



# **Collaborative Effort Led By St. Louis Regional Freightway Creates Pipeline Of Rail-Accessible, Developer-Ready Sites**

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# ST. LOUIS REGION

## RAIL SITES MAP

**1** Interstate Commerce Center  
Wentzville, MO

**2** Carrie Avenue Industrial Park  
St. Louis City, MO

**3** River City Business Park  
St. Louis City, MO

**4** BNSF Site– Fenton\*  
Fenton, MO

**5** Kaskaskia Regional Port District\*  
Red Bud, IL

**6** TRRA – Metro East Land\*  
Venice & East St. Louis, IL



**7** America's Central Port  
Granite City, IL

**8** Lakeview Commerce Center  
Edwardsville, IL

**9** Gateway Panattoni  
Edwardsville, IL

**10** Mid-American Inter'l Gateway  
Jerseyville, IL

**11** Kelsey Business & Tech Park  
Greenville, IL

**ST. LOUIS** - The St. Louis region is streamlining the site selection process for rail-accessible sites across the bi-state area. Through focused collaboration, the St. Louis region's Class I railroads and economic development organizations, brokers and business leaders on both sides of the Mississippi River in Illinois and Missouri have identified the top rail-accessible industrial real estate sites in the region. They are also taking on previously overlooked sites that have potential for rail access. Eleven locations featuring heavy industrial user zoning are ready for developers who want to

take advantage of the strong rail infrastructure and multimodal advantages in the bi-state area. Information about these sites can be found at <https://www.thefreightway.com/real-estate/rail-access/>

“We’re creating a pipeline of rail-served sites for the future and spotlighting rail sites that are currently ready to go,” said Mary Lamie, Executive Vice President of Multimodal Enterprises at Bi-State Development and head of the St. Louis Regional Freightway enterprise. The St. Louis Regional Freightway reviewed multiple sites throughout a 15-county area in southwestern Illinois and eastern Missouri, interviewed respective Class I railroads, and ultimately answered the question of whether the sites being explored were rail accessible or have potential rail access. “In typical St. Louis regional fashion, the sites that made it onto our list include service by at least one of the region’s six Class I railroads that connect to the East, West and Gulf coasts,” Lamie said. “Sites that include BNSF, Union Pacific, CSX and Norfolk Southern provide routes with high volume and scheduled service to East and West Coast ports. With help from the region’s four interstates and strategic location on the Mississippi River, 90% percent of freight from the St. Louis region moves throughout North America in two days and 100% in three days. This List is a new tool that will enhance our region’s economic development marketing efforts by spotlighting these rail-served sites.”

Mark Branstetter, Partner with Panattoni Development Company, sees tremendous value in the new list. “Coordinating a regional list of rail-served sites with the Class I railroads is saving time by eliminating uncertainty, and it helps draw attention to rail sites with significant useable acreage,” said Branstetter. “With cooperative and local carrier ownership of key rail routes, businesses choosing these sites will enjoy unparalleled rail service that supports industrial growth strengthened by intermodal capacity and proximity to suppliers.”

### **Making the Case for Rail Development in the Midwest and Region’s like St. Louis**

America’s rail network spans nearly 140,000 miles and supports more than 167,000 jobs across the country within an almost \$80 billion industry.<sup>1</sup> Rail distribution continues to grow in importance with the Federal Highway Administration estimating that the industry will increase 30% over the next two decades. The St. Louis region already is recognized as one of the largest rail hubs in the county and is taking steps now to take advantage of this projected growth by focusing on new industrial development within rail-accessible land sites.

Joe Torp, Industrial Development Manager for Norfolk Southern, believes the St. Louis region has several crucial advantages that allow it to compete with other rail-friendly regions, including geographic location, modal connectivity, and a motivated economic development community.

“Companies are starting to take notice of the Midwest’s geographic location, particularly those with customers or supply chain links in both the eastern and western regions of the United States,” said Torp. “The Midwest provides an enticing benefit for those industries. For example, instead of developing an “eastern” and “western” plant, they can locate one larger facility in the St. Louis area that can serve both markets. St. Louis also has access to a number of Class I and shortline railroads, intermodal facilities, port locations, and highway corridors. This modal connectivity gives industries the optionality to shift their shipping mode as needed, for example, from barge to rail when the river freezes up north near Chicago, or from truck to rail as driver availability tightens.”

