Hiawatha West
Service Development Plan
Public Webinar

April 14, 2026

Meet the Amtrak Team



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AMTRAK®

Agenda

Amtrak in Wisconsin

Federal Planning Process Overview (Corridor ID)

Hiawatha West Overview

- Service
- Stations
- Infrastructure

Discuss Next Steps & Comment/Feedback Opportunities

Questions can be submitted throughout

About Amtrak

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About Amtrak

- 21,000 route miles in 46 states, the District of Columbia and three Canadian provinces
- Amtrak operates more than 300 trains each day to more than 500 destinations
- Amtrak is the operator for state-supported corridor services in 19 states and for four commuter rail agencies
- Demand is surging to historic highs: record high 34.5M passengers in 2025

Operating **16** trains daily in WI

8 WI Stations

850,500 WI passengers in FY 25

3 Routes w/ daily service in WI

$17.8 M Procured from WI firms in FY25

70 Wisconsin-based employees

What's it like to ride Amtrak?

Wide, reclining seats in Coach and Business Class with more legroom than most business class airplane seats, and no middle seats

Cafe service with local food and beverage selections on most routes

Free onboard Wi-Fi, tray tables, power outlets, USB ports at every seat, and spacious restrooms

Passengers can bring 1 carry-on and 1 personal items free of charge

Wheelchair lifts at every station and reserved space in the car





Amtrak Midwest Services

Featured below is a map showing Amtrak train services in the Mmidwest



Existing Amtrak Hiawatha

Service Overview

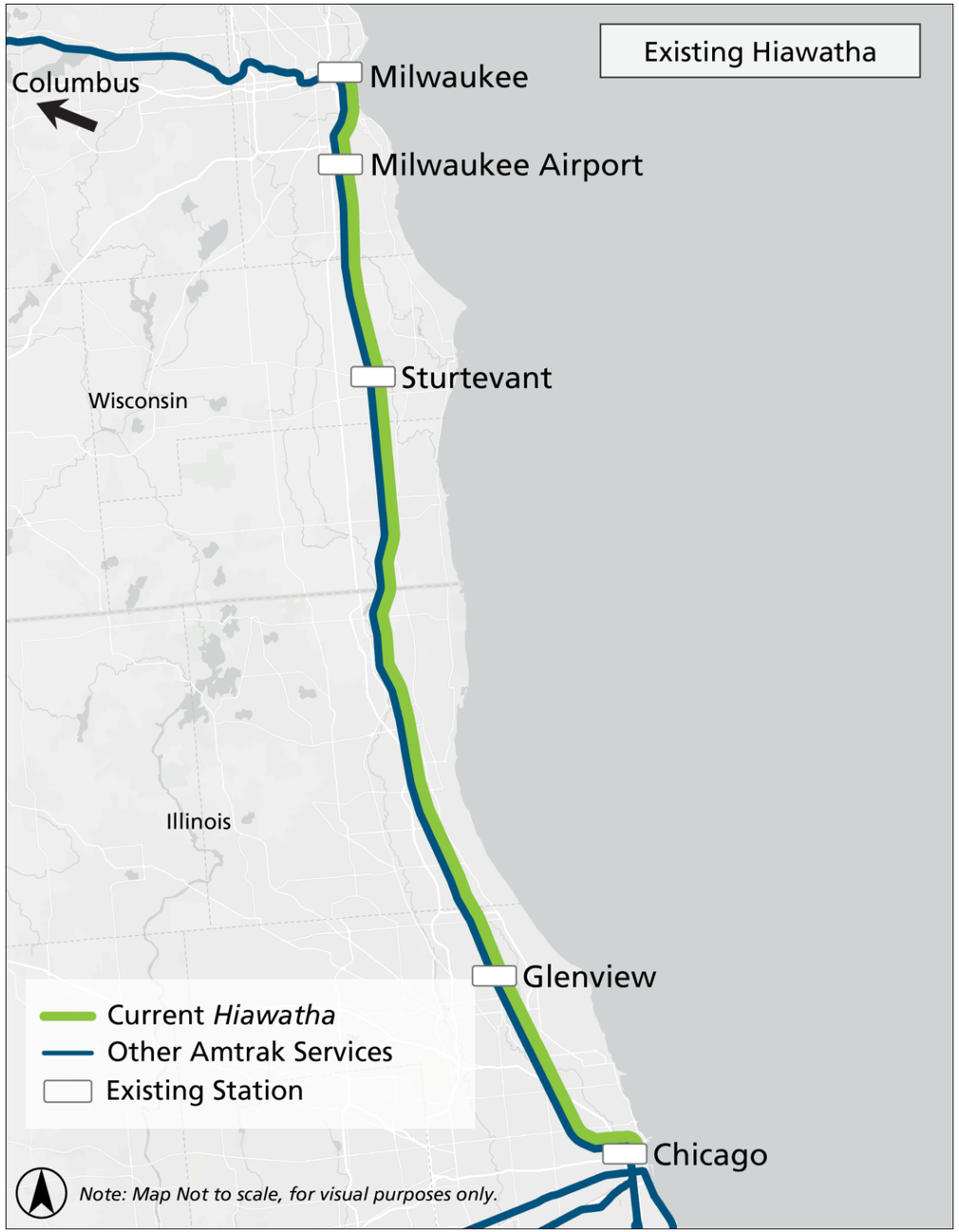
- 6 Round Trips between Milwaukee & Chicago
- 631,000 passengers in FY 25

Connects in Chicago to Midwest and National Network

- 7 Midwest routes to Michigan, Illinois, Missouri, and Minnesota
- 8 Long Distance routes to destinations across the country

Hiawatha Passenger Profile

- 18% are business travelers
- 40% are visiting family/friends/personal business
- 42% use it for leisure/recreation trips



Borealis: New Route Launch in May 2024

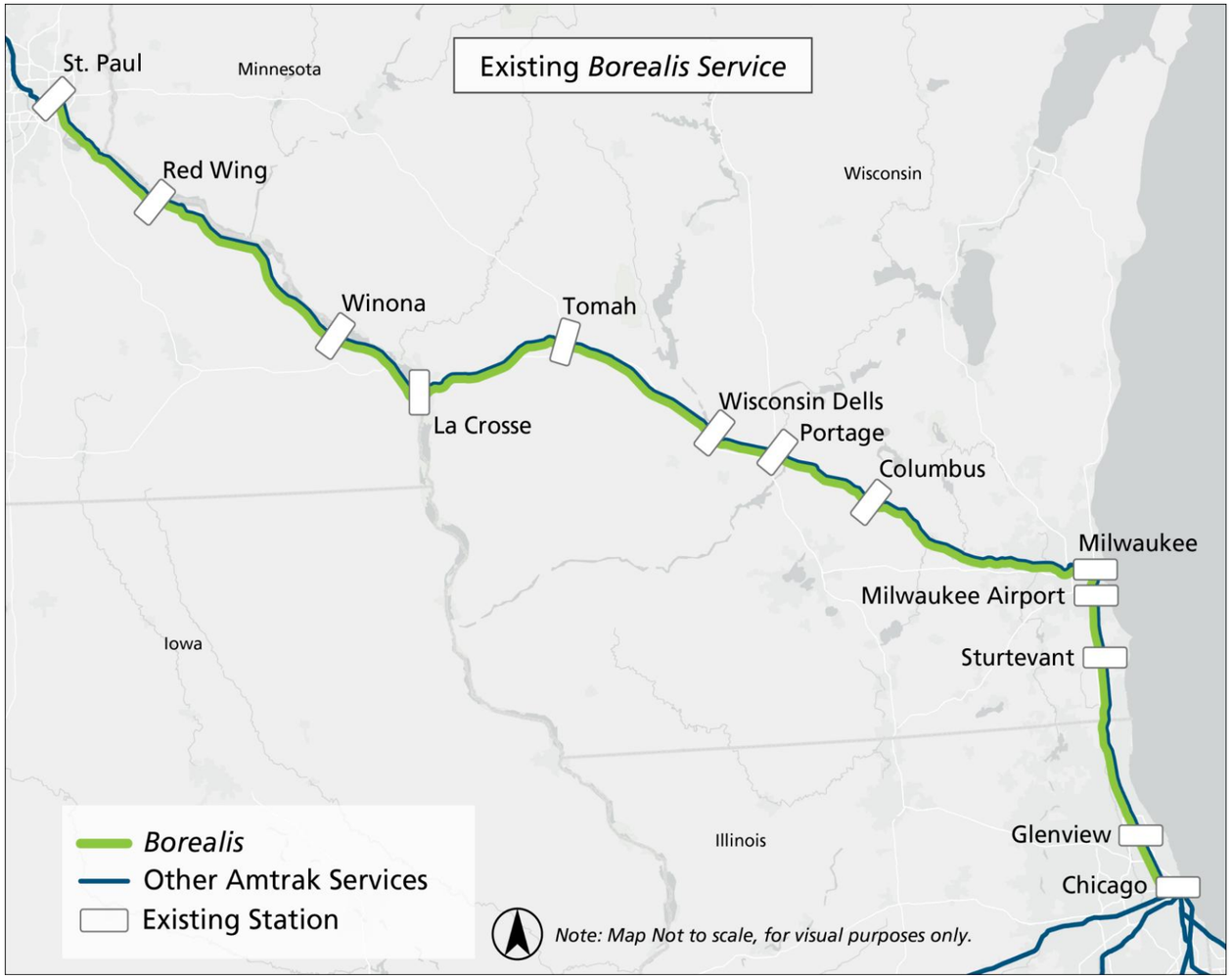
New Twin Cities – Milwaukee – Chicago service launched in May 2024

