



# Wisconsin Passenger Rail Update

Wisconsin Freight Rail Conference  
2019 Meeting, Madison, WI



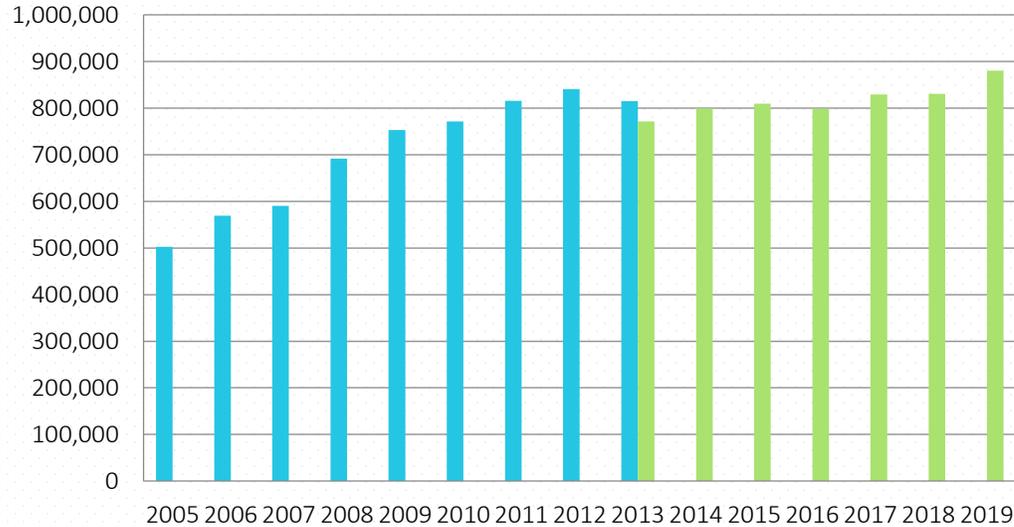
# WisDOT Passenger Rail Program and Investments

# Milwaukee-Chicago Amtrak Hiawatha Service

## Performance



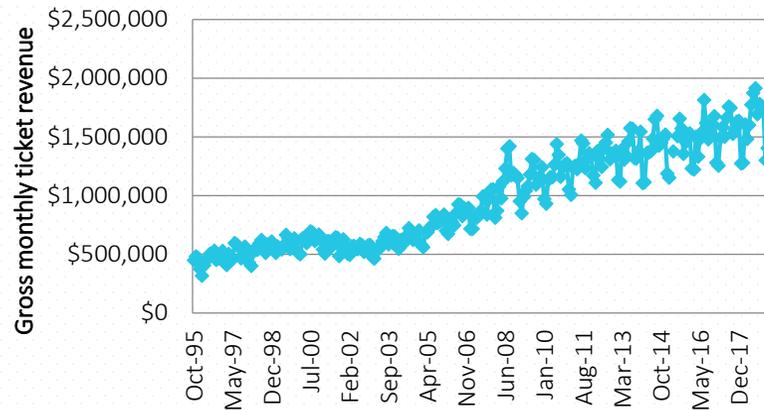
Amtrak Hiawatha Service State Fiscal Year Ridership



State Payment Forecast for Wisconsin\*



Hiawatha Service Monthly Ticket Revenue



75% costs recovered by fares

93% on-time

6% increase in riders: 880,000 SFY2019



# 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 5<sup>th</sup>.
- 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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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

