

NOTICE OF PROPOSED GUIDANCE DOCUMENT

DTIM-BPED40

Pursuant to Wis. Stat. s. 227.112, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation is hereby seeking comment on DTIM-BPED40, Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008, a proposed guidance document.

PUBLIC COMMENTS AND DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION

Comments may be submitted to the Wisconsin Department of Transportation for 21 days by:

1. Department's website: <https://appengine.egov.com/apps/wi/dot/guidance-docs?guidDocId=DTIM-BPED40>

2. Mailing written comments to:

Division of Transportation Investment Management
Wisconsin Department of Transportation
4822 Madison Yards Way
PO Box 7913
Madison, WI 53707-7913

WEBSITE LOCATION OF FINAL GUIDANCE DOCUMENT

The final version of this guidance document will be posted at wisconsin.dot.gov to allow for ongoing comment.

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Workshop Primer

Wisconsin Department of Transportation

Bureau of Planning and Economic Development

Introduction

Wisconsin's rail system is a critical component to the state's entire transportation network. Significant changes have taken place with regard to rail and continue to impact how the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) and other rail stakeholders respond. With projected increases in the state's population, steady growth in traffic congestion – particularly truck traffic - freight, intercity passenger and commuter rail will become even more vital to the state's transportation system.

WisDOT is developing a state rail plan, *Wisconsin Rail Plan 2030*. WisDOT will rely on input from rail industry, rail groups, environmental agencies and tribes, local governments, and the public to develop the plan's strategic direction and policies.

In order to ensure that we have a rigorous/robust/comprehensive discussion at the May 26th State Rail Plan Workshop, department staff have pulled this document together to provide a broad overview of:

- Why WisDOT is pursuing this effort now
- The trends anticipated to affect rail and transportation over the next 20 years
- The state of rail in Wisconsin today,
- Rail's impact on the economy and Wisconsin's transportation system and a broad overview of
- The proposed discussion points to be included in the *Wisconsin State Rail Plan 2030*

Legislative requirements

WisDOT is working to fulfill specific legislative requirements to improve our options and qualifications for future federal funding. The Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2008, which included the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act, established an intercity passenger rail capital grant program for states. The Act authorized approximately \$750 million per year for intercity passenger rail projects. To qualify for new federal grants authorized through the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act, states are required to have a state rail plan. These state rail plans must:

- Promote state policy involving freight and passenger rail transportation, including commuter rail operations
- Present priorities and strategies to enhance rail service in the state that benefits the public
- Serve as the basis for federal and state rail investments

State rail plans must be updated at least once every five years. *Wisconsin Rail Plan 2030* will fulfill these federal requirements.

State Rail Plan Overview

The plan will include an inventory and assessment of the existing rail system; consider issues related to freight, intercity passenger and commuter rail; look at multimodal aspects; examine rail's impact on economic development; address safety and security considerations; and discuss current and future funding options for rail in Wisconsin. The *Wisconsin Rail Plan 2030* will direct the development and implementation of rail policy and serve as a guide for decision makers through 2030.

Multimodal Planning Context

WisDOT adopted its 20-year multimodal transportation plan, *Connections 2030* in October 2009. *Connections 2030* established the department's foundation for transportation policy and investment decisions for the entire transportation system. Since *Connections 2030* was only recently adopted,

WisDOT has not begun the process of identifying specific implementation activities and performance measures. The plan emphasized:

- Safety and security
- System preservation and efficiency
- Optimizing system investments
- Responding to economic trends to maintain the state's competitiveness
- Considering environmental issues to maintain Wisconsin's quality of life
- Maintaining and promoting mobility and transportation choices
- Connectivity

As the state's multimodal plan, several policies directly relate to rail. These include:

- Partner with stakeholders to ensure that freight movements are safe and reliable and provide positive environmental and community impacts
 - Establish a freight focus within WisDOT
 - Assume the role of facilitator and advocate for freight between public and private interests
 - Collect and analyze data to support freight planning
- Ensure that freight rail remains a viable transportation mode for Wisconsin shippers
- Support development of fixed-guideway transit services
- Increase intercity travel options by improving intercity passenger rail service
- Facilitate intermodal passenger connections

