

TCMC PUBLIC PRESENTATION

Released: March 18, 2021



**ARUN
RAO**
AICP

Passenger Rail
Manager
WisDOT



**FRANK
LOETTERLE**
AICP

Freight and
Rail Planner
MnDOT



PRESENTERS

**AARON
BOWE**
PE

Project
Manager
HNTB



**CARON
KLOSER**
AICP

Environmental
Lead
HNTB



PRESENTATION TOPICS

- > Project background
- > Project overview
- > Improvement areas
- > Project timeline
- > Next steps



TCMC HIGHLIGHTS

- > Provides a **second daily round trip** passenger train service along the highly traveled Twin Cities, Milwaukee and Chicago corridor
- > **Uses existing rail infrastructure**, stations and train equipment to keep costs down
- > Improves railroad operations and expands capacity to provide **more reliable service with better on-time performance** for both passenger and freight trains
- > Connects with local transit, bus services and air travel to **enhance the intercity transportation network** throughout Wisconsin and Minnesota





2015 Amtrak Feasibility Study

- > Studied adding second frequency to TCMC corridor
- > Favorable ridership and revenue projections



2016 to 2018 Activities

- > Developed purpose and need for project
- > Evaluated route and service alternatives
- > Conducted operations simulation modeling
- > Identified capital improvements and cost estimates

PRIOR TCMC STUDIES

KEY OUTCOMES

- > Selected a preferred route and service schedule
- > Identified infrastructure improvements
- > Positioned the project for federal funding and next project phases

PURPOSE and NEED



The **purpose** of the TCMC Project is to:

- > Address gaps in the regional transportation system
- > Provide flexibility and convenience oriented towards intercity travel within the TCMC corridor

The **need** of the project is based on:

- > Limited non-auto transportation options along the corridor especially for small and mid-size communities
- > Population and economic growth that increases roadway congestion and airline delays
- > Lack of passenger train schedule choices
- > Capacity issues with the Empire Builder service during peak travel periods

CURRENT PROJECT PHASE



Service Development Plan

- > Route and service alternatives analysis finalized
- > Preferred alternative confirmed
- > Project operations and financial feasibility
- > Capital improvement needs
- > Benefit-cost analysis



Environmental Review

- > Evaluate project's natural, social, economic and cultural effects
- > Environmental document under FRA review
- > If approved by FRA, project may proceed with final design and construction



Secure Funding

- > Federal
- > State
- > Amtrak

FEDERAL GRANT AWARDS

TCCM was awarded two federal grants in 2020.

- > \$12.6 million Restoration and Enhancement grant to support operational costs
- > \$31.8 million Consolidated Railroad Infrastructure and Safety Improvement grant to support final design and construction costs



Wisconsin-Minnesota passenger rail project selected to receive \$31.8 million federal grant

Release date: September 30, 2020

The joint Wisconsin-Minnesota Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago Intercity Passenger Rail (TCMC) project will add an additional daily rail service between the Twin Cities and Chicago on the existing long-distance Amtrak Empire Builder route.

"The expanded service provides a much-improved travel experience for passengers between the Twin Cities and Chicago," Craig Thompson, Wisconsin Department of Transportation Secretary, said. "It will also provide many rural communities. They will have increased access to higher education facilities and jobs."

"Minnesotans will benefit from the expanded passenger rail service," MnDOT Commissioner Margaret Anderson Kelliher said. "It will also provide many rural communities. They will have increased access to higher education facilities and jobs."

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) announced the award of a \$31.8 million Consolidated Railroad Infrastructure and Safety Improvement (CRISI) competitive grant for final design and construction of the TCCM project.

The grant application received broad support from communities, stakeholders, business groups, state legislators, as well as members of Wisconsin's congressional delegation.

The TCCM project will:

- Increase passenger service
- and greatly improve the rail experience
- Double the number of daily trains

News From MIPRC States

SuperUser Account / Monday, May 11, 2020 / Categories: News From MIPRC States

'Second Empire Builder' project wins a \$12.6 million Restoration & Enhancement grant

The multi-state effort to add a second daily passenger train between the Twin Cities, Milwaukee and Chicago got a big boost when the **Federal Railroad Administration** announced the award of a \$12.6 million Restoration and Enhancement grant.