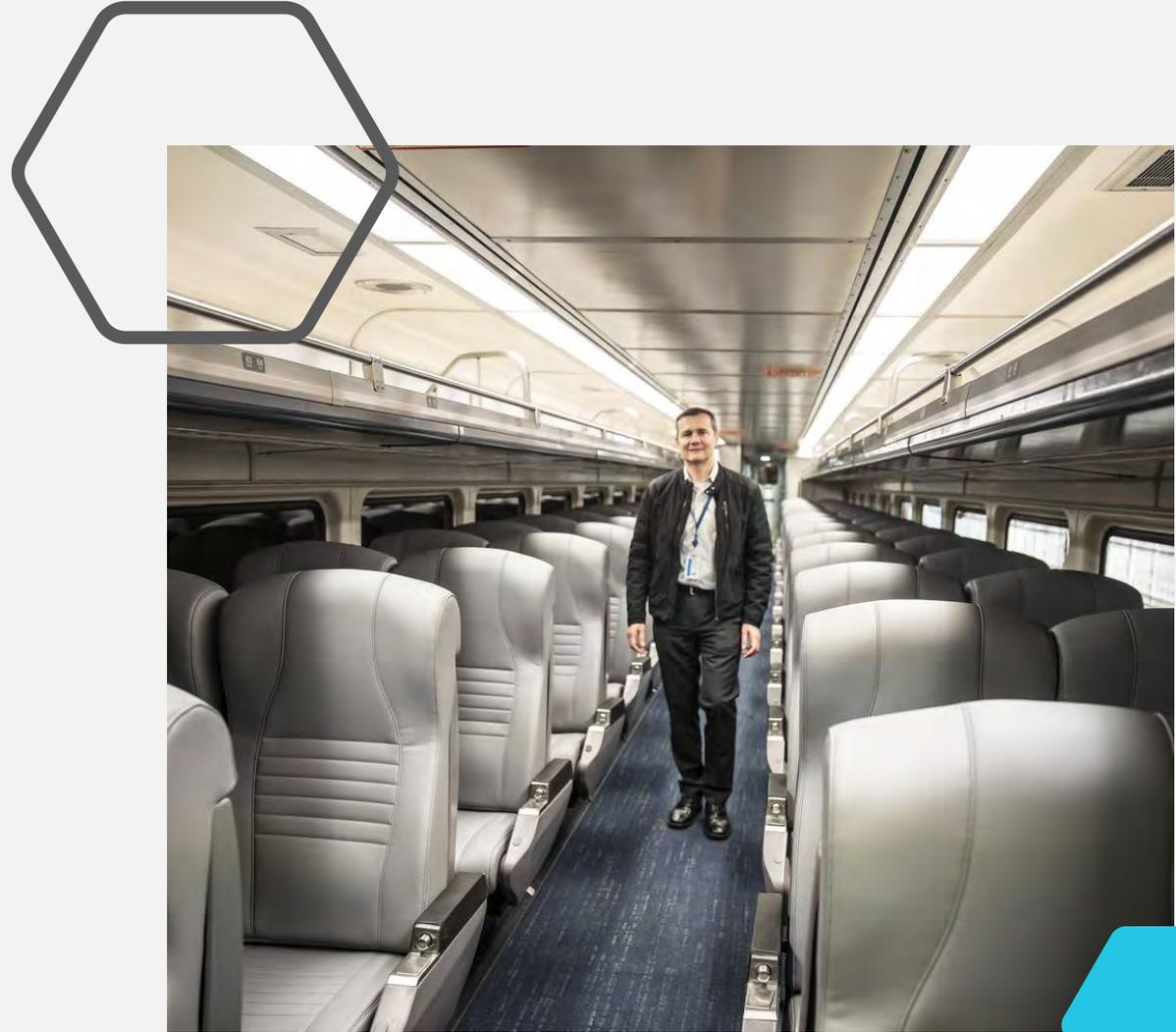
- Schedule changes to improve connectivity
  - 20% increase in MW route connections year over year (8% increase in total ridership)
  - 63% increase in connection ridership for Train 333.
- Next-generation cost-efficient passenger rail equipment for the Midwest state-supported routes
- New regional sub-brand 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



**NEW**

**AMTRAK**  
**THRUWAY**  
SERVICE CONNECTION

**Your easy connection to Milwaukee and Chicago**

I-41 Bus connects with Amtrak® Hiawatha® trains  
Travel to Chicago and back in one day



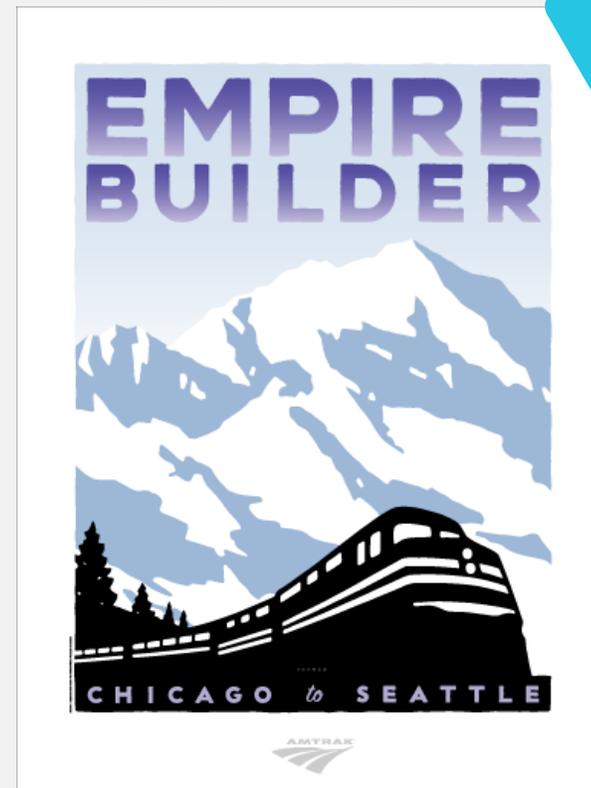
- Green Bay
- De Pere
- Appleton
- UW Oshkosh
- Oshkosh
- Fond du Lac
- Milwaukee
- Milwaukee Airport
- Sturtevant
- Glenview, IL
- Chicago, IL

