

# TWIN CITIES-MILWAUKEE-CHICAGO Intercity Passenger Rail Service

## Appendix F: Letters of Support



JUNE 19, 2020



## **Letters of Support**

Canadian Pacific Railroad  
U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin (WI)  
State Senator Jon Erpenbach & State Representative Dave Considine  
State Senator Luther Olsen  
State Senator Patrick Testin  
State Representative Jill Billings  
Illinois Department of Transportation  
Amtrak  
Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority  
La Crosse Planning Commission  
City of Chicago  
Racine County  
Milwaukee 7  
Milwaukee Downtown Business Improvement District 21  
Milwaukee County Transportation  
Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission  
City of Columbus  
City of Portage  
Portage Area Chamber of Commerce  
Wisconsin Dells Visitor Bureau  
City of Tomah  
Tomah Chamber & Visitor Center  
City of La Crosse  
La Crosse Area Development Corporation  
La Crosse County  
Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission  
City of Winona  
Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce  
Transportation Development Association  
West Central Wisconsin Rail Coalition  
Great River Rail  
Eau Claire Area Chamber of Commerce  
City of Newport  
Menomonee valley Partners  
Choice Hotels  
BublR Bikes  
Tommy Bartlett, Inc.  
University of Wisconsin - La Crosse  
Marquette University  
Independence First  
Rolling Hills Transit



C. E. Hubbard  
Director  
Interline & Passenger - South

Battle Creek Building  
1010 Shop Road  
St. Paul, MN  
55106

T (612) 904-5964  
C (612) 201-2527  
E chuck\_hubbard@cpr.ca

June 12, 2020

The Honorable Ronald L. Batory  
Administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Administrator Batory,

I am writing you in support of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation and Minnesota Department of Transportation joint application to the Federal Railroad Administration’s Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) program for funds to support the capital improvements for the Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago Intercity Passenger Rail (TCMC) Project.

The TCMC Project fills regional transportation system gaps, provides an alternative that is cost-effective to implement, operate and maintain, responds to increases in population and economic growth, integrates with Hiawatha service, and avoids travel time delays sometimes experienced by the eastbound Empire Builder as it travels from the West Coast. The new round-trip within the TCMC Project corridor complements the existing Empire Builder long-distance service with a schedule providing an intercity frequency that is approximately 4 to 6 hours apart from the existing Empire Builder schedule, to provide flexibility and convenience for passenger rail travel within the TCMC corridor.

In addition to improving regional mobility, the proposed TCMC railroad improvements will help to mitigate the addition of the TCMC daily passenger trains [one in each direction] and will benefit Canadian Pacific with movement of both domestic and international commerce along and through the Twin Cities to Milwaukee corridor. This may be realized by way of enhanced capacity allowing for simultaneous passenger, through freight, and local movements to take place while removing operational constraints in the rail corridor. Rail Traffic Control (RTC) modeling has been completed with Canadian Pacific operations input and review to identify infrastructure improvements in Minnesota and Wisconsin required to add the round-trip passenger trains within the corridor. The following infrastructure projects have been identified through this process to date:

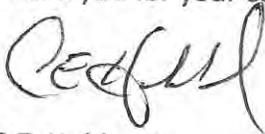
Location	Improvement Summary
Winona, MN	<p><b>Tower CK:</b> Extend siding connecting the main track to the CP Waseca Subdivision, installation of power switches and signals.</p> <p><b>Winona Siding:</b> Upgrade an existing siding with power switches and signaled to allow more efficient train meets, the ability to clear the main track more quickly and efficiently, and the ability for freight trains to operate through Winona when passenger trains are making a station stop at Winona</p>

La Crescent, MN	<b>River Jct:</b> Convert an un-signalized yard track to a signaled second main track. Modify bridge wye track alignment to allow for increased speeds through the switch, and the new main track speeds increased from 10 mph to 25 mph.
La Crosse, WI	<p><b>Mississippi River Bridge:</b> Realign the track approaches at both the west and east ends, replace the west bridge switch and replace the bridge special trackwork at the moveable points of the bridge. These improvements will increase the speed across the bridge from 10MPH to 15MPH.</p> <p><b>Downtown LaCrosse:</b> Rebuild second main track and extend La Crosse Yard lead west, re-establishing the old second main track through the La Crosse Depot. Make existing La Crosse Yard lead a signaled second main track (Grand Crossing to Black River Bridge).</p>

Canadian Pacific has worked with Wisconsin, Minnesota and other partners for several years on the TCMC project and will continue to coordinate on the project implementation with the understanding that Canadian Pacific existing and future railroad operations, infrastructure and capacity are considered throughout the implementation process.

If awarded, Federal funding would be utilized to implement these critical infrastructure improvements throughout the TCMC Corridor, allow TCMC operational agreements to be formally executed, improve existing freight operations, and provide economic value along the entire corridor. Federal funding would greatly reduce the barriers to successful implementation of the TCMC Project and I support the application for the CRISI Grant Program. We look forward to continuing to work with the state DOT's and Amtrak on this project. If I can answer any questions, I may be reached at [chuck\\_hubbard@cpr.ca](mailto:chuck_hubbard@cpr.ca) or by phone 612-904-5964.

Thank you for your consideration,



C.E. Hubbard  
 Director Interline and Passenger - US  
 Canadian Pacific

Cc: Arielle Giordano - CP  
 Daniel Sabatka - CP  
 Kelly Storozuk - CP

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

COMMITTEES:  
APPROPRIATIONS  
COMMERCE  
HEALTH, EDUCATION,  
LABOR, AND PENSIONS

June 10, 2020

The Honorable Ronald L. Batory  
Administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE  
Washington, DC 20590

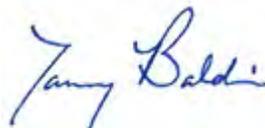
Dear Administrator Batory,

I am pleased to support the Wisconsin Department of Transportation and Minnesota Department of Transportation's application to the Federal Railroad Administration's Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) program from the Federal Railroad Administration. Funding will be used to support the capital improvements for the Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago Intercity Passenger Rail (TCMC) Project.

Currently, Amtrak's Empire Builder, which provides long-distance service between Chicago and Seattle/Portland, is the only existing passenger rail service that operates between the Twin Cities and Chicago. The TCMC Project seals regional transportation system gaps and provides an alternative that is cost-effective to implement, operate and maintain. In addition, it responds to increases in population and economic growth, integrates with Hiawatha service, and avoids travel time delays sometimes experienced by the eastbound Empire Builder as it travels from the West Coast. It is my understanding that the TCMC Project will create engineering and construction jobs needed to design and build approximately \$72 million in track and signal improvements. It will support tourism spending all along the 411-mile route and businesses that sell goods and services to Amtrak, as well as connect students to educational opportunities at colleges and universities throughout the TCMC Corridor. This will help rural and urban communities along the corridor attract and retain businesses, employees, residents, and visitors by improving connections to the economic epicenters of the region. Funding will be utilized to implement critical infrastructure improvements throughout the TCMC Corridor, allow for TCMC operations to commence, improve existing freight operations, and provide economic value along the entire corridor.

I strongly support a more robust transportation system to connect Wisconsinites to opportunities across the state. For this reason, I respectfully request that full and fair consideration be given to the Wisconsin Department of Transportation and the Minnesota Department of Transportation's application. Please keep Elaine Menigo in my office updated on the progress of this application and contact her with questions or concerns. She may be reached at 30 West Mifflin Street, Suite 700, Madison, Wisconsin 53703, by phone, 608-264-5338, or by email, [projects\\_grants@baldwin.senate.gov](mailto:projects_grants@baldwin.senate.gov). Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Tammy Baldwin  
United States Senator



## WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

P.O. BOX 8952 • MADISON, WI 53708

June 15, 2020

The Honorable Ronald L. Batory  
Administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Administrator Batory,

We are writing today to support the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) and Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) joint application to the Federal Railroad Administration's Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) program for funding to support the Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago Intercity Passenger Rail (TCMC) Project.

This project would improve regional mobility by filling transportation system gaps we currently see in our districts. The addition of this round-trip service will provide additional travel opportunities for the surrounding areas of each stop including Portage and Wisconsin Dells. We are excited for this prospect as the once daily round trip service between Chicago and St. Paul do not fully meet the travel demand of the areas on the line.

Past projects have proven that WisDOT, MnDOT, and other local planning commissions are able to collaborate significantly. This is why we have great faith that if awarded, Federal funding would be expertly used to implement critical infrastructure improvements. These improvements include providing economic value along the corridor through building approximately \$72 million in track and signal improvements and creating engineering and construction jobs. Additionally, by improving existing freight operations, tourism spending will be supported along the entire 411 mile route.

We support the WisDOT and MnDOT in their efforts to bring additional regional mobility to underserved areas, and we ask you to do the same by approving their grant application. Please feel free to contact either of our offices with any questions.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

JON ERPENBACH  
State Senator  
27<sup>th</sup> Senate District

DAVE CONSIDINE  
State Representative  
81<sup>st</sup> Assembly District



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**Luther S. Olsen**  
State Senator  
14th District

The Honorable Ronald L. Batory  
Administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Administrator Batory,

I am writing you in support of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation and Minnesota Department of Transportation joint application to the Federal Railroad Administration's Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) program for funds to support the capital improvements for the Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago Intercity Passenger Rail (TCMC) Project.

For those not traveling by personal vehicle, there are a lack of transportation options for travel to and from smaller cities within the TCMC corridor. Amtrak's Empire Builder, which provides long-distance service between Chicago and Seattle/Portland, is the only existing passenger rail service that operates between the Twin Cities and Chicago. This once daily round trip service provides limited passenger schedule options between Chicago Union Station and Union Depot in St. Paul and several smaller communities along the route in Minnesota and Wisconsin. While commercial bus and airline services are available, these do not fully serve the travel demand between these smaller cities and the larger cities.

The TCMC Project fills regional transportation system gaps, provides an alternative that is cost-effective to implement, operate and maintain, responds to increases in population and economic growth, integrates with Hiawatha service, and avoids travel time delays sometimes experienced by the eastbound Empire Builder as it travels from the West Coast. The new round-trip within the TCMC Project corridor complements the existing Empire Builder long-distance service with a schedule providing an intercity frequency that is approximately 4 to 6 hours apart from the existing Empire Builder schedule, to provide flexibility and convenience oriented towards passenger rail travel within the TCMC corridor.

In addition to improving regional mobility, the TCMC Project has important economic benefits. The TCMC Project will create engineering and construction jobs to design and build approximately \$72 million in track and signal improvements. Additionally, the Project will support tourism spending all along the 411-mile route, it will support businesses that sell goods and services to Amtrak and it will connect students to educational opportunities at colleges and



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Luther S. Olsen  
State Senator  
14th District

universities throughout the TCMC Corridor. Ultimately, it will help rural and urban communities along the corridor attract and retain businesses, employees, residents, and visitors by improving connections to the economic epicenters of the region.

The TCMC Project is a multi-partner effort with support across several states. Existing and past project phases have included significant participation from various public entities including WisDOT, MnDOT, La Crosse Area Planning Commission and the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority. Recently, the project was awarded an FRA Restoration & Enhancement Grant to fund operations and project partners are excited to advance the project from planning to implementation.

If awarded, Federal funding would be utilized to implement critical infrastructure improvements throughout the TCMC Corridor, allow for TCMC operations to commence, improve existing freight operations, and provide economic value along the entire corridor. Federal funding would greatly reduce the barriers to successful implementation of the TCMC Project and I support the application for the CRISI Grant Program.

Thank you for your consideration,

Senator Luther S. Olsen  
Wisconsin State Senator Senate District 14

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Luther S. Olsen".

Luther Olsen  
State Senator  
14<sup>th</sup> District



**PATRICK TESTIN**  
STATE SENATOR

The Honorable Ronald L. Batory  
Administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Administrator Batory,

I am writing to voice my support for the joint application by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation and the Minnesota Department of Transportation to the Federal Railroad Administration's Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) program for funds supporting the Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago Intercity Passenger Rail (TCMC) Project.

As President/CEO of the Tomah Chamber & Visitors Center Tina Thompson pointed out, 11,394 trips began or ended on Amtrak at the Tomah station last year. This has already brought increased activity to their downtown area, while saving transportation costs for those wishing to visit a beautiful part of Wisconsin. An expansion would only further the benefits we are already seeing.

Amtrak's Empire Builder is the only existing passenger rail service that operates between the Twin Cities and Chicago. While this used to provide daily round trips, options have become much more limited. Transport by bus or airline, though available, are also limited. The TCMC Project would fill this transportation gap.

If awarded, Federal funding would be utilized to implement critical infrastructure improvements throughout the TCMC Corridor, allow for TCMC operations to commence, improve existing freight operations, and provide economic value along the entire corridor. Federal funding would greatly reduce the barriers to successful implementation of the TCMC Project.

Thank you for your consideration and please feel free to reach out to me at (608) 266-3123 with any questions.

Respectfully Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Patrick Testin".

Patrick Testin  
WI State Senator 24<sup>th</sup> Senate District  
(608) 266-3123



**JILL BILLINGS**  
STATE REPRESENTATIVE

June 16, 2020

The Honorable Ronald L. Batory  
Administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Administrator Batory,

I write today to provide my support for the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) and Minnesota Department of Transportation (MNDOT) joint application to the Federal Railroad Administration's Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) program for funds to support the capital improvements for the Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago Intercity Passenger Rail (TCMC) Project. As a state legislator, whose district includes the sole passenger rail option between Chicago, Milwaukee and the Twin Cities I encourage these capital improvements.

This line is incredibly important to the economic vitality of the greater Coulee Region, providing a transportation alternative to those commuting to the Twin Cities or Milwaukee and enhancing the region's transportation infrastructure. This is why the La Crosse Area Planning Commission has been a strong partner of previous efforts to provide enhancements to this rail line. Improvements to this line through the CRISI grant will address regional transportation system gaps. The improvements will benefit industry in our region including tourism, health care and higher education. Further, the investment will directly create local jobs and economic growth in engineering and construction.

Although travel and freight trends may dwindle during the COVID-19 pandemic, it's important that this investment is made now to improve the infrastructure for future growth and provide immediate job development.

I request your approval of the WisDOT and MNDOT CRISI grant application of \$47 million for railroad improvements required to implement the TCMC service. This is a sound investment, in a vital, Midwestern transportation artery, providing economic investment, and meeting both urban and rural transportation goals. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark blue ink that reads "Jill Billings". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jill Billings  
Wisconsin State Representative  
95<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



# Illinois Department of Transportation

Office of the Secretary  
2300 South Dirksen Parkway / Springfield, Illinois / 62764  
Telephone 217/782-6149

June 4, 2020

Honorable Ronald L. Batory  
Administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Administrator Batory:

I am writing you in support of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) and Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) joint application to the Federal Railroad Administration's Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) program for funds to support the capital improvements for the Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago Intercity Passenger Rail (TCMC) Project. The joint application seeks \$52 million in Federal CRISI funds with each state contributing \$10 million in matching funds for a total project cost of \$72 million.

