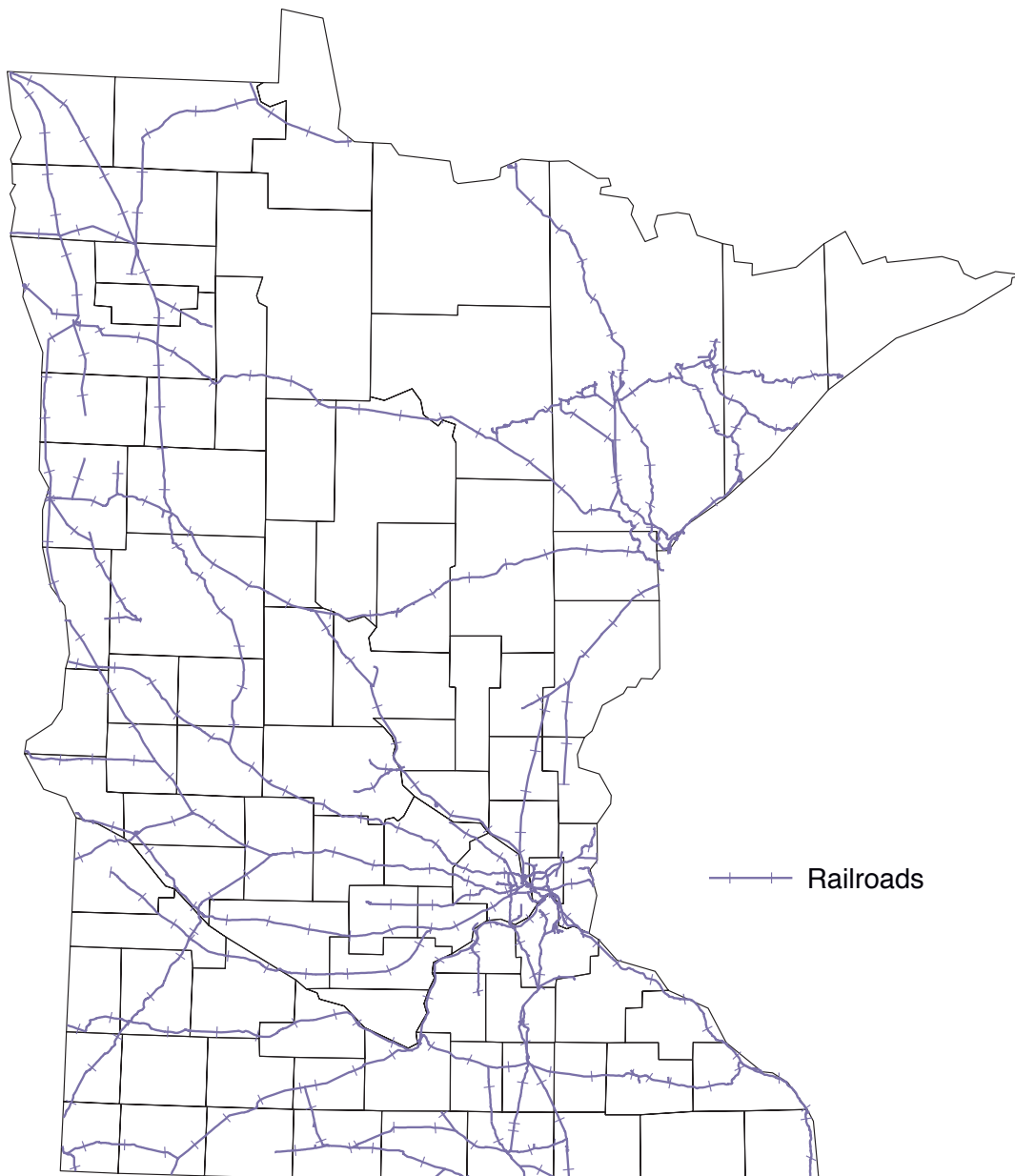


Railroads

As of 2005, Minnesota has a total of 27 railroads operating on 4,526 miles of rail line, including three private lines that do not provide commercial freight service and Minneapolis' light rail service. The number of miles in the state's rail system peaked in 1930 at 9,362 miles. Over the years, many rail lines have been abandoned in favor of other modes of transportation. An increasing number of unused rail beds, however, have found a new existence as paved biking trails.

The freight system divides carriers into three classes. Class I railroads have annual gross operating revenues in excess of \$256 million and run on over half the lines in Minnesota. Class I carriers operate transcontinental systems running between the largest trade centers. Amtrak operates two daily transcontinental passenger trains between Chicago and the Pacific Northwest on Class I lines running through St. Paul.

Class II railroads operate on 861 miles of track in Minnesota, serving primarily other upper Midwestern states and Canadian provinces. Class III railroads, with annual gross operating revenues under \$21 million, usually do not extend beyond state boundaries and in some cases serve only small geographic areas (e.g., an industrial park). These carriers, Class II and III, often operate lines that were originally operated by Class I carriers and haul largely bulk items like grain and coal. They also transport finished products like industrial goods and forest products.



Data source: Minnesota Department of Transportation
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