Book now at [AmtrakHiawatha.com](https://AmtrakHiawatha.com),  
Amtrak app or 1-800-USA-RAIL

# 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/offers 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



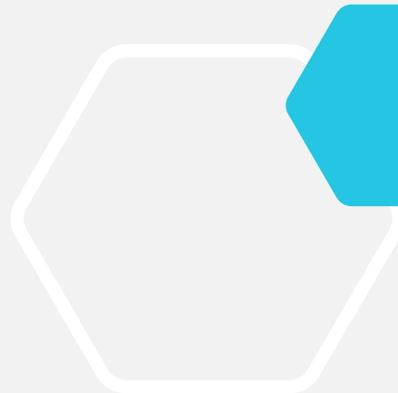


# Planning for more service

Maintain and improve existing corridors and increase frequencies

# Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago (TCMC) 2<sup>nd</sup> 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.

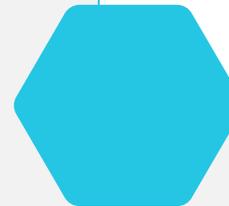


# Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago (TCMC) 2<sup>nd</sup> Daily Train

Partners: WisDOT, MnDOT, IDOT, La Crosse Area Planning Committee, Ramsey County, Amtrak, FRA

## 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



# TCMC 2<sup>nd</sup> 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

### TCMC PROJECT FEATURES

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



# CONGESTION AREAS, PROPOSED INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

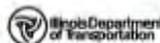
 Area of congestion

**PROPOSED INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS**

-  Siding extension
-  Upgrade with power switches and signals
-  New or converted track
-  Install universal crossover

**NOTE:**

These are **proposed** infrastructure improvements, subject to revisions during environmental review, and preliminary and final design work.



# TCMC 2<sup>nd</sup> 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

	Eastbound Departures		Westbound Departures
To St. Paul	3:17 PM <i>New</i>	From Chicago	10:15 AM <i>New</i>
	7:11 PM		2:15 PM
To Chicago	10:47 AM	From St. Paul	8:00 AM
	2:20 PM <i>New</i>		12:00 PM <i>New</i>



