

# Wisconsin Intercity Passenger Rail Update

## WisDOT Annual Freight Railroad Conference 2016



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**Wisconsin Department of Transportation**



# Intercity Passenger Rail in Wisconsin

- Existing Services
  - Amtrak *Hiawatha Service*
  - Amtrak *Empire Builder*
  - Amtrak Thruway buses
- Current department focus for passenger rail: *Maintain and improve existing passenger rail service and corridors*



# Milwaukee-Chicago Hiawatha Service

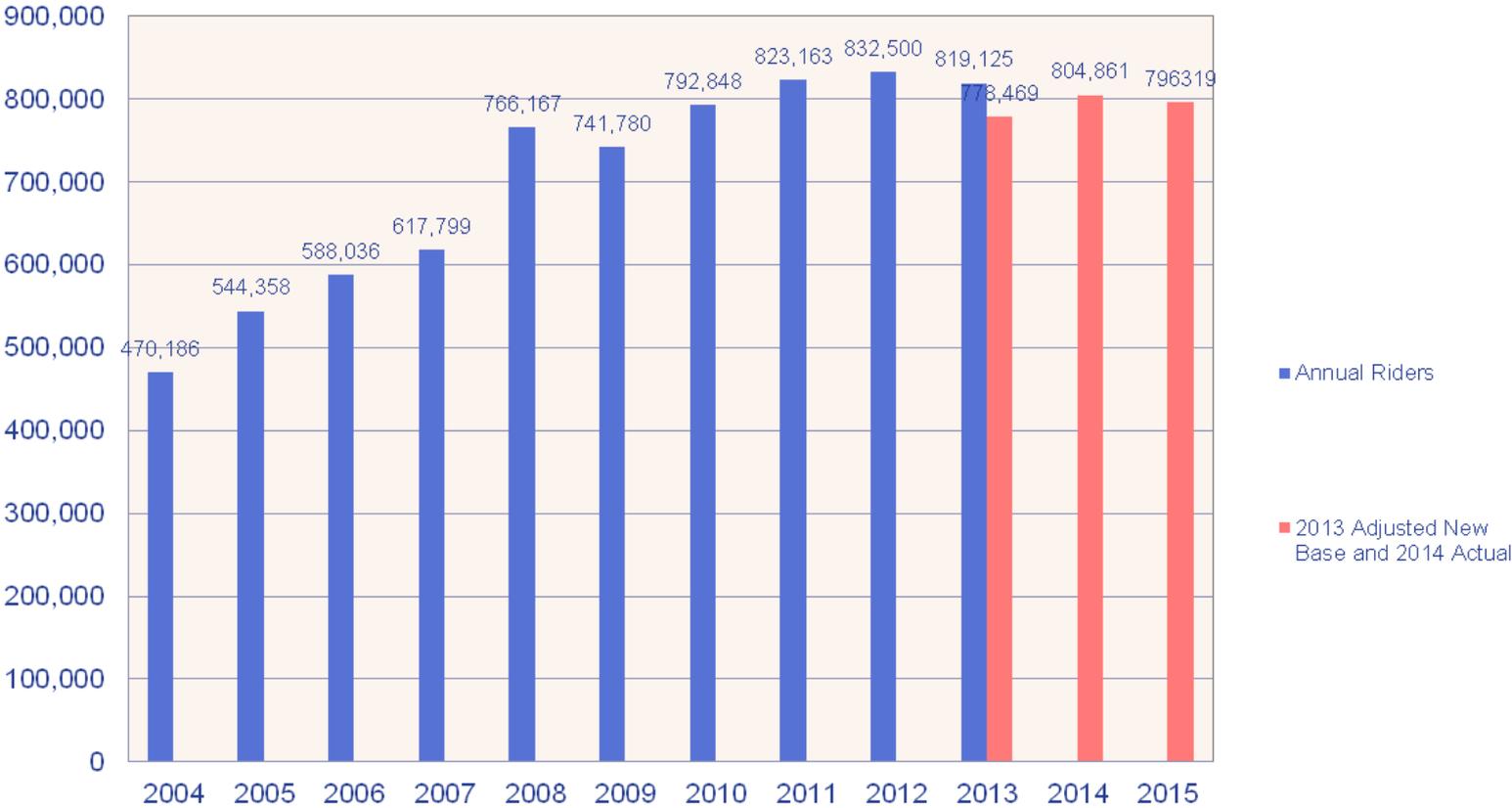
- ❑ WisDOT
- ❑ IDOT
- ❑ Amtrak
- ❑ Metra
- ❑ CP Rail

