

# from Vision to REALITY

FALL 2010  
NEWSLETTER



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Artist's rendering of new Wisconsin high-speed train



A message from

**WISDOT SECRETARY FRANK BUSALACCHI**

Earlier this year, Wisconsin received an \$822 million federal grant to extend passenger rail service from Chicago and Milwaukee to Madison. Wisconsin was the only state to receive the full amount it requested of these highly sought-after funds, making the extension the first fully funded high-speed rail corridor in the country.

The extension will link our state's largest city and manufacturing center to its Capital and center of higher education. It will provide an efficient transportation alternative in the face of increasing energy costs and increasing highway congestion that is competitive with air and auto trips. Most importantly, it will increase economic opportunities, giving Wisconsin a national competitive edge while maintaining the quality of life that makes this state a great place to live.

Our state has a long history of supporting and investing in passenger rail. As a founding member and a leader of the Midwest Regional Rail Initiative, Wisconsin is one of nine states that worked together to develop a high-speed rail plan for the entire Midwest. Wisconsin has also made substantial investments into the existing Hiawatha Service between Chicago and Milwaukee resulting in record ridership figures that have doubled during the past decade. Extending passenger rail service to Madison is the next step in building out Wisconsin's portion of the Midwest Regional Rail System, which will eventually provide service between Chicago and Minneapolis/St. Paul, as well as connections to other Midwestern cities including Detroit, St. Louis, Cleveland and Kansas City.

So while other states are jumping on board with rail initiatives of their own, Wisconsin and the Midwest are leading the way with the first fully funded, shovel-ready high-speed rail project in the country. Construction of the Milwaukee-Madison corridor will commence this year, marking an extraordinary accomplishment and tremendous opportunity for our state.





## INFO to KNOW

### WHY INVEST IN HIGH-SPEED INTERCITY PASSENGER RAIL?

- Increases transportation efficiencies within Wisconsin and to other Midwest destinations, which is a catalyst for economic development and job creation.
- Creates a new transportation choice for travelers that is competitive with air and auto trips within 100 to 500 miles.



- Increases capacity and reduces travel times for freight rail operators.
- Consumes less energy and produces fewer CO2 greenhouse gas emissions in comparison to airplanes and automobiles.
- Fosters livable urban and rural communities by encouraging downtown redevelopment and compact land uses.
- Improves safety for vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians by providing warning devices at all crossings.

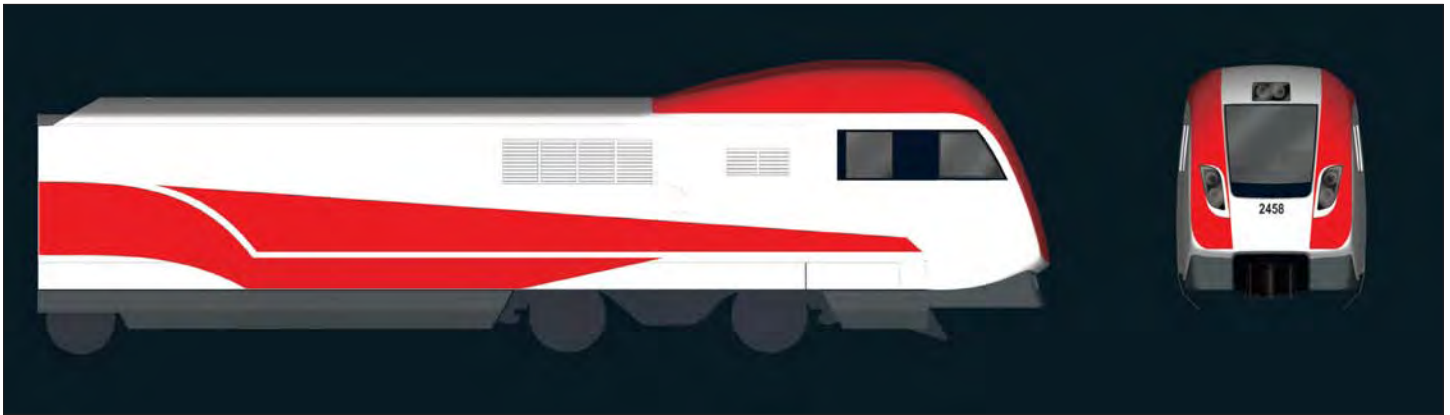
# Transportation networks spur economic development

Perhaps the biggest benefit of high-speed rail to Wisconsin and the region is how this critical transportation investment can drive future economic development. High-speed rail will:

