Wisconsin Passenger Rail Update
Wisconsin Freight Rail Conference 2019 Meeting, Madison, WI
WisDOT Passenger Rail Program and Investments
Milwaukee-Chicago Amtrak Hiawatha Service

Performance

75% costs recovered by fares

93% on-time

6% increase in riders: 880,000 SFY2019

Amtrak Hiawatha Service State Fiscal Year Ridership

State Payment Forecast for Wisconsin*

Hiawatha Service Monthly Ticket Revenue
Capacity on the Hiawatha

Hiawatha capacity Issues

• Table cars added in March to help address frequent overflow capacity situations
• Will remain at least through January 5th.
• Popular with business travelers and families
Wisconsin Investments and Initiatives

**Hiawatha Expansion**
- Increase from 7 to 10 daily round-trips
- $200 million infrastructure needed
- Some railroad FD/construction projects underway

**Hiawatha Improvement Projects Completed or Underway**
- Milwaukee Intermodal Station Train Concourse (2016)
- New state-owned locomotives (2017)
- Refreshed Amtrak Horizon coaches (Underway)
- Milwaukee Airport Rail Station Expansion (Funded 2019)
- Signaling upgrade in Milwaukee (Funded 2019)
- New state-owned coaches (Funded 2019)

**TCMC 2nd Empire Builder Frequency**
- Environmental clearance, service planning, infrastructure design (ongoing; completion summer 2020)
Modernization of Regional Rail

Wisconsin, Illinois, Michigan, and Missouri, in partnership with Amtrak

Advancing a modern, functional, cost-effective regional rail network

- Schedule changes to improve connectivity
  - 20% increase in MW route connections year over year (8% increase in total ridership)
  - 63% increase in connection ridership for Train 333.
- Next-generation cost-efficient passenger rail equipment for the Midwest state-supported routes
- New regional sub-brand created with website coming: Amtrak Midwest
- Adding train frequencies (daily trips) to existing corridors and reducing travel times
Modernization of Regional Rail

Refreshed Amtrak Cars

• Now being deployed on routes throughout the Midwest
• Completion of entire fleet by end of February.
Leveraging efficiencies to extend the reach of Amtrak Hiawatha Service

Enhanced connections to existing rail corridors will help create a multimodal system that works for Wisconsin

New Amtrak Thruway I-41 Connecting Bus Service

- Using Hiawatha cost savings to reinvest in providing connecting services to/from northeast Wisconsin
- Two additional daily coach round-trips between Green Bay and Milwaukee with timed connections to Chicago on Amtrak Hiawatha trains.
- Enables same-day round-trip between Green Bay, the Fox Valley, and Chicago
- Serves Milwaukee Mitchell International Airport
Existing Amtrak Empire Builder Opportunities/Issues

• Amtrak long-distance train between Chicago and Seattle/Portland – not state supported
• One round-trip daily: Milwaukee, Columbus, Portage, Wis. Dells, Tomah, La Crosse
• Over 100,000 riders annually in the Chicago-St. Paul segment of the route
• Regional travel: 70% on/offs in Wisconsin travelling within the Chicago-St. Paul segment
• Significant delays eastbound from Seattle/Portland
  • Challenge for regional/business travel
  • Challenge for connecting shuttle services
Planning for more service

Maintain and improve existing corridors and increase frequencies
Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago (TCMC) 2\textsuperscript{nd} Daily Train

- Additional daily round-trip serving all Empire Builder (EB) stops between Chicago and St. Paul
- Operates at a maximum of 79 mph
- Daytime schedule complements EB schedule
- 30 minutes shorter travel time than EB Builder
- Reliable on-time performance due to shorter distance, fewer railroads.
Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago (TCMC) 2nd Daily Train

Objective

- Provide schedule flexibility and reliability for regional trips
- Address latent demand for regional rail service on the corridor
- Strengthen multi-modal connections in communities
- Provide alternative to congestion, tolls, parking when accessing Milwaukee, Chicago, and Twin Cities.
- Support, attract, and retain businesses, economic development, jobs, and tourism

Partners: WisDOT, MnDOT, IDOT, La Crosse Area Planning Committee, Ramsey County, Amtrak, FRA
TCMC 2nd Daily Train

Findings

• Infrastructure costs: $55 million to $72 million depending on operating alternative
• $10 - $12 million in state funds needed each from WI and MN for their share of federal grant match
• Ridership: 155,000 annually; comparable to a similar, successful route in Michigan and higher than other comparable routes
• State-supported corridor (route under 750 miles)
• Operating support (operating costs - revenues) required and split among the states

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TCMC PROJECT FEATURES</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Service frequency</td>
<td>1 round trip per day, in addition to existing long-distance Empire Builder service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anticipated schedule</td>
<td>About 4-6 hours difference from the departure/arrival times of the Empire Builder service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speed</td>
<td>79 mph (maximum)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel time</td>
<td>Faster than Empire Builder service – about 7.5 hours between Saint Paul and Chicago</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stations</td>
<td>13 total – includes two stations in Illinois and three stations in Wisconsin served by Hiawatha service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ridership</td>
<td>About 155,000 riders annually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital cost</td>
<td>$55-76 million for track capacity improvements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual operating cost</td>
<td>$12.45 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual state operating subsidy</td>
<td>$5.60 million subsidy would be divided among Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Illinois</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CONGESTION AREAS, PROPOSED INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

