



West Central Wisconsin Rail Coalition



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West Central Wisconsin Rail Coalition

Agenda

- **The State of Play in DC & the ROI of Passenger Rail**
Jim Mathews, Rail Passengers Association
- **Ramsey County's St. Paul Union Depot**
Mike Rogers, Ramsey County
- **Bringing Trains to West Central Wisconsin**
Scott Rogers, Angela Jones, Mason Baxter, Vic Stone
- **Long-distance Trains to the Northwest**
Dan Bilka, All Aboard Northwest
- **Wisconsin and Minnesota Rail Updates**
Rich Kedzior, WisDOT; Greg Mathis, MnDOT
- **Brief Annual Business Meeting**
West Central Wisconsin Rail Coalition



EAU CLAIRE ^{TO}
TWIN CITIES
Passenger Rail Corridor





New Borealis passenger rail service shows strong ridership in first month of service

Jul 11, 2024



An Amtrak Midwest train at the Milwaukee Intermodal Station

The opportunity?

...demand for more frequent passenger service between Chicago and the Twin Cities, one of the most ...reliability and more desirable scheduling



John Anderson photo



West Central Wisconsin Rail Coalition



Owen Ayres



Ray Willoughby



Bill Leinenkugel



West Central Wisconsin Rail Coalition



The West Central Wisconsin Rail Coalition

provides 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.

Why passenger rail?

- attract and retain business and talent
- a convenient, economical, and environmentally-friendly alternative to driving
- accelerate economic growth opportunities
- improve quality of life
- increase tourism
- add resiliency to our transportation system

Creating the new Normal: How trains transformed one Midwestern town

October 13, 2023 • [General](#)



Normal, Illinois, has reinvented itself around trains over the past two decades.

Amtrak offers five daily departures in each direction towards Chicago and St. Louis. The trains are typically either sold out or near capacity, which has made Normal's train station [the second busiest in Illinois](#). It served about 241,000 passengers in 2019—versus about 3.4 million for Chicago's main station and 181,000 for Champaign's.

But Normal's success wasn't guaranteed. It came about through a clear vision and a strategic plan for using trains to strengthen the city's core.

Normal is located about 130 miles southwest of Chicago and has a population of roughly 54,000. (The Bloomington-Normal metro area has about 191,000 people.) Like many towns and cities in the late 1990s, its growth happened mainly on the outskirts, near the highways. Meanwhile, the downtown slowly faded and crumbled

"The business district was old, it was tired, the buildings were not very good quality," says Chris Koos, the mayor of Normal since 2003. "It was a good place to incubate your business, but two things would happen if you did



Brightline launches train route from Miami to Orlando



Brightline trains at Orlando International Airport. Photo: Courtesy of Brightline

brightline[®]

FAST FACTS



Go car free. Carefree.

Brightline is a high-speed passenger rail system that is redefining train travel in America. Launched in 2018 in Florida, the service was designed to take cars off the road and offer millions of travelers an eco-friendly way to move between the nation's most visited city pairs.

PHASE 1 Launched 2018

- Express, intercity passenger rail service between downtown **Miami, Ft. Lauderdale & West Palm Beach**
- Accessing approximately 8 million residents. Expected ridership of 3 million annual passengers
- Currently running 16 daily roundtrips

PHASE 2 Expected 2022

- Extends service to **Orlando International Airport**, accessing 68 million annual visitors
- Total system ridership projected to 6 million annual riders
- Connecting Florida's most populated and visited regions

PHASE 3 Future Connections

- Additional stations planned for **Aventura (2022), Boca Raton (2022), PortMiami, Disney** and **Tampa**

GoBrightline.com



The map shows the state of Florida with a yellow dashed line representing the Brightline rail route. Major highways 75 and 95 are marked. Stations are indicated by yellow circles with labels: Orlando (Orlando Connection), Disney (Disney Connection), Tampa (Tampa Connection), West Palm Beach, Boca Raton (Boca Connection), Ft. Lauderdale, Aventura (Aventura Connection), MiamiCentral, and PortMiami (Port Connection). Lake Okechobee is also labeled.



Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago (TCMC) State-Supported One Daily Round-trip

Economic Impacts of Passenger Rail Investment: TCMC

Ongoing operating costs:
\$7.2M;

WI annual operating share: Up to \$3.6M

Benefits from rail operations and visitor spending (direct, indirect, and induced):

Total annual economic benefit to WI: \$25M

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF AMTRAK'S MISSOURI RIVER RUNNER SERVICE

*executive
summary*



2022 STATE
FREIGHT AND
RAIL PLAN



KEY FINDINGS

→ MISSOURI RIVER RUNNER BY THE NUMBERS

IN MISSOURI, THE TOTAL ANNUAL ECONOMIC IMPACTS
GENERATED BY THE RIVER RUNNER INCLUDE:



1,250

JOB ANNUALLY



\$65 MILLION

IN ANNUAL LABOR INCOME



\$208 MILLION

IN ANNUAL ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

MORE THAN

\$22 MILLION

IN ANNUAL TAX REVENUE

2022 STATE
FREIGHT AND
RAIL PLAN





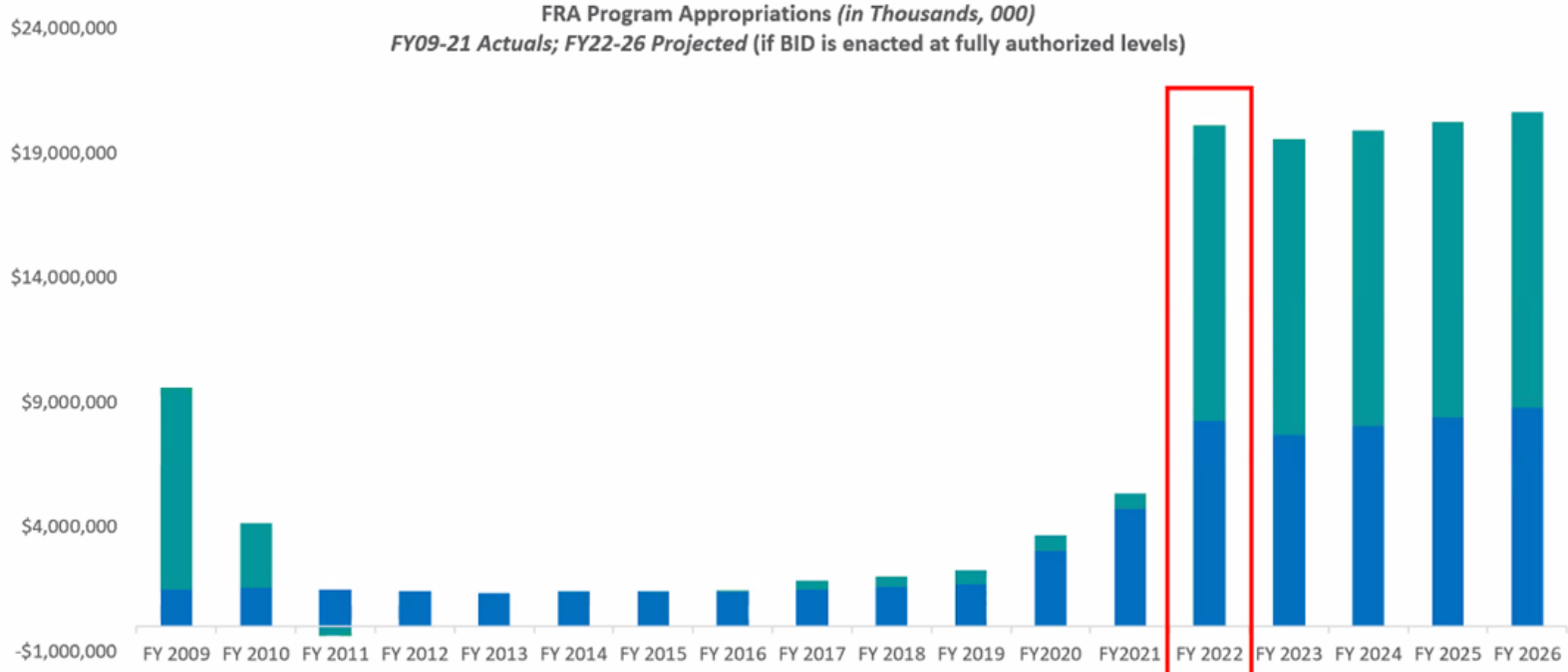
Trempealeau and Eau Claire among fastest growing counties in Wisconsin

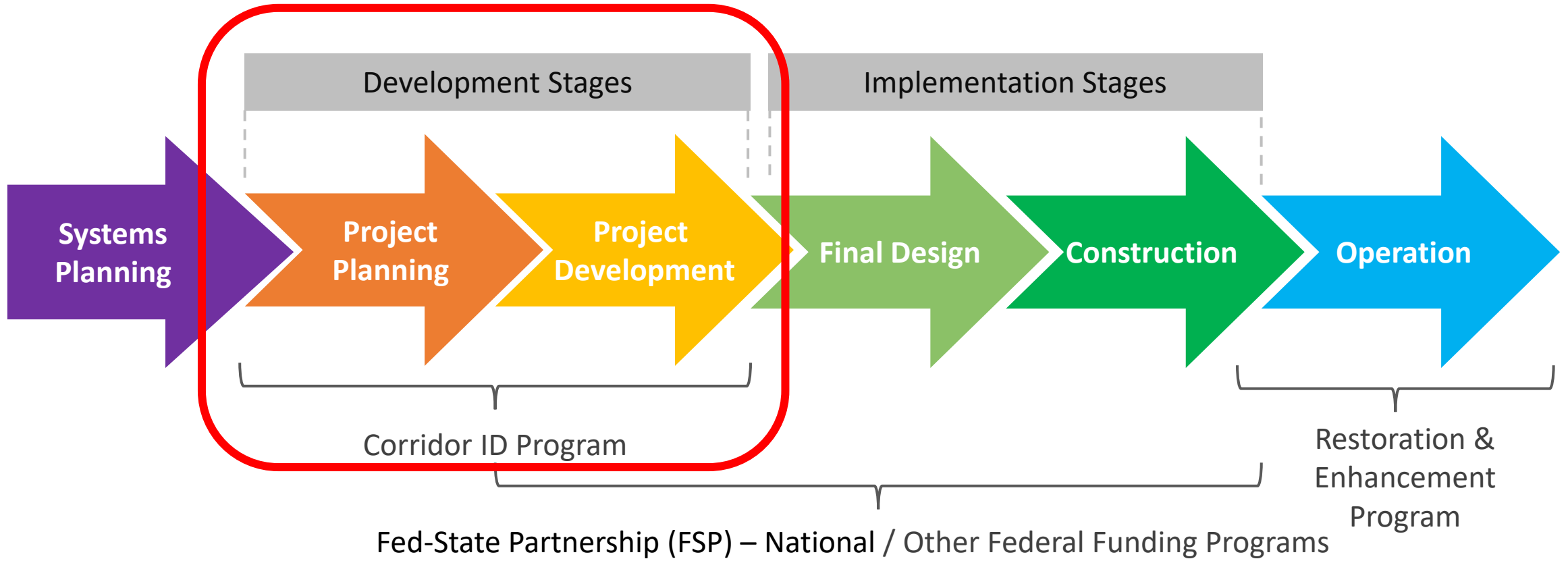
Toby Mohr [Jan 12, 2025](#) Updated [Jan 13, 2025](#) 2

TREMPEALEAU COUNTY (WQOW) - A new population projection report from the Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA) shows two areas in western Wisconsin are among the fastest growing in the state.