The bi-state region’s intermodal capabilities and rail proximity to both regional and national customers and suppliers play an important role in supporting manufacturing and distribution growth in the heart of the nation. Rail freight in regions like St. Louis can be transloaded to truck and shipped in one day to mega manufacturing regions like Chicago, Kansas City, Mo., Memphis and Nashville, Tenn., Columbus, Ohio, and Louisville, Ky. Accessibility to other modes, such as barges along the Illinois, Missouri and Mississippi Rivers, provides additional benefits for barge/rail transload services. The St. Louis region has the added advantage of being the most strategic location on the Mississippi River – ice free and lock free all the way to the Gulf of Mexico; most efficient inland port in the nation in terms of cargo tonnage moved, and it is branded as the Ag Coast of America due to being home to the highest agricultural and fertilizer barge handling capacity anywhere along the Mississippi River.

The St. Louis region and its public and private leaders also are committed to constantly improving rail service and infrastructure within the bi-state area, as evidenced by the \$222 million project to replace the then 133-year old Merchants Bridge, a vital rail artery across the Mississippi River and one of the nation’s primary east-west rail corridors serving one of America’s largest rail hubs. This work was completed in September 2022, and the new double track bridge can facilitate two freight trains moving in opposite directions at the same time and move freight faster, cost-effectively and more reliably, providing an alternative to more congested rail hubs like Chicago.

### **Site Selection Criteria to be Considered a Rail-Accessible, Developer-Ready Site**

The Development Ready Rail Land Sites list compiled by the St. Louis Regional Freightway starts with sites that have at least available 20 acres and are either shovel-ready or have development plans, active owners, or marketing in place to be considered near-shovel ready. Shovel-ready indicates potential pre-development work has been completed and construction can quickly begin. The St. Louis region has two sites that have also been through heavy review processes to be selected as Class I Rail lines

“certified” sites. The Kelsey Business and Technology Park outside of Greenville, Ill., is both a CSX Transportation select site and a BNSF certified site, indicating that both railroads consider this business park an optimal site for development within its rail network and as shovel-ready for development. Mid-American International Gateway outside of Jerseyville, Ill., is a site that has been certified by the Illinois Super Site program indicating its development-ready rail potential. These state certifications come with rigorous pre-qualification processes to ensure the sites can support high volume rail users and multiple shippers or carriers.

In addition to shovel-ready sites that are in high demand requiring shortened development timelines, the list includes two sites that are rail accessible but not quite shovel-ready. The Kaskaskia Regional Port District and the Terminal Railroad Association of St. Louis sites need site grading and/or infrastructure improvements. For these sites requiring pre-development work or sites needing more of a long-term vision to address challenging site issues, the region is working with local municipalities, tracking utility infrastructure, preparing market feasibility studies and facilitating meetings with property owners and state agencies.

“The Freightway is not only identifying and helping to market shovel-ready sites that have rail-service potential, but they also are shining a spotlight on other currently underutilized sites that could play a key role in meeting future industrial development needs, such as the 195 acres we own off of Illinois Route 3 in Venice and East St. Louis,” said Brent Wood, President of Terminal Railroad Association of St. Louis (TRRA). “Their forward thinking and willingness to collaborate to take on such challenges will help to advance these projects, so they can be added to the pipeline.”

By helping identify potential locations that can handle industrial development but need support to become development ready, the St. Louis Regional Freightway aims to continue to expand its shovel-ready sites pipeline, with the goal of attracting additional industrial development to serve end-users needing to be near rail for purposes of shipping and receiving from rail/ocean containers. Containerized cargo shipments continue to grow, underscoring the importance of taking advantage of expanding rail demand by increasing the number of shovel-ready, rail-accessible land sites in the region.

“This type of proactive research and outreach around site readiness is absolutely crucial to the region's long-term success,” said Torp. “Many high profile site selection wins are the direct result of years of research, planning, development, and advertising that occur before an industry even comes to town looking for an available site. The Development Ready Rail Land Sites list is a key first step in elevating specific sites to that next level. Additionally, this research can help guide capital investments, ensuring that any investment of public or private dollars is done so in a thoughtful and targeted manner,



increasing the probability of success. This work will ensure that sites in the region can attract and retain the attention of site selectors, potential industries, and the larger economic development community as a whole.”

To view the full report with details on each of the rail served sites, visit <https://www.thefreightway.com/real-estate/rail-access/> or contact Mary Lamie for more information at [mclamie@TheFreightway.com](mailto:mclamie@TheFreightway.com)

### ***About St. Louis Regional Freightway?***

*A Bi-State Development enterprise, the St. Louis Regional Freightway is a regional freight district and comprehensive authority for freight operations and opportunities within eight counties in southwestern Illinois and eastern Missouri, which comprise the St. Louis metropolitan area. Public sector and private industry businesses are partnering with the St. Louis Regional Freightway to establish the bi-state region as one of the premier multimodal freight hubs and distribution centers in the United States through marketing and advocacy for infrastructure development that supports the movement of freight. To learn more, visit [thefreightway.com](https://www.thefreightway.com).*