For those not traveling by personal vehicle, there are a lack of transportation options for travel to and from smaller cities within the TCMC corridor. Amtrak's Empire Builder, which provides long-distance service between Chicago and Seattle/Portland, is the only existing passenger rail service that operates between the Twin Cities and Chicago. This once daily round trip service provides limited passenger schedule options between Chicago Union Station and Union Depot in St. Paul and several smaller communities along the route in Minnesota and Wisconsin. While commercial bus and airline services are available, these do not fully serve the travel demand between these smaller cities and the larger cities.

The TCMC Project fills several regional transportation system gaps. It provides an alternative that is cost-effective to implement, operate and maintain, responds to increases in population and economic growth, integrates with the existing Hiawatha service, and avoids travel time delays sometimes experienced by the eastbound Empire Builder as it travels from the West Coast.

In addition to improving regional mobility, the TCMC Project has important economic benefits. The TCMC Project will create engineering and construction jobs to design and build approximately \$72 million in track and signal improvements. Additionally, the Project will support tourism spending all along the 411-mile route, it will support businesses that sell goods and services to Amtrak and it will connect students to educational opportunities at colleges and universities throughout the TCMC Corridor. Ultimately, it will help both rural and urban communities along the corridor attract and retain businesses, employees,

Honorable Ronald L. Batory

Page Two

June 4, 2020

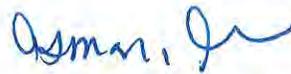
residents, and visitors by improving connections to the economic epicenters of the region.

The TCMC Project is a multi-partner effort with support across several states. Existing and past project phases have included significant participation from various public entities including WisDOT, MnDOT, La Crosse Area Planning Commission and the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority. Recently, the project was awarded a Federal Railroad Administration Restoration & Enhancement Grant to fund operations and project partners are excited to advance the project from planning to implementation.

If awarded, Federal funding would be utilized to implement critical infrastructure improvements throughout the TCMC Corridor, allow for TCMC operations to commence, improve existing freight operations, and provide economic value along the entire corridor. Federal funding would greatly reduce the barriers to successful implementation of the TCMC Project and I support the application for the CRISI Grant Program.

If you should have any questions or need additional information please contact John Oimoen at 312/793-4222 or by email at [john.oimoen@illinois.gov](mailto:john.oimoen@illinois.gov) .

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Osman, Omer".

Omer M. Osman, P.E.  
Acting Secretary

Joe McHugh  
Vice President, State Supported Services  
Business Development



June 3, 2020

Ms. Margaret Anderson-Kelliher  
Commissioner  
Minnesota Department of Transportation  
395 John Ireland Blvd.  
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Mr. Craig Thompson  
Secretary-Designee, Wisconsin Department of Transportation  
Hill Farms Transportation Building  
4822 Madison Yards Way  
Madison, WI 53705

Dear Ms. Anderson-Kelliher and Mr. Thompson,

Since I last wrote, the domestic and international travel environment has shifted dramatically. Amtrak, like other commercial interstate carriers, has had to cope with a dramatic downturn in travel demand, precipitated by shelter-in-place orders in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. We have worked with States like Wisconsin, that we provide contract services, and responded by adjusting train consist size and schedule frequency to match capacity with demand and reduced passenger revenue. Nonetheless, the value of passenger rail service today, moving essential workers and travelers for whom transportation is critical, remains. Congress and the President validated Amtrak's value to the nation by including \$1.018 billion in the CARES Act, allowing us to retain base service over the bulk of our 21,000-mile network.

Concurrently, Congress and the Administration continue to show support for passenger rail expansion in the future and the potential for corridor development like that being advanced in Minnesota and Wisconsin. I congratulate Wisconsin and Minnesota on your recent \$12.6 million FRA Restoration and Enhancement Grant toward supplementing operating support for the proposed Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago second frequency that Amtrak has been advancing in partnership with you. The Amtrak team will support your forthcoming grant application for \$47 million of FRA Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvement funds for necessary construction of capacity enhancements to implement the second train. Amtrak is pledging \$5 million to match necessary Wisconsin and Minnesota contributions to provide approximately \$25 million in local resources toward this effort.

Our relationship with Wisconsin DOT has been longstanding, and we have found our work with Minnesota DOT productive and affirming, as we take the next steps toward implementing this exciting project. We know projects like this, if implemented, will expand the transportation options which drive access to local and regional economies. During these challenging times, the labor and supplies needed for its construction over several years will inject needed stimulus in economies rocked by the sudden downturn. The CRISI grant requirements award special

*Ms. Margaret Anderson-Kelliher*

*Mr. Craig Thompson*

*June 3, 2020*

*Page Two*



consideration to projects of rural benefit. Expect full cooperation from our team in completing environmental clearances and design work, and preparing necessary agreements to cement this partnership and deliver a project with long term benefits to the people of Wisconsin and Minnesota, and enhances the quality of life of the upper Midwest.

The year 2019 was the most successful year ever for Amtrak. We expect demand for travel to return, and robust service along the Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago corridor would manifest the vision we have for successful passenger rail along similar routes nationwide. Partnerships with states will make this possible. Please reach out to me, and work with our State Supported, Host Railroads, and Government Affairs teams so that we can celebrate at a new train inaugural in a few years.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Joe McHugh". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "M".

Joseph McHugh

*Vice President, State Supported Services –  
Business Development*

June 1, 2020

The Honorable Ronald L. Batory  
Administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Administrator Batory,

I am writing you in support of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation and Minnesota Department of Transportation joint application to the Federal Railroad Administration's Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) program for funds to support the capital improvements for the Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago Intercity Passenger Rail (TCMC) Project.

The TCMC Project fills regional transportation system gaps, provides an alternative that is cost-effective to implement, operate and maintain, responds to increases in population and economic growth, integrates with *Hiawatha* service, and avoids travel time delays often experienced by the eastbound Amtrak *Empire Builder* as it travels from the West Coast. The new round-trip within the TCMC Project corridor complements the existing *Empire Builder* long-distance service with a schedule providing an intercity frequency that is approximately 4 to 6 hours apart from the existing *Empire Builder* schedule, to provide flexibility and convenience oriented towards passenger rail travel within the TCMC corridor.

For those not traveling by personal vehicle, there are a lack of transportation options for travel to and from smaller cities within the TCMC corridor. The *Empire Builder*, which provides long-distance service between Chicago and Seattle/Portland, is the only existing passenger rail service that operates between the Twin Cities and Chicago. This once daily round trip service provides limited passenger schedule options between Chicago Union Station and Union Depot in St. Paul and several smaller communities along the route in Minnesota and Wisconsin. While limited commercial bus and airline services are available, these do not fully serve the travel demand between these smaller cities and the larger cities.

In addition to improving regional mobility, the TCMC Project has important economic benefits. The TCMC Project will create engineering and construction jobs to design and build approximately \$72 million in track and signal improvements. Additionally, the TCMC Project will support tourism spending all along the 411-mile route, it will support businesses that sell goods and services to Amtrak and it will connect students to educational opportunities at colleges and universities throughout the TCMC Corridor. Ultimately, it will help rural and urban communities along the corridor attract and retain businesses and employees, and it will serve residents and visitors by improving connections to the economic centers of the region.

The TCMC Project is a multi-partner effort with support across several states. Existing and past project phases have included significant participation from various public entities including

WisDOT, MnDOT, La Crosse Area Planning Commission and the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority. Recently, the project was awarded an FRA Restoration & Enhancement Grant to fund operations and project partners are excited to advance the project from planning to implementation.

Ramsey County has long been a leader among its peer organizations in support of intercity passenger rail and particularly the TCMC Second Train. In 2015, Ramsey County provided \$300,000 for Minnesota's share of the first phase of the TCMC Second Train study when our state partner was not able to do so. Ramsey County completed the renovation of Union Depot in 2012 at a cost of \$234 million. The renovated station is a multimodal transportation hub that connects local bus service, intercity and charter bus services, hosts car sharing and bike rental facilities and is the eastern terminus of the Metro Green Line light rail transit. On May 7, 2014, Amtrak passenger train service returned to Union Depot for the first time since 1971 when the *Empire Builder* pulled into the platform. Union Depot in Saint Paul is Minnesota's busiest passenger train station and one of the busiest on the *Empire Builder* route.

Ramsey County appreciates the efforts of the state DOTs and other stakeholders in advancing the project to the point of being ready for final design and construction. Ramsey County recognizes the importance of the TCMC Project to the Twin Cities metropolitan area and to the vibrancy of Union Depot.

If awarded, Federal funding would be utilized to implement critical infrastructure improvements throughout the TCMC Corridor, allow for TCMC operations to commence, improve existing freight operations, and provide economic value along the entire corridor. Federal funding would greatly reduce the barriers to successful implementation of the TCMC Project and I support the application for the CRISI Grant Program.

Thank you for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rafael Ortega', written in a cursive style.

Rafael Ortega, Chair  
Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority



# La Crosse Area Planning Committee

*Metropolitan Planning Organization  
Serving the La Crosse/La Crescent Urbanized Area*

Peter Fletcher, Director     Jackie Eastwood, Transportation Planner  
La Crosse County Administrative Center  
212 6<sup>th</sup> Street North ☎ Room 1200 ☎ La Crosse, WI 54601-1200  
PH: 608.785.6141     Website: [www.lapc.org](http://www.lapc.org)

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May 28, 2020

The Honorable Ronald L. Batory  
Administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Administrator Batory,

I am writing you in support of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation and Minnesota Department of Transportation joint application to the Federal Railroad Administration's Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) program for funds to support the capital improvements for the Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago Intercity Passenger Rail (TCMC) Project.

The only existing passenger rail service that operates between the Twin Cities and Chicago is Amtrak's Empire Builder, which provides long-distance service between Chicago and Seattle/Portland. This once daily round trip service provides limited passenger schedule options between Chicago Union Station and Union Depot in St. Paul. For those not traveling by personal vehicle, there are a lack of transportation options for travel to and from smaller cities within the TCMC corridor. While commercial bus and airline services are available, these do not fully serve these smaller cities that have travel demand to/from the larger cities because of consistent variability in the Empire Builder schedule, as well as between the smaller cities.

The TCMC Project fills regional transportation system gaps, provides an alternative that is cost-effective to implement, operate and maintain, responds to increases in population and economic growth, integrates with Hiawatha service, and avoids travel time delays sometimes experienced by the eastbound Empire Builder as it travels from the West Coast. The new round-trip within the TCMC Project corridor complements the existing Empire Builder long-distance service with a schedule providing an intercity frequency that is approximately 4 to 6 hours apart from the existing Empire Builder schedule, to provide flexibility and convenience oriented towards passenger rail travel within the TCMC corridor.

The TCMC Project provides sufficient non-auto transportation options for communities, responds to rising population, mitigates auto travel delays due to economic growth, provides sufficient schedule choices for intercity travelers, and provide capacity for the Empire Builder during peak travel months.

The TCMC Project is a multi-partner effort with support across several states. Existing and past project phases have included significant participation from various public entities including WisDOT, MnDOT, La Crosse Area Planning Committee and the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority. Recently, the project was awarded

an FRA Restoration & Enhancement Grant to fund operations and project partners are excited to advance the project from planning to implementation.

If awarded, Federal funding would be utilized to implement critical infrastructure improvements throughout the TCMC Corridor, allow for TCMC operations to commence, improve existing freight operations, and provide economic value along the entire corridor. Federal funding would greatly reduce the barriers to successful implementation of the TCMC Project. The La Crosse Area Planning Committee is the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the La Crosse WI/La Crescent MN urbanized area and represents 10 local units of government. The La Crosse Area Planning Committee strongly supports the TCMC Project and the application for the CRISI Grant Program.

Thank you for your consideration,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter Fletcher". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Peter Fletcher, Executive Director, LAPC



CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
CITY OF CHICAGO

June 3, 2020

Mr. Ron Batory  
Administrator, Federal Railroad Administration  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Ave.  
Washington, DC 20590

Re: Wisconsin and Minnesota DOT CRISI Application for the Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago  
Passenger Rail (TCMC) Expansion Project

Dear Administrator Batory:

The Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT) supports the Wisconsin and Minnesota departments of transportation joint application for a Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvement grant for the Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago Passenger Rail (TCMC) Expansion Project. The TCMC would facilitate additional Amtrak passenger rail service connecting Chicago with Milwaukee, central and western Wisconsin, and the Twin Cities of St. Paul and Minneapolis.

Chicago's role as the rail and transportation hub of the nation is critical for the continued growth of our national economy. To facilitate our nation's continued prosperity, this role must be strengthened so that our intercity passenger rail network can better meet the increasing transportation needs of our businesses, residents and visitors.

The Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago Passenger Rail Expansion project (TCMC) is a logical next step in building out the Midwest Amtrak network, and will feed customers to and from corridors that have already seen strong Federal-State-Local partnerships such as Chicago-St. Louis and Chicago-Detroit. More than 150,000 annual passenger trips are taken between Chicago and the Twin Cities on existing Amtrak service. The proposed TCMC service would allow for a doubling of that number, bringing with it more frequent opportunities for connections and interactions between people, driving interregional relationship and forging new business opportunities.

As Commissioner of CDOT, I am requesting that the Wisconsin and Minnesota DOT grant application be given all due consideration. Our regional economy thrives with robust transportation options, including more, faster and safer passenger rail. We stand ready to partner with Amtrak and the Illinois, Wisconsin, and Minnesota departments of transportation to make this service a success from day one.

Thank you,

Gia Biagi,  
Commissioner, Transportation



**Jonathan Delagrave**

Office of the County Executive

730 Wisconsin Avenue

Racine, WI 53403

262-636-3273

fax: 262-636-3549

Jonathan.Delagrave@racinecounty.com

Monday, June 15, 2020

The Honorable Ronald L. Batory  
Administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Administrator Batory,

I am writing you in support of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation and Minnesota Department of Transportation joint application to the Federal Railroad Administration's Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) program for funds to support the capital improvements for the Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago Intercity Passenger Rail (TCMC) Project.

For those not traveling by personal vehicle, there are a lack of transportation options for travel to and from smaller cities within the TCMC corridor, including in Racine County. Amtrak's Empire Builder is the only existing passenger rail service that operates between the Twin Cities and Chicago. This once daily round trip service provides limited passenger schedule options between Chicago and St. Paul and several smaller communities along the route in Wisconsin. While commercial bus and airline services are available, these do not fully serve the travel demand between these smaller cities and the larger cities.

The TCMC Project fills regional transportation system gaps, provides an alternative that is cost-effective to implement, operate and maintain, responds to increases in population and economic growth, integrates with Hiawatha service – which has a stop in Racine County – and avoids travel time delays. In addition to improving regional mobility, the TCMC Project has important economic benefits. The TCMC Project will create engineering and construction jobs to design and build approximately \$72 million in track and signal improvements. Additionally, the Project will support tourism spending all along the 411-mile route, it will support businesses that sell goods and services to Amtrak and it will connect students to educational opportunities at colleges and universities throughout the TCMC Corridor. Ultimately, it will help rural and urban communities along the corridor attract and retain businesses, employees, residents, and visitors by improving connections to the economic epicenters of the region.

The TCMC Project is a multi-partner effort with support across several states. Existing and past project phases have included significant participation from various public entities including WisDOT, MnDOT, La Crosse Area Planning Commission and the

Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority. Recently, the project was awarded an FRA Restoration & Enhancement Grant to fund operations and project partners are excited to advance the project from planning to implementation.

