



**MADISON’S INTERCITY TRAIN STATION:
A CATALYST TO CONNECT OUR CITY TO OUR REGION**

PREPARED BY DOWNTOWN MADISON, INC.*

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

DMI Values and Madison's Intercity Train Station

The Downtown Madison, Inc. (DMI) Civic Engagement Agenda mission statement commits to sustaining, planning for, and growing downtown Madison as a vibrant regional economic engine that offers a best-in-class quality of life for businesses, downtown workers, residents, and visitors. Intercity passenger rail service to Madison touches many of the goals in the DMI Civic Agenda. DMI recognizes the empowering, once-in-a-generation opportunity, that intercity passenger rail enables the Madison metropolitan area with to accelerate its connections with other Midwestern economic engines.

Intercity passenger rail uniquely connects population centers separated by fewer than 500 miles with a greener, faster, and safer intercity travel than alternative highways and provides greater access to these population centers for those who live along or near the rail corridor. Connecting locations that are currently underserved by current transportation networks means that greater access to intercity passenger rail reduces both racial and economic inequalities. Through DMI's current relationships, we have a new opportunity to develop partnerships that can enhance the economic vitality of downtown Madison, thereby assisting in recruiting and retaining a diversity of current and future residents, workers, and businesses.

DMI should advocate for an intercity passenger rail station near the city center to provide downtown access to buses, bike share, taxi, and potential commuter trains. Locating Madison's intercity train station as close as possible to downtown supports the DMI goal to encourage the development and growth of a multi-modal transportation system to serve all residents, workers, and visitors of our downtown and region.

During the same time that DMI has advocated for intercity passenger rail service in our region, activity in the federal government has accelerated progress to expand passenger rail service nationally. In April 2021, Amtrak announced their intercity rail expansion plans, titled

Connects US, to expand the existing Hiawatha line between Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Paul-Minneapolis to Madison. On November 15, 2021, President Joe Biden signed into law the Infrastructure and Jobs Act which pledged to spend \$66 billion on Amtrak, a 480% year-over-year increase and the largest expenditure on intercity passenger rail service since Amtrak's creation.¹ Amtrak may use these funds for rail expansion and, already in January 2022, cities along the *Connects US* expansion routes like Columbus, Ohio, have released studies on where to locate their downtown train station.²

Thanks to this increased funding and early community support, DMI recognizes the once-in-a-generation opportunity that Madison has in its plans to locate an intercity train station. This report highlights three possible locations for an intercity train station. Two of which are located within a few blocks to the east of the Yahara River and the other is further east at the Oscar Mayer site. Each site has its unique advantages and disadvantages for DMI Committees to consider. Given that expanded rail service provides new opportunities connecting Madison to other Midwestern downtowns, DMI zealously advocates for passenger rail service to Madison with the station close to downtown and near other forms of transit.

¹ Rick Geddes, "Reform Amtrak to Get the Biggest Value," *The Hill*, December 2, 2021, <https://thehill.com/opinion/finance/583506-reform-amtrak-to-get-the-biggest-value>.

² Alissa Neese, "The Plan for an Amtrak Station in Columbus," *Axios Columbus*, January 12, 2022, <https://www.axios.com/local/columbus/2022/01/12/plan-for-amtrak-in-columbus-infrastructure-bill>.

II. INTRODUCTION: BENEFITS OF INTERCITY PASSENGER RAIL

Summary of Madison's Intercity Train Station Report

Much of the current discussion around Madison's intercity passenger rail station follows from the Federal Railroad Administration's Midwest Regional Rail Plan in 2021 which found the city will be a critical link to the Midwest rail network over the next 40 years. That critical link was revealed to the public in Amtrak's April 2021 railway expansion plan titled Vision 2035 which would add a Madison railway station along the existing Hiawatha line between Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Paul-Minneapolis.