- Seven round-trips daily, 6 on Sunday
- 86 miles, shortest Amtrak route in US
- Milwaukee to Chicago/Midwest hub in 89 minutes
- Features one of four Amtrak stations within an airport: Milwaukee Airport Rail Station
- 6<sup>th</sup> busiest state supported route, 807,000 riders
  - Weekdays: 42% work commute; 25% business trip; 34% of tickets paid by employers
  - 20% are monthly pass or 10-ride ticket holders, much higher on weekdays
  - 70% passengers would drive if train were not available
- Percent of trains on-time is in the mid 90s: #1 in Amtrak system in September!



# Hiawatha Service ridership

Amtrak Hiawatha Service Annual Ridership Trend



# Hiawatha Service Initiatives

Ongoing improvements; just this year:

- Addition of new Saturday night trains
- Track side roll on bikes
- Pets on trains
- Implementation of new peak/off-peak fare system all in 2016.
- Hiawatha Advertising using CMAQ funds



SET YOUR TRANSPORTATION MODE  
**TO TRAIN.**

Something great is waiting for you on either end of the Amtrak Hiawatha line. So take the most direct route between Chicago and Milwaukee and save time while you're at it. The end of the line is just the beginning. Buy your tickets at [AmtrakHiawatha.com](http://AmtrakHiawatha.com)



# Hiawatha Service: Challenges

- Seating capacity issues on peak trains with standees; pressure to add coaches
- Requests for additional stations
- Need for additional frequencies
- Preserving railroad capacity on a busy rail corridor:
  - 60 Metra trains
  - 25 freight trains
  - 16 Amtrak trains



# Other Passenger Rail Initiatives

- Midwest passenger rail equipment procurement
- Chicago-Milwaukee Intercity Passenger Rail Corridor Environmental Assessment and Service Development Plan
- Chicago-Milwaukee-Twin Cities Empire Builder corridor
- Other studies
- Milwaukee Intermodal Station Train Concourse completion



# Midwest Passenger Rail Equipment Procurement



- Illinois is procuring bi-level cars and locomotives on behalf of Midwest states, using federal funds.
- Multi-state ownership agreement signed for new equipment: IL, MI, MO, WI
- Bi-level cars (quantity and timing still TBD)
- 33 locomotives (2017) – will be leased to Amtrak for maintenance and operation during warranty period
- All MW state-supported routes (except Indiana) will have new locomotives.
- Milwaukee-Chicago Amtrak *Hiawatha Service* will be equipped with locomotives, but not bi-level cars under this grant.





