

## **Appendix 2-F: Summary of Outreach with Freight Rail Carriers and Port Operators in Wisconsin**

The following provides a summary of outreach conducted with various freight rail carriers and port operators to identify rail related issues and needs. The results of this outreach were used to further refine the scope and content of the draft *Wisconsin Rail Plan 2030*.

### **Meeting Attendees - March 1, 2010**

**Attendees:**

- Sandy Beaupré, Bureau Director, Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT)
- Aileen Switzer, Statewide Planning Chief, WisDOT
- Ron Adams, Rails & Harbors Chief, WisDOT
- Pat Trainer, Environmental Policy and Community Impacts Chief, WisDOT
- Dan Scudder, Environmental Services Chief, WisDOT
- Cameron Bump, WisDNR
- Dave Siebert, WisDNR
- Bobbi Retzlaff, WisDOT
- Jennifer Murray, WisDOT

## Port Operator Outreach

<b>Port of Green Bay</b>	Dean Haen, Port Manager
<p>The Port of Green Bay, in Brown County, is a receiving port for coal and inbound construction materials, road salt and other bulk commodities. Inbound product is moved to final destination via truck; rail is not a significant factor in decisions to make use of the port’s facilities. Canadian National Railway is the primary rail service provider.</p> <p>While merchandise traffic is not involved in today’s port operations, University of Wisconsin - Green Bay is leading a collaborative study effort with port interests on the potential movement of container traffic to and from Green Bay. This study is part of an expanded use of Highway H2O - the 2,400-mile water route from the Atlantic Ocean, traversing the St. Lawrence River, St. Lawrence Seaway and the Great Lakes.</p>	
<b>Port of Milwaukee</b>	Eric Reinelt, Port Director
<p>The Port of Milwaukee is actually a department of the city of Milwaukee. As such, the mission of the port is to promote economic development, trade and job creation within the Milwaukee region regardless of mode. Much of the freight activity at the port is therefore unrelated to its status as a marine facility.</p> <p>The Port of Milwaukee is served directly by both Canadian Pacific Railway (CP) and the Union Pacific (UP) on a time-separated basis. CP services its clients at the port daily, while UP comes in around five times per week. Trackage within the port itself is publicly-owned, but only these two carriers directly connect to the port lead. Most traffic is inbound and includes road salt, industrial salt (for the paper industry), steel construction materials, cement and heavy industrial machinery. The port is seen as an attractive location for transload of power plant and wind generation components, which then move west via rail or truck to destinations in Wisconsin, Minnesota and Iowa. A portion of this latter category can only be forwarded by rail due to dimension and weight concerns.</p> <p>A Canadian Pacific intermodal operation is run, under contract, on a parcel of land leased from the port. Roughly 15,000 to 20,000 import/export containers per year are handled via Milwaukee with 90 percent destined to or from the Port of Montreal. The balance of traffic is freight handled via the Port of Vancouver.</p> <p>Milwaukee port officials believe rail infrastructure is sufficient for current volumes, although weight restrictions on a bridge near the end of the port rail lead are sometimes cause for concern. Of greater interest would be direct access to WSOR and CN line haul services. Some shorter-haul Wisconsin destination traffic moved west from the port would benefit from the geographic coverage offered by these two carriers.</p>	

<b>Port of La Crosse</b>	John Noyes, Robers Terminal
<p>Bulk commodities and cargo moving via La Crosse are handled by one of two privately-operated dock facilities served by Canadian Pacific Railway. Robers Terminal is open to a variety of users and handles steel, coal, cement, lumber and dimensional steel. The adjacent facility specializes in the movement of oil and asphalt products. Rail service is provided by a local CP switching crew based in La Crosse and is deemed adequate “by railroad standards” according to local port managers. There have been some cutbacks in rail crew availability due to the recent recession, with crews on duty for “on call” service 12 hours per day rather than 24 hours as had previously been the case. Rail facilities are deemed adequate for handling of current port volumes.</p>	