If awarded, Federal funding would be utilized to implement critical infrastructure improvements throughout the TCMC Corridor, allow for TCMC operations to commence, improve existing freight operations, and provide economic value along the entire corridor. Federal funding would greatly reduce the barriers to successful implementation of the TCMC Project and I support the application for the CRISI Grant Program.

Thank you for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jonathan Delagrave". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial 'J'.

Jonathan Delagrave  
Racine County Executive



May 28, 2020

Mr. Ron Batory  
Administrator, Federal Railroad Administration  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Ave.  
Washington, DC 20590

**RE:** Letter of Support for the 2020 Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvement Grant application of the Wisconsin and Minnesota departments of transportation for Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago Passenger Rail Expansion

Dear Administrator Batory:

I am writing to express the Milwaukee 7 Regional Economic Development Partnership's full support of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation and Minnesota Department of Transportation joint application for a Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvement Grant, which combined with state matching funds, would allow implementation of additional Amtrak passenger rail service connecting our community with Milwaukee, the Twin Cities and Chicago.

Our community is the market center for the area. Our robust economy is supported by a wide range of economic sectors including manufacturing, technology, tourism, agriculture and health care. To continue to grow and keep our young talent and attract new residents, convenient, safe, affordable transportation is a necessity. We are home to several vibrant and growing businesses and a local population that knows our small-town values are important but that our economy is interlinked with the larger regional economies along the route. Quality passenger rail service eases family anxiety when they know their loved ones are traveling safely by train between home and wherever their travels take them.

Successful implementation of the TCMC project would double the number of schedule options daily to get people to the businesses and attractions of our region. The additional schedules would allow more convenient business trips for local entrepreneurs to other cities yet continue to enjoy the quality of life available in our vibrant community. Convenient, multiple daily departures on passenger rail would round out our transportation picture, helping us fully realize the virtues of our region, keep the jobs and residents we have, and grow. Offering cleaner passenger rail service helps to reduce emissions and supports the beauty the upper Midwest is celebrated for.

Please consider carefully the Wisconsin and Minnesota DOT grant application for the additional Twin Cities-Lacrosse-Milwaukee-Chicago Amtrak service. The economy of our community depends on a solid foundation that includes quality public transportation. Doubling the existing Amtrak service through our community strengthens that foundation, helping us realize the potential of our location, and making us the place where people will want to be.

Thank you for your consideration, and we look forward to working with our partners to improve rail transportation that is essential to support future economic growth in the region.

Sincerely,

Pat O'Brien  
Executive Director



## MILWAUKEE DOWNTOWN

Business Improvement District 21 | **301 W Wisconsin Ave. Suite 106** | Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53203  
Phone **414.220.4700** | [www.milwaueedowntown.com](http://www.milwaueedowntown.com)

June 11, 2020

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ELIZABETH A. WEIRICK

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MARK NIEHAUS

Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra

The Honorable Ronald L. Batory  
Administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Administrator Batory,

I am writing you in support of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation and Minnesota Department of Transportation joint application to the Federal Railroad Administration's Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) program for funds to support the capital improvements for the Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago Intercity Passenger Rail (TCMC) Project.

For those not traveling by personal vehicle, there are a lack of transportation options for travel to and from smaller cities within the TCMC corridor. Amtrak's Empire Builder, which provides long-distance service between Chicago and Seattle/Portland, is the only existing passenger rail service that operates between the Twin Cities and Chicago. This once daily round trip service provides limited passenger schedule options between Chicago Union Station and Union Depot in St. Paul and several smaller communities along the route in Minnesota and Wisconsin. While commercial bus and airline services are available, these do not fully serve the travel demand between these smaller cities and the larger cities.

The TCMC Project fills regional transportation system gaps, provides an alternative that is cost-effective to implement, operate and maintain, responds to increases in population and economic growth, integrates with Hiawatha service, and avoids travel time delays sometimes experienced by the eastbound Empire Builder as it travels from the West Coast. The new round-trip within the TCMC Project corridor complements the existing Empire Builder long-distance service with a schedule providing an intercity frequency that is approximately 4 to 6 hours apart from the existing Empire Builder schedule, to provide flexibility and convenience oriented towards passenger rail travel within the TCMC corridor.

In addition to improving regional mobility, the TCMC Project has important economic benefits. The TCMC Project will create engineering and construction jobs to design and build approximately \$72 million in track and signal improvements. Additionally, the Project will support tourism spending all along the 411-mile route, it will support businesses that sell goods and services to Amtrak and it will connect students to educational opportunities at colleges and universities throughout the TCMC Corridor. Ultimately, it will help rural and urban communities along the corridor attract and retain businesses, employees, residents, and visitors by improving connections to the economic epicenters of the region.

The TCMC Project is a multi-partner effort with support across several states. Existing and past project phases have included significant participation from various public entities including WisDOT, MnDOT, La Crosse Area Planning Commission and the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority. Recently, the project was awarded an FRA Restoration & Enhancement Grant to fund operations and project partners are excited to advance the project from planning to implementation.

If awarded, Federal funding would be utilized to implement critical infrastructure improvements throughout the TCMC Corridor, allow for TCMC operations to commence, improve existing freight operations, and provide economic value along the entire corridor. Federal funding would greatly reduce the barriers to successful implementation of the TCMC Project and I support the application for the CRISI Grant Program.

Thank you for your consideration,

Beth Weirick  
CEO  
Milwaukee Downtown, BID #21



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

# *Milwaukee County*

Donna Brown-Martin, Director and Highway Commissioner

June 16, 2020

The Honorable Ronald L. Batory  
Administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Administrator Batory:

I am writing you in support of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation and Minnesota Department of Transportation joint application to the Federal Railroad Administration's Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) program for funds to support the capital improvements for the Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago Intercity Passenger Rail (TCMC) Project.

For those not traveling by personal vehicle, there are a lack of transportation options for travel to and from smaller cities within the TCMC corridor. Amtrak's Empire Builder, which provides long-distance service between Chicago and Seattle/Portland, is the only existing passenger rail service that operates between the Twin Cities and Chicago. This once daily round trip service provides limited passenger schedule options between Chicago Union Station and Union Depot in St. Paul and several smaller communities along the route in Minnesota and Wisconsin. While commercial bus and airline services are available, these do not fully serve the travel demand between these smaller cities and the larger cities.

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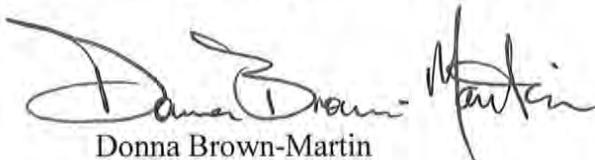
In addition to improving regional mobility, the TCMC Project has important economic benefits. The TCMC Project will create engineering and construction jobs to design and build approximately \$72 million in track and signal improvements. Additionally, the Project will support tourism spending all along the 411-mile route, it will support businesses that sell goods and services to Amtrak and it will connect students to educational opportunities at colleges and universities throughout the TCMC Corridor. Ultimately, it will help rural and urban communities

along the corridor attract and retain businesses, employees, residents, and visitors by improving connections to the economic epicenters of the region.

The TCMC Project is a multi-partner effort with support across several states. Existing and past project phases have included significant participation from various public entities including WisDOT, MnDOT, La Crosse Area Planning Commission and the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority. Recently, the project was awarded an FRA Restoration & Enhancement Grant to fund operations and project partners are excited to advance the project from planning to implementation.

If awarded, Federal funding would be utilized to implement critical infrastructure improvements throughout the TCMC Corridor, allow for TCMC operations to commence, improve existing freight operations, and provide economic value along the entire corridor. Federal funding would greatly reduce the barriers to successful implementation of the TCMC Project and I support the application for the CRISI Grant Program.

Thank you for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Donna Brown-Martin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Donna" being the most prominent.

Donna Brown-Martin  
Director  
Milwaukee County Transportation

# SOUTHEASTERN WISCONSIN REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

W239 N1812 ROCKWOOD DRIVE • PO BOX 1607 • WAUKESHA, WI 53187-1607

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June 5, 2020

Mr. Ronald Batory  
Administrator  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
Federal Railroad Administration  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, S.E.  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Mr. Batory:

On behalf of the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC), I am writing in support of the joint Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT), Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT), and Amtrak application for Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) funding to advance the overall vision of WisDOT, MnDOT, and the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) to improve the convenience and reliability of Amtrak's intercity passenger rail service operating between Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota; Milwaukee, Wisconsin; and Chicago, Illinois, and, in particular, to design and construct the infrastructure improvements in Minnesota and Wisconsin necessary for implementing new Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago (TCMC) intercity passenger rail service consisting of one additional train operating daily in each direction between Minneapolis-St. Paul, Milwaukee, and Chicago.

In Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Illinois, Amtrak's Empire Builder service—a critical component of Amtrak's national network—has long provided an important interregional transportation option within the Twin Cities-Chicago travel corridor. Approximately 100,000 travelers ride the Empire Builder each year exclusively within the Twin Cities-Chicago corridor, including travel to and from intermediate stations in Red Wing, Minnesota; Winona, Minnesota; La Crosse, Wisconsin; Tomah, Wisconsin; Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin; Portage, Wisconsin; Columbus, Wisconsin; Milwaukee, Wisconsin; and Glenview, Illinois. In addition, about 70 percent of all Empire Builder trips to or from stations in Wisconsin are made entirely within the Twin Cities-Chicago corridor. Finally, a significant proportion—about 25 percent—of all Empire Builder trips occur entirely within the Twin Cities-Chicago corridor.

The proposed TCMC service would operate over the existing Empire Builder route, minimizing the infrastructure improvements required to operate the service. The TCMC service's schedule would complement the Empire Builder's schedule, and both services combined would provide expanded schedule options with two daily round-trips connecting rural and urban communities across three states with the economic epicenters of the region. The TCMC service would provide reduced travel times and improved on-time performance compared to the Empire Builder—especially compared to east-bound Empire Builder trains that often experience late departures from Minneapolis-St. Paul due to delays accrued during its scheduled day-and-a-half trip from Seattle, Washington and Portland, Oregon to Minneapolis-St. Paul. The additional onboard capacity provided by the TCMC service would also help address near-capacity conditions experienced onboard Empire Builder trains during peak travel months.

Finally, the proposed TCMC service would stop in Southeastern Wisconsin at stations located at Milwaukee Mitchell International Airport and in Sturtevant, Wisconsin, providing new options in Southeastern Wisconsin for traveling to and from destinations west of Milwaukee (the Empire Builder currently does not stop at Milwaukee Mitchell International Airport or in Sturtevant). The improved intercity passenger rail service provided by the TCMC service would be expected to attract over 150,000 new riders per year in the Twin Cities-Chicago travel corridor.

Amtrak's Empire Builder and Hiawatha service—which currently provides seven daily round-trips between Milwaukee and Chicago—have become an important component of the transportation system in Southeastern Wisconsin since the States of Wisconsin and Illinois began jointly contracting with Amtrak in 1989 to operate the Hiawatha service. Over the past two decades, steady investment in Hiawatha service levels and infrastructure by the States of Wisconsin and Illinois, local governments, and the Federal government—including upgrades to Canadian Pacific Railway's (CP) track used by Amtrak trains, renovation of the downtown Milwaukee Intermodal Station (MIS), and construction of new stations at Milwaukee Mitchell International Airport and in Sturtevant—in cooperation with CP, Amtrak, and Metra, has resulted in Hiawatha annual ridership more than doubling from 369,000 in 1997 to 876,000 in 2019. This long-term commitment to improving intercity passenger rail service in Southeastern Wisconsin is continuing, as WisDOT recently was awarded Federal funding to acquire state-of-the-art train equipment, to construct a second platform at the Milwaukee Mitchell International Airport station, to install a new signaling system along CP right-of-way near MIS, and to implement the Muskego Yard Improvements Project. All of these recent projects are identified in the *Chicago-Milwaukee Intercity Passenger Rail Corridor Draft Environmental Assessment* as being necessary for achieving an increase in Hiawatha frequency from seven to ten daily round-trips that is planned by WisDOT and IDOT, and these projects would also benefit the TCMC service.

The proposed TCMC implementation project would include final design and construction of track and signaling infrastructure at several locations in Minnesota and Wisconsin that would improve safety and increase capacity and fluidity along the corridor, allowing the proposed TCMC service to operate without negatively impacting CP's freight rail service.

The proposed TCMC implementation project is consistent with the recommendations of VISION 2050, Southeastern Wisconsin's long-range land use and transportation plan. More specifically, VISION 2050 includes a recommendation to improve and expand intercity passenger rail service in the Region, including ultimately extending the Hiawatha route west to Minneapolis-St. Paul and north to Green Bay, Wisconsin. Implementing the TCMC service, in conjunction with other VISION 2050 recommendations, such as encouraging more compact development and significantly improving public transit service—including better transit connections to Amtrak stations, would improve the quality of life throughout the Region and make the Region more economically competitive over the next several decades.

WisDOT, MnDOT, and Amtrak's joint application for CRISI funding represents a strong partnership of Federal and State agencies to improve an essential component of the transportation system in Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Illinois. We ask the U.S. Department of Transportation to carefully consider this project and the benefits it will provide to the three States and to Southeastern Wisconsin.

Mr. Ronald Batory  
June 5, 2020  
Page 3

Thank you for your consideration.

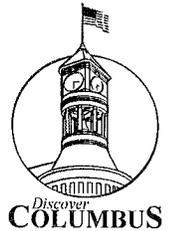
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kevin J. Muhs". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Kevin" being the most prominent.

Kevin J. Muhs, PE, AICP  
Executive Director

KJM/CTH/ESJ/esj/cp  
#253924 v1 – WisDOT June 2020 CRISI Application – Letter of Support

cc: Ms. Jamie Rennert, Director, Office of Program Delivery, Federal Railroad Administration  
Mr. Craig Thompson, Secretary-designee, Wisconsin Department of Transportation  
Mr. David Simon, Director, Bureau of Transit, Local Roads, Railroads, and Harbors,  
Wisconsin Department of Transportation  
Ms. Erin Aleman, Executive Director, Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning



The Honorable Ronald L. Batory  
Administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Administrator Batory,

I am writing you in support of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation and Minnesota Department of Transportation joint application to the Federal Railroad Administration's Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) program for funds to support the capital improvements for the Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago Intercity Passenger Rail (TCMC) Project.

For those not traveling by personal vehicle, there are a lack of transportation options for travel to and from smaller cities within the TCMC corridor. Amtrak's Empire Builder, which provides long-distance service between Chicago and Seattle/Portland, is the only existing passenger rail service that operates between the Twin Cities and Chicago. This once daily round trip service provides limited passenger schedule options between Chicago Union Station and Union Depot in St. Paul and several smaller communities along the route in Minnesota and Wisconsin. While commercial bus and airline services are available, these do not fully serve the travel demand between these smaller cities and the larger cities.

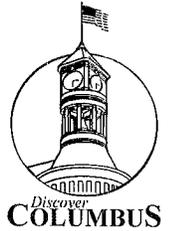
The TCMC Project fills regional transportation system gaps, provides an alternative that is cost-effective to implement, operate and maintain, responds to increases in population and economic growth, integrates with Hiawatha service, and avoids travel time delays sometimes experienced by the eastbound Empire Builder as it travels from the West Coast. The new round-trip within the TCMC Project corridor complements the existing Empire Builder long-distance service with a schedule providing an intercity frequency that is approximately 4 to 6 hours apart from the existing Empire Builder schedule, to provide flexibility and convenience oriented towards passenger rail travel within the TCMC corridor.