- **Create jobs.** Extending the Chicago-Milwaukee rail service to Madison will create thousands of design and construction jobs each year between 2010 and 2015 – including 5,500 jobs at the peak of activity in 2012. Additionally, when fully implemented, Midwest high-speed rail will generate an estimated 9,500 new permanent jobs in Wisconsin.
- **Link people and jobs like never before.** More than 18 million people live in the Twin Cities, Madison, Milwaukee and Chicago metro areas, representing 77 percent of the population of these three states. Safe, quick and reliable connections among these major economies and the communities between them gives workers access to more job markets and gives employers access to bigger pools of talent.
- **Support economic development.** The MWRRI system will connect major research and development centers with the best universities in the Midwest, creating incubators for growing industries of the new economy. High-speed rail can also drive development and investment around stations, revitalizing communities and creating new jobs.
- **Increase productivity.** The reliability of high-speed rail directly benefits Wisconsin businesses'

bottom line. In 2007, U.S. commuters lost more than 4 billion hours to congestion; air travel delays cost 2 million hours. By contrast, high-speed rail networks are extremely efficient. For example, in 2007, Japan's Tokyo-Osaka line had an annual average delay of about 30 seconds. High-speed trains are also equipped with wireless Internet and cellular phone service, so passengers can work on board.

- **Bring more visitors to more places.** Tourism is the third largest industry in Wisconsin, generating more than \$12 billion in revenue in 2009. High-speed rail will link important tourism destinations with major in-state and out-of-state markets, making it easier for tourists to stay longer and spend more.
- **Increase property values.** According to the MWRRI Benefit Cost & Economic Analysis, high-speed rail is projected to increase property values by more than \$5 billion in the Midwest. Wisconsin communities will benefit from an up to \$704 million increase in property values around stations.
- **Improve freight rail service.** Improvements to the corridor will reduce travel time between Madison and Watertown from four hours to one hour or less; improve access to sidings serving shippers; increase safety and efficient dispatching; and reduce maintenance delays and outages. Moving goods in Wisconsin will be quicker, cheaper and more reliable, which will be a direct benefit to businesses.



# The High-Speed Rail project at a glance

## ✓ NEW SERVICE

The new high-speed rail corridor will operate on the existing 80-mile railroad between Milwaukee and Madison and will be an extension of the Chicago-Milwaukee Hiawatha Service. Future plans include extensions from Madison to the Twin Cities, and from Milwaukee to Green Bay.

## ✓ STATIONS

Stations are now located in Chicago, Glenview, Sturtevant, and Milwaukee's airport and downtown. New stations are planned in Waukesha, Jefferson and Dane counties.

## ✓ TRAIN SPEEDS

Initial service will start at 79 mph and increase to 110 mph when all communication and signal upgrades are complete.

## ✓ TRAIN EQUIPMENT

The service will have new coaches that feature roomy two-by-two seating, Wi-Fi, 110 volt outlets for computers and cell phones, passenger information displays and a bistro car offering food and drink service.

## ✓ RIDERSHIP

Amtrak estimates that more than 1 million annual riders will use the Chicago-Milwaukee-Madison corridor when service is initiated in 2013. (*Amtrak, 2009*)

## ✓ SERVICE FREQUENCY

Six daily round trips between Chicago-Milwaukee-Madison will be provided, and seven trips between Chicago and Milwaukee will continue.

## ✓ OWNER/OPERATOR

The state of Wisconsin owns the rail corridor and is negotiating with Amtrak to operate the new service.

## ✓ TRAVEL TIMES

Travel between Chicago and downtown Madison will take 2:46 minutes (express) and 2:51 minutes (local). Travel between downtown Milwaukee and downtown Madison will take 1:17 minutes (express) and 1:22 (local).

## ✓ FARES

Fares are estimated from \$20 to \$33 for service between Milwaukee and Madison. Discounts would be available to frequent travelers, seniors and children.

## ✓ CAPITAL COST

Wisconsin's grant of \$822 million from the Federal Railroad Administration will cover the capital cost of implementing passenger rail service between Milwaukee and Madison and to improve existing service between Chicago and Milwaukee.

## ✓ STATE AND FEDERAL OPERATING SUPPORT

Operating support for the new line is expected to cost \$7.5 million each year – a very small portion (.4 percent) of Wisconsin's \$2.1 billion total annual budget for all transportation. Since 1998, the federal government has covered 80-90 percent of the operating cost for the Hiawatha Service. Wisconsin will seek the same level of financial support for the new service to Madison.