The report factors in population age, fertility rates, and death rates. Trempealeau County is expected to be the second fastest growing county in Wisconsin through 2050, only behind Dane County.

FRA Historical Funding Levels

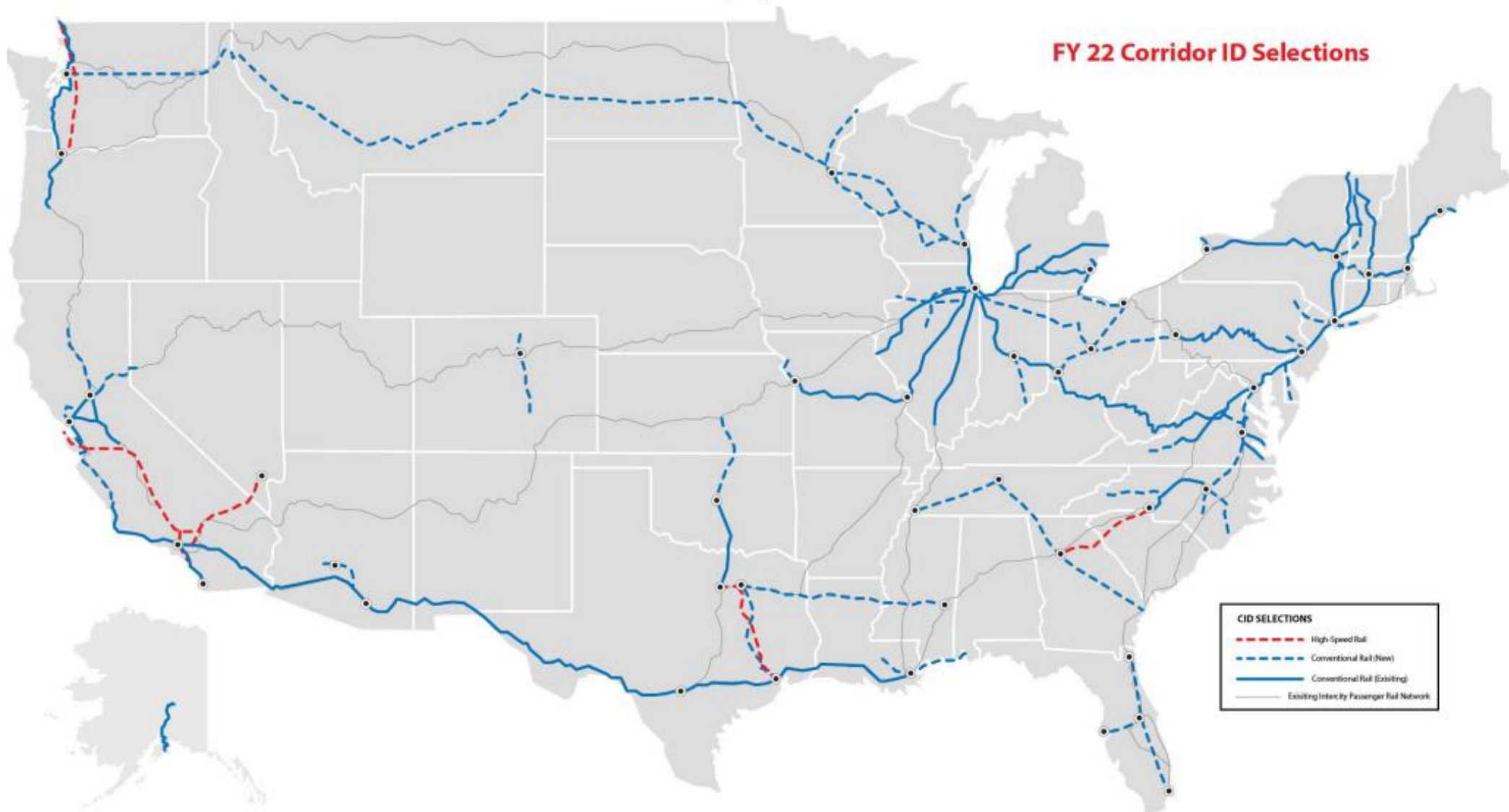




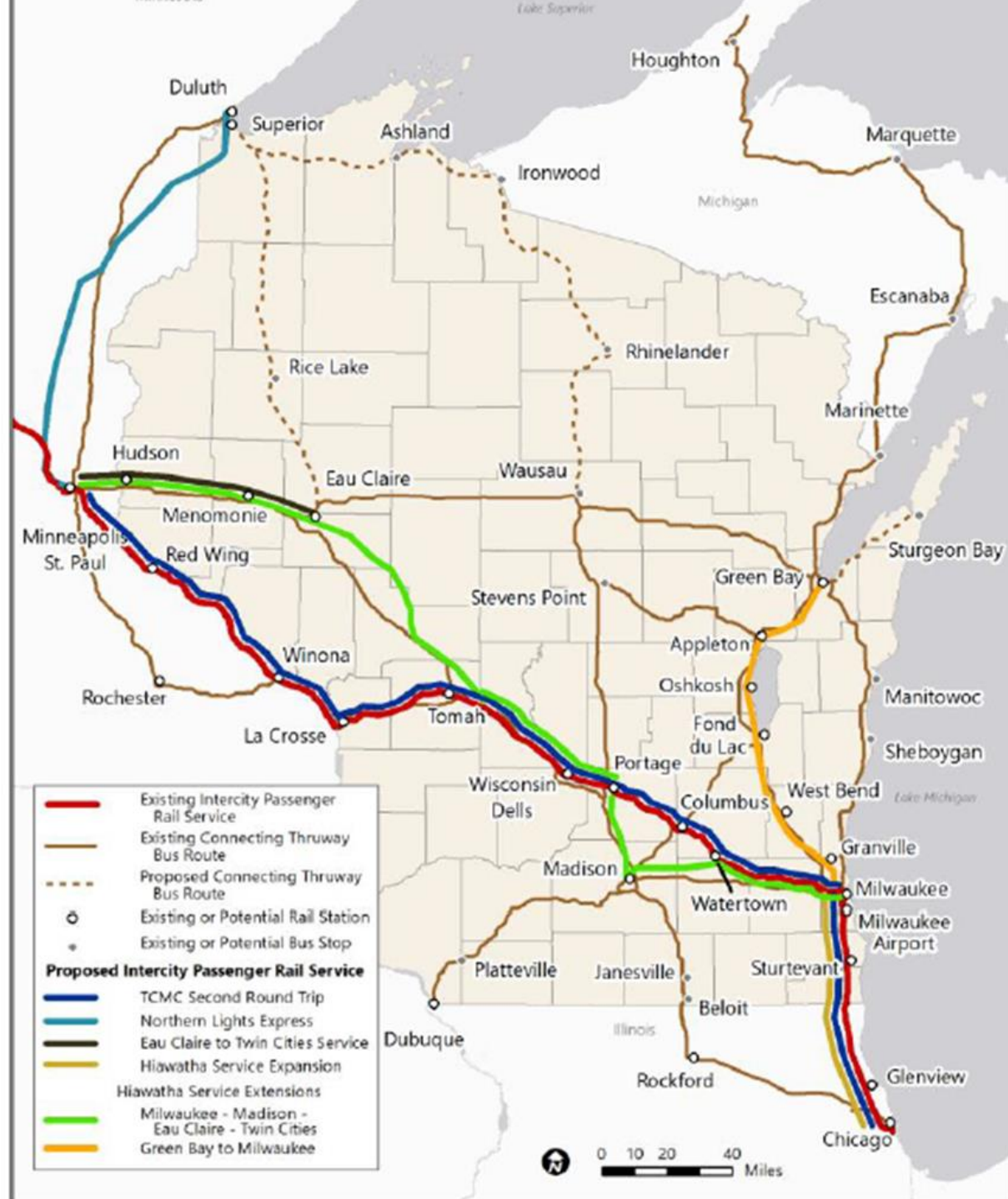
Investments to Enhance Intercity Passenger Rail

Laying the foundation for world-class rail in America

FY 22 Corridor ID Selections



DISCLAIMER: This product is for informational purposes and may not have been prepared for or be suitable for legal, engineering, or surveying purposes. It does not represent an on-the-ground survey and represents only the approximate relative location of cities, project locations, and routes. Cities shown on the map are added to provide geographic reference and are not intended for any other purpose. Every effort has been made to ensure the highest accuracy of all data on this map, but some errors can occur.



- Routes to West Central Wis train service
 - Shuttle to the Borealis at Tomah
 - Eau Claire-Twin Cities regional service (Chippewa-St. Croix Commission)
 - Chicago-Milwaukee-Madison-Eau Claire Twin Cities (WisDOT)

Chippewa-St. Croix Rail Commission

- Counties: St. Croix, Dunn, Eau Claire
- Municipalities: Altoona, Eau Claire, Menomonie, Baldwin, New Richmond, Hudson

CITY OF HUDSON
RESOLUTION NO. 3-21

RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE CREATION OF THE CHIPPEWA-ST. CROIX RAIL
COMMISSION WITH COUNTIES AND MUNICIPALITIES

WHEREAS, the City of Hudson is interested in participating in efforts to expand passenger rail services into western Wisconsin and the Chippewa Valley along the

WHEREAS, the City of Hudson is interested in participating in efforts to expand passenger rail services into western Wisconsin and the Chippewa Valley along the I-94 corridor from St. Paul,