In addition to improving regional mobility, the TCMC Project has important economic benefits. The TCMC Project will create engineering and construction jobs to design and build approximately \$53 million in track and signal improvements. Additionally, the Project will support tourism spending all along the 411-mile route, it will support businesses that sell goods and services to Amtrak and it will connect students to educational opportunities at colleges and universities throughout the TCMC Corridor. Ultimately, it will help rural and urban communities along the corridor attract and retain businesses, employees, residents, and visitors by improving connections to the economic epicenters of the region.

The TCMC Project is a multi-partner effort with support across several states. Existing and past project phases have included significant participation from various public entities including WisDOT, MnDOT, La Crosse Area Planning Commission and the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority. Recently, the project was awarded an FRA Restoration & Enhancement Grant to fund operations and project partners are excited to advance the project from planning to implementation.

**City of Columbus**

105 N. Dickason Blvd. ♦ Columbus, WI 53925-1565  
920-623-5900 ♦ fax 920-623-5901 ♦ [www.cityofcolumbuswi.com](http://www.cityofcolumbuswi.com)



If awarded, Federal funding would be utilized to implement critical infrastructure improvements throughout the TCMC Corridor, allow for TCMC operations to commence, improve existing freight operations, and provide economic value along the entire corridor. Federal funding would greatly reduce the barriers to successful implementation of the TCMC Project and I support the application for the CRISI Grant Program.

Thank you for your consideration,

Matthew Schreiber, AICP  
Director of Planning and Development  
City of Columbus

**City of Columbus**

105 N. Dickason Blvd. ♦ Columbus, WI 53925-1565  
920-623-5900 ♦ fax 920-623-5901 ♦ [www.cityofcolumbuswi.com](http://www.cityofcolumbuswi.com)

# CITY OF PORTAGE

115 West Pleasant Street  
Portage, Wisconsin 53901  
Telephone: (608) 742-2176 • Fax: (608) 742-8623



*"Where the North Begins"*

June 16, 2020

Mr. Ron Batory  
Administrator, Federal Railroad Administration  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Ave.  
Washington, DC 20590

RE: Letter of Support for the 2020 Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvement Grant application of the Wisconsin and Minnesota departments of transportation for Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago Passenger Rail Expansion (TCMC)

Dear Administrator Batory:

I am writing you in support of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation and Minnesota Department of Transportation joint application for a Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvement Grant, which combined with state and Amtrak matching funds, would allow implementation of additional Amtrak passenger rail service connecting our community with Milwaukee, the Twin Cities and Chicago.

Portage has achieved great success in attracting new businesses because of our strategic location as a transportation crossroads. Our transportation mix includes not just roads, but passenger rail. Last year 7,266 trips began or ended on Amtrak at the Portage station. These passengers were not just Portage citizens but came from outside Columbia County to take advantage of the comfort, safety and economy of passenger train service.

Portage businesses understand the value that passenger rail brings to our corner of Wisconsin as a recruiting tool, a potentially viable transportation option for visitors and residents, but know that potential is not fully tapped. Wisconsin Department of Transportation has a long relationship with the nation's passenger rail operator, Amtrak. The Milwaukee-Racine County (Sturtevant)-Chicago corridor is one of the most successful Amtrak routes, providing a record breaking 882,000 passenger trips at 94% on time. We understand that southeast Wisconsin businesses make location decisions based on the availability of this high-quality passenger rail between two of America's most important cities. We'd like to see that model extended to central and western Wisconsin.

Successful implementation of the TCMC project would double the number of schedule options daily to get people to the businesses and attractions of our region. The additional schedules would allow more convenient business trips for local entrepreneurs to other cities yet continue to enjoy the quality of life available in our vibrant community. Convenient, multiple daily departures on passenger rail would round out our transportation picture, helping us fully realize the virtues of our region, keep the jobs and residents we have, and grow. Offering cleaner passenger rail service helps to reduce emissions and supports the beauty the upper Midwest is celebrated for.

Please consider carefully the Wisconsin and Minnesota DOT grant application for the additional Twin Cities-Portage-Milwaukee-Chicago Amtrak service. The economy of our community depends on a solid foundation that includes quality public transportation. Doubling the existing Amtrak service through our community strengthens that foundation, helping us realize the potential of our location, and making us the place where people will want to be.

Amtrak service to Portage is important because it provides additional transportation capacity, makes our community easier to get to, and expanded service will charge our continued efforts to keep Portage a place to set up shop, grow a business, and raise a family.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steven Sobiek". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping initial "S" and a long, horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Steven Sobiek

Director, Business Development and Planning  
City of Portage



## Portage Area Chamber of Commerce

104 West Cook Street, Portage, WI 53901

608-742-6242 [www.portagewi.com](http://www.portagewi.com)

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June 16, 2020

Mr. Ron Batory  
Administrator, Federal Railroad Administration  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Ave.  
Washington, DC 20590

RE: Letter of Support for the 2020 Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvement Grant application of the Wisconsin and Minnesota departments of transportation for Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago Passenger Rail Expansion (TCMC)

Dear Administrator Batory:

I represent the business community of Portage and write today in support of improvements to our existing passenger rail service, presently one daily train in each direction.

Portage has achieved great success in attracting new businesses because of our strategic location as a transportation crossroads. Our transportation mix includes roads, a general aviation airport and passenger rail. Last year 7,266 trips began or ended on Amtrak at the Portage station. These passengers were not just Portage citizens but came from across Columbia County and nearby counties to take advantage of our passenger rail service.

Portage businesses understand the value that passenger rail brings as a recruiting tool and a potentially more viable transportation option for visitors and residents. However, that potential is not fully tapped. Wisconsin Department of Transportation has a long relationship with Amtrak. The Milwaukee-Chicago corridor is one of the most successful Amtrak routes, providing a record breaking 882,000 passenger trips at 94% on time. We understand that southeast Wisconsin businesses make location decisions based on the availability of this high-quality passenger rail between two of America's most important cities. We would like to see that model extended to central and western Wisconsin.

Wisconsin, Illinois, and Minnesota Departments of Transportation have been working with Canadian Pacific Railway and Amtrak to lay the groundwork for an extra daily train between Chicago, Milwaukee, Lacrosse, and the Twin Cities, via Portage. A second daily train would significantly increase the number of people coming to the Portage rail station and visit our businesses. For current and future Portage residents and businesses, it would double the schedule options available to connect to the region's other economic centers of Milwaukee, Lacrosse, the Twin Cities, and Chicago. This will strengthen Portage's position in attracting and retaining jobs and residents.

An additional passenger train on CP's critical mainline between the Midwest and the Port of Vancouver will require some capacity expansion so that railroad can continue to provide necessary freight service, also important to our members and Wisconsin's economy. Since such a project would benefit the public, a public contribution is required. We support the State of Wisconsin partnering with Minnesota

and Illinois DOTs, and Amtrak to contribute matching funds to apply for available Federal grants for passenger rail expansion projects.

Amtrak service to Portage is important because it provides additional transportation capacity, makes our community easier to get to, and expanded service will charge our continued efforts to keep Portage a place to set up shop, grow a business, and raise a family.

Sincerely,

*Marianne Hanson*

Marianne Hanson  
President & CEO  
Portage Area Chamber of Commerce



**WISCONSIN DELLS VISITOR & CONVENTION BUREAU, INC.**

701 Superior Street, Wisconsin Dells, WI 53965

Administrative Office – 608.254.8088 | Visitor Information – 608.254.4636

info@wisdells.com | www.wisdells.com

February 4, 2020

The Honorable Ronald L. Batory  
Administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Administrator Batory,

I am writing you in support of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation federal grant applications to the Federal Railroad Administration for funds to support implementation of the Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago Intercity Passenger Rail (TCMC) second daily round-trip project.

The Wisconsin Dells and Lake Delton area attract over 4 million visitors per year, and we have a large international work force that supports our businesses and tourism industry. The largest markets for the Dells area are the Chicago, Milwaukee and Minneapolis/S. Paul metropolitan areas. The existing passenger rail service is an important component of the transportation mix for the Dells area, and enhanced service would greatly increase the utility of that transportation asset.

The existing passenger rail service that operates between the Twin Cities and Chicago and serves the Wisconsin Dells / Lake Delton area is Amtrak's Empire Builder, which provides long-distance service between Chicago and Seattle/Portland. This once daily round-trip service provides limited schedule options between the Dells and Chicago and the Minneapolis/St. Paul areas. For those who are looking for alternatives to driving to reach the Dells and our businesses, there is a shortage of options.

The TCMC Project will double the passenger rail service in the Dells, opening up more schedule options for more trips. It will fill regional transportation system gaps, and provide an alternative that is cost-effective to implement, operate and maintain. The TCMC would also address travel time delays sometimes experienced by the eastbound Empire Builder as it travels from the West Coast. The Empire Builder also has limited seating capacity, particularly for regional trips. The additional schedule options and more reliable service will increase passenger rail ridership and capacity, and provide options for our visitors and employees, helping our businesses grow and thrive and strengthening the Dells as a premier tourist destination in the Midwest.

Federal funding for the implementation of the new service would greatly reduce the barriers to successful implementation of the TCMC Project. I fully support this project and related grant applications for federal funds.

Thank you for your consideration,

Romy A. Snyder  
President/CEO  
Wisconsin Dells Visitor & Convention Bureau



819 Superior Avenue  
Tomah, Wisconsin 54660  
Phone: (608) 374-7420  
Fax: (608) 374-7424

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The Honorable Ronald L. Batory  
Administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Administrator Batory,

I am writing you in support of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation and Minnesota Department of Transportation joint application to the Federal Railroad Administration's Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) program for funds to support the capital improvements for the Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago Intercity Passenger Rail (TCMC) Project.

Tomah has achieved great success in attracting new businesses because of our strategic location as a transportation crossroads. Our transportation mix includes not just roads, but passenger rail. Last year 11,394 trips began or ended on Amtrak at the Tomah station on the north edge of downtown. These passengers were not just Tomah citizens but came from outside Monroe County to take advantage of the comfort, safety and economy of passenger train service. While in Tomah, many frequent our businesses and shops on Superior Avenue, Tomah's 'Main Street.'

Tomah businesses understand the value that passenger rail brings to our corner of Wisconsin as a recruiting tool, a potentially viable transportation option for visitors and residents, but know that potential is not fully tapped. Wisconsin Department of Transportation has a long relationship with the nation's passenger rail operator, Amtrak. The Milwaukee-Racine County (Sturtevant)-Chicago corridor is one of the most successful Amtrak routes, providing a record breaking 882,000 passenger trips at 95% on time. We understand that southeast Wisconsin businesses make location decisions based on the availability of this high-quality passenger rail between two of America's most important cities. We'd like to see that model extended to central and western Wisconsin.

For those not traveling by personal vehicle, there are a lack of transportation options for travel to and from smaller cities within the TCMC corridor. Amtrak's Empire Builder, which provides long-distance service between Chicago and Seattle/Portland, is the only existing passenger rail service that operates between the Twin Cities and Chicago. This once daily round trip service provides limited passenger schedule options between Chicago, St. Paul and communities along the route like Tomah. While commercial bus and airline services are available, these do not fully serve the travel demand between these smaller cities and the larger cities.

The TCMC Project fills regional transportation system gaps, provides an alternative that is cost-effective to implement, operate and maintain, responds to increases in population and economic growth, and avoids travel time delays sometimes experienced by the eastbound Amtrak train as it travels from the West Coast. The new round-trip within the TCMC Project corridor complements the existing Amtrak service with a schedule providing an intercity frequency that is approximately 4 to 6 hours apart from the existing train schedule, to provide flexibility and convenience oriented towards passenger rail travel within the TCMC corridor.

In addition to improving regional mobility, the TCMC Project has important economic benefits. The TCMC Project will create engineering and construction jobs to design and build approximately \$52 million in track and signal improvements. Additionally, the Project will support tourism spending all along the 411-mile route, it will support businesses that sell goods and services to Amtrak and it will connect students to educational opportunities at colleges and universities throughout the TCMC Corridor. Ultimately, it will help rural and urban communities along the corridor attract and retain businesses, employees, residents, and visitors by improving connections to the economic epicenters of the region.

Federal funding would greatly reduce the barriers to successful implementation of the TCMC Project and I support the application for the CRISI Grant Program.

Thank you for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mike Murray', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mike Murray  
Mayor  
City of Tomah

January 17, 2020

Re: Support additional Amtrak service on the Twin Cities-Tomah-Milwaukee-Chicago passenger rail route

Dear Governor Evers:

I represent the business community of Tomah and write today in support of improvements to our existing passenger rail service, presently one daily train in each direction.

Tomah has achieved great success in attracting new businesses because of our strategic location as a transportation crossroads. Our transportation mix includes not just roads, but passenger rail. Last year 11,394 trips began or ended on Amtrak at the Tomah station on the north edge of downtown. These passengers were not just Tomah citizens but came from outside Monroe County to take advantage of the comfort, safety and economy of passenger train service. While in Tomah, many frequent our businesses and shops on our resurgent Superior Avenue, Tomah's 'Main Street.'

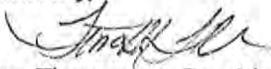
Tomah businesses understand the value that passenger rail brings to our corner of Wisconsin as a recruiting tool, a potentially viable transportation option for visitors and residents, but know that potential is not fully tapped. Wisconsin Department of Transportation has a long relationship with the nation's passenger rail operator, Amtrak. The Milwaukee-Racine County (Sturtevant)-Chicago corridor is one of the most successful Amtrak routes, providing a record breaking 882,000 passenger trips at --% on time. We understand that southeast Wisconsin businesses make location decisions based on the availability of this high-quality passenger rail between two of America's most important cities. We'd like to see that model extended to central and western Wisconsin.

Wisconsin, Illinois and Minnesota Departments of Transportation have been working with Canadian Pacific Railway and Amtrak to lay the groundwork for an extra daily train between Chicago, Milwaukee, Lacrosse, and the Twin Cities, via Tomah. We would like to see that happen. This would significantly increase the number of people coming to Tomah to use the train station, and visit our businesses. For current and future Tomah residents and businesses, it would double the schedule options available to connect to the region's economic centers of Milwaukee, the Twin Cities, and Chicago. This will strengthen Tomah's position in attracting and retaining jobs and residents.

An additional passenger train on CP's critical mainline between the Midwest and the Port of Vancouver will require some capacity expansion so that railroad can continue to provide necessary freight service, also important to our members and Wisconsin's economy. Since such a project would benefit the public, a public contribution is required. We support the State of Wisconsin partnering with Minnesota and Illinois DOTs, and Amtrak to contribute matching funds to apply for available Federal grants for passenger rail expansion projects.

Amtrak service to Tomah is important because it provides additional transportation capacity, makes our community easier to get to, and expanded service will charge our continued efforts to keep Tomah a place to set up shop, grow a business, and raise a family.