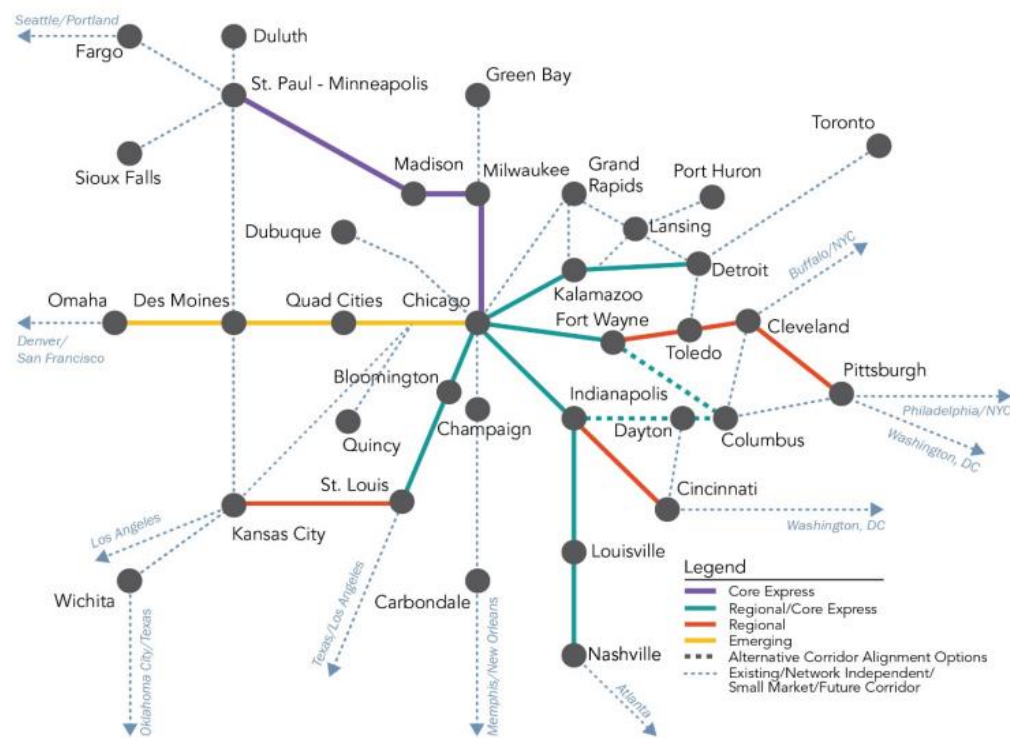
Moreover, Vision 2035 calls for two more Wisconsin routes, a spur traveling north from the Hiawatha line through the Fox Valley with stations in Fond du Lac, Oshkosh, Appleton, and Green Bay. In addition, Vision 2035 calls for a new track to connect Eau Claire to the Hiawatha line between Milwaukee and Minneapolis. In response, mayors along the expanded Hiawatha line urged their Congressional leaders in Washington to support infrastructure funding for Amtrak's Vision 2035.

For Madison to be ready when federal infrastructure funding is available, Mayor Rhodes-Conway secured in the 2022 Capital Improvement Plan, \$120,000 to plan for potential passenger rail expansion to Madison. On May 10, 2022, the Madison Common Council authorized the City to enter into a contract with HNTB Corporation for passenger rail study services. Several passenger rail station locations have already been proposed. They include the Oscar Mayer site, the Yahara Station, and the Pennsylvania Avenue Campus. By advocating for passenger rail and finding the right station location, Madison will develop as a vibrant and inclusive place for all people to live, learn, and work.

Public, Environmental, and Equity Benefits

Intercity passenger rail is critical to the mobility of Wisconsin citizens and visitors, and to the economic growth of the state, region, and downtown. The American Public Transportation Association (APTA) estimates a quadruple multiplier effect in economic benefits from every dollar invested in passenger rail. Over the past few months, the discussion of passenger trains in Madison has heightened. Last fall, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) released their study that prioritized Midwest rail corridors to develop across the Midwest over the next 40 years (see Figure 1 below).³ Of the four highest-priority corridors, only the expanded Hiawatha line to include Madison between Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Paul-Minneapolis has not been built. The City is taking steps to prepare for the potential expansion, and include efforts to “site a station, and refresh documents, according to Madison Transportation Planner, Philip Gritzmacher.”⁴

Figure 1. FRA Midwest Regional Rail Plan Network



³ Diane Bezucha, “Madison and Milwaukee Identified as Keys Links in an Expanded Rail Network Across the Midwest,” *Wisconsin Public Radio*, October 27, 2021, <https://www.wpr.org/madison-and-milwaukee-identified-keys-links-expanded-rail-network-across-midwest>.

⁴ Downtown Madison, Inc., “2021 DMI State of the Downtown” YouTube video, 34:08, November 4, 2021, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_M3iwGd6o94&t=2100s.