Ridership Has Exceeded Projections

- About 600 daily passengers
- Over 400,000 passengers since launch

New service generated substantial growth at existing stations

↑126%	↑71%	↑69%
Columbus, WI	La Crosse, WI	Portage, WI



Hiawatha West Project Overview & Planning Context

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Proposed Hiawatha West

Extends 2 Chicago-Milwaukee *Hiawatha Service* trains west to Waukesha, Jefferson, and Dane counties

One-seat direct service between Wisconsin stations and Chicago

Utilizes existing railroad infrastructure

Temporary platforms for a startup service, permanent stations in later phases

Different from previous efforts on corridor

- *Hiawatha West* is a conventional speed service NOT high-speed rail
- Upgrades to existing infrastructure supporting passenger and freight trains
- Fewer capital projects needed
- Lower operating costs



Hiawatha West Benefits

Train service for Wisconsin's 2nd and 3rd most populous counties

200 Permanent Jobs

Safe, reliable, and convenient travel alternative to I-90 and I-94

Direct ride from more of WI to Chicago and connections to national rail network

Generates **$20+ million in visitor spending**

Leverage for communities to attract and retain residents, employers, businesses, and students

Improves freight rail infrastructure for operators & shippers

Improves safety with new grade crossings track upgrades

Promotes **economic development**

Based on preliminary analysis, some statistics are subject to change as additional analysis occurs.

Passenger Rail Planning Process: Hiawatha West

***Hiawatha West* is Here**

Wisconsin Long Range Transportation Plan

Wisconsin State Rail Plan

Service Development Plan (SDP)

- **Alternatives, Operations, Infrastructure, Costs, Stations**

Engineering & Environmental Analysis

- **Preliminary engineering**
- **Additional Engagement**
- **Environmental evaluation**

Final Design & Construction

Implementation

Systems Planning

Corridor Planning (FRA Corridor ID)

FRA Grant Programs

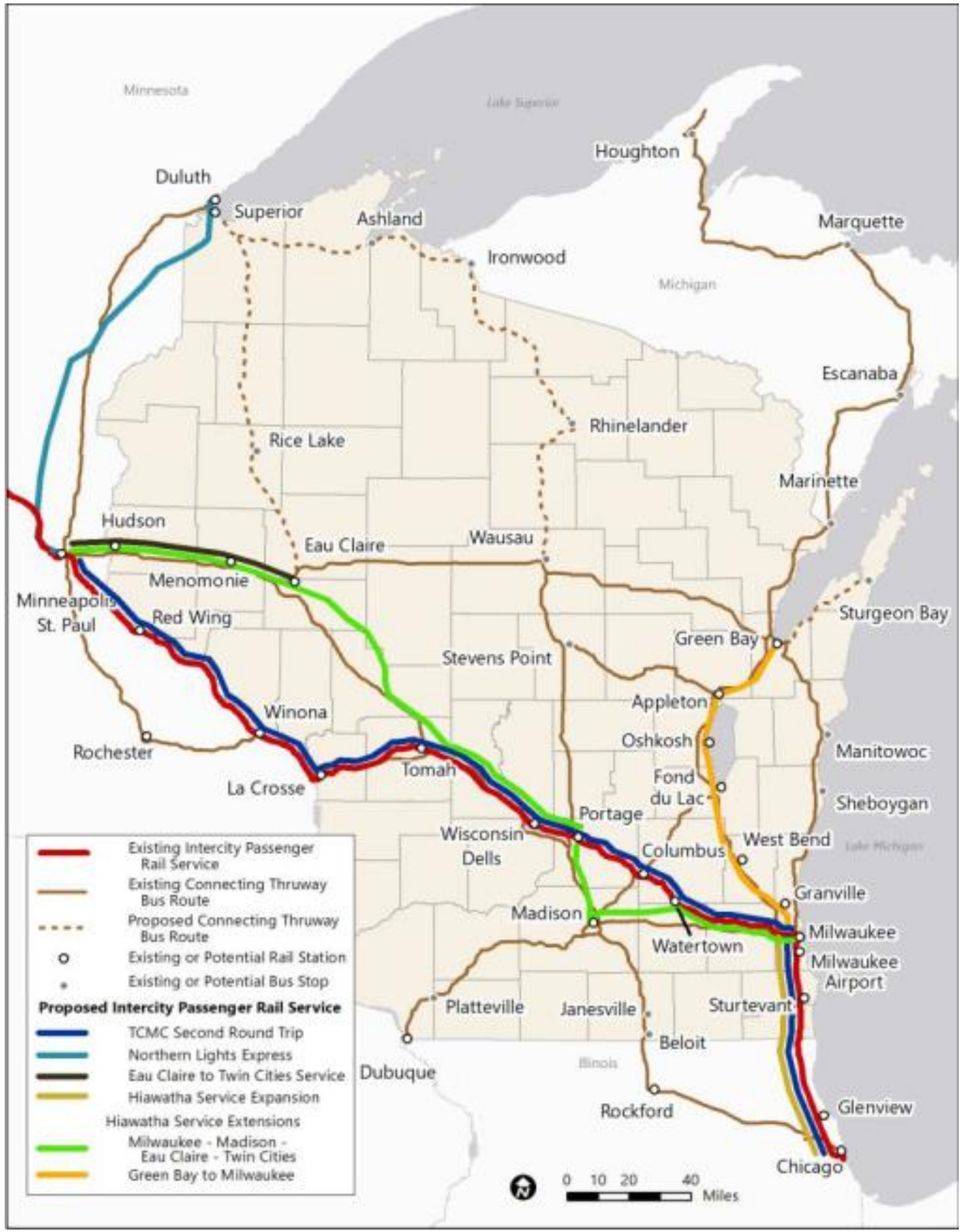
Planning Context: State Rail Plan

System Plan: Wisconsin Rail Plan 2050

FRA/WisDOT Corridor ID Program

Chicago-Milwaukee-Madison-Eau Claire-Twin Cities (MMET) Corridor

Hiawatha* Extension to Waukesha, Jefferson, Dane county *Hiawatha West (Phase 1 MMET)