<b>Ports of Duluth/Superior</b>	Adolph Ojaard, Port Director	Teleconference
<p>Superior, Wisconsin is the site of the state’s highest-volume marine operations, with a variety of bulk cargoes moving via privately owned dock facilities to and from vessels that ply the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence Seaway. Key commodities include coal, grain, taconite and other ore and mining-related products. General merchandise traffic moves via facilities across the state line in Duluth. The Port Authority of Duluth/Superior is a Minnesota-chartered organization that owns facilities only in Minnesota but serves as the advocacy and marketing entity for port interests in the region as a whole.</p> <p>The port has experienced a significant increase in wind energy component handling over the past five years, but this traffic moves via the Duluth facilities that are equipped to handle merchandise and industrial goods shipments. Minnesota Steel’s long-term plans for new rolling mill facilities in the Iron Range may in time create demand for new rail service and/or new merchandise marine handling via the Lakes, but any such traffic would again be handled via the Duluth side of the bi-state port complex.</p> <p>Four Class I carriers serve the Twin Ports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Canadian National Railways, by virtue of its acquisition of Duluth, Minnesota and Iron Range and Wisconsin Central Railroad properties in 2001</li> <li>• Canadian Pacific Railway, through trackage rights access from the south over Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF)</li> <li>• Union Pacific Railroad, through trackage rights access from the south over BNSF</li> <li>• BNSF Railway, which accesses the port over its own lines from both the west and south</li> </ul> <p>Port management describes rail service as reliable from all serving carriers, consisting of regularly scheduled merchandise service and special commodity-specific unit train movements of grain, coal and other bulk commodities. Both inbound and outbound bulk commodity traffic is nearly always transferred to ground before furtherance via the connecting mode due, in part, to the seasonal nature of Great Lakes shipments. These “buffer stocks” eliminate most concerns over the specific timing of train movements as related to connecting marine vessels.</p> <p>At present, there are no significant rail facility needs related to the Superior port operations.</p>		

### Rail Carrier Outreach

<b>Amtrak</b>	Bruce Hillblom, Senior Director-State Partnerships
Amtrak’s engagement with Wisconsin for new services is through the context of the Midwest Regional Rail Initiative and the ARRA-funded <i>Hiawatha</i> extension project. Amtrak is also working with WisDOT on issues surrounding station development and ownership for present and anticipated services.	
<b>Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) Railway</b>	Chris Bigoness, Manager Public Funding; Paul Nowicki, AVP Government and Public Policy
BNSF’s main track infrastructure is considered adequate for current traffic volumes. Planners have identified potential future investments, if volumes grow significantly. Most of these projects target “missing sections” of what today are for the most part double-track alignments. A total of 12 miles of new second track would be involved.	
<b>Canadian National Railway (CN)</b>	Kevin Soucie, Senior Manager Government Affairs
A System Diagram map, traffic density by line and detailed engineering data for each of CN’s 16 Wisconsin subdivisions was provided to WisDOT.	
<b>Canadian Pacific Railway (CP)</b>	Judy Mitchell, Manager Commercial Development; Herb Jones, Manager of Public Affairs
Replacement of La Crosse-La Crescent bridge is a key infrastructure issue and has been ranked as a high priority by the Army Core of Engineers. CP also has periodic high water problems with the main line via the Reeseville swamp and sought funding assistance under the Federal TIGER grant funding program in 2009 for reconstruction and elevation of their alignment in that area. CP sees safety and appropriate treatment of passenger service investments, including protection of freight service capacity, as priority issues for the state.	
<b>Union Pacific (UP) Railroad</b>	Mike Payette, AVP Government Affairs; Mark Bristol, Gen. Director, Network and Business Development
UP has requested that WisDOT consider public assistance for removal of vertical clearance restrictions to permit double stack operations through Wisconsin; 11 discrete projects would be involved between Glen Oak and the Illinois border south of Milwaukee. UP is also seeking state support for a branch line rail bridge upgrade at Chippewa falls to permit 286,000lb car loadings on this branch. WisDOT has offered to purchase this line but UP is unwilling to cede ownership at this time.	

<b>Wisconsin &amp; Southern Railroad (WSOR)</b>	Ken Lucht, Director of Public Affairs; Ben Meighan, Engineering Superintendent
<p>WSOR looks forward to continuing strong support from the state as they gradually upgrade all of their lines to minimum FRA Class II status. WisDOT's consulting team met with WSOR engineering staff to review proposed medium and long-term infrastructure targets and associated capital plans. A sample of field inspections was also performed to evaluate track conditions. Enhanced access to the Chicago gateway (through trackage rights) would support further development of carload traffic. WSOR is presently restricted to one brace of trains daily due to restrictions imposed by Metra over lines that Metra owns and dispatches.</p>	
<b>Escanaba and Lake Superior (EL&amp;S)</b>	Tom Klimek, VP Marketing
<p>E&amp;LS is concerned over decreasing traffic volumes and the difficulty of marketing carload traffic with their current Class I connector.</p>	
<b>Wisconsin Northern Railroad (WNR)</b>	Lon VanGemert, CEO
<p>WNR operates a successful rail franchise of around 3,500 annual carloads of primarily inbound traffic. WNR would benefit from an upgrade of rail facilities to 286,000lb loading standards on the connecting UP route over Chippewa Falls.</p>	
<b>Tomahawk Railway</b>	Suzie Klinger, GM
<p>No written data received.</p>	