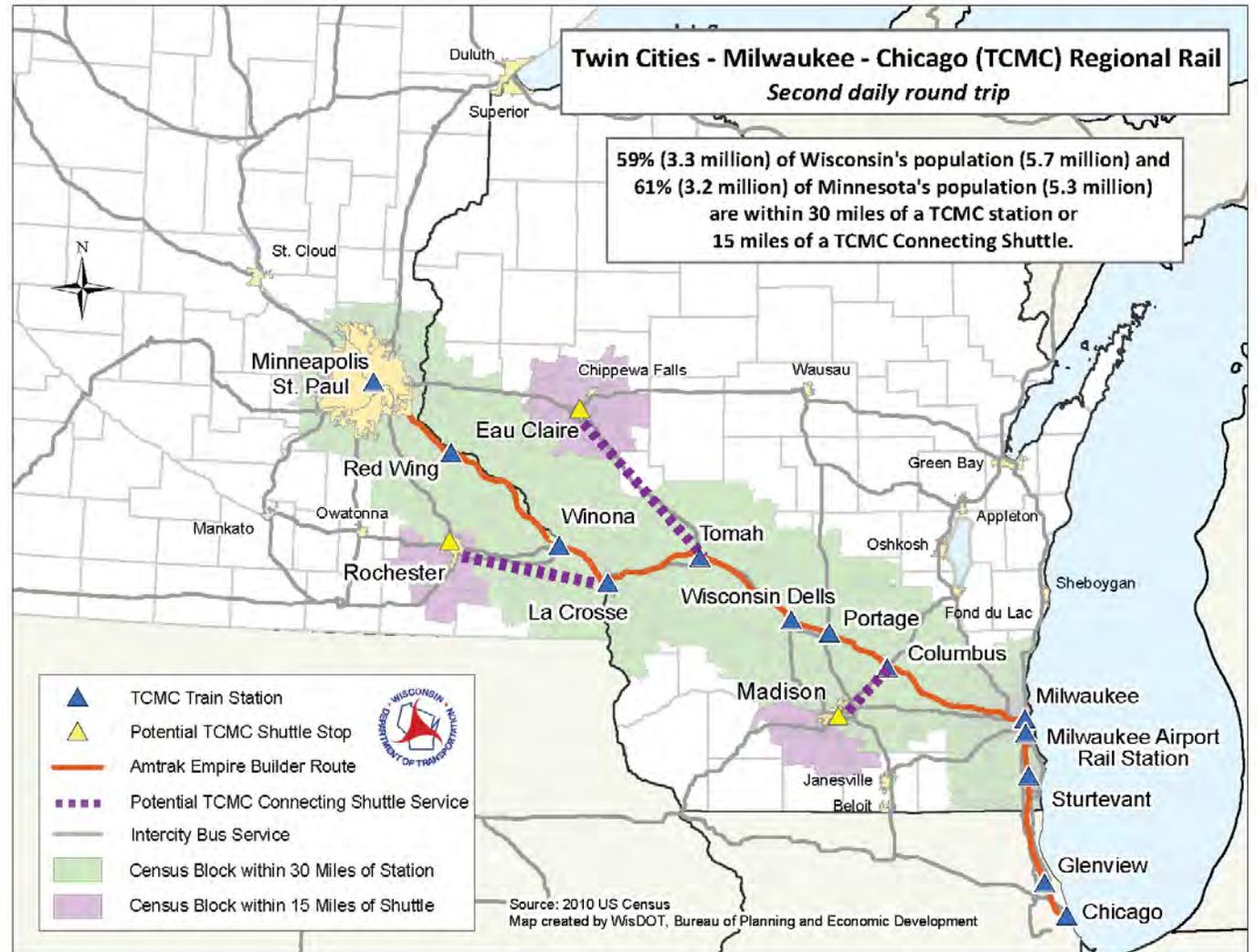
The grant was awarded to the Wisconsin Department of Transportation for the TCCM project, a.k.a. "the Second Empire Builder" project, authorized by the FRA on May 5 by the FRA. Authorized