Madison's intercity rail link would connect us with some of our region's strongest economies. As a reliable, all-weather link between Madison and the Midwest's economic centers, intercity rail is a valuable alternative mode of travel for our region.⁵ Intercity rail travel is time-competitive with intercity bus, automobile, or air travel for distances between 100-500 miles and frequent high-volume service provided by Amtrak would also remove vehicles from the crowded I-94 corridor and carbon emissions from our atmosphere.^{6, 7}

Intercity rail travel provides benefits and amenities to the individual traveler that other forms of intercity travel cannot provide. Trains are known for transportation comfort and convenience; a traveler can board and disembark their train near a city's downtown, thereby connecting to the larger area. Passengers travel in a coach that is safe, spacious, and relaxing with access to food and beverages, ample legroom, and the option to walk around. In addition, intercity rail service offers predictable and consistent business-class workspaces to remain productive during their entire travel time.

Intercity rail travel is an especially important way for Wisconsin to provide equitable transportation options to address economic and racial inequalities. Madison's intercity rail service will increase the reach of Amtrak service to minority populations currently underserved by Amtrak's passenger rail network.⁸ Madison's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion is strengthened with an expanded intercity passenger rail service that helps connect Midwestern communities of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) to economic centers and minority-owned enterprises.

⁵ Edward Bloustein, "The Role of Amtrak's Intercity Passenger Rail Services in New Jersey," *Alan M. Voorhees Transportation Center*, June 2004, pp. 1. https://vtc.rutgers.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/InstAnal.Amtrak_NJ.pdf.

⁶ Benjamin Sperry & Curtis Morgan, "Measuring the Benefits of Intercity Passenger Rail" *Southwest Region University Transportation Center*, April 2010, pp. 117.

<https://static.tti.tamu.edu/swutc.tamu.edu/publications/technicalreports/169116-1.pdf>.

⁷ American Public Transportation Association, "Connecting America: Making the Case for Intercity Rail," November 2005, pp. 3. <http://www.reconnectingamerica.org/assets/Uploads/11-17-05-Intercity-Rail-Paper.pdf>.

⁸ National Railroad Passenger Corporation, "Benefits," *Amtrak Connects US*, <https://www.amtrakconnectsus.com/benefits/>.

With local decision-making so important, Mayor Rhodes-Conway is prioritizing bringing passenger rail to Madison. The Mayor stated that the City was already in conversation with the US Department of Transportation about bringing Amtrak service to Madison. The extended service along the Hiawatha line would be an “essential transportation connection for our city and for our region...and fantastic for our economy, for our region, and for our state.”¹²

Five Midwestern Mayors Join Letter in Support of Amtrak Expansion

Within days after Amtrak announced their *Connects US* proposal, the mayors of major cities in Illinois, Minnesota, and Wisconsin sent a letter to federal transportation officials urging support for Amtrak’s plans to extend rail service between their communities.¹³ The letter was signed by mayors Tom Barrett of Milwaukee, Melvin Carter of St. Paul, Jacob Frey of Minneapolis, Lori Lightfoot of Chicago, and Satya Rhodes-Conway of Madison. According to the *Connects US* map, the five cities would be linked by an extension of Amtrak’s current Hiawatha line.

The letter addressed to Secretary of Transportation, Pete Buttigieg, and acting Federal Railroad Administrator, Amit Bose, encouraged the federal agency to “deliver an American passenger rail network as a top priority for infrastructure investment” as part of President Biden’s infrastructure plan. Currently, the bipartisan infrastructure bill includes the largest federal investment in passenger rail (\$66 billion) since Amtrak was created.¹⁴ In the letter to Secretary Buttigieg and acting Administrator Bose, the mayors urge support for Amtrak’s proposed

¹² City of Madison Office of the Mayor, “Press Briefing by Mayor Satya Rhodes-Conway,” *City of Madison*, April 1, 2021, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C_CKQuf9faU.

¹³ Mitchell Schmidt, “Five Midwestern Mayors Join Letter Supporting Amtrak Expansion,” *Northwest Indiana Times*, April 15, 2021, https://www.nwitimes.com/news/state-and-regional/five-midwestern-mayors-join-letter-supporting-amtrak-expansion/article_a6655d1e-8a03-5375-8a5d-9be5dfd55a70.html.