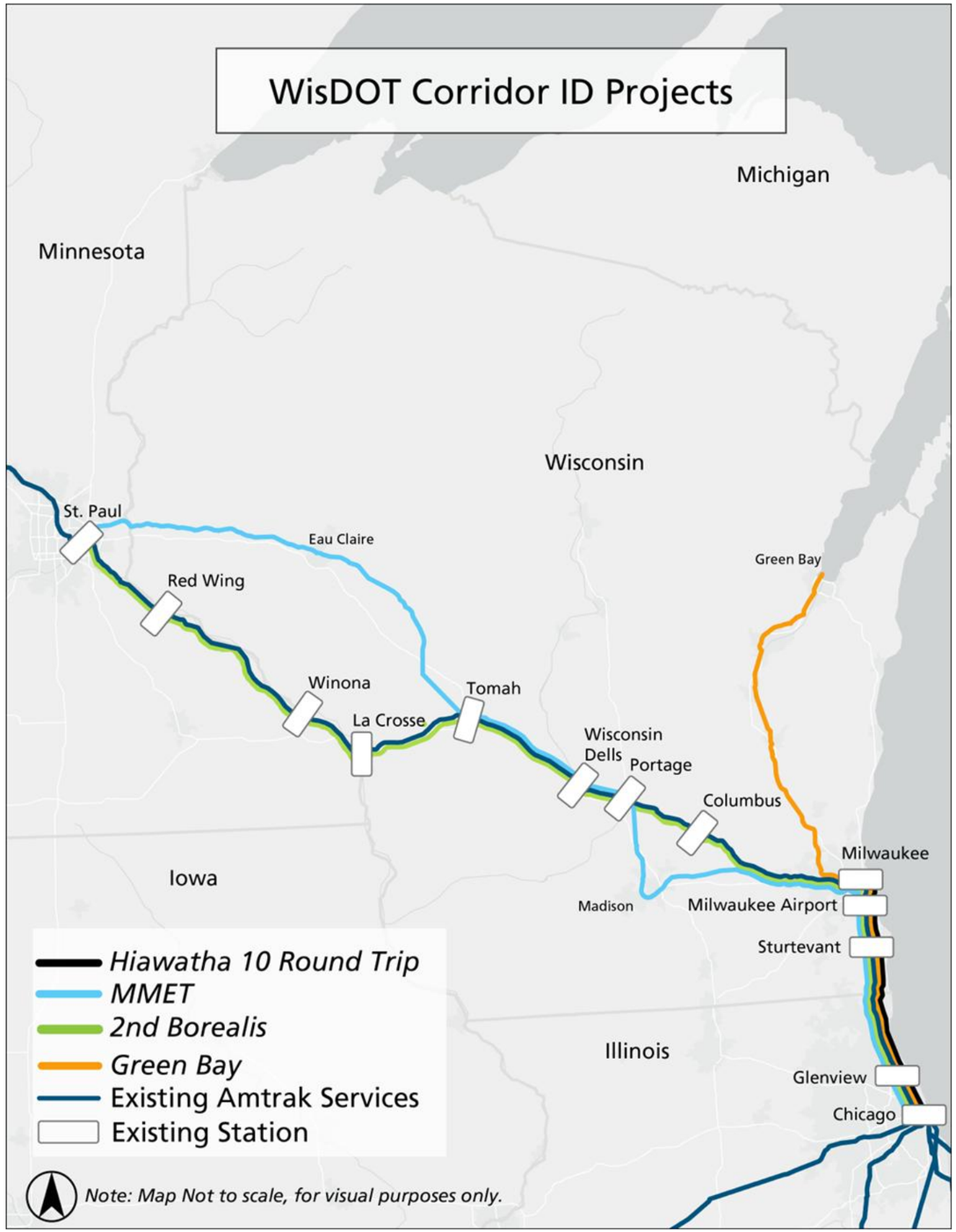
Planning Context: Corridor ID

System Plan: Wisconsin Rail Plan 2050

FRA/WisDOT Corridor ID Program

Chicago-Milwaukee-Madison-Eau Claire-Twin Cities (MMET) Corridor

Hiawatha* Extension to Waukesha, Jefferson, Dane county *Hiawatha West (Phase 1 MMET)



Planning Context: MMET

System Plan: Wisconsin Rail Plan 2050

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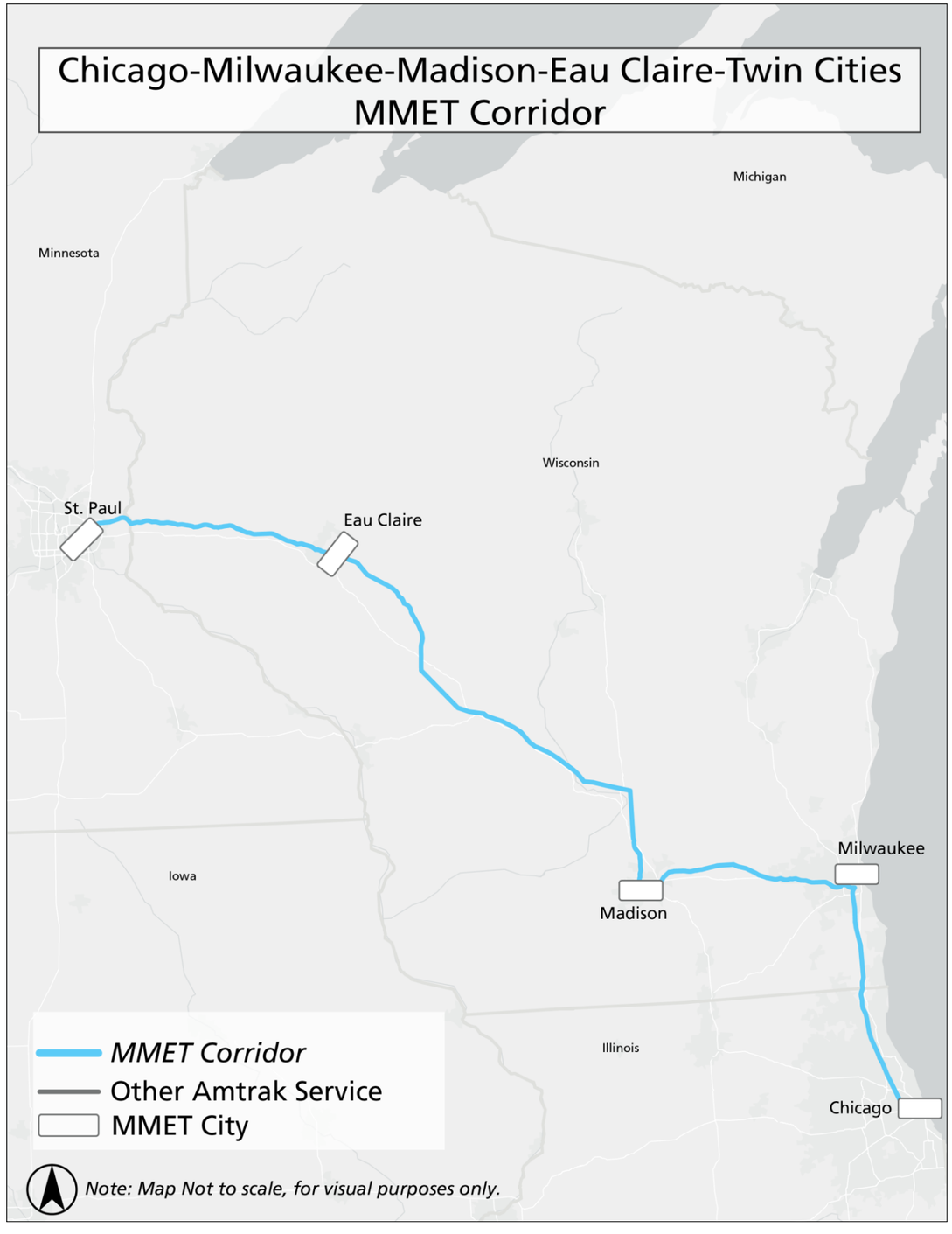
FRA/WisDOT Corridor ID Program

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Chicago-Milwaukee-Madison-Eau Claire-Twin Cities (MMET) Corridor

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Hiawatha* Extension to Waukesha, Jefferson, Dane county *Hiawatha West (Phase 1 MMET)



Planning Context: Hiawatha West

System Plan: Wisconsin Rail Plan 2050

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FRA/WisDOT Corridor ID Program

↓

Chicago-Milwaukee-Madison-Eau Claire-Twin Cities (MMET) Corridor

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Hiawatha* Extension to Waukesha, Jefferson, Dane county *Hiawatha West (Phase 1 MMET)



Schedule & Station Analysis

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Service (Schedules) and Station Alternatives Analysis Process

