

GET ON BOARD!

Passenger Rail Service
for West Central
Wisconsin

West Central Wisconsin Rail Coalition
December, 2004



Passenger trains....



MOMENTUM
CHIPPEWA VALLEY

Passenger Rail Service for West Central Wisconsin?

- Passenger rail service is growing fast where development investments have been made: The Northeast Corridor, California, the Pacific Northwest, North Carolina, Texas, Florida and other areas.
- Critical economic, demographic, social and transportation issues are converging to make trains important to our future here in Wisconsin.



Current passenger rail service in Wisconsin

Figure 2-4: Wisconsin Amtrak Service 2004

Source: WisDOT Bureau of Planning



Current passenger rail service in Wisconsin

- Current Wisconsin service
 - Popular Amtrak “Hiawatha Service”
 - 7 trains/day Milwaukee-Chicago, supported by WisDOT
 - New intermodal station at General Mitchell Field
 - Chicago-Seattle “Empire Builder” long distance train
 - Chicago-Milwaukee-La Crosse-St. Paul-Seattle/Portland
 - No current service to populous, fast-growing areas including Madison, Fox Valley, West Central Wis.



Current and future passenger rail service in Wisconsin

- Wisconsin is a leader in the 9-state Midwest Regional Rail Initiative.
 - Chicago-Milwaukee-Madison-La Crosse-St. Paul
 - Milwaukee-Appleton-Green Bay
 - Multiple frequencies up to 110 mph
 - Milwaukee-Madison project “ready to go” pending federal funding
- Planning is progressing for new commuter rail service connecting Milwaukee, Racine and Kenosha.



Proposed Midwest Regional Rail System



Future passenger rail service in Wisconsin

Figure 2-6: Proposed Midwest Regional Rail System in Wisconsin

Source: WisDOT Bureau of Planning

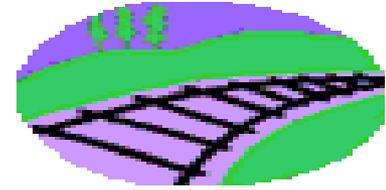


Passenger Rail Service for West Central Wisconsin?

- For the rapidly growing Chippewa and St. Croix valleys, passenger rail service would provide a viable option to meet transportation needs now and in the future.
 - High-speed intercity service to connect Hudson, Menomonie, Eau Claire/Chippewa Falls and Black River Falls to Minneapolis/St. Paul, Madison, Milwaukee and Chicago.
 - Potential commuter rail service to and from Minneapolis/St. Paul.



West Central Wisconsin Rail Coalition



Mission:

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.



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Passenger Rail Service for West Central Wisconsin?

- **What the future could look like**
 - Frequent trains, 80-110 mph
 - Smooth, upgraded tracks
 - Comfortable, roomy seating
 - Large windows, power for laptops
 - Café service for light meals, beverages
- Business travelers – productive time
- Visitors/leisure travelers
- Commuters to avoid congested I-94



Passenger Rail Service for West Central Wisconsin?

- **Benefits**

- **Fast-growing region – 4 of the 13 Wis. Counties projected to grow 25%+ by 2030**
- **Alternative to increasing I-94 congestion**
- **Mobility for aging population**
- **Cost-effective, productive alternative to driving for business and leisure travelers**



Passenger Rail Service for West Central Wisconsin?

- **Benefits**

- **Accessibility and attractiveness for regional educational institutions (UW Eau Claire, Stout, River Falls, CVTC)**
- **Development of I-94 Technology Corridor**
- **Potential daily commuter service**
- **Energy Efficiency**
- **Uses existing transportation corridors**



Passenger Rail Service for West Central Wisconsin?

- **Benefits**

- **Connectivity with local/regional highway, transit and air transportation.**
- **High speed rail access will become as important to economic development in the future as interstate**



Passenger Rail Service for West Central Wisconsin?

- Wisconsin State Rail Plan and Connections 2030 Process
 - Potential for service for West Central Wisconsin being considered
 - Consultants' study released in 2002



Passenger Rail Service for West Central Wisconsin?

Source: WisDOT Bureau of Planning

"Eau Claire plus La Crosse" alternative
Every second train through WI Dells travel to Eau Claire first and returns via La Crosse



Passenger Rail Service for West Central Wisconsin?

- West Central Wisconsin alternatives
 - “Eau Claire plus La Crosse”
 - Trains on St. Paul-Chicago corridor alternate between La Crosse, Eau Claire routes
 - “Eau Claire West”
 - St. Paul-Eau Claire route only
 - Consultants’ study showed both “likely to produce ridership and revenue figures that could improve the overall financial performance” of the MWRRI.



What needs to happen now

- Establishment of federal funding mechanism
- Implementation of Midwest Regional Rail Initiative
- Inclusion of the West Central Wisconsin rail corridor in state plans, such as Connections 2030
 - We advocate the “Eau Claire plus La Crosse alternative
- Study commuter rail service feasibility
- Local city/country planning
- Preservation of rail corridors and strengthening of rail freight utilization



We want YOU “on board”!

- Advocate the “Eau Claire plus La Crosse” route with your legislators and local officials for inclusion in the state’s Connections 2030 Transportation Plan.
- Encourage the incorporation of rail service in local comprehensive plans.
- Support the Midwest Regional Rail Initiative and creation of a federal funding mechanism.
- Get involved with the West Central Wisconsin Rail Coalition and help us elevate the importance rail plays in a balanced transportation system.



Need additional information?

- To answer any of your questions, to have a presentation at your service group, organization or municipality, or to indicate you would like to join our coalition contact any one of our members or:
 - Director, Momentum Chippewa Valley at 715-833-6276
 - Jackie Pavelski, Public Affairs Director, Eau Claire Chamber of Commerce 715-834-1204