Other *Connections 2030* policies that support rail-related activities include:

- Provide grant and loan assistance to Wisconsin businesses and communities
- Maintain and improve waterways critical to Wisconsin's transportation system
- Improve intercity bus service and connections
- Emphasize air quality improvement
- Enhance the security of the transportation system by reducing vulnerability

As a starting point, the *Wisconsin Rail Plan 2030* will reaffirm the policies and actions identified in *Connections 2030*. The rail plan will take a closer look at Wisconsin's rail system, focusing on the role that freight, intercity passenger and commuter rail have in the state's multimodal transportation system. The rail plan will also identify priorities and strategies to establish a basis for future rail investments.

Trends

In addition to integrating the adopted policies of *Connections 2030*, this rail planning effort should reflect Wisconsin's demographic, economic and travel trends. These include:

Population changes

- Between 2000 and 2030, the state's population is predicted to increase by 22.0 percent.
- Between 2000 and 2030, Wisconsin's population of people 65 years and older is predicted to increase by 99.7 percent.

- By 2030, the average household size in Wisconsin is expected to decrease from 2.5 people (in 2000) to 2.31 people
- 30 percent of the state's current population owns at least one vehicle, and 18 percent owns three or more vehicles.

Travel patterns

- Between 2007 and 2030, traffic on Wisconsin's roadways is expected to increase 34 percent
- Total vehicle miles traveled (VMT) in the state is estimated to be 80 billion miles in 2030
- Truck VMT is expected to increase 64 percent between 2007 and 2030, while personal VMT is forecasted to increase 33 percent
- From 1980 to 2006, the total number of roadway miles increased 6 percent
- The 2000 U.S. Census revealed the average travel time to work was 20.8 minutes for the 2.7 million people in Wisconsin's workforce

Modal Choice

- In 2007, more than 81 million trips in Wisconsin were completed using public transit
- Ridership for Amtrak's *Hiawatha Service*, which operates between Chicago and Milwaukee, increased 67 percent between 1997 and 2007
- In 2007, more than 116 million pounds of cargo moved through Wisconsin's air carrier airports

Economic activity

- The transportation system is and will continue to be vital to Wisconsin's economy
- Low value, high volume commodities are typically transported by rail and are essential to the main industrial sectors of Wisconsin's manufacturing economy
- Heavy machinery, auto assembly, pulp and paper products, are some of the state's key industrial sectors that are dependent upon rail to deliver high volume bulk raw commodities and finished products to domestic and foreign markets
- Wisconsin businesses shipped more than 528 million tons of freight in 2002. The freight was valued at more than \$433 billion
- Wisconsin's freight railroads contributed \$392 million directly to the state's economy in 2006 through wages and retirement benefits to current and former railroad workers living in the state. Railroads also contribute millions of dollars each year to the economy through investments, purchases, and taxes

Rail System Overview

Wisconsin's rail network is comprised of three components:

- Freight rail
- Intercity passenger rail
- Commuter rail

Freight rail provides transportation service to agriculture, forest products, manufacturers and industrial users throughout the state. The system is composed of publicly and privately owned rail lines and serves both long distance and local freight needs.

Freight Rail System facts

- Total system 3,600 miles, about 470 miles are publicly owned
- Wisconsin has 7,300 public and private rail-road crossings
- 13 freight railroad companies operate in Wisconsin
- 77 percent of the network miles are operated by Class I railroads; 23 percent of the state's rail mileage is operated by short-line or regional railroads
- 180 million tons of freight were transported in 2007
- Ports in Milwaukee, Superior, Ashland, Marinette, Green Bay, Manitowoc, Sheboygan, Prairie Du Chien and La Crosse have freight rail access
- Arcadia and Milwaukee have truck-rail intermodal¹ connections
- Coal is the top commodity shipped by rail in the state
- By 2035, freight rail tonnage shipped to and from Wisconsin is forecast to nearly double