'Second Empire Builder' project wins a \$12.6 million Restoration & Enhancement grant

TCMC CONNECTS PLACES, PEOPLE, and JOBS

Wisconsin and Minnesota Travel Shed

- > 6.5 million people
- > 3+ million jobs
- > 620 tourist attractions
- > 1,250 hotels and resorts
- > 7 casinos, 45 convention centers
- > 26 major medical facilities
- > 120 higher education institutions



TCMC BENEFITS



Traveler and User Benefits

- > Allows travelers to choose how they spend their travel time (work, rest, etc.)
- > Provides downtown-to downtown connections
- > Allows travelers to avoid traffic congestion, weather delays, parking, security lines, and tolls

Reliable and Convenient Service to Enhance Mobility

- > Shorter travel times (avoids bottlenecks to the west)
- > Improves on-time performance and service reliability
- > Provides more schedule choices allowing more convenient trips via rail
- > Enhances intermodal connectivity with local transit, bus services and air travel

TCMC BENEFITS



Community and Economic Development

- Helps create jobs
- Supports tourism and local businesses in smaller communities
- Supports economic development efforts to attract and retain jobs and businesses
- Serves smaller urban and rural communities that currently have limited transportation options

Freight Network Improvements

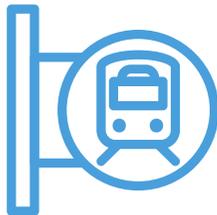
- Improves freight rail operations and capacity.
- Grade crossing and railroad capacity improvements improve safety and reduce gate down times
- Supports freight rail shippers
- More efficient freight train operations reduce emissions and take trucks off roads.

PROJECT OVERVIEW



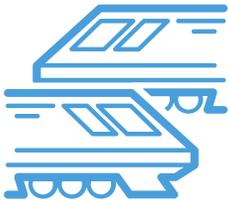
Route

411 miles
TCMC corridor
Saint Paul to Chicago



Stations

13 total
includes stations served
by Empire Builder and
Hiawatha routes



Train Frequency

2 round trips per day,
with TCMC and Empire
Builder service



Schedule

Doubles choices with
morning and mid-
day departures along
the corridor



Service Start

2024
depending on
availability of state
matching funds



Maximum Speed

79 miles per hour



Ridership

124,200 riders
annually projected
in opening year



Travel Time

7.5 hours
Saint Paul to Chicago

TCMC ROUTE

- > Utilizes the existing 411-mile Empire Builder route between Saint Paul and Chicago
- > Terminates at Union Depot in Saint Paul and Chicago Union Station
- > Stops at the 13 stations served by the Empire Builder and Hiawatha in the TCMC corridor





OPERATIONS and EQUIPMENT

- > Amtrak operator and crews
- > Initially uses existing Amtrak equipment
- > Equipment maintained at Amtrak 14th Street yard facility in Chicago
- > Light service, cleaning and crew layover at Amtrak's existing Midway facility in Saint Paul

IMPROVEMENT AREAS

* Potential improvements to Midway Station may occur if deemed necessary by Amtrak in future operations analysis

