



ILLINOIS PASSENGER RAIL
CHICAGO TO MILWAUKEE



ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT | Chicago-Milwaukee Hiawatha Service Intercity Passenger Rail Project



More Trips on the Amtrak Hiawatha Service Proposed PUBLIC INVITED TO COMMENT

The public is invited to comment on proposed service improvements for Amtrak's Hiawatha Service that would provide a total of ten round trips per day, seven days a week between Chicago and Milwaukee. Currently the route provides seven round trips Monday through Saturday and six on Sunday. The proposed improvements are part of an Environmental Assessment being conducted by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) and the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) in partnership with the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA).

Over the past four years, the project team has studied alternatives to address increased demand for the service and have advanced an alternative that includes track and infrastructure improvements that will accommodate increased service on the route. The project's purpose is to address existing and future passenger rail demand, provide an alternative to traffic delay, reliability issues, and long travel times, strengthen transportation connections to other transportation modes and enhance and improve Hiawatha Service reliability.

About the Hiawatha Service

IDOT and WisDOT have jointly operated the 86-mile Hiawatha Service since 1989. The popular Service has five stations, including Chicago Union Station, Glenview, Sturtevant, the Milwaukee Airport and the Milwaukee Intermodal Station.

Traveling at a maximum speed of 79-miles per hour, a typical one-way trip between Chicago and Milwaukee takes one hour and 29 minutes, and each train seats up to 416 passengers.



What is an ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT?

An Environmental Assessment (EA) is a concise public document that has been prepared for this project as guided by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

THE NEPA PROCESS HELPS PUBLIC OFFICIALS:

Make decisions based on understanding of environmental consequences

Take actions that protect, restore, and enhance the environment

The EA provides sufficient evidence and analysis to determine whether a proposed project will require the preparation of a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) or an Environmental Impact Statement.



Illinois Department of Transportation

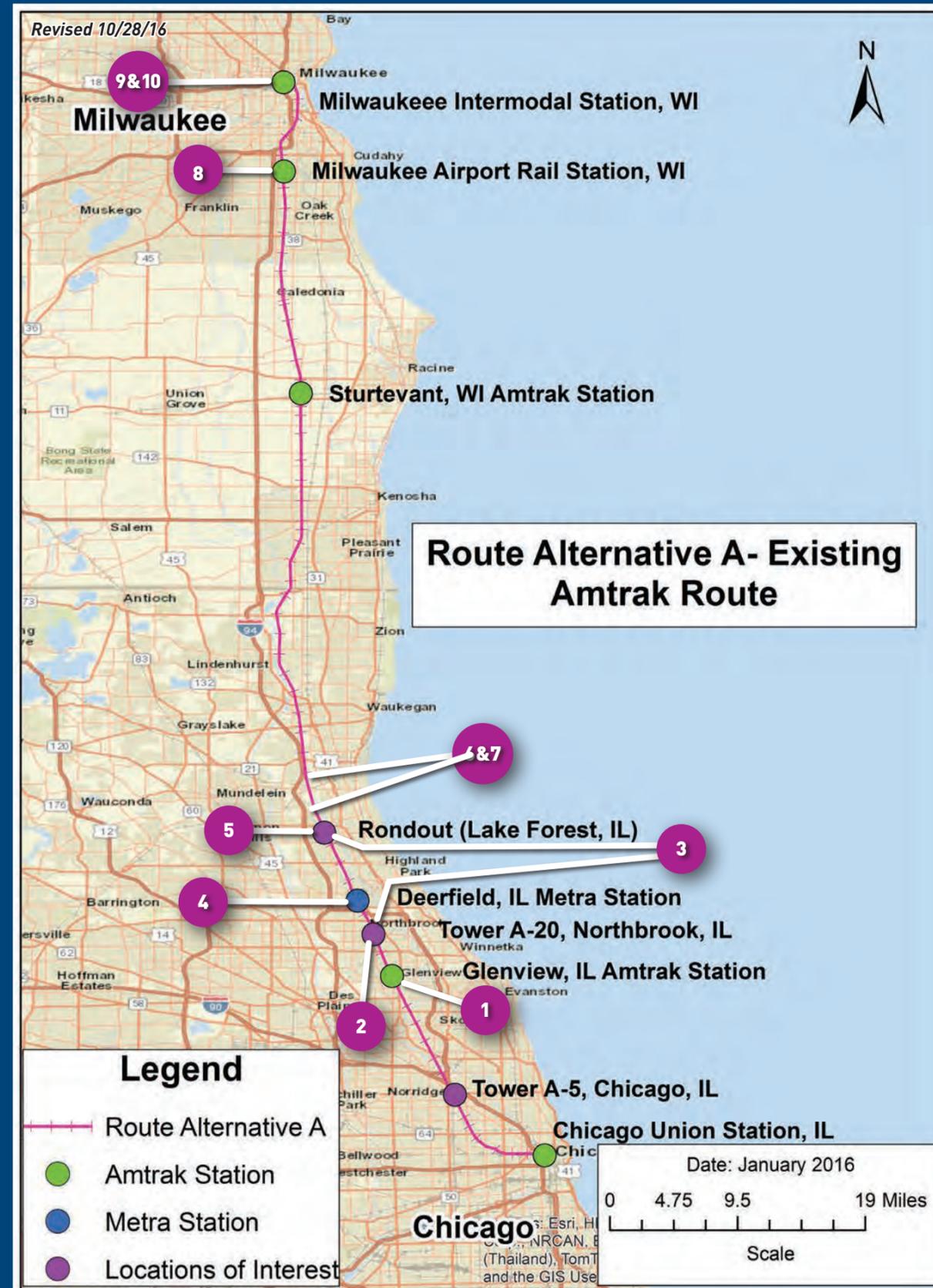


U. S. Department of Transportation

PROJECT MAP

In order to increase Hiawatha Service frequency to 10 round trips per day, the project proposes 10 infrastructure investment projects.