Chippewa-St. Croix Rail Commission

- Members: St. Croix, Dunn, Eau Claire counties; Altoona, Eau Claire, Menomonie, Baldwin, New Richmond, Hudson; WC Wis Rail Coalition
- Ex-officio: Union Pacific, WisDOT, MnDOT, Ramsey Co. MN, Washington Co. MN; West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission(MPO), UW-Eau Claire, UW-Stout, UW-River Falls, Chippewa Valley Tech College, Northwood Tech College

Application
Federal Railroad Administration
Corridor Identification and Development Program (CID)
Chippewa-St Croix Regional Corridor
Eau Claire, Wisconsin, to Twin Cities, Minnesota

Application submitted by
Eau Claire County as administrative and fiscal agent for the
Chippewa-St. Croix Rail Commission
March 2023

FRA Corridor Identification and Development Program
Chippewa-St Croix Regional Corridor (Eau Claire, WI to Twin Cities, MN) - Project Corridor & Potential Stations Map



Chippewa-St. Croix Rail Commission

*A joint Transportation
Commission formed under
Wisconsin Statutes 66.0301
to advance the public
interest by pursuing
passenger rail service for the
St. Croix and Chippewa
Valley regions of Wisconsin*

Members

- Dunn County
- Eau Claire County
- St. Croix County
- City of Altoona
- Village of Baldwin
- City of Eau Claire
- City of Hudson
- City of Menomonie
- City of New Richmond
- West Central Wisconsin
Rail Coalition

Ex Officio Members

- West Central Wis Regional
Planning Commission
- Wisconsin DOT
- Minnesota DOT
- Union Pacific Railroad
- Ramsey County (MN)
Regional Railroad Authority
- Washington County (MN)
Regional Railroad Authority
- Chippewa Valley Technical
College
- Northwood Technical College
- University of Wisconsin
- Eau Claire
- University of Wisconsin
- River Falls
- University of Wisconsin
- Stout

Application

Federal Railroad Administration

Corridor Identification and Development Program (CID)