# 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



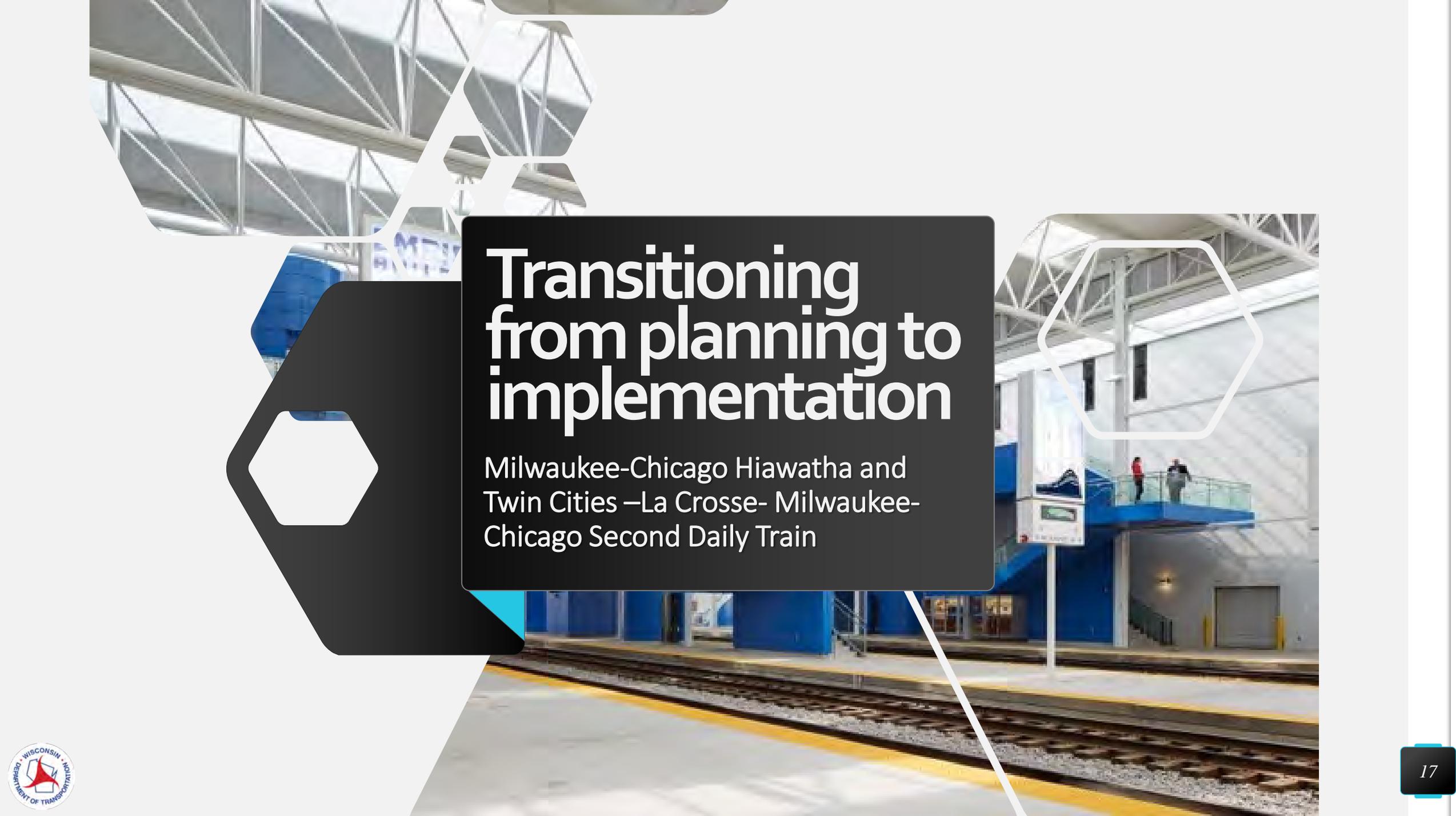
## Challenges

- 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





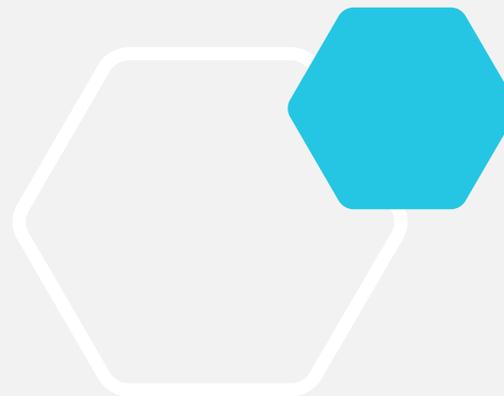
# Transitioning from planning to implementation

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

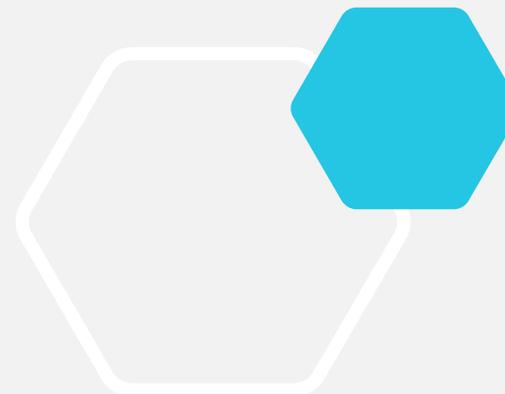
- \$10.1 million project
  - \$5.05M FRA CRISI; \$4M WI; \$1M Amtrak; \$50K CP Rail
- Adds second platform with overhead access and two elevator towers
- Benefits: Capacity and reliability - enables freight and passenger trains to be dispatched on both tracks; Accessibility; Safety
- Project required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