 Area of congestion

PROPOSED INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

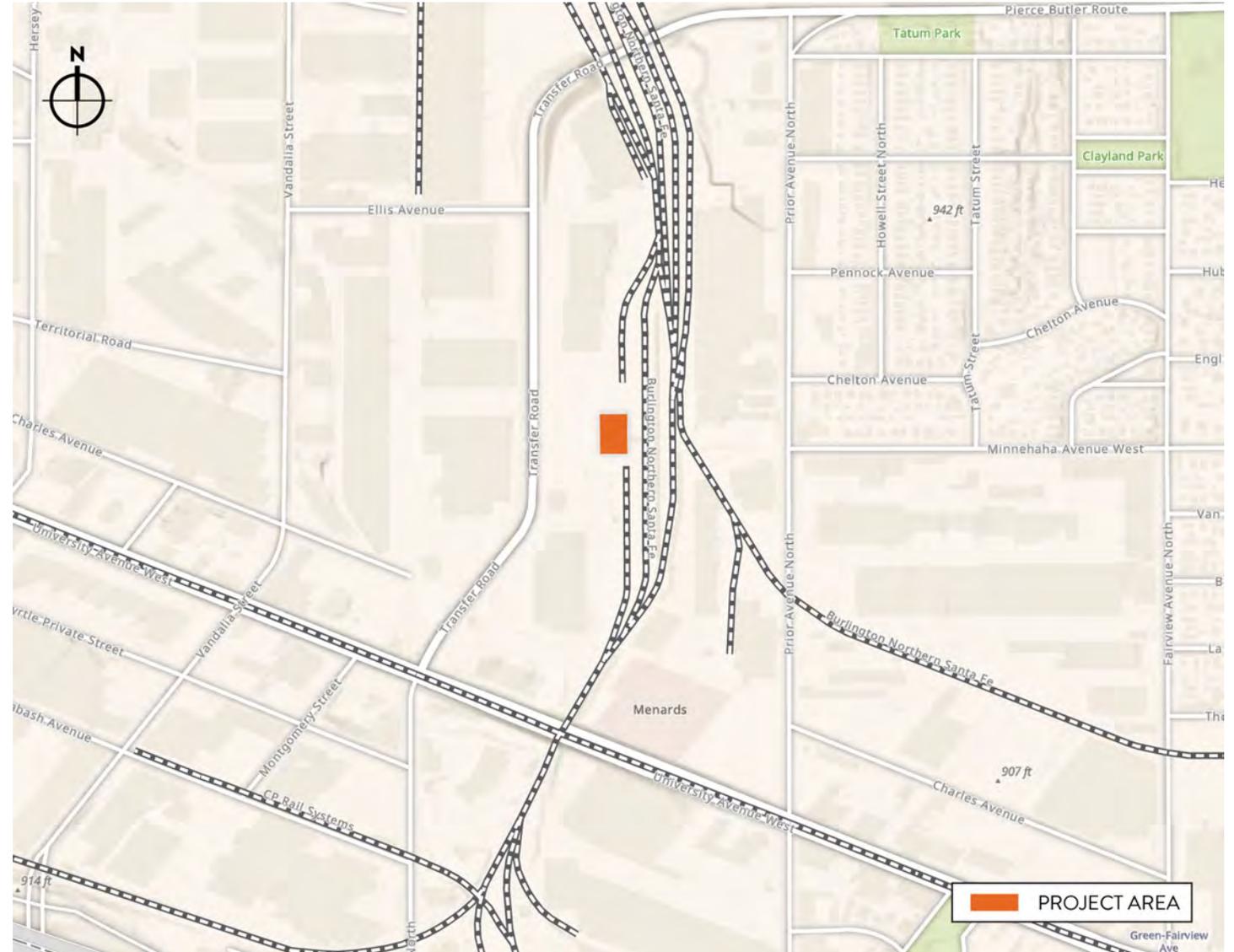
-  Siding extension
-  Upgrade with power switches and signals
-  New or converted track
-  Install universal crossover
-  Building improvements



NOTE:
These are **proposed** infrastructure improvements, subject to revisions during environmental review and final design work.