Sincerely,



Tina Thompson, President/CEO  
Tomah Chamber & Visitors Center

January 17, 2020

Re: Support additional Amtrak service on the Twin Cities-Tomah-Milwaukee-Chicago passenger rail route

Dear Members of the Tomah Delegation of the Wisconsin Legislature:

I represent the business community of Tomah and write today in support of improvements to our existing passenger rail service, presently one daily train in each direction.

Tomah has achieved great success in attracting new businesses because of our strategic location as a transportation crossroads. Our transportation mix includes not just roads, but passenger rail. Last year 11,394 trips began or ended on Amtrak at the Tomah station on the north edge of downtown. These passengers were not just Tomah citizens but came from outside Monroe County to take advantage of the comfort, safety and economy of passenger train service. While in Tomah, many frequent our businesses and shops on our resurgent Superior Avenue, Tomah's 'Main Street.'

Tomah businesses understand the value that passenger rail brings to our corner of Wisconsin as a recruiting tool, a potentially viable transportation option for visitors and residents, but know that potential is not fully tapped. Wisconsin Department of Transportation has a long relationship with the nation's passenger rail operator, Amtrak. The Milwaukee-Racine County (Sturtevant)-Chicago corridor is one of the most successful Amtrak routes, providing a record breaking 882,000 passenger trips at --% on time. We understand that southeast Wisconsin businesses make location decisions based on the availability of this high-quality passenger rail between two of America's most important cities. We'd like to see that model extended to central and western Wisconsin.

Wisconsin, Illinois and Minnesota Departments of Transportation have been working with Canadian Pacific Railway and Amtrak to lay the groundwork for an extra daily train between Chicago, Milwaukee, Lacrosse, and the Twin Cities, via Tomah. We would like to see that happen. This would significantly increase the number of people coming to Tomah to use the train station, and visit our businesses. For current and future Tomah residents and businesses, it would double the schedule options available to connect to the region's economic centers of Milwaukee, the Twin Cities, and Chicago. This will strengthen Tomah's position in attracting and retaining jobs and residents.

An additional passenger train on CP's critical mainline between the Midwest and the Port of Vancouver will require some capacity expansion so that railroad can continue to provide necessary freight service, also important to our members and Wisconsin's economy. Since such a project would benefit the public, a public contribution is required. We support the State of Wisconsin partnering with Minnesota and Illinois DOTs, and Amtrak to contribute matching funds to apply for available Federal grants for passenger rail expansion projects.

Amtrak service to Tomah is important because it provides additional transportation capacity, makes our community easier to get to, and expanded service will charge our continued efforts to keep Tomah a place to set up shop, grow a business, and raise a family.

Sincerely,



Tina Thompson, President/CEO  
Tomah Chamber & Visitors Center



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
L A C R O S S E

June 4, 2020

Mr. Ron Batory  
Administrator, Federal Railroad Administration  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Ave.  
Washington, DC 20590

RE: Letter of Support for the 2020 Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvement Grant application of the Wisconsin and Minnesota Departments of Transportation for Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago Passenger Rail Expansion

Dear Administrator Batory:

I am writing you in support of the Wisconsin and Minnesota departments of transportation joint application for a Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvement Grant, which combined with state matching funds, would allow implementation of additional Amtrak passenger rail service connecting La Crosse with the Twin Cities, Milwaukee and Chicago (TCMC).

La Crosse is the market center for Southwest Wisconsin. Our robust economy is supported by a wide range of economic sectors including higher education, technology, manufacturing, and health care. To continue to grow and keep our young talent and attract new residents, convenient, safe, affordable transportation is a necessity. La Crosse is home to several corporate headquarters and three universities. Many of the 15,000+ students rely on Amtrak to get between campus and home. The presence of passenger rail service is a recruitment tool for the City's various universities, helping ease families' anxiety about how their children will travel between home and school.

In La Crosse, we value our airport and the service available to Midwestern hubs at Chicago and Minneapolis. Interstate 90 makes us easily accessible. Convenient, multiple daily departures on passenger rail would round out our transportation picture, helping us fully realize the virtues of our region, keep the jobs and residents we have, and grow. Offering cleaner passenger rail service helps to reduce emissions and supports the beauty of the upper Mississippi River watershed.

Successful implementation of the TCMC project would double the number of schedule options daily to get people to the businesses, educational institutions, and attractions of our region. The

additional schedules would allow more convenient business trips for local entrepreneurs to other cities, yet continue to enjoy the quality of life available in our small, vibrant city.

Please consider carefully the Wisconsin and Minnesota DOT grant application for the additional Twin Cities-Lacrosse-Milwaukee-Chicago Amtrak service. The economy of La Crosse depends on a solid foundation that includes quality public transportation. Doubling the existing Amtrak service through La Crosse strengthens that foundation, helping us realize the potential of our location, and making La Crosse the place where people will want to be.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tim Kabat". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Mayor Tim Kabat

June 4, 2020

Mr. Ron Batory  
Administrator, Federal Railroad Administration  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Ave.  
Washington, DC 20590

RE: Letter of Support for the 2020 Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvement Grant application of the Wisconsin and Minnesota Departments of Transportation for Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago Passenger Rail Expansion

Dear Administrator Batory:

I am writing you in support of the Wisconsin and Minnesota departments of transportation joint application for a Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvement Grant, which combined with state matching funds, would allow implementation of additional Amtrak passenger rail service connecting La Crosse with the Twin Cities, Milwaukee and Chicago (TCMC).

The La Crosse area is the economic hub for the western part of the state. Our region features some of the largest and most influential employers in Wisconsin, including headquarters for Kwik Trip, Gundersen Health System, and Trane Company. Our robust economy is supported by a wide range of economic sectors including higher education, technology, manufacturing, and health care. Within a 30-mile radius of Amtrak depot in La Crosse are:

- Two (2) State Universities – University of Wisconsin – La Crosse & and Winona State University
- Two (2) Private Universities – Viterbo University and Saint Mary's University of Minnesota
- Two (2) Technical College Systems – Western Technical College and Minnesota State College South East

As the world continues to progress, the demand for efficient transportation options, both for business and personal reasons, are increasing exponentially. Our geographic location, essentially splitting the distance between major U.S. cities such as Chicago, Milwaukee, Madison, Rochester, and Minneapolis, puts us in the perfect position to offer business investment and leisure opportunities for all.

The La Crosse area transportation infrastructure currently features a regional airport, offering daily flights to Minneapolis, Chicago, and Detroit. We also have an interstate, harbor, and two industrial rail lines (BNSF and CP) that all converge in the City of La Crosse along the banks of the historic Mississippi River. The incentives to travel to, do business and live in La Crosse are relatively numerous, yet, we are lacking in convenient and efficient regional passenger rail transportation, like what we have seen on the East Coast. Adding a second daily route to the Amtrak Minneapolis – Chicago rail service would allow La Crosse to take the next step in becoming a truly diverse and well-rounded regional economic hub.

Please carefully consider the Wisconsin and Minnesota DOT grant application for the additional Twin Cities-La Crosse-Milwaukee-Chicago Amtrak service. The economy of La Crosse depends on a solid foundation that includes quality public transportation. Doubling the existing Amtrak service through La Crosse strengthens that foundation, helping us realize the potential of our location, and making the region The Wisconsin Option.

Thank you for your consideration,



Sam Bachmeier  
Economic Development Coordinator, LADCO



Department, Name/Title  
400 4th Street North  
Room 3330  
La Crosse, WI 54601-3200  
608-785-9626 Phone  
608-785-5922 Fax  
lacrossecounty.org

May 29, 2020

Elaine L. Chao  
Secretary, U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Ave.  
Washington, DC 20590

RE: Letter of Support for the 2020 Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvement Grant application of the Wisconsin and Minnesota Departments of Transportation for Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago Passenger Rail Expansion

Dear Secretary Chao:

I am writing you in support of the Wisconsin and Minnesota departments of transportation joint application for a Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvement Grant, which combined with state matching funds, would allow implementation of additional Amtrak passenger rail service connecting Lacrosse with the Twin Cities, Milwaukee and Chicago (TCMC).

Lacrosse is the market center for southwest Wisconsin. Our robust economy is supported by a wide range of economic sectors including higher education, technology, manufacturing, and health care. To continue to grow and keep our young talent and attract new residents, convenient, safe, affordable transportation is a necessity. Lacrosse is home to several corporate headquarters and the University of Wisconsin-Lacrosse. Many of her 10,000 students rely on Amtrak to get between campus and home. The presence of passenger rail service is a recruitment tool for the university, helping ease families' anxiety about how their children will travel between home and school.

In Lacrosse, we value our airport and the service available to Midwestern hubs at Chicago and Minneapolis. Interstate 90 makes us easy to get to. Convenient, multiple daily departures on passenger rail would round out our transportation picture, helping us fully realize the virtues of our region, keep the jobs and residents we have, and grow. Offering cleaner passenger rail service helps to reduce emissions and supports the beauty of the upper Mississippi River watershed.

Successful implementation of the TCMC project would double the number of schedule options daily to get people to the businesses, educational institutions, and attractions of our region. The additional schedules would allow more convenient business trips for local entrepreneurs to other cities, yet continue to enjoy the quality of life available in our small, vibrant city.

As a sign of the full support from the La Crosse County Board, we adopted a resolution, supporting the TCMC project in August of 2019. I have enclosed that resolution with this letter.

Please consider carefully the Wisconsin and Minnesota DOT grant application for the additional Twin Cities-Lacrosse-Milwaukee-Chicago Amtrak service. The economy of Lacrosse depends on a solid foundation that includes quality public transportation. Doubling the existing Amtrak service through

Lacrosse strengthens that foundation, helping us realize the potential of our location, and making Lacrosse the place where people will want to be.

Thank you for your consideration,

Respectfully Submitted:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'CH Handy', written in a cursive style.

Charles Handy  
La Crosse County Planner

Enc.



RESOLUTION # 8-6/19

TO: HONORABLE MEMBERS OF THE LA CROSSE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

ITEM # 6-12

**BOARD ACTION**

Adopted:   
For: 22  
Against: 0  
Abstain: 0  
Abs/Excd: 6  
Vote Req: 0  
Other Action: None

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ACTION**

Adopted:   
For: 7  
Against: 0  
Abstain: 0  
Abs/Excd: 2

**RE: SUPPORT EXPANSION OF AMTRAK SERVICES CHICAGO-MILWAUKEE-LA CROSSE-TWIN CITIES**

**WHEREAS**, one way to help grow business and tourism in Wisconsin is by providing a range of affordable, safe, and convenient transportation options including expanding the frequency of Amtrak services along the Hiawatha and Empire Builder route from Chicago-Milwaukee- La Crosse to the Twin Cities; and

**WHEREAS**, increased ridership via the Milwaukee-Chicago Hiawatha service has increased to the point that no operating subsidy will be required to run the seven round trips per day, confirming that investments in competitive passenger rail service is economically viable; and

**WHEREAS**, the Governor's budget requested funding to expand rail service between Milwaukee and Chicago on the Amtrak Hiawatha line and the legislature's Joint Finance committee has supported an investment that will provide matching funds for federal transportation grants to complete the improvements to increase service from seven round trips daily to ten round trips per day; and

**WHEREAS**, expanding the Hiawatha service provides a first step to enable the addition of one daily train in each direction on the Amtrak service route along the Chicago-Milwaukee-La Crosse-Twin Cities rail corridor, which will benefit the economy of the entire State, making business and tourism travel more convenient likely increasing ridership that could eliminate the operating subsidy for the Empire route; and

**WHEREAS**, expansion of the service along Chicago-Milwaukee-La Crosse-Twin Cities route will enhance service for the 17 Wisconsin Counties adjacent to the route, representing roughly 50% of the State's population, many within 30-45 minutes driving distance to an existing Train Station, the Counties include: Kenosha, Racine, Milwaukee, Waukesha, Jefferson, Dodge, Dane, Columbia, Sauk, Adams, Juneau, Monroe, La Crosse, Trempealeau, Buffalo, Pepin and St. Croix.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the La Crosse County Board of Superivsors encourages the State of Wisconsin to support the additional bonding authority to secure matching Federal funds to make the track capacity and signal improvements necessary to increase the number of trains to permit one daily train in each direction, serving all communities along the Chicago-Milwaukee- La Crosse to the Twin Cities route.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that this resolution will be forwarded to Governor Evers, the La Crosse federal and State legislative delegation and to the Wisconsin Counties Association to include in the WCA platform.

**FISCAL NOTE:** No direct cost to La Crosse County.

Date: June 12, 2019

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE CHAIR**

**RECORDING CLERK**

	Reviewed Only	Recommended	Not Recommended
Co. Admin.		<u>30</u>	
Fin. Director	<u>[Signature]</u>		
Corp. Counsel	<u>[Signature]</u>		
Board Chair	<u>[Signature]</u>		

Requested By: County Board Chair  
Date Requested: June 6, 2019  
Drafted By: County Administrator

Adopted by the La Crosse County Board this 20 Day of June, 2019

STATE OF WISCONSIN  
COUNTY OF LA CROSSE

I, Ginny Dankmeyer, County Clerk of La Crosse County do hereby certify that this document is a true and correct copy of the original resolution required by law to be in my custody and which the County Board of Supervisors of La Crosse County adopted at a meeting held on the 20<sup>th</sup> day of June 2019.

[Signature]  
Ginny Dankmeyer, La Crosse County Clerk

17 WI Counties  
Adjacent to the  
Route

Roughly 1/2 the  
population of the  
State could be  
within a short drive  
of an existing  
station

Two trains daily  
would significantly  
expand convenience  
from Chicago to  
Twin Cities





**MISSISSIPPI RIVER  
REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION**

*1707 Main Street, Suite 435  
La Crosse, WI 54601  
Phone: (608) 785-9396  
Fax: (608) 785-9394  
Email: [plan@mrrpc.com](mailto:plan@mrrpc.com)  
Website: [mrrpc.com](http://mrrpc.com)*

*James Kuhn, Cashton WI  
Chairman  
Margret Baecker, Independence WI  
Vice Chairman  
Vicki Burke, Onalaska, WI  
Secretary & Treasurer  
Dave Bonifas La Crosse, WI  
Director*

May 28, 2020

The Honorable Ronald L. Batory  
Administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Administrator Batory,

I am writing you in support of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation and Minnesota Department of Transportation joint application to the Federal Railroad Administration's Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) program for funds to support the capital improvements for the Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago Intercity Passenger Rail (TCMC) Project.

The only existing passenger rail service that operates between the Twin Cities and Chicago is Amtrak's Empire Builder, which provides long-distance service between Chicago and Seattle/Portland. This once daily round trip service provides limited passenger schedule options between Chicago Union Station and Union Depot in St. Paul. For those not traveling by personal vehicle, there are a lack of transportation options for travel to and from smaller cities within the TCMC corridor. While commercial bus and airline services are available, these do not fully serve these smaller cities that have travel demand to/from the larger cities because of consistent variability in the Empire Builder schedule, as well as between the smaller cities.

The TCMC Project fills regional transportation system gaps, provides an alternative that is cost-effective to implement, operate and maintain, responds to increases in population and economic growth, integrates with Hiawatha service, and avoids travel time delays sometimes experienced by the eastbound Empire Builder as it travels from the West Coast. The new round-trip within the TCMC Project corridor complements the existing Empire Builder long-distance service with a schedule providing an intercity frequency that is approximately 4 to 6 hours apart from the existing Empire Builder schedule, to provide flexibility and convenience oriented towards passenger rail travel within the TCMC corridor.