¹⁴ The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, “Updated Fact Sheet: Bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.” *The White House* August 2, 2021, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/08/02/updated-fact-sheet-bipartisan-infrastructure-investment-and-jobs-act/>.

extension of the Hiawatha line. The “Hiawatha line is one of Amtrak’s most successful routes and would enhance connectivity between economic centers of our three Midwestern states.”¹⁵



MIDWESTERN CORRIDORS

Prior to initiating any new corridor service, Amtrak will collaborate with stakeholders on schedules, trip frequencies, infrastructure and equipment needs, station facilities, funding, implementation roles, and contractual agreements.

Hiawatha Corridor

Chicago – Milwaukee

Already the Midwest’s highest volume route, the Wisconsin and Illinois Departments of Transportation are planning frequency increases; the vision includes:

- Expand from 7 to 10 round trips Chicago – Milwaukee

This expanded corridor provides Wisconsin residents with increased mobility options between the state’s largest city and Chicago, including connections with many other Midwest routes.

Madison Hiawatha Extension

Madison – Milwaukee – Chicago

The vision to extend the successful *Hiawatha* corridor west includes:

- Extend 4 Chicago – Milwaukee *Hiawatha* round trips to Madison

This new corridor provides Dane County residents, businesses and visitors with increased mobility options between the state’s capital and its largest city, as well as service to Chicago.

Green Bay Hiawatha Extension

Green Bay – Milwaukee – Chicago

The vision to extend the successful *Hiawatha* corridor north includes:

- Extend 3 Chicago – Milwaukee round trips to Green Bay

This new corridor provides Green Bay and Fox Valley residents with increased mobility options to the state’s largest city, as well as service to Chicago.



Economic Impact

The net economic benefit of this investment from operations is expected to reach \$8 billion annually by 2035, with an additional \$195 billion in economic activity generated by additional capital investments during 2021-2035. Over 26,000 ongoing permanent jobs, plus 616,000 person-years of temporary employment supported by capital investments during 2021-2035, will be created or supported by this effort. If left unaddressed, the frustrating congestion drivers experience on urban interstates today, where 47% of highway miles are congested during peak periods, will become the norm between major cities as well. A reduction in traffic congestion from expanded intercity rail will lead to enhanced productivity.

6 Amtrak’s Vision For Improving Transportation Across America

Source: National Railroad Passenger Corporation, “Amtrak’s Vision for Improving Transportation Across America,” May 27, 2021, pp.46. https://media.amtrak.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Amtrak-2021-Corridor-Vision-May27_2021.pdf.

¹⁵ Mayors Barrett, Carter, Frey, Lightfoot, Rhodes-Conway to Hons. Bose and Buttigieg, April 9, 2021, in *Midwest Mayors Write Secretary Buttigieg to Urge Expansion of Amtrak’s Hiawatha Line*, <https://www.cityofmadison.com/mayor/documents/Buttigieg%20Letter%20from%20Midwest%20Mayors%20on%20Passenger%20Rail%20.pdf>.

Eight Wisconsin Mayor's Letter to Congress in Support of Proposed Hiawatha Line Extension

Wisconsin municipal leaders also wrote a letter to Congress expressing their enthusiastic support for the expanded Hiawatha passenger rail network between communities within Wisconsin.¹⁶ The letter was signed by mayors Eric Genrich of Green Bay, Donald Merkes of Menasha, Lori Palmeri of Oshkosh, Mitch Reynolds of La Crosse, Satya Rhodes-Conway of Madison, and Jake Woodford of Appleton. Amtrak's *Connects US* envisioned rail service in Wisconsin would "improve regional connections between our urban centers throughout the state, facilitating intra- and inter-state travel and commerce while reducing emissions and congestion."¹⁷ The mayors urged Wisconsin's members of Congress to make the modernized and expanded passenger rail program a top priority within the bipartisan infrastructure bill.

In addition, the letter articulated the benefits of passenger rail. According to the Department of Transportation, passenger rail creates good-paying jobs, addresses climate change, and promotes equity. The mayors also pointed out that the American Public Transportation Association estimated that passenger rail has a quadruple multiplier effect in economic benefit from every dollar invested. Connecting cities in Wisconsin by passenger rail would "ensure the status of our state as a center of innovation and opportunity."