Source: WisDOT 2005

Railroads	
BNSF	Burlington Northern-Santa Fe
CN	Canadian National
CPR	Canadian Pacific Railway (Soo Line Railroad)
DMIR	Duluth, Missabe & Iron Range Railway Co.
ELS	Escanaba & Lake Superior
ICE	Iowa, Chicago & Eastern Railroad Corporation
METWR	Municipality of East Troy Wisconsin Railroad Co.
PGR	Progressive Rail, Inc.
TR	Tomahawk Railway
UP	Union Pacific Railroad
WGN	Wisconsin Great Northern
WSOR	Wisconsin & Southern Railroad Co.

Some freight rail challenges (identified through previous planning efforts)

- Preserving local rail service
- Preserving abandoned corridors
- Improving intermodal connections
- Funding track upgrades on publicly owned lines to meet market standards for heavier railcars
- Addressing security in rail yards (includes minimizing trespassing)
- Coordinating passenger rail and freight rail movements
- Coordinating shipping companies and freight rail
- Addressing crossing safety and closures
- Addressing weight limits on publicly-owned track

Wisconsin's **Intercity Passenger** rail system includes two passenger rail lines and eight stations. Amtrak provides passenger rail service on the Hiawatha and the Empire Builder lines. Additional routes are being studied as part of the Midwest Regional Rail Initiative.

¹ Intermodal freight transportation is the movement of freight using more than one mode of travel where all parts of the transportation network are effectively connected and coordinated. An intermodal system includes both origins and destinations (for example, ports, railheads, and warehouses), as well as the links between them (such as roads or rail).

Wisconsin Amtrak rail routes and ridership, 2007

Intercity Passenger Rail System Facts

Hiawatha Service facts:

- Operations between Milwaukee and Chicago by Amtrak under contract with Wisconsin and Illinois since 1989
- Operated on Canadian Pacific and Metra rights of way
- Seven daily round trips (six on Sundays), the most of any Amtrak route outside of the east and west coast
- Best on-time performance of the national Amtrak system: 89 percent in 2007 federal fiscal year
- Route has experienced a 67 percent ridership growth during the last 10 years



Empire Builder Service facts:

- Operates between Chicago and Seattle and Portland by Amtrak, Amtrak pays full cost
- Operated on Canadian Pacific and Metra rights of way
- Provides one round trip daily
- 2007 ridership was 94,800 trips to and from Wisconsin stations

Midwest Regional Rail Initiative and Wisconsin

Wisconsin partnered with eight other states and Amtrak to better link major Midwestern cities via a 3,000-mile intercity passenger rail system known as the Midwest Regional Rail System.



Official Midwest Regional Rail 2004 Business Plan Map. NOTE: Route alignments shown are not final and require route alternatives analysis and environmental studies to determine the final route alignment and intermediate cities served.

Wisconsin applied for two ARRA grants in 2009, one for improvements between Chicago and Milwaukee, and the other for construction and implementation of Milwaukee-Madison high-speed rail. Also, Minnesota and Wisconsin partnered to apply for a grant to complete a Tier 1 environmental study to extend service from Milwaukee to the Twin Cities. All of these grant applications were approved.

Milwaukee-Madison High Speed Rail, \$810 million (extension of Chicago-Milwaukee service):

- 6 daily round-trips Milwaukee to Madison at speeds up to 110 mph. All 6 are through trains between Chicago and Madison
- Rail corridor (track, structures, signals, maintenance facilities, PTC, etc.)
- Train equipment acquisition (trainsets and locomotives)
- Station environmental and alternatives analysis and construction of 4 stations (Brookfield, Oconomowoc, Watertown, Madison)

Chicago-Milwaukee, \$12 million:

- Truesdell crossover
- Platform extension at Milwaukee Airport Rail Station

Milwaukee-Twin Cities Service Level NEPA, \$1 million:

- Wisconsin is working with Minnesota in partnership on the Milwaukee-Twin Cities Service Level NEPA study
- \$600,000 federal; \$300,000 Minnesota; \$300,000 Wisconsin
- Will determine route or routes to be carried forward into the NEPA/preliminary engineering phase

Some intercity passenger rail challenges (identified through previous planning efforts)

- Coordination of passenger and freight rail movements
- Financial support of Amtrak service
- Infrastructure investments needed to ensure that improved passenger rail service does not negatively impact Wisconsin's freight rail service
- Some stations lacking adequate passenger rail facilities
- Hiawatha Service train equipment is aging; replacements with modern amenities and improved performance characteristics are needed
- Providing and maintaining adequate connectivity with other modes
- Frequent passenger rail service exists only in southeast Wisconsin; other populous and fast growing areas do not have this level of service
- Considerable federal and state funding sources must be identified before implementing improved passenger rail service in Wisconsin

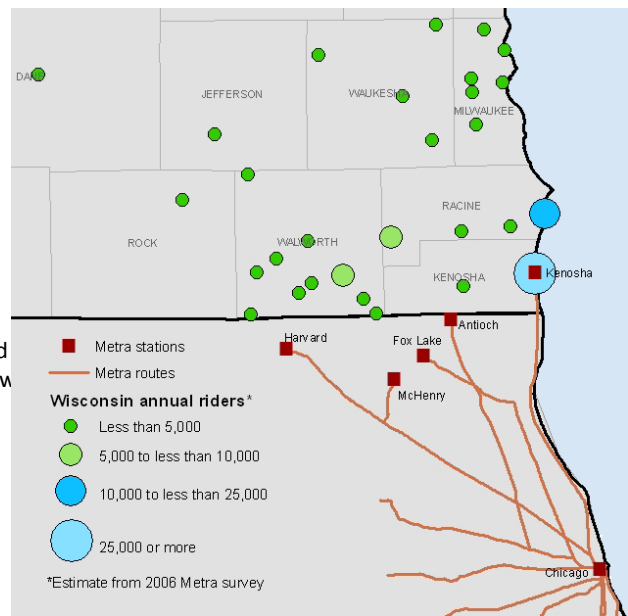
Commuter Rail System Facts

Currently, Metra² is the only commuter rail provider operating in Wisconsin. Metra provides one stop in Wisconsin, with its Union Pacific North Line terminating in Kenosha. The line provides service between Kenosha and downtown Chicago.

Other commuter rail activities:

- Wisconsin helps fund commuter rail studies with local sponsors and federal government

²Metra, officially the Northeast Illinois Regional Commuter Railroad, serves its surrounding suburbs. The system serves over 100 communities with



- In 2003, the state developed a commuter rail grant program to help fund commuter rail studies. Funding has increased each budget cycle.
- The 2005-2007 Wisconsin budget created a Regional Transit Authority (RTA) to study commuter rail service from Kenosha to Milwaukee
- Potential commuter rail projects currently being or previously studied:
 - Transport 2020 (Madison metropolitan area)
 - Kenosha-Racine-Milwaukee (KRM) commuting corridor
 - Commuter rail service between Rock County, Dane County and Chicago
- There is strong support from many business groups for commuter rail, particularly in southeast Wisconsin

Wisconsin Metra system and users by origin
Source: Metra

WisDOT’s role in commuter rail

Commuter rail is considered public transit and is funded and regulated by the Federal Transit Administration, the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act specifically notes that state rail plans must address commuter rail.

Although the state provides significant financial and technical support, decisions about the nature, amount and location of transit services to be provided – including commuter rail – are the responsibility of local governments.

