



Green Bay Extension Newsletter

NEW Rails
An Affiliate of WisARP

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Amtrak! Connect Us!

by Terry Brown, WisARP

In the 21st century the discussion of passenger rail within the State of Wisconsin was relatively short and rather boring: How many daily trips for the Hiawatha? Don't forget the Empire Builder.

There was quite a bit of excitement around Madison during 2009 & 2010 about a Hiawatha Extension train. The President Obama administration and the FRA was excited to grow the network in Wisconsin. Everyone in Wisconsin knows how that ended.

Things have been really quiet in Green Bay. Several Passenger Rail advocate groups did create maps that showed Amtrak service extending to Green Bay. Just a whimper of excitement.

With the November 2020 Presidential Election and the inauguration of President Biden, suddenly many transportation advocates became excited. Passenger Rail advocates everywhere were hoping at least one passenger train would come to town to expand the transportation options.

In Wisconsin, first thoughts of most people were would Madison get another chance at a passenger train option. It seemed Fox Valley and Green Bay advocates were silent, but not for long.

Amtrak Connects Us!

In May 2021 Amtrak CEO William Flynn wrote an open letter to Congress announcing Amtrak's "*bold vision to bring sustainable, world-class intercity passenger rail service to more communities across America.*" During the summer of 2021 Amtrak wasn't the only visionary passenger rail map to be unveiled, but the Amtrak vision was the one that gathered the most attention nationwide.

And a little Light Blue line lit a fuse of excitement that's still growing. The little Light Blue line connecting Milwaukee going north around the west side of Lake

Winnebago and ending in Green Bay has created some genuine interest and some serious hope that a train will be created.

Amtrak did release the visionary map earlier in 2021. It seems a mid-April 2021 Times-Press news story opened the door for many more people to learn of the potential opportunity of passenger rail in northeast Wisconsin.

The story also brought to light Green Bay Mayor Eric Genrich's support for passenger rail coming to Green Bay. The Times-Press story paraphrased a Genrich quote this way; (*Genrich*) said the ability to connect the "mega-region" of Northeast Wisconsin and boost economic development in Green Bay is the biggest benefit his office sees out of the Amtrak proposal.



Wisconsin Association of Railroad Passengers (WisARP)

founded in 1977 has been involved in the planning, advocating and education of the public on the need for more passenger trains. It is made up of people who enjoy traveling by train, find it a practical way to travel, and are dedicated to preserving and improving the quality and quantity of passenger trains in Wisconsin and Coast-to-Coast. Read more about WisARP at www.WisARP.info.

About the photo at the top of this page: The building is the backside of the former Chicago & Northwestern Railroad Station in Oshkosh, facing the single track Canadian National mainline just north of the Fox River bridge.

A Green Bay Passenger Rail History

By Frank Ingram, Chairman of NEWRAILS

With assistance from Terry Brown, TCMC Newsletter Editor &

At the creation of the National Railroad Passenger Corporation, more commonly known as Amtrak in 1971, the

passenger rail connections between Green Bay and Milwaukee were suffering like most intercity passenger routes

of the day. Just 20-25 years earlier this route was considered by some to be one of the most heavily used passenger rail services in the region.

Anecdotally it has been suggested that had the Wisconsin-Illinois State line been north of Milwaukee, Amtrak would have taken over the route. However, it was regarded as an *Intrastate* route, not an *Interstate* route. In 1971 outward appearances were the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) was only interested in concrete for freeways and highways.

Green Bay Train Stations

numerous options after WWII

The only passenger station remaining in Green Bay today was constructed by the Chicago & North Western Railway and opened in 1899. Arguably the most popular train was the Flambeau 400 traveling between Chicago and Ashland, WI. Regular passenger service ended in 1971. In 1996 the station was purchased by Titledown

Brewery and remains in business to this day.

A 1939 C&NW Passenger Train schedule shows two different routes were utilized: a west of Lake Winnebago route through Fond du Lac and Oshkosh, five trains per day; and a second route along the Lake Michigan shoreline for four trains per day. This Pre-



World War II scheduling obviously reflects a much different traveling community in eastern Wisconsin.

The Milwaukee Road also had a downtown station on the east side of the Fox River competing with the C&NW.