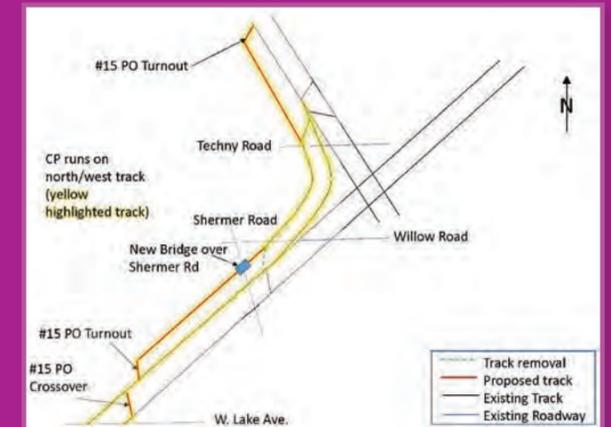
- 1 Glenview Universal Crossover**
 - >> Construct two track crossovers
 - >> Allows trains to move onto opposite tracks, increasing operating flexibility
- 2 UPRR Siding Extension at A-20**
 - >> Two design alternatives propose to construct a 10,000 foot section of track adjacent to Canadian Pacific and Union Pacific mainlines in Glenview (see alternative maps on the right)
 - >> Reduces delays on the mainline for passenger and freight rail by providing additional track capacity
- 3 Speed Increase between A-20 and Rondout**
 - >> Speed increase for certain freight trains from 40 MPH to 50 MPH between the railroad control points in Northbrook, IL and Lake Forest, IL.
 - >> Reduces travel times for freight trains traveling through the 12-mile segment and provides an improvement in capacity
- 4 Deerfield Holding Track**
 - >> Construct new 1,500 foot track to allow Metra trains to change direction off the mainline
 - >> Increases schedule flexibility by freeing up capacity on the mainline
- 5 Lake Forest Universal Crossover**
 - >> Construct two track crossovers
 - >> Allows trains to move onto opposite tracks, increasing operating flexibility
- 6 Rondout Siding Extension**
 - >> Extend siding track approximately 13,000 feet to the south
 - >> Provides operational flexibility for both freight and passenger trains
- 7 Metra Fox Lake Second Track**
 - >> Replace antiquated signal equipment
 - >> Upgrade trackwork and construct second track on the Fox Lake Subdivision
 - >> Significantly improves Metra, Amtrak, and freight delays by moving stopped trains off the mainline
- 8 Milwaukee Airport Rail Station Second Platform**
 - >> Install second rail platform on the west side of the Canadian Pacific tracks, elevator towers, and an overhead pedestrian bridge
 - >> Decreases congestion on the mainline tracks and increases reliability for all users
- 9 Muskego Yard Signalization**
 - >> Provides operational flexibility for Canadian Pacific trains by providing a two-track signalized alternative route around Milwaukee Station
- 10 Milwaukee Station-Cut-Off CTC Installation**
 - >> Provides increased reliability and operational flexibility to Amtrak and freight trains traveling through the station
 - >> Enables trains to operate more efficiently and at higher speeds in this segment of track



UPRR Siding ALTERNATIVES

ALTERNATIVE 1

Would construct an 11,000-foot track extension adjacent to the UP Milwaukee Subdivision on the west side of the existing two mainlines and construct a new bridge over Shermer Road adjacent to the existing bridge.



ALTERNATIVE 2

Would construct a 10,000-foot track adjacent to the UP Milwaukee Subdivision on the east side of the existing two mainlines and construct a new bridge over Shermer Road adjacent to the existing bridge. Would construct track swings to allow UP mainline operations to occur on the eastern two tracks.



Hiawatha Service Trends & Facts

Increasing Ridership

Since 2001, Hiawatha Service ridership has nearly doubled. Ridership in 2014 was nearly 805,000 trips – a 93 percent increase over 13 years.



Project Will Provide Robust Alternative to Highway Travel

- ✓ Traffic volumes projected to increase on I-94 & other highways in the Hiawatha Service corridor.
- ✓ 70% of passengers surveyed say they would have traveled by auto if train were not available.
- ✓ Avoiding congestion was the primary reason respondents provided for taking the train.

More Multimodal Choices

The proposed train schedule options are critical to provide more flexibility for passengers and to help them make connections to intercity and local bus service, air service, and other rail routes.

Consistent with Regional Planning Goals

- ✓ 2012 Illinois State Transportation Plan
- ✓ Metro Chicago's GO TO 2040 Comprehensive Plan
- ✓ Wisconsin Connections 2030 Plan
- ✓ Wisconsin Rail Plan 2030
- ✓ SEWRPC Vision 2050



Service Reliability

- ✓ On-Time Performance remains strong but has seen some recent decreases including a six percent decrease from 2004-2015.
- ✓ 40 percent of delays have been related to other trains indicating that there are railroad capacity challenges on the corridor that need to be addressed.

GET INVOLVED



The public is invited to comment on the EA. The full EA document was made available for public review and comment starting on Thursday, October 6, 2016 on the project websites:

chi-milwrailstudy.wi.gov

illinoisrail.org

Comments received by Tuesday, November 15, 2016 will become part of the official record.