Madison's 2022 Capital Improvement Plan: Executive Budget

In the 2022 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), the City of Madison included an Intra-City Passenger Rail Station & Planning Project. As part of the 2022 budget, the City of Madison's Department of Transportation received \$120,000 in initial funding for this capital project.¹⁸ With

¹⁶ Mayor Satya Rhodes-Conway, "Wisconsin Rail Letter," in *Mayor Satya's Blog*, June 16, 2021, <https://www.cityofmadison.com/mayor/blog/the-train-is-back-on-the-table>.

¹⁷ Mayors Genrich, Merkes, Palmeri, Reynolds, Rhodes-Conway, Woodford to Hons. Baldwin, Fitzgerald, Gallagher, Grothman, Johnson, Kind, Pocan, June 14, 2021, <https://www.cityofmadison.com/mayor/documents/WI%20Rail%20Letter%206-202167.pdf>.

¹⁸ *Id.* at 16.

the funding, the City of Madison will prepare for potential passenger rail expansion and will restart efforts to identify possible sites for a multimodal transportation facility.

During an August 31, 2021, news conference to announce the City's 2022 Capital Improvement Plan, Mayor Satya Rhodes-Conway outlined the rationale for including the Inter-City Passenger Rail Station and Planning project. The mayor announced that "to seize the opportunity provided by the federal government, this budget also includes \$120,000 to help us plan for train service to Madison under the Amtrak *Connects US* plan."¹⁹

2022 HNTB Passenger Rail Study Services (Legistar #71175)

On May 10, 2022, the Madison Common Council authorized the negotiation and execution of a contract with HNTB Corporation for passenger rail study services.²⁰ The contract may cost up to \$120,000 and is funded in the City of Madison Transportation 2022 annual capital budget. The authorization listed, among others, three previously covered events that have given rise to the current discussion around Madison's intercity passenger rail station.

First, extending passenger rail Hiawatha service to Madison was recommended by Amtrak in 2021 through their *Connects US* plan. Second, the Federal Rail Administration's Midwest Regional Rail Plan stated an extension of passenger rail to Madison was a critical market "critical to the operational viability of Core Express corridor between Chicago and Minneapolis-St. Paul." Third, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law made unprecedented funds available to fund passenger rail expansion.

In addition, the Resolution included the rationale that Strategy 4, of the Imagine Madison Comprehensive Plan Land Use and Transportation, intended to improve access to transit services

¹⁹ City of Madison, Office of the Mayor. "Press Conference by Mayor Satya Rhodes-Conway." *City of Madison*, August 31, 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QYTqz4ZX3Lg>.

²⁰ Madison Common Council, "HNTB Contract for Rail Study," Resolution # 71175, May 10, 2022, pp. 2160-61. <https://madison.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=PA&ID=892682&GUID=80058AE3-F788-46F2-AB06-708A0E532CA4>.

to nearby cities such as Milwaukee, Chicago, and Minneapolis.²¹ To improve regional city transit access would require “maintaining the viability of rail corridors and advocating for passenger rail connections with state officials.”²² With the included money for a Passenger Rail Station Location and Planning in the 2022 Capital Budget, the “City Purchasing issued a Request for Proposals where HNTB Corporation was a successful proposer and met the qualifications desired, having national and local rail experience.²³” Speaking to WORT on May 11, 2022, Philip Gritzmacher, transportation planner for the City of Madison, said that HNTB is an ideal partner for this project because “HNTB is a nationally renowned vendor of planning services for rail. They worked initially on the high-speed rail project back when that was going on in the 2010s, so we feel comfortable and confident in their ability to work on this particular project, they have a great deal of experience working with rail.”²⁴ In addition, Gritzmacher said HNTB will help the City through the next steps in plan approval, “[t]hey will help us where the best station would be, update some of the background data from the previous studies that we have had related to high speed rail, and then work with us on our public engagement process to make sure the public is onboard with the location they identify.”²⁵

²¹ City of Madison, “Imagine Madison: People Powered Planning,” April 20, 2021, pp. 6. https://www.imaginemadisonwi.com/sites/imaginemadisonwi.com/files/document/pdf/Progress%20Update%202021_Final.pdf.