---

***A Nine County Economic Development District Providing Planning and Economic Development Services***

- *Land Use Planning* ▪ *Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances* ▪ *Transportation Planning* ▪ *Economic Development Planning*
- *GIS Mapping* ▪ *Recreation Planning* ▪ *Revolving Loan Fund Administration* ▪ *Grant Writing* ▪ *Socioeconomic Data Dissemination*
- *Assist Local Interests in Responding to State and Federal Programs* ▪ *Advisory Service on Local Planning Issues*
- *Coordinating Agency for Programs and Activities* ▪ *Public Advocacy on Issues Affecting Our Region*

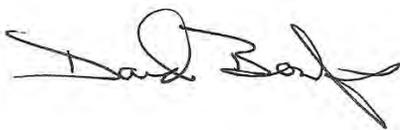
The TCMC Project provides sufficient non-auto transportation options for communities, responds to rising population, mitigates auto travel delays due to economic growth, provides sufficient schedule choices for intercity travelers, and provide capacity for the Empire Builder during peak travel months.

The TCMC Project is a multi-partner effort with support across several states. Existing and past project phases have included significant participation from various public entities including WisDOT, MnDOT, La Crosse Area Planning Committee and the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority. Recently, the project was awarded an FRA Restoration & Enhancement Grant to fund operations and project partners are excited to advance the project from planning to implementation.

If awarded, Federal funding would be utilized to implement critical infrastructure improvements throughout the TCMC Corridor, allow for TCMC operations to commence, improve existing freight operations, and provide economic value along the entire corridor. Federal funding would greatly reduce the barriers to successful implementation of the TCMC Project. The Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission is an Economic Development District in western Wisconsin and is made of 9 Counties, 146 Towns, 50 Villages and 22 Cities. Funding of this project will support one of the goals of our 2017-2022 *Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy*. Specifically goal #3 "Improve the Region's Transportation, Telecommunication, Renewable Energy and Public Facility Infrastructure. The Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission strongly supports the TCMC Project and the application for the CRISI Grant Program.

Thank you for your consideration,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dave Bonifas". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Dave Bonifas,  
Executive Director  
Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission



## City Hall

207 Lafayette Street  
P.O. Box 378  
Winona, MN 55987-0378  
507.457.8234  
[www.cityofwinona.com](http://www.cityofwinona.com)

June 2, 2020

Elaine L. Chao  
Secretary, U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Ave.  
Washington, DC 20590

RE: Letter of Support for the 2020 Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvement Grant application of the Minnesota and Wisconsin Departments of Transportation for Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago Passenger Rail Expansion

Dear Secretary Chao:

I am writing you in support of the Minnesota and Wisconsin departments of transportation joint application for a Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvement Grant, which combined with state matching funds, would allow implementation of additional Amtrak passenger rail service connecting Winona with the Twin Cities, Lacrosse, Milwaukee and Chicago (TCMC).

Winona is the market center for southeast Minnesota and southwest Wisconsin. Our robust economy is supported by a wide range of economic sector including higher education, technology, manufacturing, health care and the arts. To continue to grow and keep our young talent and attract new residents, the 8,000 students at Winona State University and the 5900 at St. Mary's University, quality transportation service is critical. Having safe transportation is an inducement tool for the schools, improves the quality of life for our residents and supports the mobility needs of the elderly, the disabled, and those without personal, private transportation. Offering cleaner passenger rail service helps to reduce emissions and supports the beauty of the Mississippi Valley we all love.

Successful implementation of the TCMC project would double the number of schedule options daily to get people to the businesses, educational institutions, and attractions of our region. The additional schedules would allow business day trips to our local commercial enterprises from other cities on the route, providing business travelers with productive work time while aboard and making Winona an even more attractive place to start or expand an enterprise.

Please consider carefully the Minnesota and Wisconsin DOT grant application for the additional Twin Cities-Winona-Milwaukee-Chicago Amtrak train. The economy of Winona and communities like ours depend on convenient transportation to get visitors and workers to and from the region. Investing in this project would be a wise use of taxpayer dollars that support businesses and travelers in our region and across the upper Midwest.

Thank you for your consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark F. Peterson", is written over the typed name.

Mayor Mark F. Peterson



June 15, 2020

The Honorable Ronald L. Batory  
Administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Administrator Batory,

I am writing you to express Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce's (WMC) support of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation and Minnesota Department of Transportation joint application to the Federal Railroad Administration's Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) program for funds to support the capital improvements for the Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago Intercity Passenger Rail (TCMC) Project.

WMC is the state chamber of commerce, manufacturers association, and largest general business association in Wisconsin. We were founded over 100 years ago, and are proud to represent approximately 3,800 member companies of all sizes, and from every sector of our economy. Our mission is to make Wisconsin the most competitive state in the nation in which to do business. One way WMC works to make our mission a reality is to ensure Wisconsin has adequate transportation infrastructure.

For those not traveling by personal vehicle, there are a lack of transportation options for travel to and from smaller cities within the TCMC corridor. Amtrak's Empire Builder, which provides long-distance service between Chicago and Seattle/Portland, is the only existing passenger rail service that operates between the Twin Cities and Chicago. This once daily round trip service provides limited passenger schedule options between Chicago Union Station and Union Depot in St. Paul and several smaller communities along the route in Minnesota and Wisconsin. While commercial bus and airline services are available, these do not fully serve the travel demand between these smaller cities and the larger cities.

The TCMC Project will serve several Wisconsin communities including Milwaukee, Sturtevant, Glenview, Tomah, Wisconsin Dells, Portage, Columbus, and La Crosse. This project fills regional transportation system gaps and provides an alternative that is cost-effective to implement, operate and maintain. The new round-trip within the TCMC Project corridor complements the existing Empire Builder long-distance service with a schedule providing an intercity frequency that is approximately four to six hours apart from the existing Empire Builder schedule, to provide flexibility and convenience oriented towards passenger rail travel within the TCMC corridor.

In addition to improving regional mobility, the TCMC Project has important short and long term economic benefits. The TCMC Project will create engineering and construction jobs to design and build approximately \$72 million in track and signal improvements. Additionally, the Project will support tourism spending all along the 411-mile route, it will support businesses that sell goods and services to Amtrak. Ultimately, it will help rural and urban communities along the corridor attract and retain businesses, employees, residents, and visitors by improving connections to the economic epicenters of the region.

The TCMC Project is a multi-partner effort with support across several states. Existing and past project phases have included significant participation from various public entities including WisDOT, MnDOT, La Crosse Area Planning Commission and the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority. Recently, the project was awarded an FRA Restoration & Enhancement Grant to fund operations and project partners are excited to advance the project from planning to implementation.

If awarded, federal funding would be utilized to implement critical infrastructure improvements throughout the TCMC Corridor, allow for TCMC operations to commence, improve existing freight operations, and provide economic value along the entire corridor. Federal funding would greatly reduce the barriers to successful implementation of the TCMC Project and WMC wholeheartedly supports the application for the CRISI Grant Program.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

*/s/ Kurt Bauer*

President & CEO

Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce



*It's how we get there*

June 15, 2020

The Honorable Ronald L. Batory  
Administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE  
Washington, DC 20590

**RE:** Letter of Support for the 2020 Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvement Grant application for the Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago Passenger Rail (TCMC) Project

Dear Administrator Batory,

I am writing to you in support of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation and Minnesota Department of Transportation joint application to the Federal Railroad Administration's Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) program. These funds would facilitate the capital improvements necessary to implement additional Amtrak passenger service between the Twin Cities, Milwaukee, and Chicago.

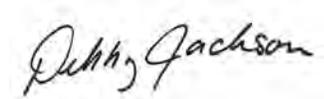
Chicago, Milwaukee, and the Twin Cities are part of a midwestern mega-region, which produces more than \$2 trillion in economic output, making it roughly the world's 14th largest economy. Additional rail service between Wisconsin, Illinois, and Minnesota provides more opportunities for regional relationships and new business ventures by improving connections to the economic epicenters of the region.

Amtrak's Empire Builder, which provides long-distance service between Chicago and Seattle/Portland, is the only existing passenger rail service that operates between the Twin Cities and Chicago. This once-daily, round-trip service provides limited passenger schedule options between Chicago Union Station and Union Depot in St. Paul and several smaller communities along the route in Minnesota and Wisconsin. The Empire Builder service, which has a ridership of about 155,000 a year, reaches near-capacity or capacity during peak travel months, and travel demand within the corridor is projected to rise.

The TCMC Project fills regional transportation system gaps. The new round trip within the TCMC Project corridor integrates with the Hiawatha service and complements the existing Empire Builder long-distance service. The new train's anticipated schedule would be approximately 4 to 6 hours apart from the current Empire Builder schedule, providing flexibility and convenience for rail passengers.

Please carefully consider the Wisconsin and Minnesota application for the Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago Passenger Rail (TCMC) Project. If awarded, federal funding would be utilized to implement critical infrastructure improvements throughout the TCMC Corridor, allow for additional passenger rail service, improve existing freight operations, and provide economic value along the entire corridor.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Debby Jackson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Debby Jackson  
Executive Director

Cc:

Elaine L. Chao, Secretary, U.S. Department of Transportation

Craig Thompson, Secretary-designee, Wisconsin Department of Transportation



**WEST CENTRAL  
WISCONSIN  
RAIL COALITION**

June 15, 2020

The Honorable Ronald L. Batory  
Administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Administrator Batory,

This letter is in support of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation and Minnesota Department of Transportation joint application to the Federal Railroad Administration's Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) program for funds to support the capital improvements for the Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago Intercity Passenger Rail (TCMC) Project.

The West Central Wisconsin Rail Coalition is a non-profit educational organization providing leadership and coordination to develop passenger rail service through west central Wisconsin as part of a regional strategy to ensure a balanced transportation system for long term sustainable economic growth.

In the attached resolution, we endorse the implementation of the TCMC project, and encourage WisDOT to implement the shuttle connection it is considering as part of the project from Eau Claire to Tomah. TCMC will provide important new travel options for citizens, students and visitors to our communities locally and throughout Wisconsin and Minnesota.

We strongly encourage this CRISI Grant Program application be approved.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Scott Rogers', written in a cursive style.

Scott Rogers, Chair  
West Central Wisconsin Rail Coalition  
rogers@eauclairchamber.org  
715-858-0616

Enclosure: Resolution

West Central Wisconsin Rail Coalition  
RESOLUTION  
Proposed Chippewa Valley-Black River Falls-Tomah Amtrak Shuttle Connection

WHEREAS, passenger rail service, as part of an integrated multimodal transportation system, is increasingly being recognized as a critical modal choice for small, medium and large communities, providing reasonably priced, safe, accessible transportation to complement other modes, as well as a desirable transportation asset for communities to be economically competitive and attractive to skilled talent; and

WHEREAS, the West Central Wisconsin business community sees the value of passenger rail service as critical to efficient travel for employees, allows productive use of time during travel, and increases the attractiveness of West Central Wisconsin as a business location and tourism destination; and

WHEREAS, the West Central Wisconsin Rail Coalition has worked since 1999 to obtain passenger rail service for area communities including Hudson/River Falls, Baldwin, Menomonie and Eau Claire/Chippewa Falls, currently developing a public-private partnership to establish an initial corridor between St. Paul and Eau Claire with future extension eastward to Milwaukee and Chicago; and

WHEREAS, both the Wisconsin State Rail Plan and the Minnesota State Rail plan include the West Central Wisconsin corridor in long-range plans for passenger rail service; and

WHEREAS, Tomah is among the closest stations to the corridor with current passenger rail service with the Amtrak Empire Builder train once daily in each direction on a route linking Tomah to the Wisconsin communities of La Crosse, Wisconsin Dells, Portage, Columbus and Milwaukee, as well as Chicago, Winona, Red Wing and Minneapolis-St. Paul in neighboring states. Amtrak provides direct passenger rail service from Tomah to 45 cities and towns all the way to the Pacific Northwest, and connections with more than 400 domestic and Canadian destinations; and

WHEREAS, many residents and visitors to West Central Wisconsin currently drive on I-94 to park and use the Amtrak station at Tomah to access the Empire Builder and Amtrak's national network, but there is no direct dedicated shuttle connection from West Central Wisconsin to meet the train. Additionally, Black River Falls currently has no intercity public transportation; and

WHEREAS, Wisconsin Department of Transportation, like 17 other U.S. states, has an operating contract with Amtrak to supplement service along the existing Chicago to Milwaukee route with 14 additional train departures six days per week with and twelve on Sunday, because travel utility and demand is best served with multiple frequencies (departures and arrivals) each day providing competitive travel service that prompts motorists to opt not to drive and expanding the capacity of the existing transportation network between Milwaukee and Chicago with seats on trains; and

WHEREAS, the departments of transportation of the states of Wisconsin and Minnesota are working with Amtrak on the TCMC (Twin Cities Milwaukee Chicago) project to consider adding a second daily frequency between St. Paul, Milwaukee and Chicago to serve the additional demand for passenger rail transportation in the corridor; Implementation of this service provides an opportunity to expand its usefulness by connecting significant off-line markets via dedicated shuttle service; and

WHEREAS, the inclusion in the TCMC project of a direct shuttle service between the Chippewa Valley (including downtown Eau Claire), Black River Falls and the Tomah Amtrak station to meet trains would significantly enhance the utility of these rail improvements for West Central Wisconsin. This would open up more travel opportunities for area residents and visitors to connect to/from Milwaukee and Chicago via Tomah, and would especially provide improved mobility for students, seniors and others who cannot or do not want to drive 80 miles to access the service; and

WHEREAS, the City of Eau Claire is constructing a new Transit Center, and it would be beneficial to broaden the offerings available there to travelers in the community to include the Amtrak shuttle to and from Tomah, providing access to the national intercity passenger rail network; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Federal government appropriated \$1.4 billion for rail-specific, competitive grants available for states to implement passenger rail improvement projects, making this mode a priority for the nation's mobility; and

WHEREAS, communities in West Central Wisconsin want to experience the economic and mobility benefits made possible by a better connected, more functional multimodal transportation network that includes more frequent passenger train departures, such as that being experienced by communities on 28 Amtrak-state partnered passenger rail corridor services across the U.S; and

WHEREAS, implementation of the shuttle connection to Tomah would be a step towards, and be complementary to, the future implementation of direct passenger rail service to West Central Wisconsin;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the West Central Wisconsin Rail Coalition requests the State of Wisconsin to work with Amtrak, the Canadian Pacific Railroad, Minnesota Department of Transportation and other communities along the route to implement one additional passenger train frequency each day between Chicago, Milwaukee, and Saint Paul, via Tomah, and to include dedicated shuttle service between Tomah, Black River Falls and Eau Claire to meet the arrivals and departures of both the new train and the Empire Builder. Including a similar Columbus-Madison shuttle to meet these trains would also provide additional travel options to reach the state's capital city.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Scott Rogers', written over a horizontal line.

Scott Rogers, Chair  
West Central Wisconsin Rail Coalition  
January 23, 2020



June 4, 2020

The Honorable Ronald L. Batory  
Administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Administrator Batory,

I am writing you in support of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation and Minnesota Department of Transportation joint application to the Federal Railroad Administration's Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) program for funds to support the capital improvements for the Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago Intercity Passenger Rail (TCMC) Project.