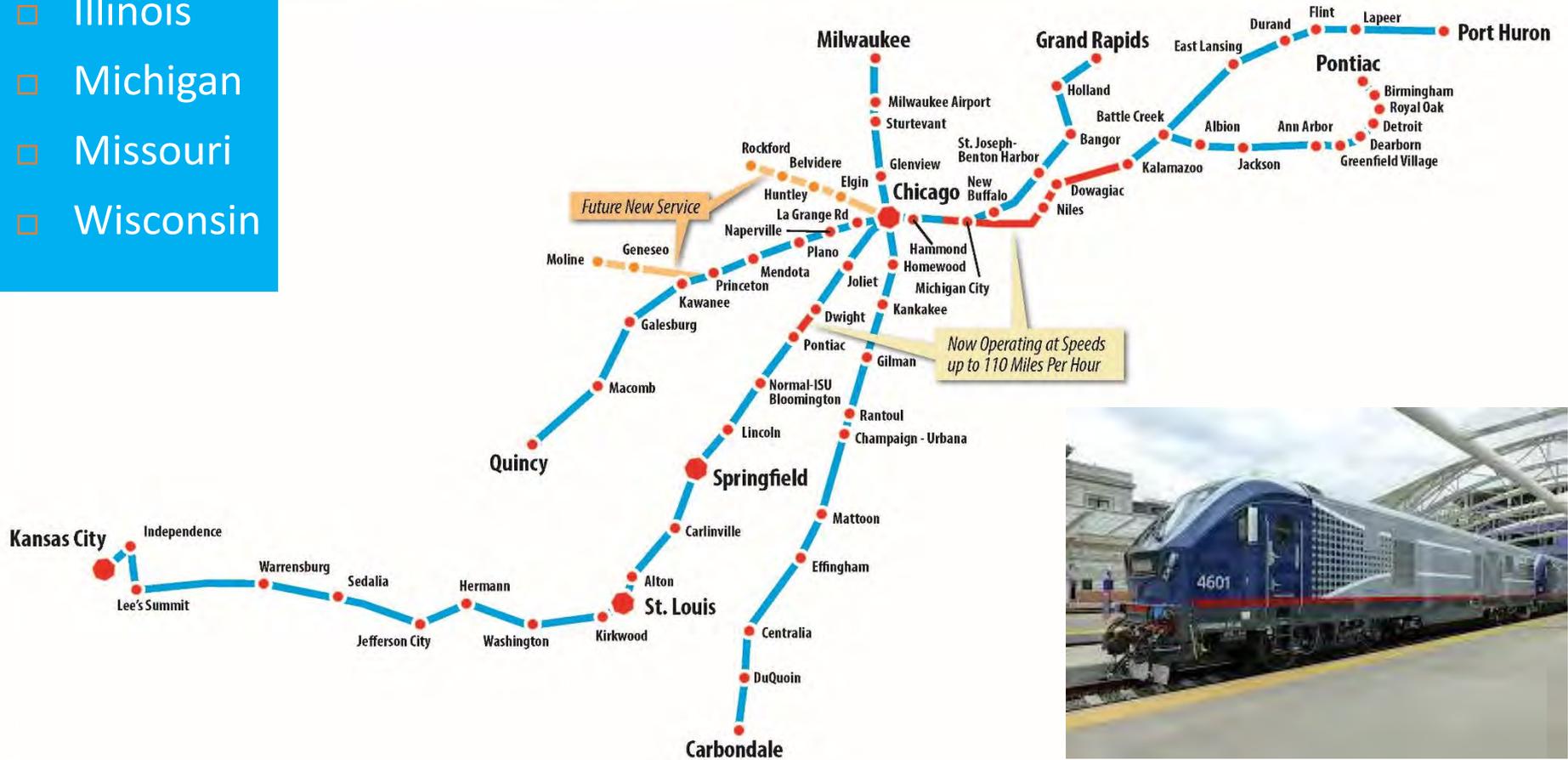
# Midwest Passenger Rail Equipment Procurement

- Siemens Charger Locomotives for Hiawatha Service in 2017
  - Standardization – based on national spec
    - Interoperability, Interchangability, Supplier Flexibility
  - Speed: up to 125 mph with good acceleration
  - Environmental: Tier 4 emissions (90% lower than existing), low noise levels
  - Efficiency: Fuel efficiency 16% improvements, regenerative braking, LED lighting
  - Safety: Tier 2 car body; crash energy management
  - 100% Buy America (FRA and FTA standards)



# MIDWEST HUB CORRIDORS MIDWEST EQUIPMENT POOL

- ❑ Illinois
- ❑ Michigan
- ❑ Missouri
- ❑ Wisconsin



# Chicago-Milwaukee ICPR Corridor EA and SDP

WisDOT

IDOT

FRA

In partnership  
with Amtrak

- Environmental Assessment and Service Development Plan for the Chicago-Milwaukee Hiawatha Service corridor to:

- add 3 additional daily round-trip frequencies, for a total of 10 round-trips daily
- reduce travel time



# Chicago-Milwaukee EA and SDP Projects

Railroad infrastructure projects (7 in Illinois, 7 in Wisconsin) needed to accommodate additional trains and maintain reliability

- 2 universal crossovers in Glenview & Lake Forest
- UPRR siding extension at A20 in Glenview, IL
- Freight speed increase A20 to Rondout
- Metra holding track at Deerfield
- Rondout 3<sup>rd</sup> track extension to the south
- Metra Fox Lake 2<sup>nd</sup> Track
- Milwaukee Airport Rail Station 2<sup>nd</sup> platform
- Muskego Yard signalization for 2 freight through-tracks
- Milwaukee Intermodal Station – Cutoff CTC installation