## ✓ PROJECT SCHEDULE

The final design for the Milwaukee-Madison corridor was started in summer 2010 and will continue through the spring 2011. Corridor construction is planned between fall 2010 and winter 2012. Station planning and design started in spring 2010 and will last through summer 2011, with construction completion in late 2012. Passenger service will begin in 2013.

# Amtrak: More than 1 million riders expected

## Ridership forecasts show extension to Madison will increase number of passengers

Ridership on the extended Hiawatha line will exceed 1 million passengers annually when service to Madison is added in 2013, according to Amtrak's ridership forecasts. This figure includes more than 330,000 annual passengers who are expected to use the new stations between Milwaukee and Madison.

The methodology used to project ridership for the Chicago-Milwaukee-Madison corridor is based on intercity passenger rail ridership experienced in similar Midwestern communities.

It also considers a range of factors that influence travel market demand such as population, travel times, train speeds, service frequency, fares, parking capacity and rates, local transit connections at stations and competition from other transportation modes.

This proven methodology is similar to the process used for the past 40 years by state and metropolitan planning agencies to develop travel forecasts for



*Travelers* across the Midwest are taking the train in record numbers, according to fiscal year 2010 ridership and revenue numbers released by Amtrak yesterday. Almost 2.8 million people took the train on short-distance corridor service within the region last year – an 8 percent increase over fiscal year 2009.”

*Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Commission / October 12, 2010, news release*

highways and transit systems.

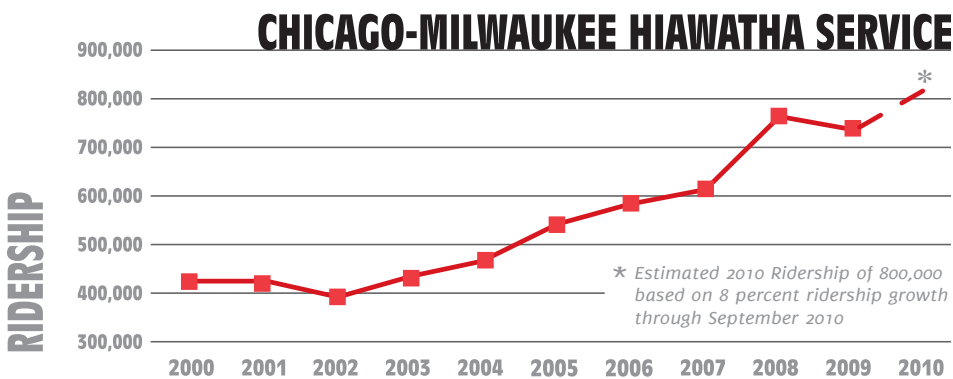
The ridership numbers are considered conservative but reliable and are accepted by the Federal Railroad Administration. Demand for the Hiawatha Service is high and continues to grow, despite challenging economic times (see graph). WisDOT is in the process of updating ridership estimates to reflect current market conditions.



### INFO to KNOW

#### PASSENGER RAIL USERS

- Business travelers
- Students
- Individuals with disabilities
- Senior citizens who do not drive
- Visitors and tourists
- People attending events
- Commuters



◀ Wisconsin, Illinois and U.S. Department of Transportation have helped fund the successful Amtrak Hiawatha passenger rail service between Milwaukee and Chicago since 1989. In 2009, 741,780 passengers boarded Hiawatha trains, nearly doubling 2000 figures. The Hiawatha Service is on pace to set a record 800,000 annual riders by the end of 2010.

# Milwaukee-Madison corridor will feature many upgrades

Final design is under way to extend the Chicago-Milwaukee Hiawatha Service to the 80-mile rail corridor between Milwaukee and Madison. The project will bring tangible benefits to the state through the operation of high-speed trains and improved freight rail service. This major investment in the region will deliver a number of upgrades and safety improvements, including:

## **NEXT GENERATION TRAIN CARS**

New passenger coach cars capable of speeds of up to 110 mph feature roomy two-by-two seating, Wi-Fi, 110-volt outlets for computers and cell phones, passenger information displays and a bistro car with food and drink service. The coaches are equipped with “passive tilt” technology, which allows for a more comfortable ride through curves. The cars will be manufactured out of lightweight materials, which improves travel times.

## **TRACK UPGRADES TO INCREASE CORRIDOR CAPACITY**

Track improvements include upgrading the existing double track between Milwaukee and Pewaukee; installing a second track between Pewaukee and Watertown; and upgrading the single track between Watertown and Madison, and adding sidings.