Identify Initial Universe of Alternatives

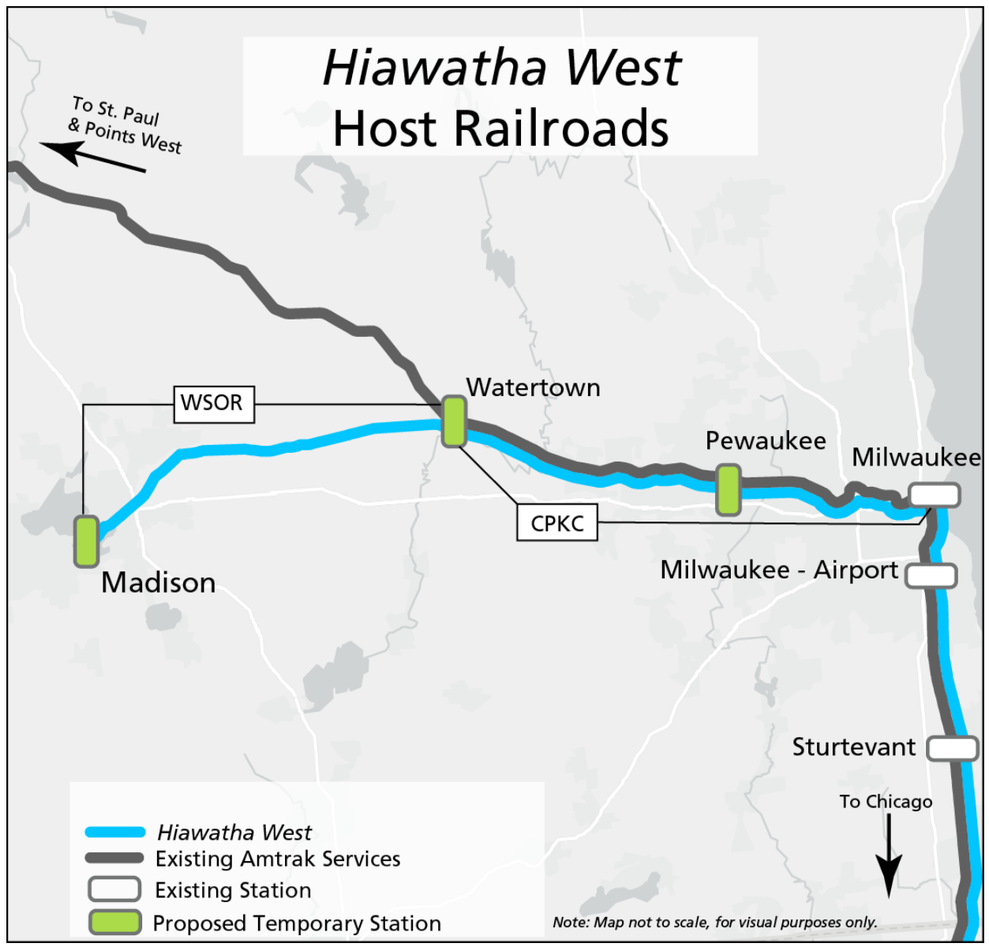
Screen for Critical Flaws

Review Refined Alternatives with Host Railroads

Develop Evaluation Criteria

Apply Criteria and Select Alternative

Proposed Hiawatha West Route



Utilize Existing Rail Infrastructure

- 81.6-mile extension
- Allows for faster implementation
- Reduces need for new infrastructure

CPKC (Milwaukee-Watertown)

- 46.6 miles
- Utilized by Hiawatha, Borealis, and Empire Builder today
- Minimal improvements anticipated

Wisconsin & Southern Railroad (Watertown-Madison)

- 35.0 miles
- Owned by Wisconsin River & Rail Transit Commission
- Some infrastructure upgrades anticipated

Initial Ridership Forecast

+ 260,000 annual passenger trips
Expected with Hiawatha West (extension)

Existing Chicago-Milwaukee Hiawatha service carried
681,600 annual passengers in FY25

These are modeled estimates, as the project progresses, estimates are subject to change based on updated demographics and other similar data.

Temporary Station Overview

Summary

- Temporary platforms sufficient for day-to-day operations
- Implemented to start service while more permanent stations are developed

Design Elements

- Stations will be ADA accessible
- Parking, lighting, ADA ramps, signage

Subsequent phases

- Permanent platforms with building/shelter
- May be at same or different location





Station Identification Process

Identify potential station communities to meet the project goals and the Purpose and Need

Evaluate sites within each community based on criteria

Narrow down station sites to preferred location(s)

Conduct stakeholder and public outreach on station site(s)

Select sites to advance for further evaluation in PE/NEPA

Key Station Evaluation Criteria

Logistics

- Existing railroad infrastructure and operations
- Space for parking
- Land ownership

Access & Community Impact

- Proximity to major roads and highway access
- Connections to transit
- Location relative to businesses and residents
- Surrounding land use

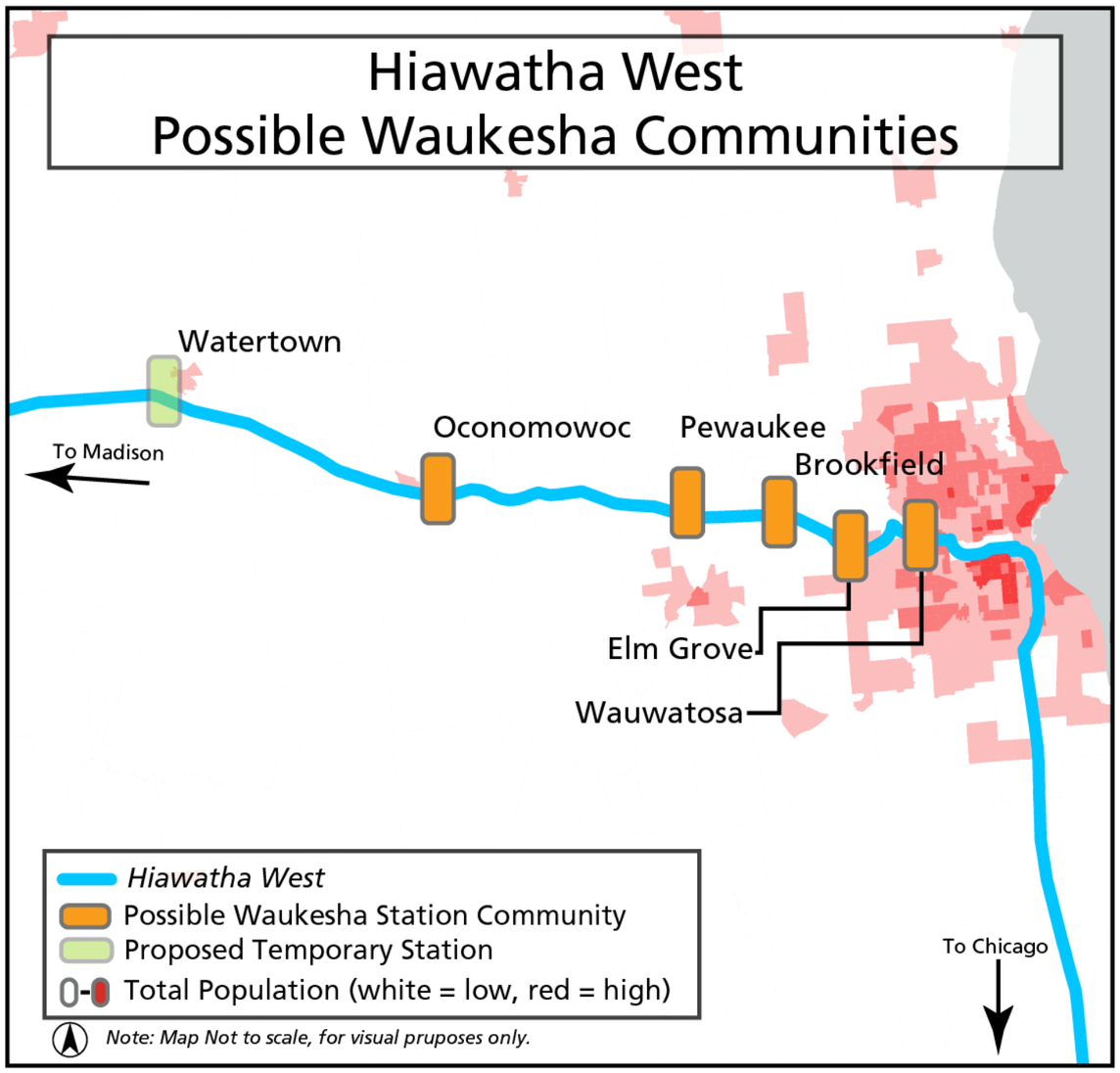
Travel Markets

- Proximity to population centers
- Location relative to other stations (spacing)
- Location relative to key destinations/employers

Potential Milwaukee/Waukesha Station Communities

Community	Opportunities	Challenges
Wauwatosa	High population density	Proximity to Milwaukee
Elm Grove	Located near Waukesha County population hubs	Proximity to Milwaukee & existing infrastructure
Brookfield	Central location within Waukesha County	Railroad operation requirements and limited space for parking
Pewaukee	Proximity to population hubs and spacing relative to Watertown/Madison/ Milwaukee	Site may have engineering challenges
Oconomowoc	Growing community location options in downtown core	Proximity to Waukesha County population hubs

NOTE: Borealis and Empire Builder pass through these communities today



Sites Considered in Pewaukee

**** Selected as this location was identified as the location most compatible with CPKC operations and required the least infrastructure for quick implementation***