²² Madison Common Council “HNTB Contract for Rail Study,” pp. 2161.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Catherine Garvens, “Study To Find Location For Amtrak Train Station In Madison Approved,” *WORT*, May 11, 2022. <https://www.wortfm.org/study-to-find-location-for-amtrak-train-station-in-madison-approved/>.

²⁵ Ibid.

IV. CRITERIA TO EVALUATE TRAIN STATION LOCATION

Madison Train Station Location Criteria

During a news interview aired on Thursday, September 23, 2021, Mayor Satya Rhodes-Conway explained what the Inter-City Passenger Rail Station and Planning project would accomplish. Funding for the project is “for us to start to update some of the studies on station location and routing. We want to be ready, assuming the [federal] infrastructure bill does pass.”²⁶

Over the last two decades, the City has planned for passenger rail and proposed various train station locations. In 2010, the state was in line to receive \$810 million in federal funding to build a Madison to Milwaukee high-speed rail line. However, in 2011, Governor Scott Walker rejected the federal funds, and the rail line and downtown train station were not built. While the goal to build an intercity train station in Madison today is similar to what it was ten years ago, the criteria used to evaluate train station locations evolves. Criteria used in the past to evaluate train station locations are not precedent-setting but reflect the priorities and requirements of the time. This report will outline past criteria to evaluate proposed station locations in Madison with the understanding in mind that criteria evolve through conversation and research.

In 2010, then Alder Rhodes-Conway and Alder Rummel co-authored a City resolution that outlined a set of criteria that the Mayor and Common Council should use to evaluate proposed locations for a Madison train station. That resolution, #17884, was adopted by the Common Council and the following criteria were used to evaluate train station locations in 2010:²⁷

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Mayor and Common Council of the City of Madison strongly support a station that meets the following criteria:

1. Facilitates swift and efficient train service between Madison and Milwaukee, and supports future service to other cities;

²⁶ Michelle Baik, “Madison Mayor Sets Stage for Potential Amtrak Station,” September 23, 2021, <https://www.nbc15.com/2021/09/24/madison-mayor-sets-stage-potential-amtrak-station/>.

²⁷ Alders Rhodes-Conway, Rummel, “Regarding the Location of a High-Speed Rail Station in the City of Madison,” *Resolution # 17844*, April 20, 2010, <https://madison.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=1765924&GUID=7E2F4A92-D087-436D-82FB-A91F49F2001D>.

2. Has the capacity to be multi-modal, specifically including access by Metro bus service, inter-city bus service, auto, bicycle, and foot, and offers the future opportunity of access by commuter rail or bus rapid transit;
3. Has a strong potential to encourage and facilitate transit-oriented development and to serve as an anchor for our economic development efforts;
4. Is located so it may efficiently and effectively serve passengers traveling to downtown, the State Capitol, and the University of Wisconsin; and
5. Can, once developed, provide sufficient amenities, such as parking, taxis, rental car service, food service and more to serve travelers;

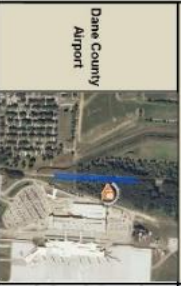



At the April 2010, Common Council meeting which adopted Resolution #17884, several registrants provided their insight and public feedback. In particular, the chair of Downtown Madison, Inc's Transportation and Parking Committee, John Robinson, submitted a letter that outlined goals for the station that fit into three broad categories:²⁸

To maximize the chance of success for its success, the station must be located where it maximizes ridership. This means that the station should be located as close to potential riders as reasonably possible, maximizing convenience, ease of use, and attractiveness. Second, we believe that the station must be located where it can serve as a hub for different modes of transportation. This would include inter-city bus, local bus (Madison Metro), and bicycles, and the potential for future connections to commuter rail lines. Third we believe that the station must be located in an area that can accommodate and is attractive to economic development. As you are well aware, rail transportation around the country has spurred economic development along the line, particularly near the stations.

By May 6, 2010, Governor Doyle announced the location of the rail station, "after further study, and after considering public input from workshops held earlier this month, the new rail station will be located at 101 E. Wilson St." However, the train to Milwaukee was never completed and subsequent decisions by Amtrak, no longer make the station at 101 E. Wilson a viable alternative.

²⁸ Transportation and Parking Committee of Downtown Madison, Inc. to Hons. Busalacchi, April 20, 2010, in #17884: *Regarding the Location of a High Speed Rail Station in the City of Madison*, <https://madison.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=1765975&GUID=D55334C7-9A73-4171-A846-30EA3411EC56>.