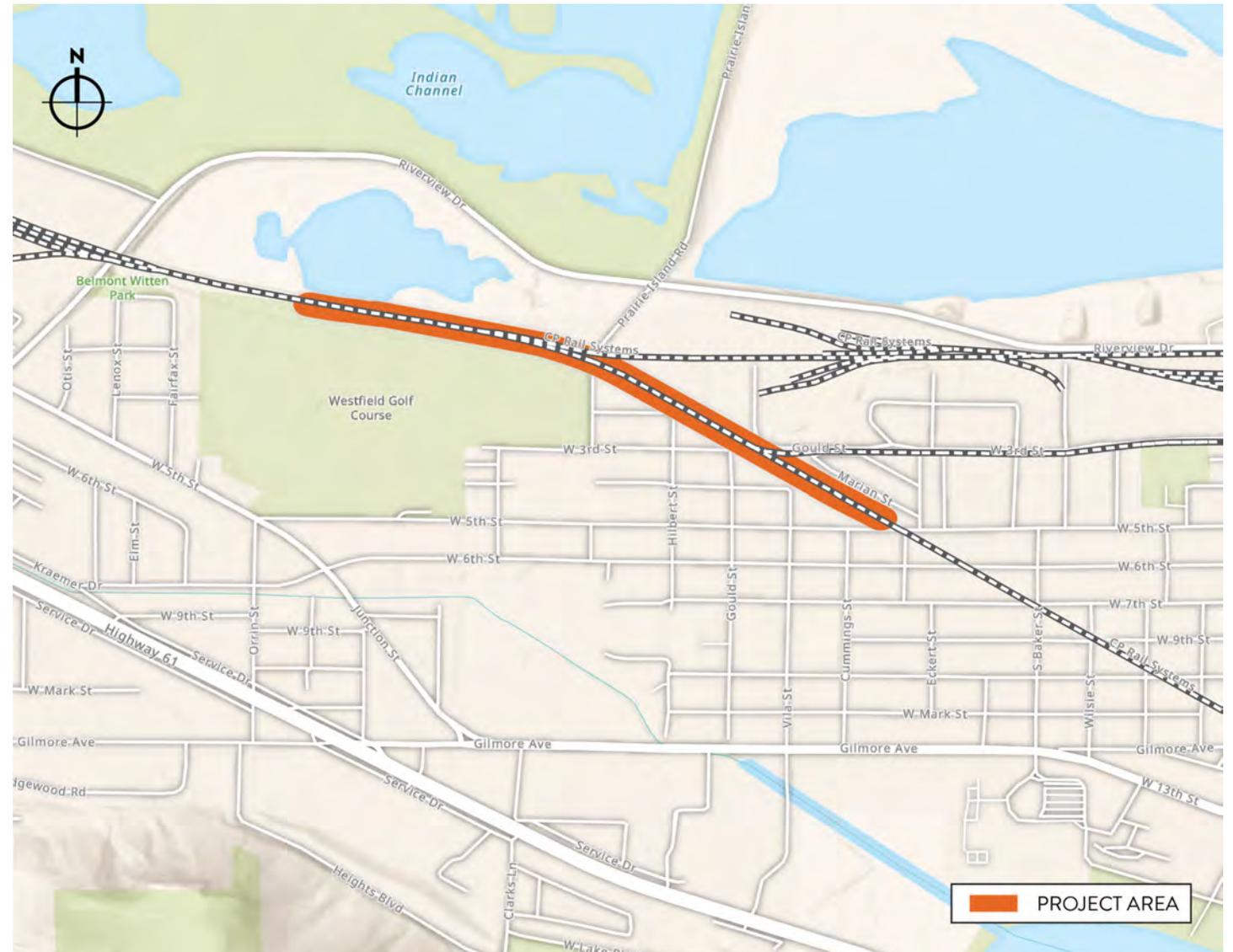
SAINT PAUL MIDWAY STATION

- > Potential interior renovations to serve as Amtrak crew base, layover and commissary facility
- > If deemed necessary by Amtrak in future operations analysis