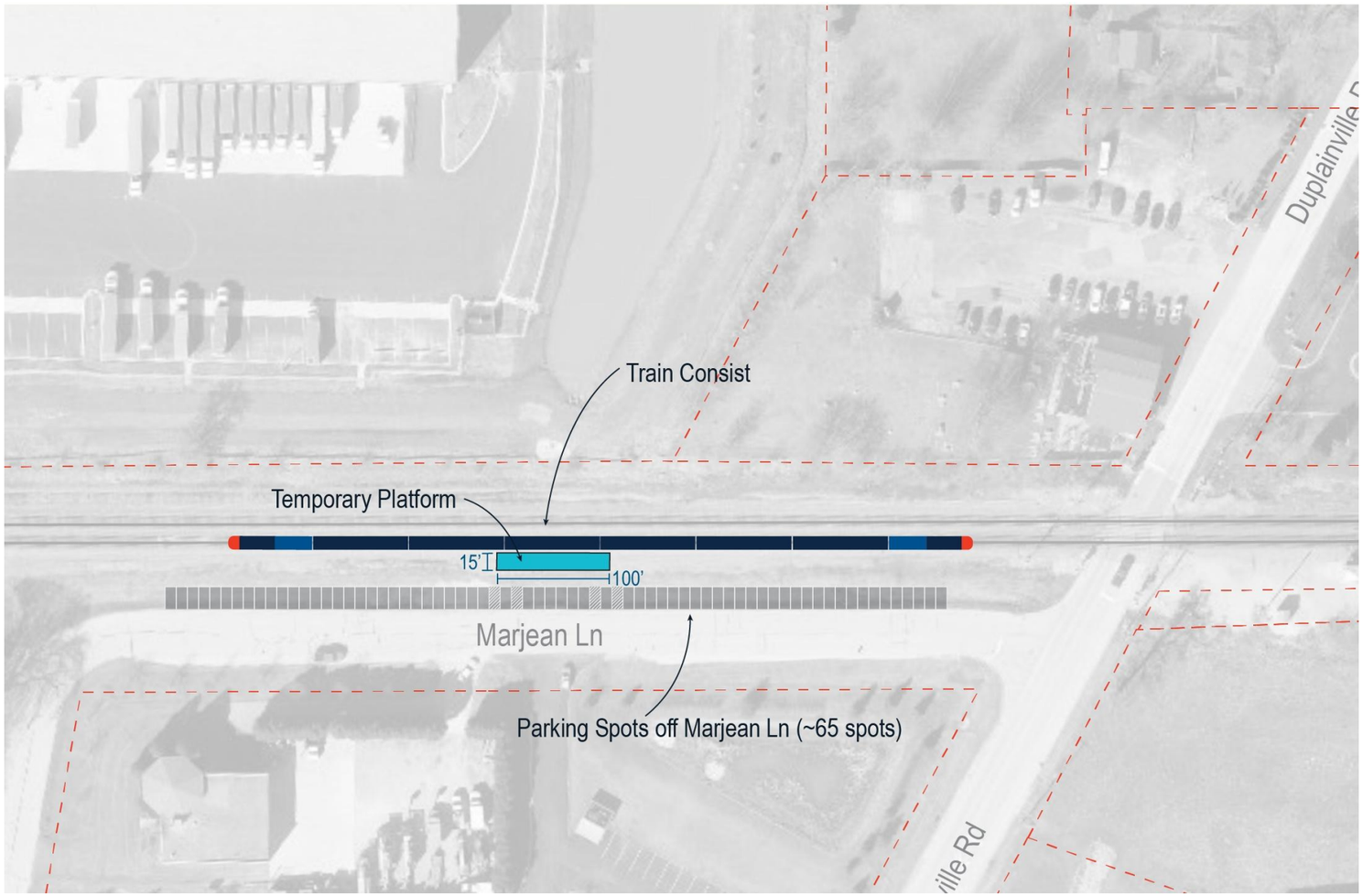
Preferred Temporary Station-Pewaukee Duplainville Rd

Statistics and map showing image of what a station platform could look like.

53,800
Projected Annual Ons/Offs

73 Ons/Offs per Day

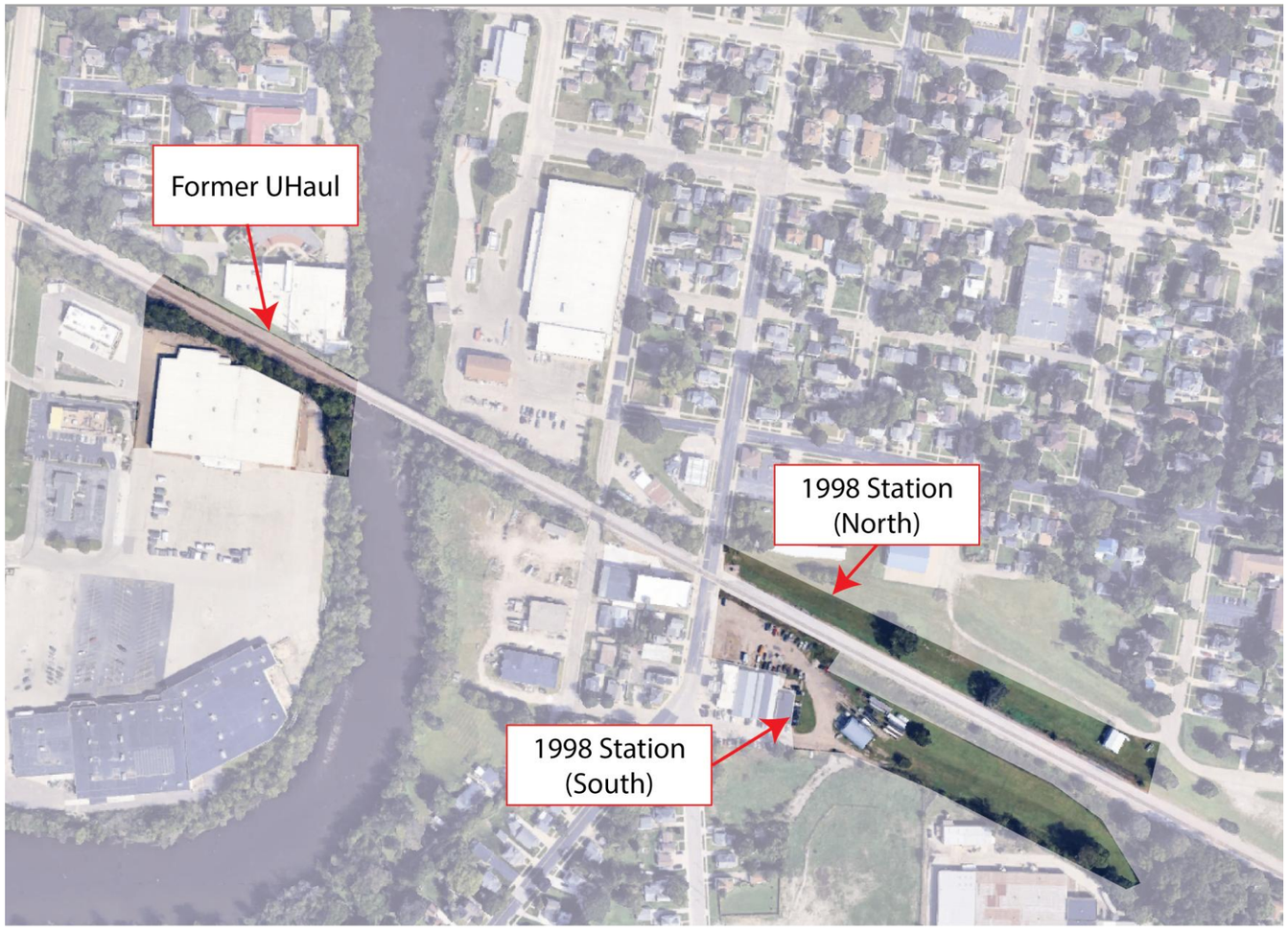
Anticipated 65 Parking Spaces



Based on preliminary analysis, some statistics are subject to change as additional analysis occurs.

Watertown Site Selection

Map showing potential sites considered



Watertown had a temporary station during a 1998 highway construction mitigation project