Chippewa-St Croix Regional Corridor

Eau Claire, Wisconsin, to Twin Cities, Minnesota

- **Meet transportation needs**
- **Competitive operator selection**
- **Host RR Direct Access Model**
- **Consider zero-emission equipment**
- **Transportation Oriented Development**

Direct Access Model

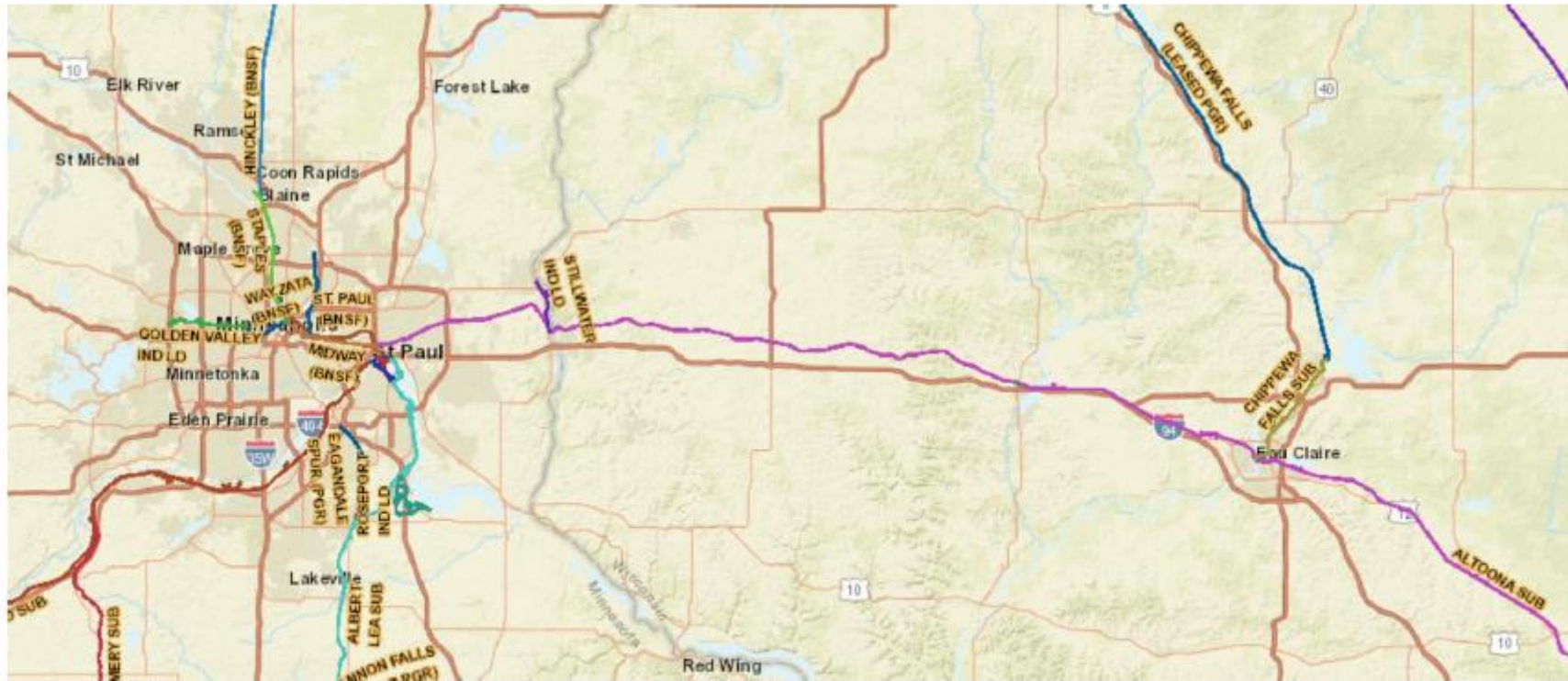
Effective alternative to deliver projects sooner and often costs less

- Host RR sells access directly to a state/public agency
 - Negotiated rates and OTP metrics.
 - Agency picks a 3rd Party private operator.
 - Limited Term agreement.
- Benefits to State Agency
 - Competitive bid process provides for a more efficient private operator
 - Greater direct control of service & transparency. Provides mechanisms for expansions of/changes in service.
 - In most cases, less capacity investment is required. Host Railroad does not need to protect itself from the punitive and difficult to achieve PRIIA COTP metric.
 - Creates a win-win partnership with the host railroad who dispatches your service.
- Benefits to Host Railroad
 - Fair Access, Operations and Maintenance compensation.
 - Opportunity to renegotiate terms at set intervals.



UPRR Altoona Sub - overview

- ~88 miles Eau Claire-St. Paul Union Depot, currently Class 4 track conditions, signalled territory (but currently non-CTC)





AIPRO

Association for Innovative Passenger Rail Operations

Who is **AIPRO**?



Founded in 2010 to advance competition for private passenger rail operators



Reformed in 2020 to expand membership to include rail labor, contractors, and consulting groups



Focus on getting to a competitive level for intercity services currently found in the commuter market



Works with State DOTs, Rail Authorities, FRA, and Congress to advance the idea of competition

Who are our Members?