Some commuter rail challenges (identified through previous planning efforts)

- Lack of a dedicated local/regional funding source and state assistance
- Existing government organizational and financial structures (all levels of government) are not conducive to efficiently administering and funding future commuter rail transit, existing bus and shared-ride taxi systems; new legislation and funding sources are needed

Wisconsin Rail Plan 2030 plan development timeline

Plan Scoping – Spring/Early Summer 2010:

- Web-based questionnaire supplemented with an telephone survey targeted to low income, minority, and elderly populations in Wisconsin
- Stakeholder workshop
- Environmental resource agency and tribal consultation

Draft Plan Outreach – Late Summer 2010:

- Statewide public hearings
- Targeted outreach to low income, minority and elderly populations
- Amend plan to include comments received

Plan Adoption – Late Fall 2010:

- WisDOT Secretary adopts plan, transmit copy to FRA

Proposed Wisconsin State Rail Plan 2030 – Brief Draft Overview

Chapter 1: Introduction

Brief discussion of the role of freight, intercity passenger and commuter rail in the state’s multimodal transportation system

Rail plan purpose:

Makes the state eligible for federal rail funding under the Passenger Rail Improvement and Investment Act of 2008

Supports and achieves the state’s multimodal vision for transportation:

An integrated multimodal transportation system that maximizes the safe and efficient movement of people and products throughout the state, enhancing economic productivity and the quality of Wisconsin’s communities while minimizing impacts to the natural environment.

Builds on the policies and actions identified in *Connections 2030*, the state’s long-range multimodal transportation plan

The *Wisconsin Rail Plan 2030* reaffirms the rail policies identified in *Connections 2030*.

Examples of these policies include:

- Increasing intercity travel options by improving intercity passenger rail service
- Facilitating intermodal passenger connections
- Ensuring that freight rail remains a viable transportation mode for Wisconsin shippers
- Partnering with stakeholders to ensure that freight movements are safe and reliable and provide positive environmental and community impacts

Chapter 3: Development Process and Outreach

Reviews the key factors and trends that influenced the development of the *Wisconsin State Rail Plan 2030*

Documents the outreach activities WisDOT undertook in developing the plan.

Chapter 3: System Inventory

Reviews Wisconsin’s existing rail system, including:

- Track ownership and mileage
- Rail crossings
- Intercity passenger rail ridership numbers

- Condition of the current system including stations, terminals and intermodal facilities

Chapter 4: Economic Development

This chapter uses economic and commodity flow data to detail the importance of rail to the state's economic development. Specifically, the chapter includes sections about:

- Overall state economy
- Wisconsin economy by sector
- Economic significance of the railroad industry – number of employees, wages, output and value added
- Identification and discussion of industry sectors in the state dependent upon rail service
- Freight commodity flow analysis on the volume, value, and types of commodities transported by railroads in, out, and through Wisconsin
- Intermodal freight activity
- Energy efficiency of rail
- Emissions comparisons (truck vs. rail, water)
- Economic significance of intercity passenger and commuter rail
- Rail assistance programs
- Role of rails to trails in Wisconsin's economy

Chapter 5: Freight Rail

This chapter provides a more in-depth look at freight rail activity in Wisconsin. The chapter discusses:

- WisDOT's history in the freight rail industry and growth of the state-owned rail network
- Network service and capacity issues
- Managing intercity passenger rail and commuter rail initiatives in the context of the freight system

The chapter also identifies several freight rail issues and their implications for freight mobility. Examples of these issues include:

- Potential rail line abandonments
- Potential major shifts in freight traffic patterns due to CREATE, the Port of Prince Rupert, shipments of western coal and the Panama Canal
- Access to rail service in Wisconsin

Chapter 6: Intercity Passenger Rail

This chapter provides a more in-depth look at intercity passenger rail service. Specifically, the chapter:

- Reviews existing intercity passenger rail service in Wisconsin
- Discusses proposed new intercity passenger rail service as identified under the Midwest Regional Rail Initiative
- Explains WisDOT's role in intercity passenger rail
- Discusses various studies currently underway to further implement intercity passenger rail within the state

The chapter also identifies several intercity passenger rail issues. Examples of these issues include:

- Coordination with other states, freight railroads and commuter rail providers

- Intermodal connections
- Stations

Chapter 7: Commuter Rail

This chapter documents Wisconsin’s existing commuter rail service and recently completed or ongoing commuter rail studies.