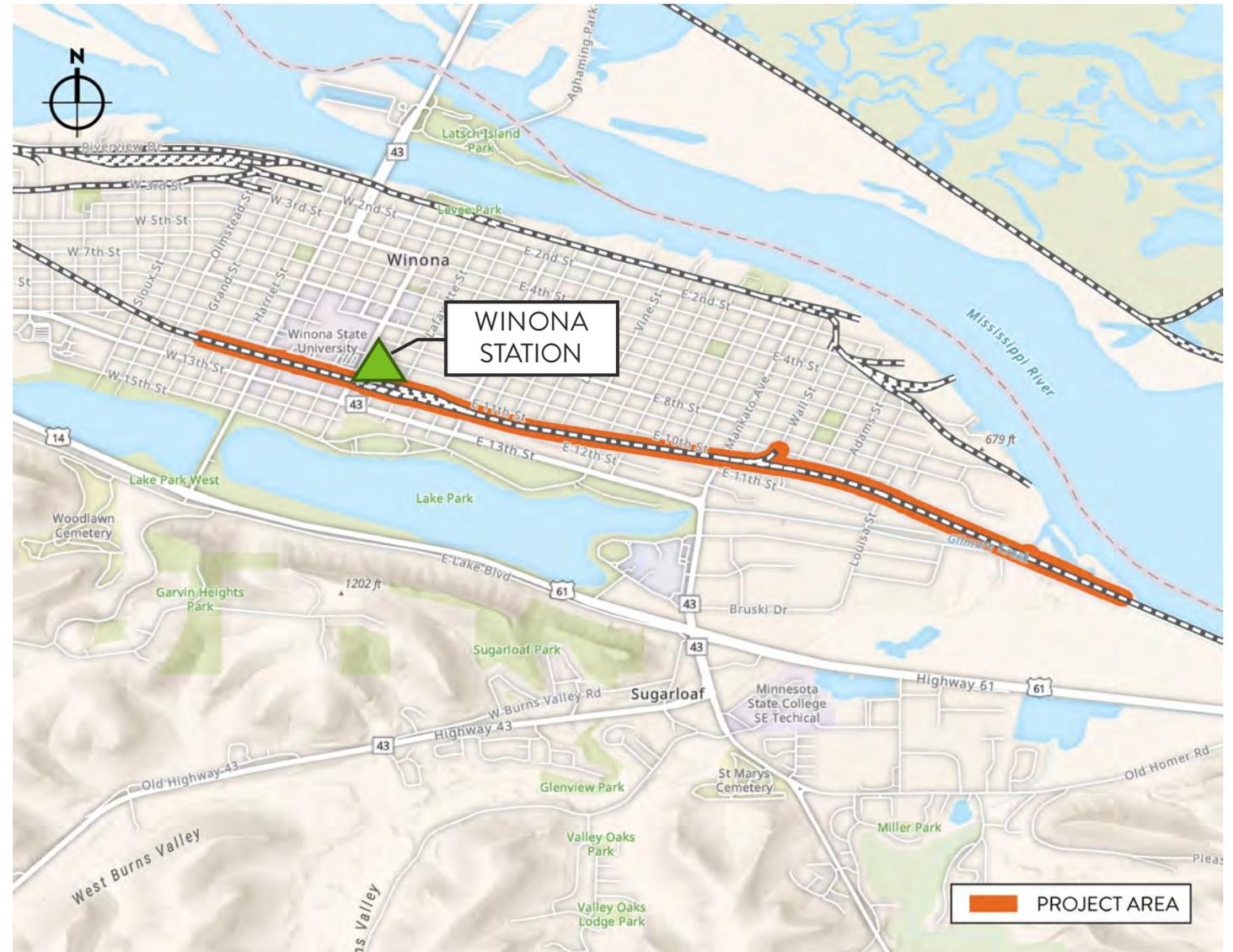
WINONA TOWER CK

- Extend siding about a half mile
- Construct new turnouts
- Install new signals and communications
- Reconstruct Bierce Street at-grade crossing



WINONA WINONA SIDING

- Rehabilitate two miles of existing siding track
- Construct new turnouts
- Install new signals and communications
- Reconstruct track and panels at six crossings