KEOLIS

MAXACCEL
Asset Management & Regulatory Compliance Software Solutions

 **RATP dev**
USA

 **DIREX**
SOLUTIONS

 **transdev**
the mobility company

HERZOG



Where are our members **properties?**

KEOLIS

Massachusetts Bay
Transportation Authority

Virginia Railway Express

TRANSDEV

Milwaukee Streetcar

Cincinnati Streetcar

RATPDEV

DC Streetcar

Tucson Streetcar

HERZOG

Altamont Corridor
Express (ACE)

ACE Maintenance

Arrow

Caltrain

CTRail Hartford Line

KC Streetcar

MetroRail

New Mexico Rail
Runner Express

OKC Streetcar

TEXRail

Tren Urbano

Tri-Rail

Trinity Railway Express

OC Streetcar

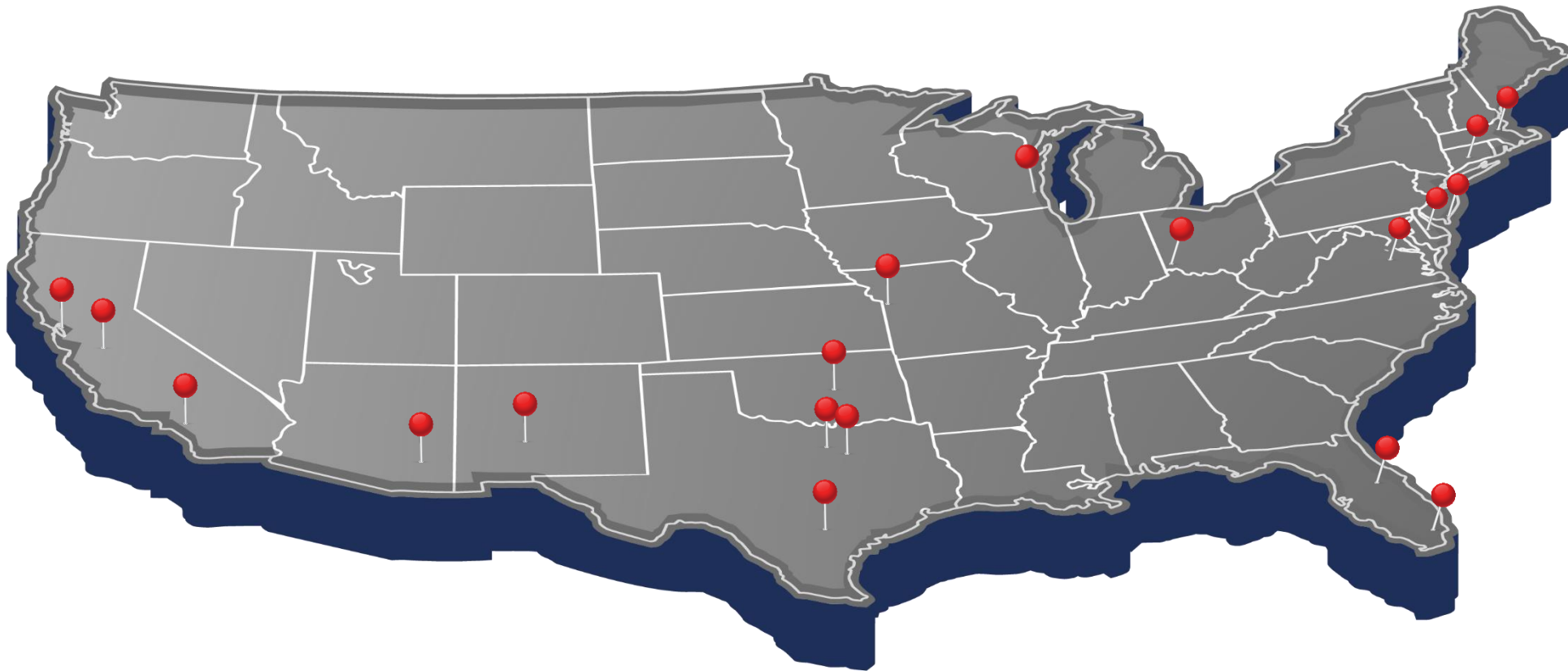
Silver Line

SunRail Maintenance

New Jersey Transit, Atlantic
City Line Maintenance

MetroLink Maintenance

Brightline Maintenance



AIPRO by the Numbers



AIPRO by the Numbers



US OPERATIONS

Keolis
30 MILLION

Herzog
17 MILLION

Transdev
2.1 MILLION

RATPDev
15.4 MILLION

AIPRO by the Numbers

US OPERATIONS

INTERNATIONAL

Keolis

470 MILLION

Transdev

608 MILLION

RATPDev

1.5 BILLION



AIPRO by the Numbers

US OPERATIONS

60 MILLION

INTERNATIONAL

2.6 BILLION





**AIPRO's Market
Sounding Process**



**AIPRO's Market
Sounding Process**

**UTILIZED SEVERAL TIMES
IN KEY LOCATIONS**

Such as Connecticut, Washington,
and Wisconsin

**BRING ALL KEY STAKEHOLDERS
TO THE TABLE**

FRA, DOT, Operators, Labor,
Consultants, Host Railroads

**ENCOURAGE COMMERCIALY
NEGOTIATED AGREEMENTS**

Advantages to working with **AIPRO**

- 01 **Open competition for O&M**
- 02 **Service that is tailored to the Authority**
- 03 **Total market analysis of all possible operators**
- 04 **Increased transparency of finances**
- 05 **No sole source procurement of operations**
- 06 **Ability to get services started faster and cheaper**