Amtrak Evaluated 3 station sites

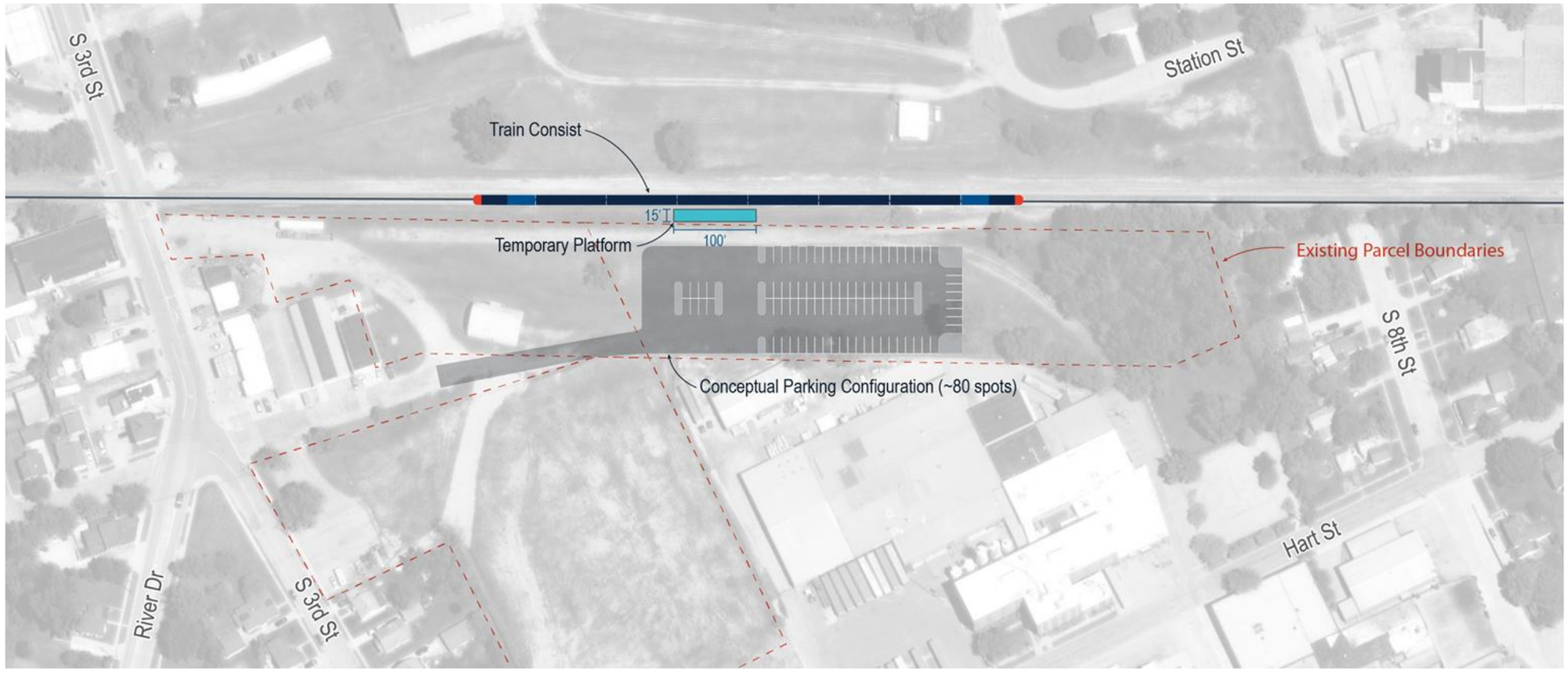
- 2 sites at the 1998 location
- 1 site at a former U-Haul facility

Selected the 1998-South Site

- Fewer engineering challenges compared to U-Haul
- More space for parking and future expansion than 1998-North
- Better roadway access than 1998-North

Preferred Temporary Station-Watertown 3rd Street

Statistics and map showing image of what a station platform could look like.



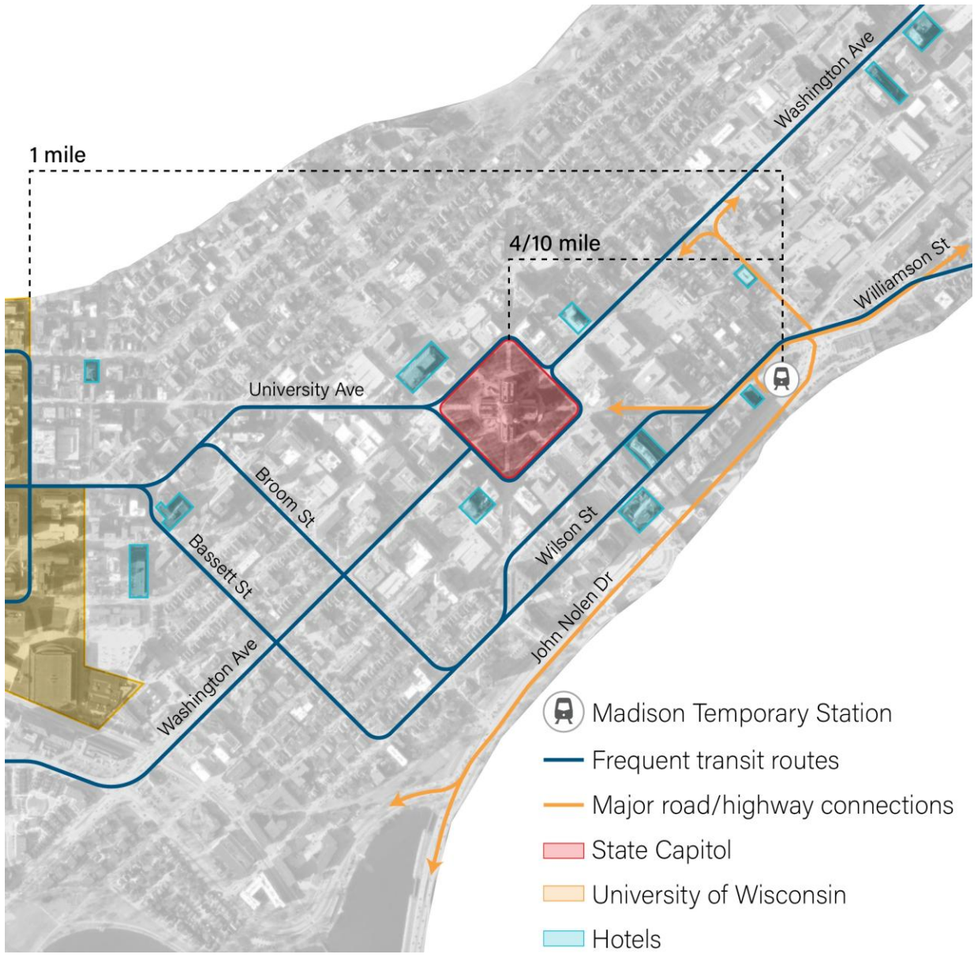
Projected 34,400 annual ons/offs	On private land; city coordinating with land owner	Sufficient highway and roadway access	Ample space for parking	Close proximity to downtown

Based on preliminary analysis, some statistics are subject to change as additional analysis occurs.

Madison Temporary Station Location

Decision factors leading to downtown location

Map showing key statistics and sites considered



Strong access to/from traffic generators and last mile connections

- UW, Capitol, Convention Center, Hotels, Healthcare destinations
- Strong transit connections
- Strong highway access via John Nolen Dr, East Washington

Location within broader market area

- Geographic center of Dane County affording good access from larger metro area

Real estate and land use

- City-owned land and surface parking lot
- High visibility
- Complimentary surrounding land uses and high density

Railroad operations and track

Sites Considered in Madison

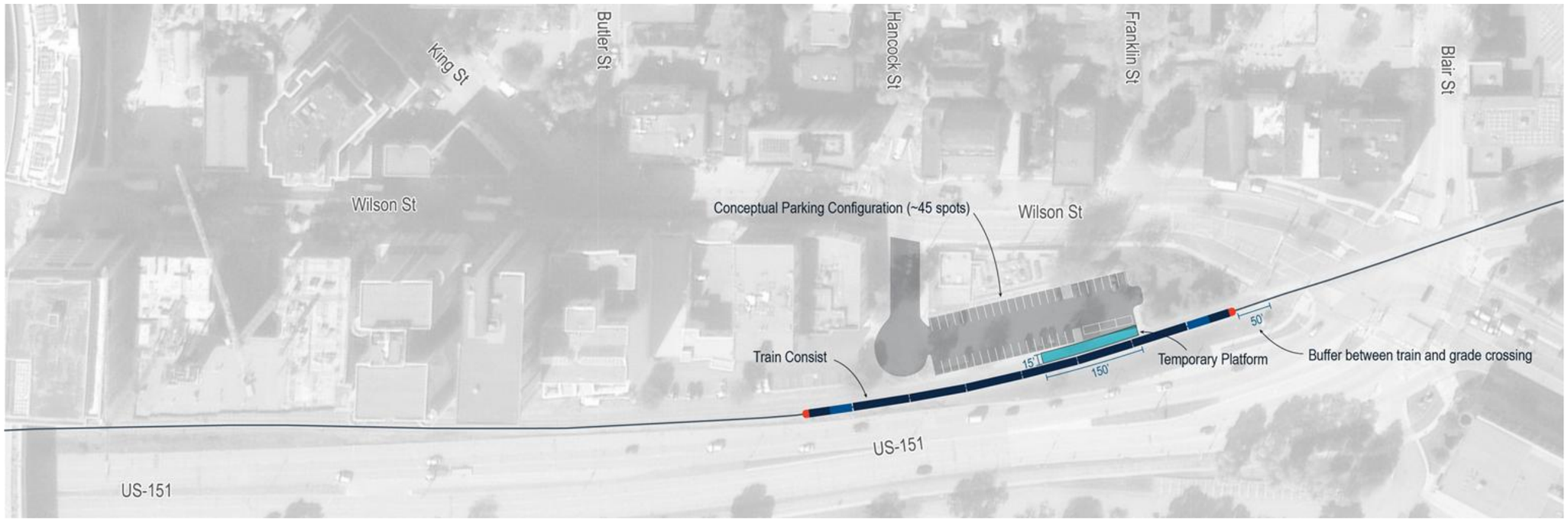
Map showing sites considered



* This location was identified as the location most compatible with WSOR operations. Additionally, the site's city ownership and downtown location are favorable.