A 1952 Milwaukee Road timetable shows two trains daily visiting Green Bay traveling on the east side of Lake Winnebago, stopping in towns like Plymouth, Elkhart Lake, Chilton and more. One of the trains each direction had an overnight scheduling with the southbound leaving Green Bay at 1:05am.

The Soo Line also had passenger train service for much of the first half of the 20th century, but it did not stop in Green Bay. The Laker service started in Chicago with stops in Milwaukee and Waukesha, then traveling north on the current Canadian National mainline with stops in Fond du Lac, Oshkosh, and Neenah. From there The Laker veered northwest towards Waupaca and Stevens Point. The two daily trains included

a northbound that left Chicago at 12:45am and a southbound that left Neenah at 3:00am.

NEW Rails thanks Mark Weitenbeck and Dave Rasmussen for their contributions to this story.

NEWRAILS is Born

A small group in Green Bay got together to promote rail travel in general and offer an alternative to several WisDOT Passenger Rail proposals. It was known as NEWRAILS. The original start date of NEWRAILS is unknown.

My alternative proposal suggests the Canadian Pacific track west out of Milwaukee and at Duplainville connect to the Canadian National going north, as an alternative to relaying track near West Bend. The Wisconsin state owned corridor used by Wisconsin & Southern Railroad to Slinger is a later improvement and is also supported. *(Continued on page three)*



Northeast Wisconsin Rails, or NEW Rails, is an affiliate of WisARP. Where WisARP is considered a statewide organization, NEW Rail was established specifically to focus on helping promote passenger rail service in the Fox Valley and Green Bay areas of Northeast Wisconsin. NEW Rails is funded through WisARP, so your WisARP membership helps support the work of NEW Rails.



GREEN BAY EXTENSION & TCMC NEWSLETTERS
 are created and written by Terry Brown, Vice President- Public Relations for WisARP and is solely responsible for its content.

WHAT IS IIJA?

And why is it important to Green Bay?

Heard the latest? There's a significant amount of federal grant money available right now for passenger rail projects across the United States. The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) is the gatekeeper of this money, and the path for getting a grant is through an application spelling out your reason for desiring a grant and the path going forward on how it's going to be completed.

It is a somewhat complex process that when handled by someone with previous successful experience applying for federal grants, increases the chances of being awarded some federal funding. All applications must show some local money being available in partnership with the federal grant. No grant will be considered 100 percent of the funding necessary to complete the project.



Heard the latest? How many different maps of proposed passenger rail service expansions in the Midwest show a train connecting Milwaukee to Green Bay? They all go around the west side of Lake Winnebago connecting Appleton, Oshkosh, and Fond du Lac. Perhaps the map gaining the most notoriety is the Amtrak Connects Us plan, but there are other Midwest maps like the one produced by the FRA, and they all show a train route to Green Bay.

If only it were that easy: Show a copy of one of the maps to your local US Representative, wait for the next round of funding and a train will soon magically appear at the Titledown Brewery Station in Green Bay. Sounds a little bit like what Madison expected in 2010. That story did not finish with a happy ending.

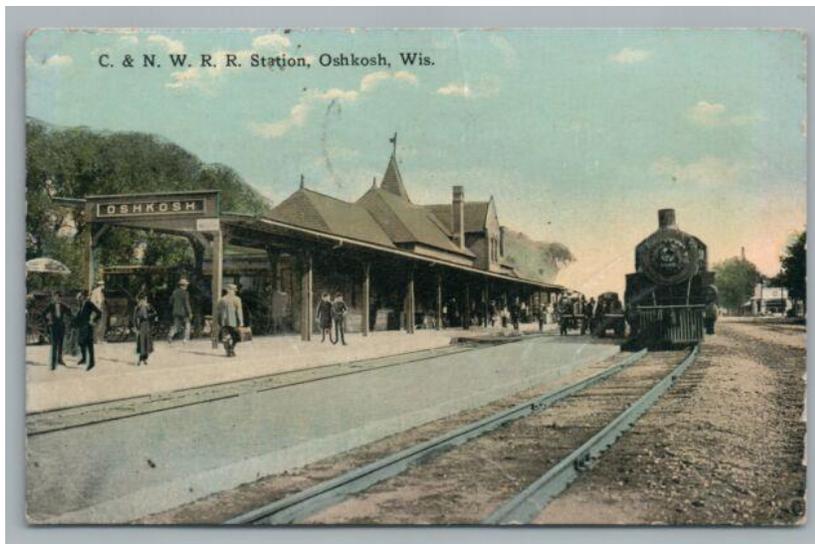
Heard the latest? IIJA is the current acronym to pay attention to. IIJA stands for Infrastructure Investments and Jobs Act, signed into law by President Biden on November 15, 2021. There are significant amounts of money for the Northeast Corridor (NEC) and Amtrak in general, but there's money specifically designated for Amtrak Long-Distance trains and Intercity Passenger Rail operations. This could be an incentive for the Fox Valley area and Green Bay to coordinate efforts to speed up the initial stages of new train development. The 21st Century history of passenger rail funding began in 2008 with the passage of PRIIA, the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act during the George W. Bush administration.