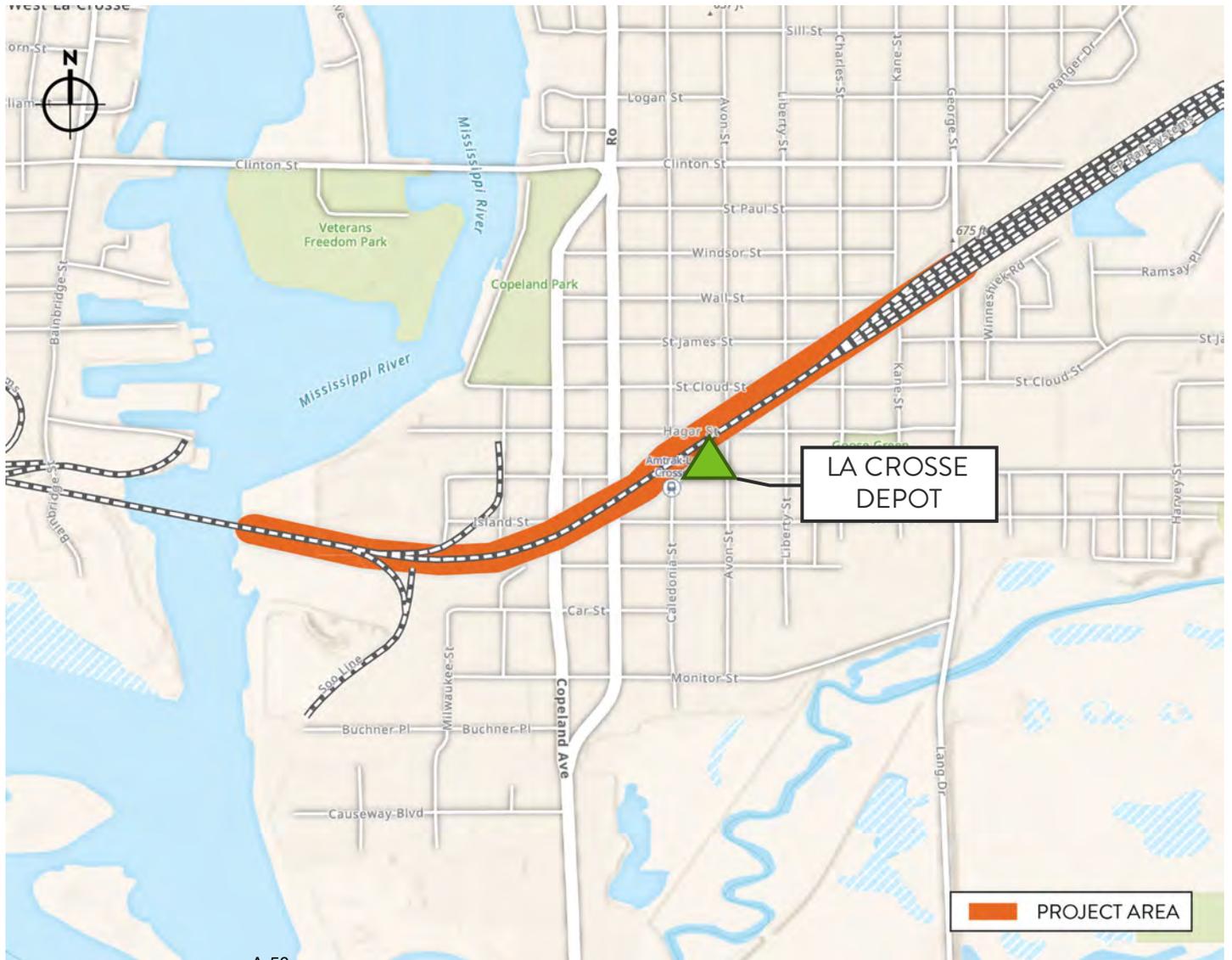
LA CRESCENT RIVER JUNCTION YARD

- Convert one mile of yard track to signaled second main track
- Construct 0.4 miles new wye connection track
- Construct new turnouts
- Install new signals and communications



LA CROSSE DEPOT AREA

- Rebuild second main track through La Crosse Depot
- Convert existing yard track to new yard lead track
- Extend yard lead-track to the west and add power switch
- Reconstruct crossings at Saint Cloud/Liberty streets and Avon/Hagar streets



CAPITAL COSTS

TCMC is a cost-effective project that leverages existing rail infrastructure, equipment and facilities.