Preferred Temporary Station – Madison East Wilson St.

Map showing key statistics and sites considered



Projected annual ~215,000 ons/offs

200 ft platform with ramps, lights, parking and drop/off

City-owned land and lot

Alignment with City of Madison Station Study

Tranist Connection on Wilson Street

Based on preliminary analysis, some statistics are subject to change as additional analysis occurs.

Key Schedule Evaluation Criteria

Logistics

- Minimize conflicts with existing freight and passenger trains

Commercial Performance

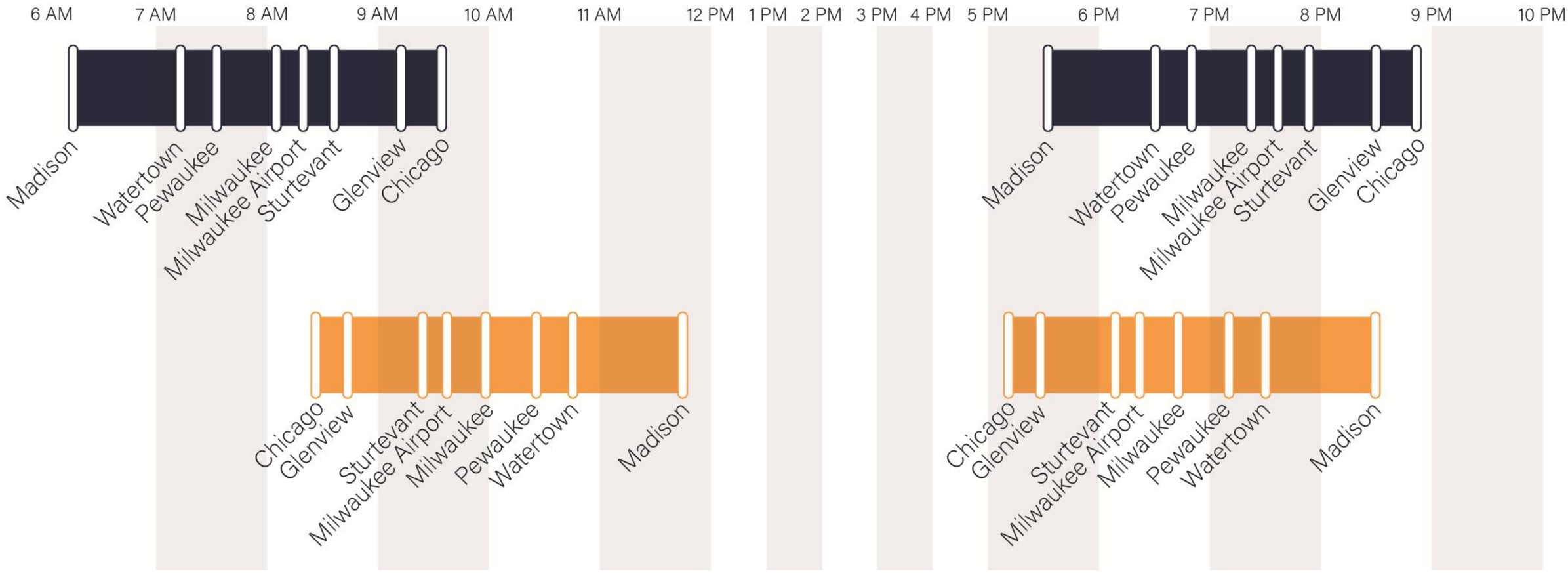
- Projected ridership and revenue
- Projected operating costs

Travel Markets

- Ability to serve different users (business, students, etc.)
- Connections to other Amtrak services
- Convenience (i.e. enable day trips in both directions)

Initial Draft Conceptual Schedule

Based on initial infrastructure evaluation, will be refined as project advances



Infrastructure Upgrades

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Infrastructure Analysis Process

Determine existing railroad conditions and improvements for passenger service

Analyze congestion points

Identify improvements to mitigate congestion

Test Infrastructure & confirm with host railroads

CPKC Existing Infrastructure Conditions

- 45.7-mile segment
- Single track Watertown to Pewaukee with two passing sidings
- Double track Pewaukee to Milwaukee
- 79 MPH max speed (passenger)
- Signaling system for freight and passenger operations in place



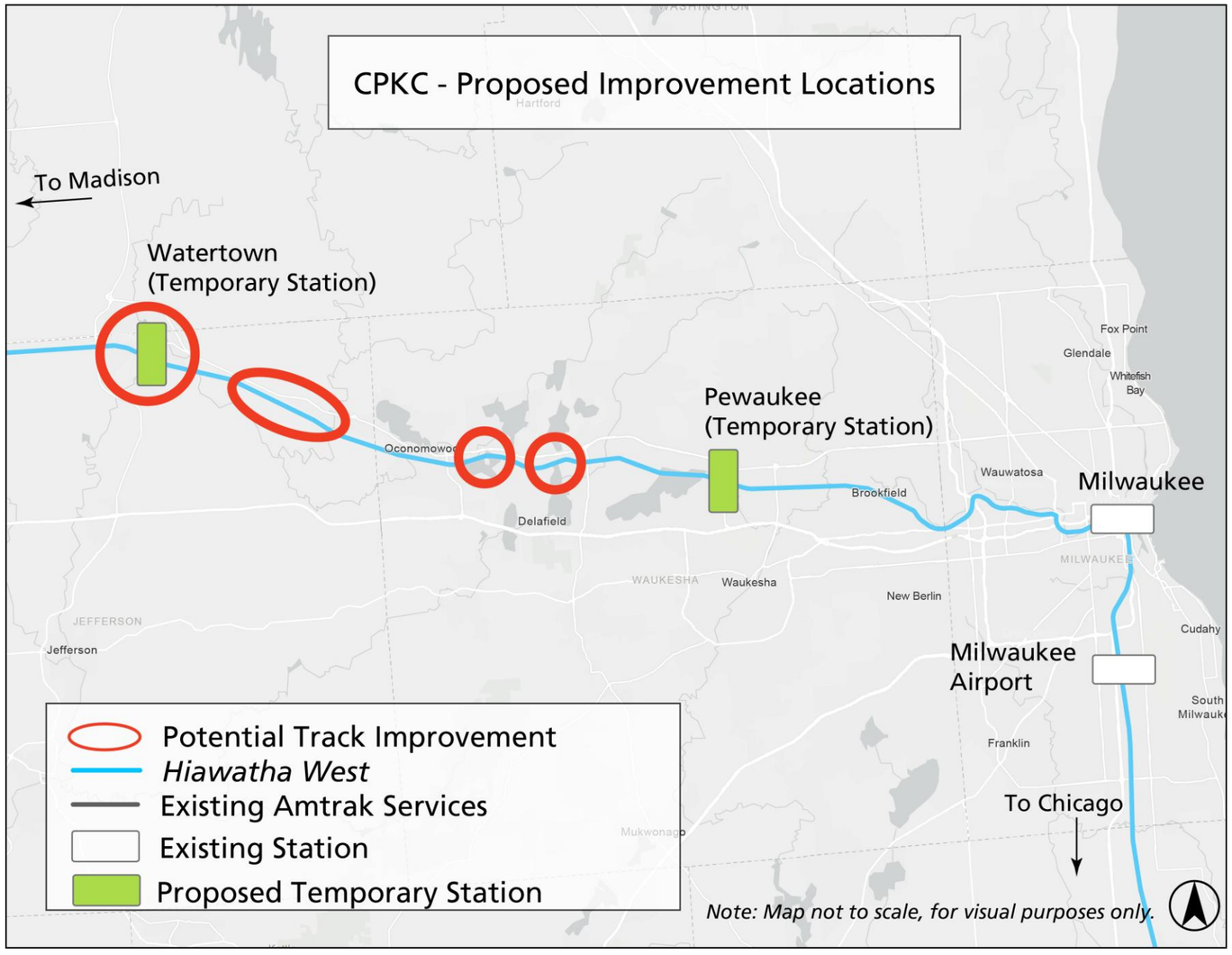
CPKC Anticipated Infrastructure Improvements

Analysis with CPKC is ongoing

Initial analysis includes several safety and capacity investments

- Extending existing sidings (see red on map)
- Crossovers from one track to the other

All infrastructure improvements anticipated to occur within existing railroad ROW



Map showing specific areas considered for improvements

Based on preliminary analysis, some aspects are subject to change as additional analysis occurs.