For those not traveling by personal vehicle, there are a lack of transportation options for travel to and from smaller cities within the TCMC corridor. Amtrak's Empire Builder, which provides long-distance service between Chicago and Seattle/Portland, is the only existing passenger rail service that operates between the Twin Cities and Chicago. This once daily round trip service provides limited passenger schedule options between Chicago Union Station and Union Depot in St. Paul and several smaller communities along the route in Minnesota and Wisconsin. While commercial bus and limited airline services are available, these do not fully serve the travel demand between these smaller cities and the larger cities.

The TCMC Project fills regional transportation system gaps, provides an alternative that is cost-effective to implement, operate and maintain, responds to increases in population and economic growth, integrates with Hiawatha service, and avoids travel time delays sometimes experienced by the eastbound Empire Builder as it travels from the West Coast. The new round-trip within the TCMC Project corridor complements the existing Empire Builder long-distance service with a schedule providing an intercity frequency that is approximately 4 to 6 hours apart from the existing Empire Builder schedule, to provide flexibility and convenience oriented towards passenger rail travel within the TCMC corridor.

In addition to improving regional mobility, the TCMC Project has important economic benefits. The TCMC Project will create engineering and construction jobs to design and build approximately \$72 million in track and signal improvements. Additionally, the Project will support tourism spending all along the 411-mile route, it will support businesses that sell goods and services to Amtrak and it will connect students to educational opportunities at colleges and universities throughout the TCMC Corridor. Ultimately, it will help rural and urban communities along the corridor attract and retain businesses, employees, residents, and visitors by improving connections to the economic epicenters of the region.

UNION DEPOT, SUITE 200, 214 4TH STREET EAST, ST. PAUL, MN 55101 • 651-266-2760 • WWW.GREATRIVERRAIL.ORG

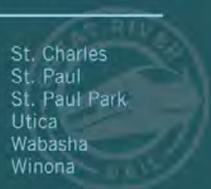
RIVER ROUTE MEMBERS:

Dakota County  
Regional Rail Authority  
Goodhue County  
Regional Rail Authority  
Ramsey County  
Regional Rail Authority

Wabasha County  
Regional Rail Authority  
Washington County  
Regional Rail Authority  
Winona County  
Regional Rail Authority  
Cottage Grove

Goodview  
Hastings  
La Crosse Area  
Planning Committee (LAPC)  
Lake City  
Red Wing

St. Charles  
St. Paul  
St. Paul Park  
Utica  
Wabasha  
Winona





The TCMC Project is a multi-partner effort with support across several states. Existing and past project phases have included significant participation from various public entities including WisDOT, MnDOT, La Crosse Area Planning Committee and the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority. The Great River Rail Commission has advocated for the TCMC Project at the Minnesota legislature, at numerous public events and through social media. Recently, the project was awarded an FRA Restoration & Enhancement Grant to fund operations and project partners are excited to advance the project from planning to implementation.

If awarded, Federal funding would be utilized to implement critical infrastructure improvements throughout the TCMC Corridor, allow for TCMC operations to commence, improve existing freight operations, and provide economic value along the entire corridor. Federal funding would greatly reduce the barriers to successful implementation of the TCMC Project and I support the application for the CRISI Grant Program.

Thank you for your consideration,

Mark Vaughan, Chair

Great River Rail Commission

UNION DEPOT, SUITE 200, 214 4TH STREET EAST, ST. PAUL, MN 55101 • 651-266-2760 • WWW.GREATRIVERRAIL.ORG

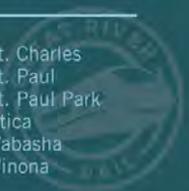
RIVER ROUTE MEMBERS:

Dakota County  
Regional Rail Authority  
Goodhue County  
Regional Rail Authority  
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Regional Rail Authority  
Winona County  
Regional Rail Authority  
Cottage Grove

Goodview  
Hastings  
La Crosse Area  
Planning Committee (LAPC)  
Lake City  
Red Wing

St. Charles  
St. Paul  
St. Paul Park  
Utica  
Wabasha  
Winona





June 15, 2020

The Honorable Ronald L. Batory  
Administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Administrator Batory,

This letter is in support of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation and Minnesota Department of Transportation joint application to the Federal Railroad Administration's Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) program for funds to support the capital improvements for the Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago Intercity Passenger Rail (TCMC) Project.

As the advocate of business, the Eau Claire Area Chamber of Commerce champions a strong local and regional economy. Our membership includes 1,200 organizations who employ over 40,000 individuals. We advocate for policies that promote a good business environment and support efficient and effective government.

Transportation is a critical component for economic prosperity. The Chamber has long advocated for establishing passenger rail service to our region as an important component for economic competitiveness and talent attraction. We understand that the Wisconsin Department of Transportation will consider including a shuttle connection from the Chippewa Valley to the Amtrak station at Tomah as part of the planned implementation of the TCMC. We believe an Amtrak shuttle from Eau Claire to Tomah would enhance the connectivity of our community by opening up more travel opportunities for area residents, students, and visitors to connect to/from Milwaukee and Chicago via Tomah.

Therefore, we support the TCMC Project because it fills regional transportation system gaps across and beyond the current Amtrak route, including nearby cities like ours. It provides an alternative that is cost-effective to implement, operate and maintain, responds to increases in population and economic growth, integrates with Hiawatha service, and avoids travel time delays sometimes experienced by the eastbound Empire Builder as it travels from the West Coast.

We understand the Federal funding would be utilized to implement critical infrastructure improvements throughout the TCMC Corridor, allow for TCMC operations to commence, improve existing freight operations, and provide economic value along the entire corridor. Federal funding would greatly reduce the barriers to successful implementation of the TCMC Project and we support the application for the CRISI Grant Program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David W. Minor".

David W. Minor  
President & CEO



## CITY OF NEWPORT

596 7th Avenue  
Newport, Minnesota 55055  
(651) 459-5677  
Fax: (651) 459-9883

June 18, 2020

The Honorable Ronald L. Batory  
Administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Administrator Batory,

I am writing you in support of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation and Minnesota Department of Transportation joint application to the Federal Railroad Administration's Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) program for funds to support the capital improvements for the Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago Intercity Passenger Rail (TCMC) Project.

For those not traveling by personal vehicle, there are a lack of transportation options for travel to and from smaller cities within the TCMC corridor. Amtrak's Empire Builder, which provides long-distance service between Chicago and Seattle/Portland, is the only existing passenger rail service that operates between the Twin Cities and Chicago. This once daily round trip service provides limited passenger schedule options between Chicago Union Station and Union Depot in St. Paul and several smaller communities along the route in Minnesota and Wisconsin. While commercial bus and airline services are available, these do not fully serve the travel demand between these smaller cities and the larger cities.

The TCMC Project fills regional transportation system gaps, provides an alternative that is cost-effective to implement, operate and maintain, responds to increases in population and economic growth, integrates with Hiawatha service, and avoids travel time delays sometimes experienced by the eastbound Empire Builder as it travels from the West Coast. The new round-trip within the TCMC Project corridor complements the existing Empire Builder long-distance service with a schedule providing an intercity frequency that is approximately 4 to 6 hours apart from the existing Empire Builder schedule, to provide flexibility and convenience oriented towards passenger rail travel within the TCMC corridor.

In addition to improving regional mobility, the TCMC Project has important economic benefits. The TCMC Project will create engineering and construction jobs to design and build approximately \$72 million in track and signal improvements. Additionally, the Project will support tourism spending all along the 411-mile route, it will support businesses that sell goods and services to Amtrak and it will connect students to educational opportunities at colleges and universities throughout the TCMC Corridor. Ultimately, it will help rural and urban communities along the corridor attract and retain

businesses, employees, residents, and visitors by improving connections to the economic epicenters of the region.

The TCMC Project is a multi-partner effort with support across several states. Existing and past project phases have included significant participation from various public entities including WisDOT, MnDOT, La Crosse Area Planning Commission and the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority. Recently, the project was awarded an FRA Restoration & Enhancement Grant to fund operations and project partners are excited to advance the project from planning to implementation.

If awarded, Federal funding would be utilized to implement critical infrastructure improvements throughout the TCMC Corridor, allow for TCMC operations to commence, improve existing freight operations, and provide economic value along the entire corridor. Federal funding would greatly reduce the barriers to successful implementation of the TCMC Project and I support the application for the CRISI Grant Program.

Thank you for your consideration,



Deb Hill  
City Administrator  
City of Newport

**Chair**

Mick Hatch  
Foley & Lardner LLP

**President**

Bruce Keyes  
Foley & Lardner LLP

**Vice-President**

Jeff Morgan  
Allied Insulation Supply

**Secretary**

Michele Bria, Ph.D.  
Journey House

**Treasurer**

Pat O'Connor  
Retired - formerly BMO

**Members**

Jennifer Bognar Zierer  
We Energies

Dave Cieslewicz  
DCA Consulting

Peter Coffaro  
Employ Milwaukee

Bill Davidson  
Harley-Davidson Museum

Karen Dettmer  
Milwaukee Department of  
Public Works

Ed Eberle  
State Senate

Rodney Ferguson  
Potawatomi Hotel &  
Casino

Laura Goranson  
g.moxie

Shelley Jurewicz  
FaB Wisconsin

Katherine Lazarski  
Milwaukee Metropolitan  
Sewerage District

Rocky Marcoux  
Milwaukee Department of  
City Development

Julie Penman  
Penman Consulting

Steve Raasch  
Zimmerman Architectural  
Studios

Sheri Schmit  
Milwaukee Regional  
Medical Center

Lora Strigens  
Marquette University

Tracy Wymelenberg  
Advocate Aurora Health

Dashal Young  
Wisconsin Community  
Services

The Honorable Ronald L. Batory  
Administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Administrator Batory,

On behalf of Menomonee Valley Partners (MVP), I am writing in support of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation and Minnesota Department of Transportation joint application to the Federal Railroad Administration's Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) program for funds to support the capital improvements for the Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago Intercity Passenger Rail (TCMC) Project.

MVP is a public/private partnership with a mission to revitalize and sustain Milwaukee's Menomonee River Valley as a thriving urban district. The Valley's transformation over the last 20 years has earned it a reputation as a national model. Access to transportation has been a major driver of this transformation, and the TCMC Project promises to continue that precedent, improving economic development and strengthening the business environment.

For those not traveling by personal vehicle, there is a lack of transportation options for travel to and from smaller cities within the TCMC corridor. Amtrak's Empire Builder, which provides long-distance service between Chicago and Seattle/Portland, is the only existing passenger rail service that operates between the Twin Cities to Milwaukee to Chicago. This once daily round trip service provides limited passenger schedule options between Chicago's Union Station and Union Depot in St. Paul and several smaller communities along the route in Minnesota and Wisconsin. While commercial bus and airline services are available, these do not fully serve the travel demand between these smaller communities and the larger cities.

The TCMC Project fills regional transportation system gaps, provides an alternative that is cost-effective to implement, operate and maintain, responds to increases in population and economic growth, integrates with Hiawatha service, and avoids travel time delays sometimes experienced by the eastbound Empire Builder as it travels from the West Coast. The new round-trip within the TCMC Project corridor complements the existing Empire Builder long-distance service with a schedule providing an intercity frequency that is approximately 4 to 6 hours apart from the existing Empire Builder schedule, to provide flexibility and convenience oriented towards passenger rail travel within the TCMC corridor.

In addition to improving regional mobility, the TCMC Project has important economic benefits. The TCMC Project will create engineering and construction jobs to design and build approximately \$72 million in track and signal improvements. Additionally, the Project will support tourism spending all along the 411-mile route, it will support businesses that sell goods and services to Amtrak and it will connect students to educational opportunities at colleges and universities throughout the TCMC Corridor. Ultimately, it will help connect rural and urban communities along the corridor as well as attract and retain businesses, employees, residents, and visitors.

The TCMC Project is a multi-partner effort with support across several states. Existing and past project phases have included significant participation from various public entities including WisDOT, MnDOT, La Crosse Area Planning Commission, and the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority. Recently, the project was awarded an FRA Restoration & Enhancement Grant to fund operations and project partners are excited to advance the project from planning to implementation.

If awarded, Federal funding would be utilized to implement critical infrastructure improvements throughout the TCMC Corridor, allow for TCMC operations to commence, improve existing freight operations, and provide economic value along the entire corridor. Federal funding would greatly reduce the barriers to successful implementation of the TCMC Project and I support the application for the CRISI Grant Program.

Thank you for your consideration,



Corey Zetts  
Executive Director  
Menomonee Valley Partner

CC:

Elaine L. Chao, Secretary, U.S. Department of Transportation

Craig Thompson, Secretary-designee, Wisconsin Department of Transportation

David M. Simon, P.E., Director, Bureau of Transit, Local Roads, Railroads, and Harbors, Wisconsin Department of Transportation



June 8, 2020

Mr. Ron Batory  
Administrator, Federal Railroad Administration  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Ave.  
Washington, DC 20590

**RE:** Letter of Support for the 2020 Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvement Grant application of the Wisconsin and Minnesota departments of transportation for Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago Passenger Rail Expansion

Dear Administrator Batory:

I am writing you on behalf of Cambria hotels in support of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation and Minnesota Department of Transportation joint application for a Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvement Grant which would allow implementation of additional Amtrak passenger rail service connecting Milwaukee, the Twin Cities and Chicago.

The tourism industry as a result of COVID19 has been negatively impacted nine times greater than September 11. Milwaukee serves as a midpoint for travelers welcoming them from both Chicago and the Twin Cities of Minneapolis St Paul. Cambria hotel Milwaukee is the closest hotel to the Milwaukee Intermodal Station, is a preferred partner of Amtrak and we are in the business of caring for & connecting people. If the apprehension of travel via air continues local travel is steering the tourism economy recovery of which rail travel linking cities like Minneapolis St Paul, Milwaukee and Chicago could be an ideal source.

Please consider carefully the Wisconsin and Minnesota DOT grant application for the additional Twin Cities-Lacrosse-Milwaukee-Chicago Amtrak service. The economy of our community depends on a solid foundation that includes quality public transportation. Doubling the existing Amtrak service through our community strengthens that foundation, helping us realize the potential of our location, and making us the place where people will want to be.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Janis Cannon', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Janis Cannon, Senior Vice President  
Choice Hotels, Upscale Brands  
Cambria Hotels and the Ascend Collection

CC: Elaine L. Chao  
Secretary, U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Ave.  
Washington, DC 20590

Craig Thompson  
Secretary-Designee  
Wisconsin Department of Transportation  
4822 Madison Yards Way  
Madison, WI 53705



275 West Wisconsin Ave.  
Suite 1415  
Milwaukee, WI 53203

414.931.1121

bublrbikes.org

Bruce Keyes  
Chairman  
Foley & Lardner

Dr. Michele Bria  
President  
Journey House

Barry Mainwood  
Vice President  
Mainly Editing

Tonieh Welland  
Secretary

Noel Kegel  
Treasurer  
Wheel & Sprocket

Mike Amsden  
City of Milwaukee, DPW

Jen Ferguson  
City of Wauwatosa

Eugene Manzanet  
US Bank

John Miller  
Arenberg Holdings LLC

Rece Schneider  
Public Policy Forum

June 4, 2020

The Honorable Ronald L. Batory  
Administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE  
Washington, DC 20590

**RE:** Letter of Support for the 2020 Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvement Grant application of the Wisconsin and Minnesota departments of transportation for Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago Passenger Rail Expansion

Dear Administrator Batory:

I am writing you in support of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation and Minnesota Department of Transportation joint application for a Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvement Grant, which combined with state matching funds, would allow implementation of additional Amtrak passenger rail service connecting Milwaukee with the Twin Cities and Chicago.