It's understandable that all the above programs for funding, conditions for applying and keeping your alphabet soup acronyms straight begins to make the average person become disoriented. There are a host of seasoned experts available within WisDOT and Amtrak that are eager to create and facilitate well drafted and planned funding applications.

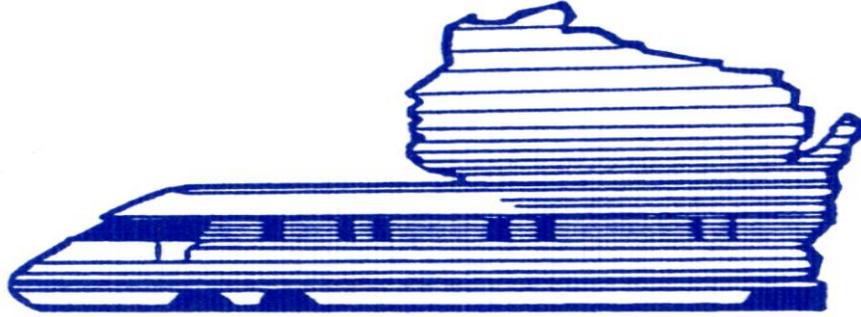
NEWRails is Born *(continued from page two)*

Our current proposal is a train of two 2-car DMUs leaving Milwaukee after connecting with a Milwaukee- Chicago Hiawatha train. The train would stop at a new depot in northern Milwaukee County, Fond du Lac, and Oshkosh. In Oshkosh the train would divide. The front DMU would run express to Appleton and Green Bay. The rear would

take the same route stopping at Neenah/Menasha, Appleton, Kaukauna, Wrightstown, De Pere, and Green Bay. On select days this train could stop near Lambeau Field. Southbound trains would be the reverse. DMUs allow service to smaller markets and could gain additional support from these communities.



All stories in this newsletter are edited to fit. Find the full versions at www.wisarp.info



Wisconsin Association of Railroad Passengers (WisARP) **New member sign-up form 2022**

Since 1977, WisARP has been the voice of the rail passenger in Wisconsin. Our strength is in the size of our membership. A one-year trial WisARP membership is just \$5. Besides our quarterly newsletter Badger Rails, WisARP also has email groups to provide members with the latest news.

It has been over 10 years since the Walker administration turned back federal money that WisDOT had applied for to continue development of the Madison Extension. But the work of WisARP has continued. We are still focused on:

(1) You are seeing this New Member Sign-Up sheet in a newsletter keeping Wisconsin citizens informed over developments of the Green Bay and Madison Extension Trains as seen in the Amtrak Connect Us Vision Map. WisARP is committed to the creation and implementation of these Hiawatha Extension trains.

(2) Educating the public on the usefulness of the Hiawatha service in a post-Pandemic/ Endemic era, and

(3) Keeping Wisconsin informed on the progress of the second train on the current Empire Builder route between the Twin Cities and Chicago called the TCMC train. Funding has been secured, but our education efforts do continue.

If you would like to join WisARP for the journey ahead, it is simple. Just fill out the form below. Your first year (2022) is \$5 with this special TCMC Newsletter form! Just \$10 per year afterwards.

Jim Sponholz, WisARP VP-Membership- March 2022 NR

Name _____

Address _____ Cell Phone _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Please add your email address below to receive the latest WisARP news including Badger Rails.

Email address _____

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