Total Railroad Infrastructure cost: over \$155 million



# Chicago-Milwaukee ICPR Corridor EA and SDP

- WisDOT
- IDOT
- FRA

In partnership with Amtrak

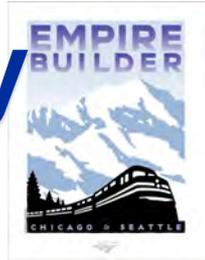


- Draft EA Completed; Released October 6<sup>th</sup>, 2016. Public comment period runs through November 15<sup>th</sup>.
- Public meetings were held in Milwaukee, Glenview, IL and Chicago Oct 27<sup>th</sup>, Nov 1<sup>st</sup>, and Nov 2<sup>nd</sup>.
- Eligibility for federal funding when and if available



# 2nd Empire Builder Frequency

## Twin Cities –La Crosse- Milwaukee-Chicago



- Existing Empire Builder Chicago-Seattle/Portland
  - Over 100,000 riders annually within the Chicago-Twin Cities corridor segment
  - Most using for regional travel
  - Feasibility study for 2<sup>nd</sup> train completed in 2015:
    - 2nd round-trip Chicago-TC on the Empire Builder corridor
    - Existing stations; convenient times that complement the Empire Builder schedule
    - Favorable ridership and revenue projections supported advancing to the next step

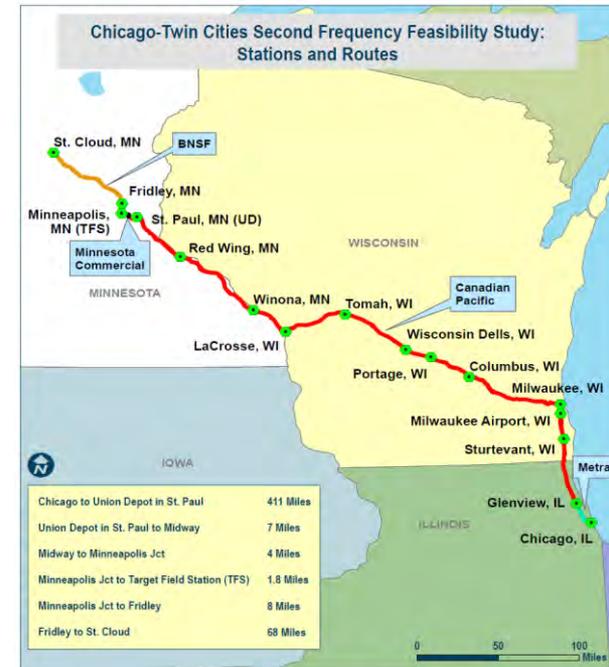


# 2nd Empire Builder Frequency: TCMC Phase 1 Study

## Partners

- MnDOT
- WisDOT
- IDOT
- FRA
- Ramsey County, MN
- La Crosse, WI MPO
- MN HS Rail Commission

- Next phase: Twin Cities - Milwaukee - Chicago Intercity Passenger Rail Service Phase 1 Study
- TCMC study includes:
  - Analysis of integration with Hiawatha Service
  - Further operations/capacity modeling and infrastructure needs identification
  - Concept engineering and capital cost estimates for identified infrastructure
  - Pre-NEPA activities (Purpose and need, alternatives analysis, outreach)
- Expected completion summer 2017
- Phase 2 (starting next year) will complete NEPA/SDP requirements for federal funding to implement



# Other Plans and Studies

- Minnesota: Northern Lights Express Tier 2 EA, Preliminary Engineering, and Service Development Plan
  - 4 round-trips daily Duluth-Twin Cities at 90 mph
  - Draft EA end of this year
  - Completion June 2017; eligibility for federal funds
  - Public meeting in Superior, WI re: grade crossing improvements on October 25<sup>th</sup>
  - City of Superior joined the Northern Lights Express Alliance and is a voting member
- FRA-led Midwest Multi-State Passenger Rail Planning Project
  - Long-term (30-40 year) blueprint for high-performance intercity passenger rail network in the Midwest
  - Planning process will commence soon
  - All stakeholders will have opportunity to participate