WSOR Existing Conditions









35-mile segment, sufficient conditions for current freight operations

Track is suitable for up to 30 MPH speeds; Upgrades are required for 59 MPH

26 bridges, 11 require upgrades for faster passenger speeds

61 at-grade crossings

52 require safety upgrades
consolidate and improve several crossings

Watertown ←→ Madison Railroad Infrastructure Improvements

Track & Signal Improvements

Upgrade Track to Faster Speeds

30→ 59 MPH → 79 MPH

new rail, ties, ballast

PTC/CTC
Signal System for future 79 MPH speeds

Bridge Improvements

11 Bridge Rehabilitations or Replacements

Crossings

Upgrade Existing Crossings

Grade Crossing Closures

Signage at private crossings

Stations & Facilities

Temporary Station in Madison

(ADA-compliant temporary platforms)

Train Parking and Servicing Site

In

Madison

Grade Crossing Improvements

New safety devices (gates, lights, bells) at 35 existing crossings

Upgraded safety devices at 17 existing crossings

For system safety, some crossing consolidation in Waterloo and Madison

(additional municipal coordination to occur)

Signage at private active farm crossings



Based on preliminary analysis, some aspects are subject to change as additional analysis occurs.

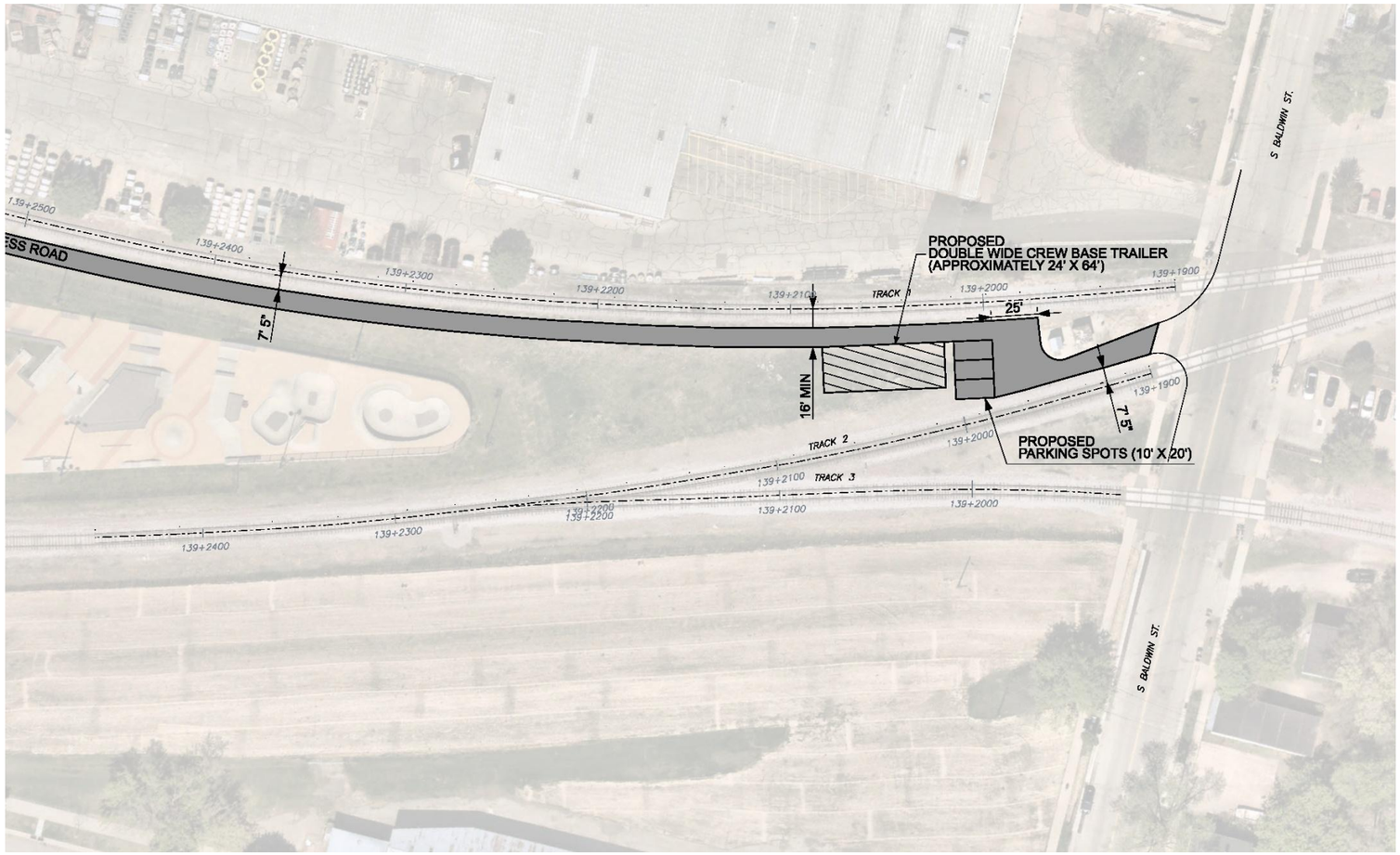
Temporary Layover Site & Crew Base

Amtrak will park and service a train on existing track behind Metro Transit

For security, area will have lighting improvements and trains will be fenced off

Trains will have an electric connection to minimize locomotive idling

Trailer for mechanical staff and crew



Map showing a rendering of potential layover facility

Based on preliminary analysis, some aspects are subject to change as additional analysis occurs.

Anticipated Train Equipment

Current Hiawatha Service Equipment

- Two sets of Siemens Venture coaches and Siemens Charger locomotives

Hiawatha West Equipment

- Will require a third set of Siemens Venture coaches and a Charger locomotive
- May be supplemented with existing Amtrak-owned single-level cars to start service

Equipment Notes

- Venture is the newest Midwest equipment
- Chargers are a Tier-4 EPA locomotive, meaning strict limits on exhaust emissions
- Chargers are quieter than legacy fleet





Estimated Costs & Economic Impact

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Capital Investment and Economic Impact

- Total project costs are expected to be approximately $215-$275 million
- Funding would be secured via existing federal grant programs covering up to 80% of project costs, with state and local partners covering 20%
- These capital investments will yield economic impacts from construction employment and spending in Wisconsin. These benefits are in the process of being quantified and will be released soon.

$215-$275 million
estimated total project cost

80% Federal Funded
$172 - $220 million

20% local match
$43-$55 million

Based on preliminary analysis, some aspects are subject to change as additional analysis occurs.

Hiawatha West Operating Support & Economic Impact

Estimated $2.5M in annual operating support

For reference, current Chicago-Milwaukee Hiawatha operating support is ~$5.6M

Yields

Estimated $46.3M in annual economic impact
&
200 permanent jobs

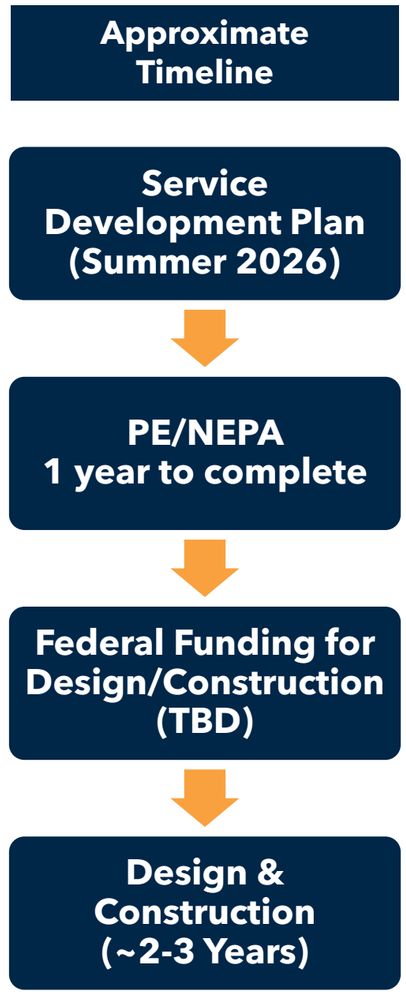
Economic impact analysis summarizes visitor spending and economic activity from operating the additional service. Subject to revision as the project advances. Operating support may also be refined as the project progresses.

When can service start?

Several unknowns prevent identification of a specific start year at this current stage

- Service start depends on the timing of:
  - Federal approvals for Service Development Plan, Preliminary Engineering and NEPA
  - Federal grant funds for final design and construction: 80% federal
  - Securing 20% state match to federal grant in next state budget
  - Construction materials lead times

Amtrak is committed to working with funding partners to expedite the process to get to service start



Questions?

Feedback Opportunities & Next Steps to Follow

Feedback Opportunities & Next Steps

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Stay involved in Hiawatha West

Submit questions and comments on Service Development Plan using online form

Sign up for project updates

Please provide comments on Service Development Plan by May 15th

Additional involvement opportunities during the next step: Preliminary Engineering and NEPA / Environmental



Next Steps to Complete Service Development Plan



Additional Public & Host Railroad Feedback



Meetings with Additional Key Stakeholders



Revise Service Development Plan



Submission to FRA

Thank You!

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