Bubl Bikes supports all travel options that help get travelers out of individual automobiles. Successful implementation of the project would double the number of schedule options daily to bring passengers into Milwaukee. Train service offers safe, convenient travel for families. However, there are currently few such travel option for those not traveling by personal vehicle within the TCMC corridor. Amtrak's Empire Builder, which provides long-distance service between Chicago and Seattle/Portland, is the only existing passenger rail service that operates between the Twin Cities and Chicago. This once daily round-trip service provides limited passenger schedule options between Chicago Union Station and Union Depot in St. Paul and several smaller communities along the route in Minnesota and Wisconsin. While commercial bus and airline services are available, these do not fully serve the travel demand between these smaller cities and the larger cities. Additionally, these other options are frequently not time effective, have confusing schedules, require transfers, and/or the usage of multiple carriers.

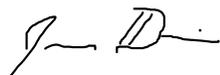
The TCMC Project fills regional transportation system gaps, provides an alternative that is cost-effective to implement, operate and maintain, responds to increases in population and economic growth, integrates with Hiawatha service, and avoids travel time delays sometimes experienced by the eastbound Empire Builder as it travels from the West Coast. The new round-trip within the TCMC Project corridor complements the existing Empire Builder long-distance service with a schedule providing an intercity frequency that is approximately 4 to 6 hours apart from the existing Empire Builder schedule, to provide flexibility and convenience oriented towards passenger rail travel within the TCMC corridor.

In addition to improving regional mobility, the TCMC Project has important economic benefits. The TCMC Project will create engineering and construction jobs to design and build approximately \$72 million in track and signal improvements. Additionally, the Project will support tourism spending all along the 411-mile route, it will support businesses that sell goods and services to Amtrak and it will connect students to educational opportunities at colleges and universities throughout the TCMC Corridor. Ultimately, it will help rural and urban communities along the corridor attract and retain businesses, employees, residents, and visitors by improving connections to the economic epicenters of the region.

The TCMC Project is a multi-partner effort with support across several states. Existing and past project phases have included significant participation from various public entities including WisDOT, MnDOT, La Crosse Area Planning Commission and the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority. Recently, the project was awarded an FRA Restoration & Enhancement Grant to fund operations and project partners are excited to advance the project from planning to implementation.

If awarded, Federal funding would be utilized to implement critical infrastructure improvements throughout the TCMC Corridor, allow for TCMC operations to commence, improve existing freight operations, and provide economic value along the entire corridor. Federal funding would greatly reduce the barriers to successful implementation of the TCMC Project and I support the application for the CRISI Grant Program.

Thank you,



James Davies  
Executive Director  
Bubl'r Bikes

CC: Elaine L. Chao, Secretary, U.S. Dept. of Transportation 1200 New Jersey Ave. Washington, DC 20590  
Craig Thompson, Secretary-designee, Wis. Dot. 4822 Madison Yards Way Madison, WI 53705  
David M. Simson, P.E., Director, Bureau of Transit, Local Roads, Railroads, and Harbors, Wis. DOT  
Hill Farms State Office Building, 4822 Madison Yards Way, Madison, WI 53705



**Tommy Bartlett, Inc.**  
560 Wisconsin Dells Pkwy.  
Wisconsin Dells, WI 53965

p: 608-254-2525  
f: 608-254-6103

tommybartlett.com  
bartlett@tommybartlett.com

June 17, 2020

Elaine L. Chao  
Secretary, U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Ave.  
Washington, DC 20590

RE: Letter of Support for the 2020 Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvement Grant application of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation for Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago Passenger Rail Expansion

Dear Secretary Chao:

I am writing you in support of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation and Minnesota Department of Transportation joint application for a Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvement Grant, which combined with state matching funds, would allow implementation of additional Amtrak passenger rail service connecting Wisconsin Dells with Milwaukee, the Twin Cities and Chicago.

The Wisconsin Dells and Lake Delton areas attract more than four million annual visitors to our tourism destination. In addition to visiting our attractions, many of these visitors stay overnight at resort properties, dine at restaurants and shop at retail stores. This generates revenue used to pay employees, state and local taxes and provide for general upkeep so visitors have a safe and positive experience in the Waterpark Capital of the World!™

Successful implementation of the project would double the number of schedule options daily to bring families to the Wisconsin Dells area. Train service offers safe, convenient travel for families and would set our region apart from other Midwestern tourist destinations for ease of access. Wisconsin Dells is on the same passenger rail route as the Twin Cities and Chicago, the two most significant regions originating visitors to our area. In addition, the demands on our labor force far exceed the capacity of the local labor pool and we rely on thousands of J1 students to fill the balance of this capacity. Many of these young students do not have vehicles, so additional train departures help them make the journey to our area, broaden the appeal of our properties when they have time off, and make it easy for them to get home.

Please consider the Wisconsin and Minnesota DOT grant application for the additional Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago Amtrak train. The tourism communities of Wisconsin Dells and Lake Delton depend on convenient transportation to get visitors and workers to and from the region. Investing in this project would be a wise use of the taxpayer dollars that support businesses and travelers in our region and across the upper Midwest.

Thank you for your consideration,

Jill C Diehl  
Executive Vice President | General Manager

cc: Wisconsin Department of Transportation



The Greatest Show  
on H2O!

UNIVERSITY of WISCONSIN  
**LA CROSSE**

June 9, 2020

The Honorable Ronald L. Batory  
Administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Administrator Batory,

I am writing you in support of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation and Minnesota Department of Transportation joint application to the Federal Railroad Administration's Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) program for funds to support the capital improvements for the Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago Intercity Passenger Rail (TCMC) Project.

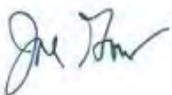
For those not traveling by personal vehicle, there are a lack of transportation options for travel to and from smaller cities within the TCMC corridor. Amtrak's Empire Builder, which provides long-distance service between Chicago and Seattle/Portland, is the only existing passenger rail service that operates between the Twin Cities and Chicago. This once daily round trip service provides limited passenger schedule options between Chicago Union Station and Union Depot in St. Paul and several smaller communities along the route in Wisconsin and Minnesota. While commercial bus and airline services are available, the addition of the TCMC Passenger Rail may help serve the travel demand between these smaller cities and the larger cities.

The TCMC Project fills regional transportation system gaps, responds to increases in population and economic growth, integrates with Hiawatha service, could provide a solution to the high demand for parking spaces on and around the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse's campus by removing the need for a personal vehicle, and may help avoid travel time delays sometimes experienced by the eastbound Empire Builder as it travels from the West Coast. The new round-trip within the TCMC Project corridor complements the existing Empire Builder long-distance service with a schedule providing an intercity frequency that is approximately 4 to 6 hours apart from the existing Empire Builder schedule, to provide flexibility and convenience oriented towards passenger rail travel within the TCMC corridor.

In addition to improving regional mobility, the TCMC Project will connect students to educational opportunities at colleges and universities, like UWL. This will provide new options for our students traveling to and from home, as well as our faculty and staff who travel to conferences, workshops and/or presentations throughout the TCMC Corridor. Ultimately, it could help the La Crosse area attract and retain employees, residents, students, and visitors by improving connections to the region.

If awarded, Federal funding would greatly reduce the barriers to successful implementation of the TCMC Project and I support the application for the CRISI Grant Program. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Joe Gow  
Chancellor

OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR  
135 Graff Main Hall  
1725 State St. | La Crosse, WI 54601 USA

phone 608.785.8004  
fax 608.785.6907  
www.uwlax.edu



**Be The Difference.**

June 12, 2020

Mr. Ron Batory  
Administrator, Federal Railroad Administration  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Administrator Batory:

On behalf of Marquette University, I am writing you in support of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation and Minnesota Department of Transportation joint application for a 2020 Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvement Grant, which, combined with state matching funds, would allow implementation of additional Amtrak passenger rail service connecting our community with Milwaukee, the Twin Cities and Chicago.

Marquette University is a Catholic, Jesuit university located near the heart of downtown Milwaukee, Wisconsin, with more than 8,300 undergraduate and 3,000 graduate and professional students from nearly all states and 85 countries. Many of our students are from Illinois, and Minnesota is the third highest state we draw students from.

Not only is quality rail service important to our local economy but eases family anxiety when they know their loved ones are traveling safely by train between home and wherever their travels take them.

Successful implementation of the TCMC project would double the number of schedule options daily to get people and students to the businesses, campuses, and attractions of our region. The additional multiple daily departures on passenger rail would create more convenience for residents, businesses, and visitors, helping us fully realize the virtues of our region and likely increase economic growth. Offering cleaner passenger rail service also helps to reduce emissions and supports the beauty the upper Midwest is celebrated for.

Please carefully consider the Wisconsin and Minnesota DOT grant application for the additional Twin Cities-Lacrosse-Milwaukee-Chicago Amtrak service. The economy of our community depends on a solid foundation that includes quality public transportation. Increasing the existing Amtrak service through our community strengthens that foundation, helping us realize the potential of our location, and making us the place where people will want to be.

Thank you,

Michael R. Lovell  
President

cc: Elaine L. Chao

**President**

Zilber Hall, Suite 441  
P.O. Box 1881  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53201-1881

P 414.288.7223  
W marquette.edu



June 16, 2020

Mr. Ron Batory  
Administrator, Federal Railroad Administration  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Ave.  
Washington, DC 20590

**RE:** Letter of Support for the 2020 Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvement Grant application of the Wisconsin and Minnesota departments of transportation for Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago Passenger Rail Expansion

Dear Administrator Batory:

I am writing you in support of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation and Minnesota Department of Transportation joint application to the Federal Railroad Administration's Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) program for funds to support the capital improvements for the Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago Intercity Passenger Rail (TCMC) Project.

Independence First is a non-profit Center for Independent Living serving people with disabilities in the metropolitan Milwaukee area. Over half of our board, and over half of our staff, are persons with disabilities, so we understand very well the issues impacting people with disabilities. Transportation is invariably identified as one of the top issues impacting people with disabilities in the state in the surveys that the Wisconsin Coalition of Independent Living Centers conducts annually.

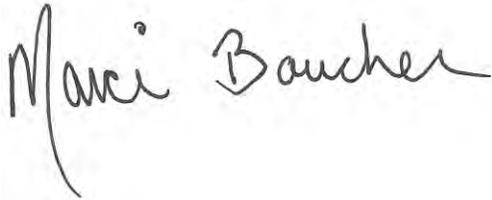
For many people with disabilities, there is a lack of transportation options for regional travel within the Midwest, particularly if one cannot drive, or does not want to drive. Airlines are not very accessible for people who use wheelchairs, particularly motorized chairs, and are infamous for losing or damaging wheelchairs.

Rail service is an attractive option as the Amtrak cars have accessible spaces and accessible restrooms. Amtrak's Empire Builder, which provides long-distance service between Chicago and Seattle/Portland, is the only existing passenger rail service that operates between the Twin Cities and Chicago. This once daily round trip service provides limited passenger schedule options between Chicago Union Station and Union Depot in St. Paul and several smaller communities along the route in Minnesota and Wisconsin.

While commercial bus and airline services are available, aside from accessibility issues, these do not fully serve the travel demand between these smaller cities and the larger cities.

The capital improvements will improve regional mobility for people with disabilities, allowing them to travel more easily within the corridor between Chicago and Twin Cities. This will allow greater economic and recreational opportunities for persons with disabilities, enabling trips to visit destinations such as Mall of America, Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin State Capitol, SummerFest, Navy Pier, etc.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marci Boucher". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial "M".

Marci Boucher  
CEO/President  
Independence First

cc:

Secretary Chao, U.S. Department of Transportation  
Secretary-designee Thompson, Wisconsin Department of Transportation  
Director Simon, Bureau of Transit, Local Roads, Railroads, and Harbors



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Kasson, MN 55944

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June 18, 2020

The Honorable Ronald L. Batory  
Administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Administrator Batory,

I am writing you in support of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation and Minnesota Department of Transportation joint application to the Federal Railroad Administration's Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) program for funds to support the capital improvements for the Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago Intercity Passenger Rail (TCMC) Project.

For those not traveling by personal vehicle, there are a lack of transportation options for travel to and from smaller cities within the TCMC corridor. Amtrak's Empire Builder, which provides long-distance service between Chicago and Seattle/Portland, is the only existing passenger rail service that operates between the Twin Cities and Chicago. This once daily round trip service provides limited passenger schedule options between Chicago Union Station and Union Depot in St. Paul and several smaller communities along the route in Minnesota and Wisconsin. While commercial bus and airline services are available, these do not fully serve the travel demand between these smaller cities and the larger cities.

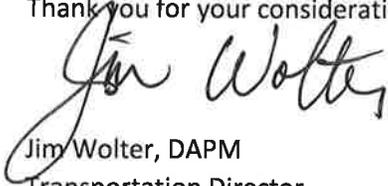
The TCMC Project fills regional transportation system gaps, provides an alternative that is cost-effective to implement, operate and maintain, responds to increases in population and economic growth, integrates with Hiawatha service, and avoids travel time delays sometimes experienced by the eastbound Empire Builder as it travels from the West Coast. The new round-trip within the TCMC Project corridor complements the existing Empire Builder long-distance service with a schedule providing an intercity frequency that is approximately 4 to 6 hours apart from the existing Empire Builder schedule, to provide flexibility and convenience oriented towards passenger rail travel within the TCMC corridor.

In addition to improving regional mobility, the TCMC Project has important economic benefits. The TCMC Project will create engineering and construction jobs to design and build approximately \$72 million in track and signal improvements. Additionally, the Project will support tourism spending all along the 411-mile route, it will support businesses that sell goods and services to Amtrak and it will connect students to educational opportunities at colleges and universities throughout the TCMC Corridor. Ultimately, it will help rural and urban communities along the corridor attract and retain businesses, employees, residents, and visitors by improving connections to the economic epicenters of the region.

The TCMC Project is a multi-partner effort with support across several states. Existing and past project phases have included significant participation from various public entities including WisDOT, MnDOT, La Crosse Area Planning Commission and the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority. Recently, the project was awarded an FRA Restoration & Enhancement Grant to fund operations and project partners are excited to advance the project from planning to implementation.

If awarded, Federal funding would be utilized to implement critical infrastructure improvements throughout the TCMC Corridor, allow for TCMC operations to commence, improve existing freight operations, and provide economic value along the entire corridor. Federal funding would greatly reduce the barriers to successful implementation of the TCMC Project and I support the application for the CRISI Grant Program.

Thank you for your consideration,



Jim Wolter, DAPM  
Transportation Director  
Semcac - Rolling Hills Transit  
400 Commerce Dr. SE  
Kasson, MN 55944  
507-634-4330

[jim.wolter@semcac.org](mailto:jim.wolter@semcac.org)