EAU CLAIRE TO
TWIN CITIES
Passenger Rail Corridor

West Central Wis Rail Coalition
FRA Corridor ID Progress Meeting

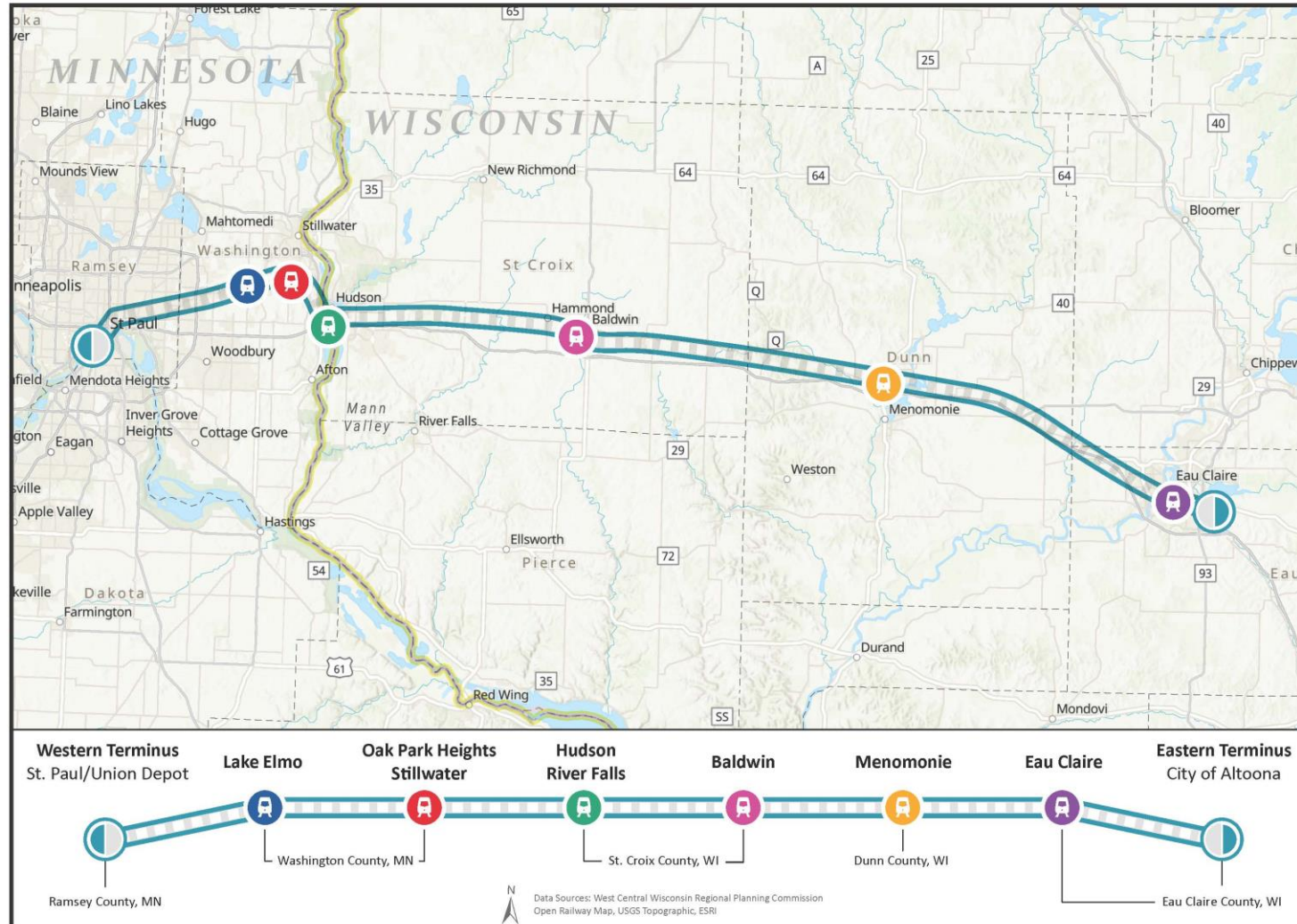
HDR Update

January 21, 2025

Corridor Map

FRA Corridor Identification and Development Program

Chippewa-St Croix Regional Corridor (Eau Claire, WI to Twin Cities, MN) - Project Corridor & Potential Stations Map



Statement of Work Status

Highlights

- Closely follows FRA Draft Statement of Work Framework, Ver 3: CID Program, Step 2 - SDP
- Consideration of a private rail operator to support a “direct access model” with the dispatching railroad and seek a competitive bid process for operator selection.
- Coordination with stakeholders of related corridor studies
- Use of the alignment owned by UP with coordination of BNSF, CPKC, and RCRRA in the vicinity of Union Depot, St. Paul
- Two-step approach for analysis of improvements needed for Eau-Clare to Twin Cities and Milwaukee-Madison-Eau Claire-Twin Cities Corridors



Step 1 Schedule

Task	Due Date
1.1 Project Management Plan	October-November 2024
Final FRA Review/Approval	Approved 11/08/2024
2.1 Gap Analysis	November 2024-December 2024
Submission of Gap Analysis	Completed
Final FRA Review/Approval	12/17/2024
2.2 Statement of Work	December 2024-March 2025
Submission to FRA	1/21/2025
Final FRA Review/Approval	Anticipated 3/28/2025
2.3 Approved Project Schedule	December 2024-March 2025
Submission of Project Schedule	1/31/2025
Final FRA Review/Approval	3/28/2025
Budget for Step 2	December 2024-March 2025
Submission of Budget	1/31/2025
Final FRA Review/Approval	3/28/2025