The chapter also identifies issues such as:

- Funding
- Governance
- Track capacity
- Service schedules
- Intermodal connections

Chapter 8: Multimodal/Intermodal/Livable Communities

A successful rail system needs to have strong intermodal and multimodal connections. Freight needs to move efficiently between modes such as rail and port connections and rail and truck connections. Likewise, passengers need to be able to move efficiently between modes such as rail and air and rail and transit. This chapter will introduce the concept of livability and livable communities as it relates to rail transportation planning, including the emphasis at the federal level as criteria for evaluating and awarding competitive discretionary grants.

This chapter provides information related to:

- Wisconsin’s multimodal and intermodal transportation facilities
- Intermodal/Multimodal connectivity
- Initiatives at the federal level
- Initiatives at the state level
- Land use planning
- Passenger and freight rail intersect
- Rail and the environment
- The challenges associated with incorporating livability concepts into rail transportation plans

Chapter 9: Safety and Security

Safety and security continue to be a top priority for WisDOT. The following objectives guide WisDOT’s planning and policy development for safety across all transportation modes:

- Reduce crashes, injuries, and fatalities
- Educate people on safety strategies
- Design and construct safe transportation facilities
- Identify and build partnerships between federal, state, and local agencies and advocates to achieve safety improvements

The *Wisconsin Rail Plan 2030* plan focuses on these objectives in the context of safety improvements for Wisconsin’s rail system. Specifically, the chapter discusses:

- Roles and Coordination
 - Agencies and roles
 - Inter-agency coordination

- Rail Safety
 - Crossings
 - Collisions and derailments
 - HAZMAT
 - Trespassing
 - Research
- Rail Security
 - Structures and facilities
 - Other security threats
- Emergency Response

Chapter 10: Funding, Finance Options and Investment for Implementation

This chapter provides an overview of funding options, challenges and future direction for rail transportation in Wisconsin including:

- Benefits of public investment in rail infrastructure and operations
- Current funding mechanisms for freight, intercity passenger and commuter rail
 - Federal programs
 - State programs
 - Public-Private Partnerships (stations)
 - ARRA grants (100% federal dollars)
- WisDOT investment strategies for funding future rail needs
 - Federal emphasis on freight movements and HSR
 - National rail plan
 - PRIIA
 - Up-coming federal transportation bill reauthorization
 - Rail funding challenges and potential strategies to address them

The *Wisconsin Rail Plan 2030* will also present the state’s long-range service and investment program, a PRIIA requirement, as an appendix to this chapter. The program includes a list of any rail capital projects expected to be undertaken or supported in whole or in part by the state, as well as a detailed funding plan for those projects. For each project included on the capital projects list, the plan provides a description of the anticipated public and private benefits of the project and a discussion of the correlation between the public funding contributions for the project and its public benefits.

Chapter 11: System-plan Environmental Evaluation

Required by Wisconsin Administrative Code Trans 400, the system-plan environmental evaluation provides a qualitative assessment of the potential impacts of the Wisconsin Rail Plan 2030 on:

- congestion
- energy
- air quality
- land use
- agriculture
- economic growth
- communities
- sensitive land and water resources

The system-plan environmental evaluation does not provide the kind of quantitative detail found in project-level environmental reports (e.g., environmental assessment, environmental impact statements), nor does it replace those reviews. When required by federal or state laws or regulations, additional environmental analysis will occur at the project level.

Chapter 12: Environmental Justice Analysis

Required by Presidential Executive Order 12898, the environmental justice analysis ensures minority and low-income populations do not have disproportionately high or adverse human health or environmental effects as a result of implementing the *Wisconsin State Rail Plan 2030*. The chapter:

- Provides an overview of Wisconsin's minority, low-income, age 65 years and older, and zero-vehicle household population
- Includes an evaluation of how the rail plan's recommendations will effect these populations
- Identifies areas for potential consideration during planning and project-level activities.

When required by federal laws or regulations, additional environmental justice analysis will occur at the project level.