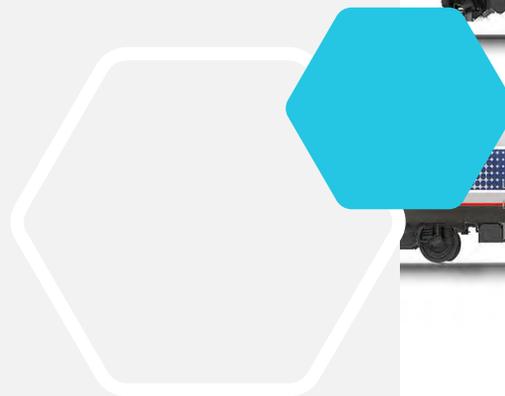


# 2019 Federal Grant Award Selections

Advancing improvements to the Hiawatha corridor incrementally

## Next Generation Single Level Equipment Acquisition: Hiawatha

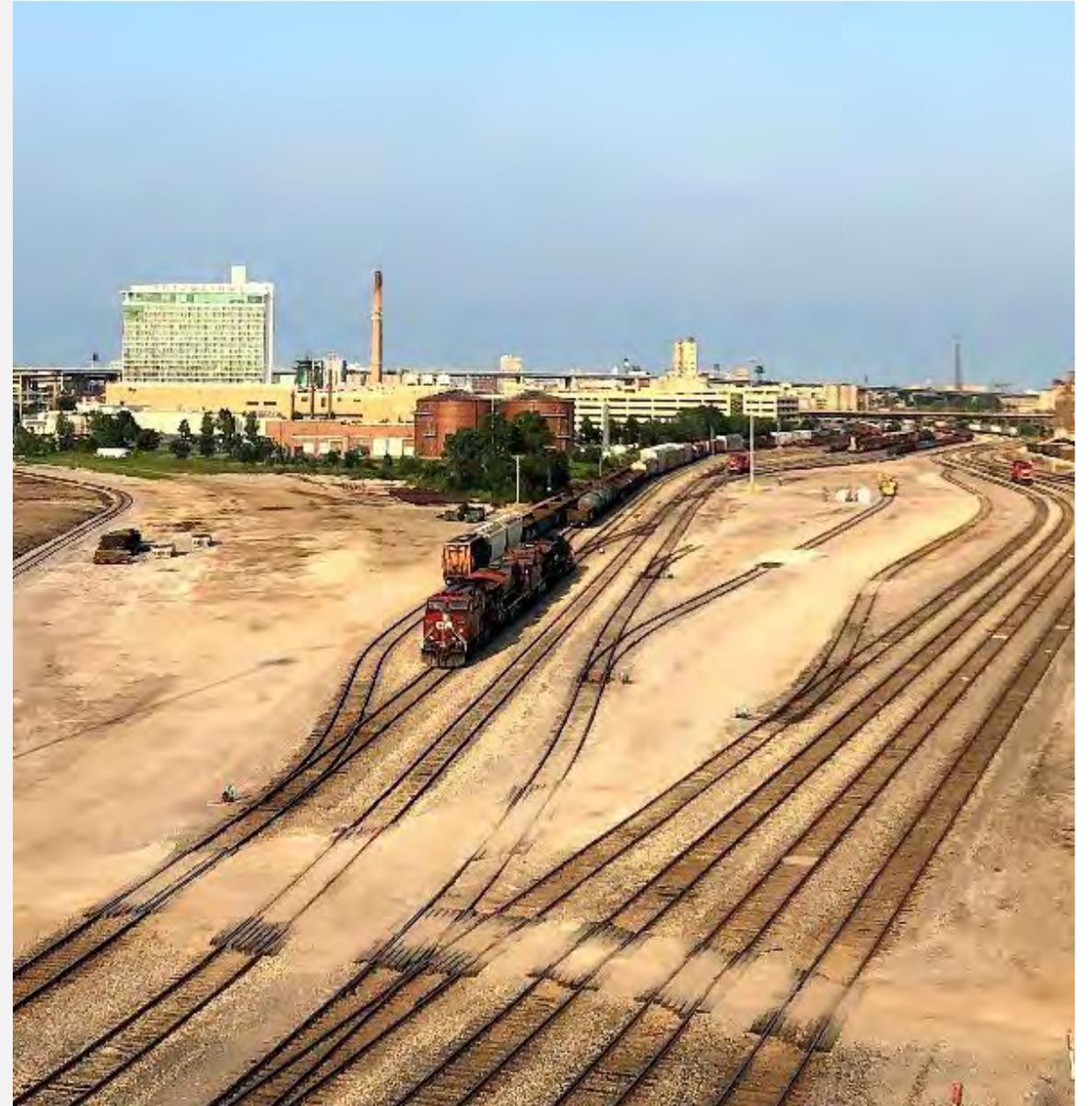
- \$39M million project
  - \$28M FRA Fed-State Partnership; \$11M WI
- Adds 6 coaches/ 3 cabs to Midwest pool for use on Hiawatha
- Reliability, accessibility, additional seating capacity, lower maintenance costs, consistent equipment with all MW routes
- Adds up to 58 additional seats to Hiawatha trains



# 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





# Thank You

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