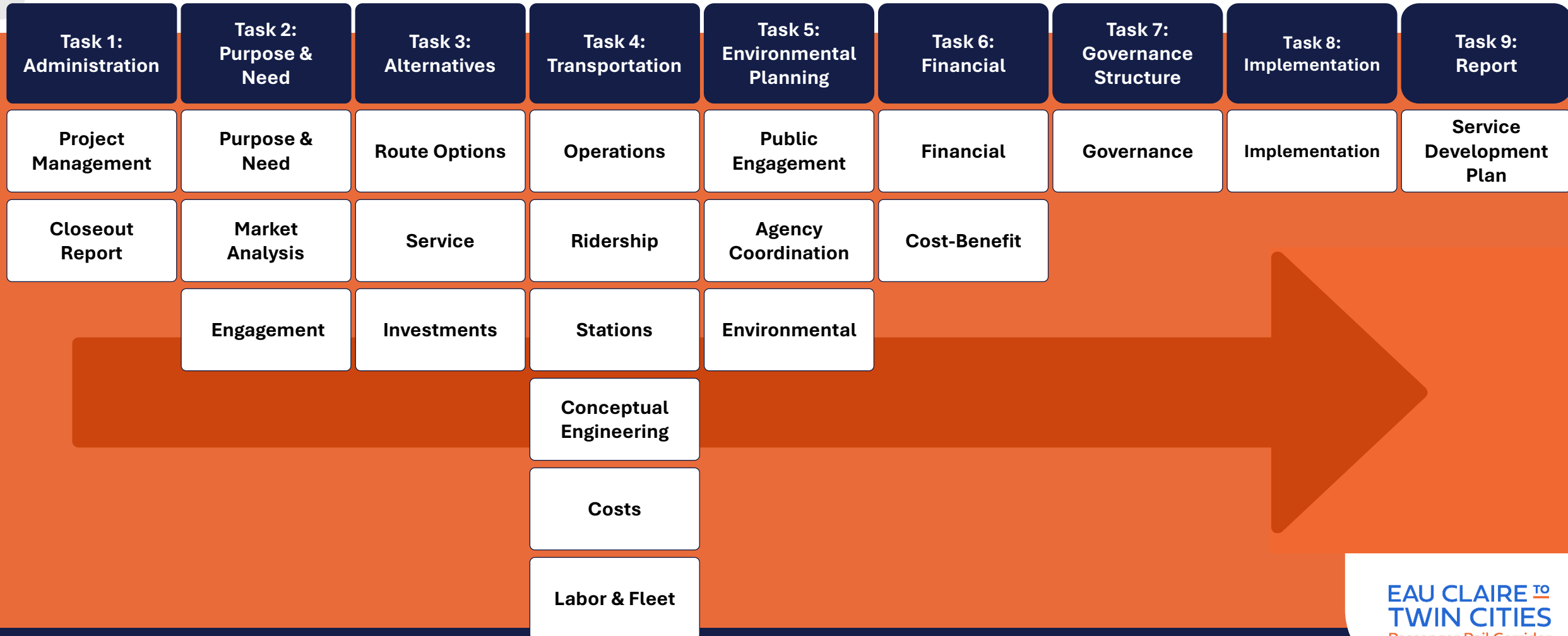
Next steps

- Routes to West Central Wis train service
 - Shuttle to the Borealis at Tomah
 - Eau Claire-Twin Cities regional service (Chippewa-St. Croix Commission)
 - Chicago-Milwaukee-Madison-Eau Claire Twin Cities (WisDOT)
- Completion of Phase I in 2025
- 10% funding match for Phase II/Service Development Plan

Corridor ID Program Steps

TOPIC	Step 1: Scoping	Step 2: Service Development Plan	Step 3: Preliminary Engineering/NEPA
\$	Up to \$500,000 0% local match	Budget as determined 10% local match	Budget as determined 20% local match
SCOPE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Step 1 project management plan ✓ Step 2 scope ✓ Step 2 schedule ✓ Step 2 budget 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Service development plan (<i>see next slide</i>) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Preliminary engineering ✓ NEPA environmental clearance with FRA ✓ Capital projects added to FRA project pipeline

Service Development Plan



Business Sign-On Statement: Wisconsin Passenger Rail Support



Organizers

Laurie Radke, President & CEO, Greater Green Bay Chamber

Andrew Davis, Vice President of Governmental Affairs, Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce

Jason Fields, President, Madison Region Economic Partnership

Becky Bartoszek, President, Fox Cities Chamber of Commerce

Scott Rogers, Vice President Governmental Affairs, Eau Claire Area Chamber of Commerce

We support the expansion of passenger rail service in high-potential Wisconsin corridors as a **needed and worthwhile investment for the economic future of our state**. Frequent service to more cities will help attract and retain business and the talent critical to its success; provide a convenient, economical, and environmentally-friendly alternative to driving; accelerate economic growth opportunities; improve quality of life; increase tourism; and add resiliency to our transportation system.

Business Organizations

- Chippewa Falls Area Chamber of Commerce
- Eau Claire Area Chamber of Commerce
- Envision Greater Fond du Lac
- Fox Cities Chamber of Commerce
- Greater Green Bay Chamber
- Greater Madison Chamber of Commerce
- Madison Region Economic Partnership
- Downtown Madison, Inc.
- Menomonie Area Chamber & Visitor Center
- Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce
- Momentum West Wisconsin
- Oshkosh Chamber of Commerce
- Portage Area Chamber of Commerce
- REALTORS® Association of Northeast Wisconsin
- Superior-Douglas County Area Chamber of Commerce

Businesses

- American Tent, Green Bay
- Aurora BayCare Medical Center
- Ayres Associates
- Banbury Place/Cigan Properties
- Baue Management Group
- Bellin Health
- Boldt
- Cellcom
- Festival Foods
- Findorff construction
- Goodwill North Central Wisconsin
- Green Bay Packaging Inc.
- Green Bay Packers
- Ho-Chunk Gaming Madison
- HSHS St. Vincent and St. Mary's Hospital
- Johnson Financial Group
- Lake Effect Human Resources & Law
- Madison Boats
- Madison Gas & Electric
- Mercury Marine
- Milwaukee Bucks
- Molson Coors
- Nicolet National Bank
- Prevail Bank
- Prevea Health
- Royal Credit Union
- Schneider National
- Schreiber Foods, Inc.
- SSM Health
- SupraNet Communications
- UnityPoint Health - Meriter
- UW Health
- Valley Sports Academy - Eau Claire

Tourism & Affinity

- AARP Wisconsin
- Destination Lake Winnebago Region
- Destination Madison
- Discover Green Bay
- Fox Cities Conv & Visitors Bureau
- Oshkosh Conv & Visitors Bureau
- Visit Eau Claire
- Visit Milwaukee
- Northern Wisconsin State Fair
- Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra

Education

- Chippewa Valley Technical College
- Green Bay Area Public School District
- Madison Area Technical College
- Moraine Park Technical College
- Northwood Technical College
- UW-Eau Claire
- UW-River Falls
- UW-Stout
- Chancellor Michael Alexander/UW-Green Bay

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