- **ST PAUL**
- **Red Wing**
- **La Crosse**
- **Winona, MN**
  - Extend Tower CK siding
  - Upgrade existing siding at Amtrak Winona Depot
- **Columbus, WI**
  - Install universal crossover west of Columbus

**River Junction, MN**
- Cement yard track to signaled main track
- Upgrade bridge switch

**La Crosse, WI**
- Rebuild second main track and extend La Crosse yard lead west
- Extend Modernday siding and install universal crossover

**NOTE:** These are proposed infrastructure improvements, subject to revisions during environmental review, and preliminary and final design work.
TCMC 2nd Daily Train

Community Impact Example: La Crosse

- Expanded schedule with 2 round-trips daily facilitates regional travel and enables a one-overnight business trip to Twin Cities, Milwaukee, or Chicago
  - AM meeting in St. Paul
  - AM meeting in La Crosse
- Addresses limited air, intercity bus, and rail options
- At least 17,000 additional trips using La Crosse station

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eastbound Departures</th>
<th>Westbound Departures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To St. Paul</td>
<td>From St. Paul</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:17 PM New</td>
<td>10:15 AM New</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:11 PM</td>
<td>2:15 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To Chicago</td>
<td>From Chicago</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:47 AM</td>
<td>8:00 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:20 PM New</td>
<td>12:00 PM New</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Milwaukee-Chicago Hiawatha Expansion

Increase to 10 Round-trips Daily

Environmental Clearance and Service Development Plan Ongoing:

• Infrastructure projects in WI and IL: $200 million
• Environmental document and SDP will be changed to reflect new infrastructure projects

Challenges

• Opposition to track improvements in Illinois
• Working with railroad stakeholders to find alternative projects that add sufficient track capacity
• Large enough federal grant programs
• State and local funding matches

Next Steps

• Complete analysis of infrastructure alternatives to projects in Illinois and clear them environmentally
• Apply for federal grant for design and construction
• Add frequencies incrementally up to 10 RT daily
Transitioning from planning to implementation

Milwaukee-Chicago Hiawatha and Twin Cities –La Crosse- Milwaukee-Chicago Second Daily Train
State matching funds for federal construction grants

Wisconsin Biennial Budget 2019-2021 Act 9

- $35 million for passenger rail related railroad capital improvements between Milwaukee and Chicago corridor.
- Intended to use as match for federal grants.
- Allows WisDOT to move ahead with federal grant applications for final design and construction projects.
2019 Federal Grant Award Selections

Milwaukee Airport Rail Station Expansion

- $10.1 million project
  - $5.05M FRA CRISI; $4M WI; $1M Amtrak; $50K CP Rail
- Adds second platform with overhead access and two elevator towers
- Benefits: Capacity and reliability - enables freight and passenger trains to be dispatched on both tracks; Accessibility; Safety
- Project required for increased frequencies

CTC Signaling Installation Milwaukee

- $5.2 million project
  - $2.6M FRA CRISI; $2.6M WI
- Replaces ABS signaling with CTC
- Benefits: reliability, safety, speed increase
- Project required for increased frequencies

Figure 4 – Passengers crossing the CP main tracks using the small emergency platform to board an Amtrak train dispatched on Track 2 due to railroad maintenance work
2019 Federal Grant Award Selections

Advancing improvements to the Hiawatha corridor incrementally

Next Generation Single Level Equipment Acquisition: Hiawatha

• $39M million project
  • $28M FRA Fed-State Partnership; $11M WI
• Adds 6 coaches/3 cabs to Midwest pool for use on Hiawatha
• Reliability, accessibility, additional seating capacity, lower maintenance costs, consistent equipment with all MW routes
• Adds up to 58 additional seats to Hiawatha trains
2019 BUILD and CRISI Grant Applications

BUILD and CRISI Grant Application: Muskego Yard Improvements

• $54M million project
  • $26M USDOT/FRA; $20M WI; $8M Amtrak
  • Bypass for freight trains of Milwaukee Intermodal Station
  • Yard track and signal reconfiguration
  • Two new mainline CTC signalized through-tracks with 25 mph freight speeds and new or upgraded bridges
  • Removes most freight from Milwaukee Intermodal Station
  • New yard lead

• BUILD Application submitted July of 2019
• CRISI Application submitted October of 2019
Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago (TCMC) Status

Progress to date

- Feasibility study (forecasts for ridership, revenues, costs)
- Operations analysis
- Capacity modeling and infrastructure needs
- Concept engineering and capital cost estimates for infrastructure
- Pre-NEPA activities (Purpose and need, alternatives analysis, initial outreach)

Current work in progress (Completion spring 2020)

- Completing Service Development Plan (Updated ridership, revenue, costs, operation details, benefit-cost analysis)
- Environmental surveys for projects
TCMC Next Steps

Next Steps

• Complete environmental clearance and railroad agreement (Spring/summer 2020)

• **If the states decide to implement the service:** Complete and submit federal grant application for final design and construction (Spring/summer 2020 or later)

What is needed for the grant application?

• Matching funds from:
  • State of Wisconsin
  • State of Minnesota
  • Amtrak
  • Local partners

• Matching fund target is $25 million (federal grant $47 million)

Benefit-cost and Return on Investment are key deciding factors