## **WARNING SIGNALS AT ALL CROSSINGS TO IMPROVE SAFETY**

Gates and flashing lights will be installed at all crossings to seal off the corridor. Constant-warning technology, which sets the warning time regardless of the train’s speed, will be used to discourage motorists and pedestrians from ignoring the signal.

## **NEW STATIONS TO CONNECT COMMUNITIES**

Alternatives analyses and environmental assessments are being completed for the proposed new

stations in Waukesha, Jefferson and Dane counties. Station features will vary from community to community, but will generally contain a platform, shelter and parking areas.

## **POSITIVE TRAIN CONTROL TECHNOLOGY TO IMPROVE SAFETY AND REDUCE TRAVEL TIME**

Positive Train Control (PTC) is a system that uses radio and GPS communications to monitor the location and speed of trains and when necessary control train movements to avoid hazards. PTC is needed to run trains at 110 mph.

## **LAND BRIDGES TO IMPROVE TRACK STABILITY**

Areas west of Watertown have marshy soils that are too weak to support the existing rail bed. New structures, called land bridges, will be built over the marsh soils to support the tracks. This will improve long-term maintenance and reliability for both freight and passenger service.

## **QUIET ZONES**

Improvements to highway-railroad crossings will typically qualify local communities for Federal Railroad Administration-approved Quiet Zones (segments of railroad where locomotive horns are not routinely sounded). WisDOT will prepare the documentation and support local communities requesting Quiet Zones from the FRA.



*View of the Madison station from John Nolen Drive.*

## **Public helps guide Madison station design**

WisDOT has been working with the community to refine the designs of the new Madison station.

Passengers will use escalators and elevators to transfer between a platform level, featuring two tracks and new lighted platforms, and a mezzanine level, which will include waiting areas, restrooms, ticket kiosks, restaurants and shops.

The new station, located at the Department of Administration building at 101 E. Wilson St., will act as a portal to Madison’s downtown, with platforms located directly below the Monona Terrace parking structure.

## **Project construction starts**

Construction begins with the building of land bridges west of Watertown. WisDOT will host pre-construction public meetings this fall and next spring to prepare residents and communities for the construction activities.

# Frequently asked questions about high-speed rail

## WHY ISN'T MY COMMUNITY GETTING A STATION?

Intercity passenger rail is meant to move people between regional population centers. As a result, local stops are kept to a minimum to be competitive with auto and air trips between 100 and 500 miles. Commuter rail, which is another form of passenger rail, is meant to have more frequent stops to serve a corridor within a metropolitan area.

## HOW NOISY WILL THE TRAINS BE?

Track upgrades will minimize noise from passenger trains and reduce noise from existing freight operations. In addition, the improvements being made at highway-railroad crossings will typically qualify local communities for Federal Railroad Administration approved Quiet Zones (segments of railroad where locomotive horns are not routinely sounded). Noise and vibration studies are under way, and the results will be shared with the public when complete.

## WHAT IS BEING DONE TO ADDRESS SAFETY CONCERNS?

Safety is a top priority for the project and several measures are being taken to create a safe corridor including: closing some grade crossings, fencing the corridor, improving warning devices at all grade crossings and upgrading the train signal system with positive train control technology.

## WILL THIS PROJECT TAKE AWAY FUNDING FROM OTHER TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS?

This project is funded by the federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act dollars that are dedicated to passenger rail and does not affect funding for other projects.

## WILL BIKE AND SNOWMOBILE CROSSINGS BE AFFECTED?

All public trail crossings will be maintained. Snowmobiles will need to cross tracks at public right of way crossings.



## WHY IS WISDOT IMPLEMENTING THIS PROJECT NOW?

The extension of the highly successful Chicago to Milwaukee line has been part of Wisconsin's long-range mobility plans for more than two decades. Recent federal funding opportunities allow the state to implement the plan with 100 percent federal funds with the commitment to begin service in 2013.

## HOW WILL TRAFFIC BE AFFECTED AT CROSSINGS?

Current projections estimate that cars would wait approximately 60 seconds at crossings to allow passenger trains to pass – similar to the length of many stop lights. The project team will be working on traffic management plans in coordination with local communities to address impacts during construction and any crossings that may be permanently closed.

## WILL THE STATE NEED MORE LAND FOR THE PROJECT?

The project does not intend to use eminent domain to purchase additional right of way. WisDOT may consider purchasing property in some isolated cases only where there is a willing seller and the cost of the land is less than the planned improvement.



## ? for MORE HIGH-SPEED RAIL INFO

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