

GET ON BOARD!

Passenger Rail Service
for West Central
Wisconsin

West Central Wisconsin Rail Coalition
December, 2004



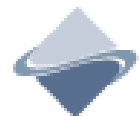
Passenger trains....



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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.



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Current passenger rail service in Wisconsin

Figure 2-4: Wisconsin Amtrak Service 2004

Source: WisDOT Bureau of Planning



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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



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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.

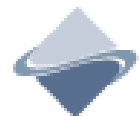


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Passenger Rail Service for West Central Wisconsin?

- **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**

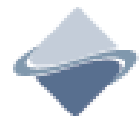
- **Fast-growing region – 4 of the 13 Wis. Counties projected to grow 25%+ by 2030**
- **Alternative to increasing I-94 congestion**
- **Mobility for aging population**
- **Cost-effective, productive alternative to driving for business and leisure travelers**



Passenger Rail Service for West Central Wisconsin?

- **Benefits**

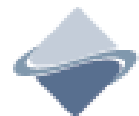
- **Accessibility and attractiveness for regional educational institutions (UW Eau Claire, Stout, River Falls, CVTC)**
- **Development of I-94 Technology Corridor**
- **Potential daily commuter service**
- **Energy Efficiency**
- **Uses existing transportation corridors**



Passenger Rail Service for West Central Wisconsin?

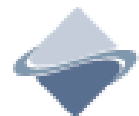
- **Benefits**

- **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?

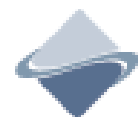
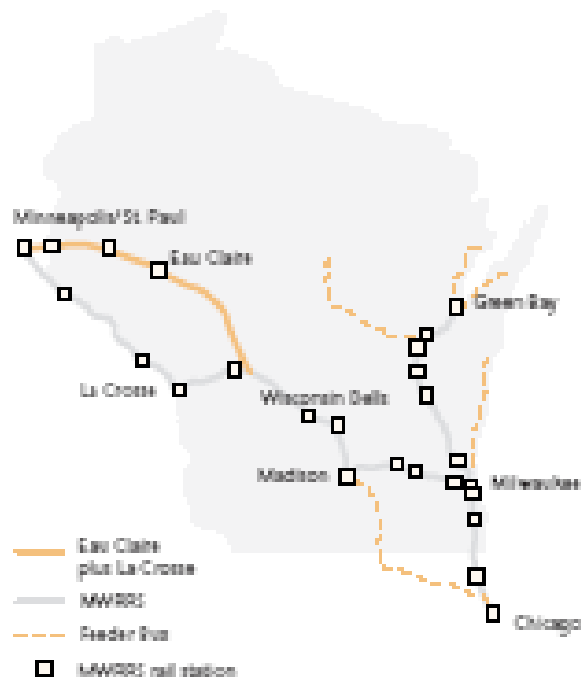
- Wisconsin State Rail Plan and Connections 2030 Process
 - Potential for service for West Central Wisconsin being considered
 - Consultants' study released in 2002



Passenger Rail Service for West Central Wisconsin?

Source: WisDOT Bureau of Planning

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



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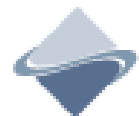
Passenger Rail Service for West Central Wisconsin?

- 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