\$53 million total

- > \$40.7 million in Minnesota
- > \$12.3 million in Wisconsin

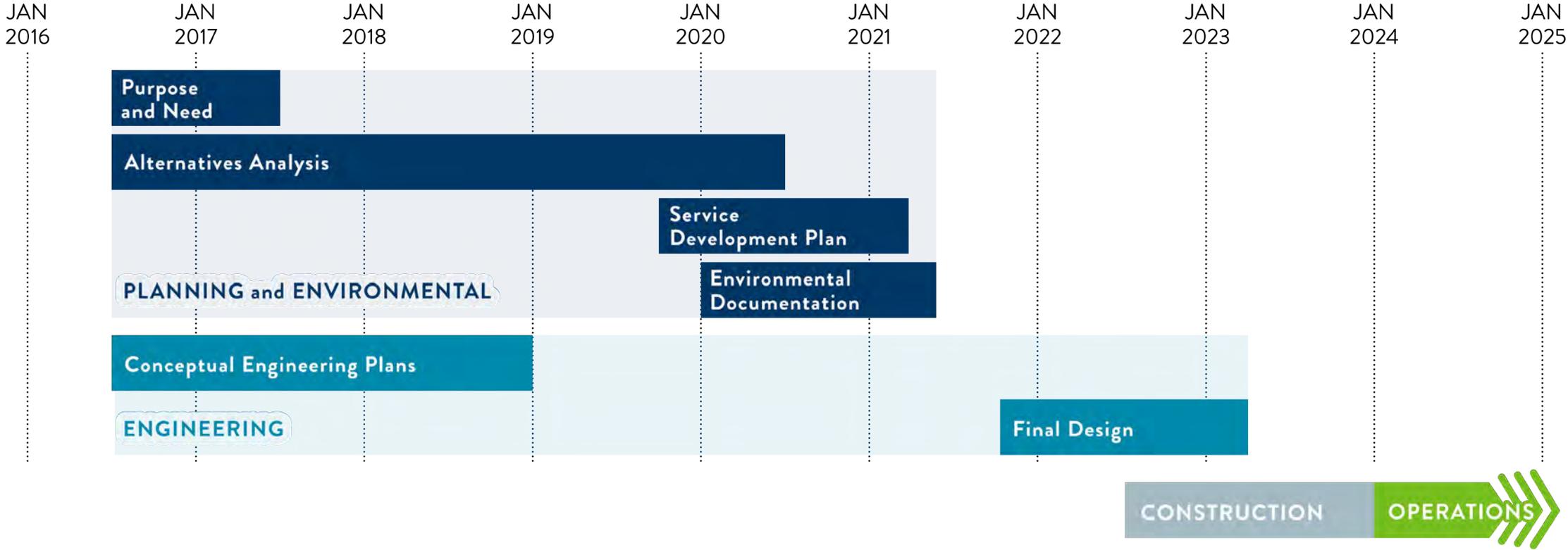
Funding partners:

- > WisDOT - \$6.5 million (pending approval)
- > MnDOT - \$10 million (pending approval)
- > Amtrak - \$5 million (committed)
- > FRA (CRISI grant) - \$31.8 million (committed)

REVENUES AND OPERATIONS (FIRST YEAR SERVICE)

TCMC Revenue and Operating Cost Forecast (\$ in millions)						
FISCAL YEAR	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
Annual Operating Cost	12.29	12.30	12.32	12.33	12.35	12.36
Annual Revenue	4.86	4.91	4.95	5.00	5.04	5.09
Total Operating Funding	7.43	7.40	7.37	7.34	7.30	7.27
State Partner Support (split among states)	1.81	3.20	4.58	7.34	7.30	7.27
Federal R&E Grant	5.62	4.20	2.79	0.00	0.00	0.00

- > Operating Cost: \$12.29 million
- > Revenue: \$4.86 million
- > Operating Support: \$7.43 million
 - Federal R&E grant \$5.62 million (committed)
 - State partners \$1.81 million



PROJECT TIMELINE

NEXT STEPS



- Complete environmental review spring 2021
- Secure state funding matches to federal grants
- Advance final design to prepare for construction

SUBMIT YOUR COMMENTS

Please submit your
comments by April 9, 2021

Use the online comment form at
WisDOT and MnDOT TCMC websites:

<https://wisconsindot.gov/Pages/projects/multimodal/tcmc.aspx>

or

<http://www.dot.state.mn.us/passengerrail/tc-mil-chi/>



*If you are unable to submit electronically,
please mail your comments to:*

Arun Rao, WisDOT Passenger Rail Manager
P.O. Box 7913, Madison, WI 53707