Summary of Madison High-Speed Rail Station Feasibility Assessment

Madison High-Speed Rail Station Site Alternatives		Evaluation Criteria									
Rail Operations	Vehicular Access	Multimodal Access	Population Access	Traffic Impacts	Parking Capacity	Rail Infrastructure Capital Costs	Site Geometrics	Environmental Scan	Previous Studies	Economic Impact	
<p>Dane County Airport</p> 	<p>Travel time unchanged (used as a base for analysis). 2020 ridership estimate = 478,000. Minimal impact on existing freight rail operations.</p>	<p>No direct arterial access to site - only accessed by International Lane (airport "loop road") internal to airport property. Regional access via Packers Ave and Anderson St to US51/151 & I-90/94/42</p>	<p>No pedestrian or bicycle access into airport or to property. Regional serves the station site.</p>	<p>5.3 miles from approximate Madison area population center</p>	<p>Station traffic has minimal impact to circulation and capacity at airport. All station and airport traffic enters/exits at same point. Additional 8 grade crossings, 0 road closures.</p>	<p>Parking for 300 vehicles accommodated in existing airport ramp structure (airport annexes/freight) and parking in future)</p>	<p>Estimated \$31.2 million for railroad infrastructure. Cost for station & amenities similar to Monona Terrace Station.</p>	<p>Adequate clear track length for 600' platform, new station and amenities. Elevated pedestrian bridge over International Lane to airport parking structure.</p>	<p>No observed wetland, wetweedy or historical/archeological impacts. Potential superfund site nearby. No other observed hazard issues.</p>	<p>2001 EA: Retain for further analysis. 2004 EA FONSI. Serve as station for through trips</p>	<p>Limited redevelopment potential at or near the site.</p>
<p>Yahara (First Street) Station</p> 	<p>Travel time decrease of 3 min. 38 sec. 2020 ridership estimate = 514,400. Moderate impact in current freight rail operations.</p>	<p>Good, direct arterial access to E. Washington Ave. and E. Johnson St. Additional site access from S. First St. Regional access via E. Washington to WIS 30 and I-90/94/42</p>	<p>Adequate pedestrian and bicycle access, not a friendly pedestrian environment. Excellent bus route access at site</p>	<p>2.2 miles from approximate Madison area population center</p>	<p>Station traffic has little to no impact to circulation and capacity of adjacent arterials. Additional 2 grade crossings (gates close in both directions on E. Johnson & E. Washington), 0 road closures.</p>	<p>Ample room (with redevelopment) for surface and/or structured parking</p>	<p>Estimated \$5.1 million for railroad infrastructure. Cost for station & amenities similar to Depot/Kohl Center station.</p>	<p>Not adequate clear track length for train between E. Washington and E. Johnson, results in train tripping both gate crossings for duration of stop - significant vehicular impacts. Curving track is problematic. Room exists for construction of new station.</p>	<p>Potential wetland impacts, no observed wetweedy or hazard issues. One nearby historical building.</p>	<p>Not considered nor developed as at alternative in 2001 EA or 2004 EA FONSI</p>	<p>Potential for redevelopment of station site (currently underutilized). Mixed-use development and structured parking potential.</p>
<p>Monona Terrace</p> 	<p>Travel time increase of 0 min. 1 sec. 2020 ridership estimate = 537,100. No significant impacts on freight rail operations.</p>	<p>No direct arterial access to site. Future access to site via S. Finckey St. at E. Wilson St. Regional access via John Nelson Dr. to Balline, E. Washington to I-90/94/39</p>	<p>Good pedestrian and bicycle access due to location adjacent to downtown and Lake Monona paths (grade difference needs to be addressed). Good bus route access.</p>	<p>0.8 miles from approximate Madison area population center</p>	<p>Station traffic may impact John Nelson Dr. intersection LOS. One-way flow on E. Wilson (and other streets) can be problematic. Additional 7 grade crossings (crossed in both directions), 2 road closures.</p>	<p>No available open land for additional parking. May be able to share parking with nearby public ramp (or expand parking in existing convention center</p>	<p>Estimated \$18.0 million for railroad infrastructure. Cost for station & amenities similar to airport station.</p>	<p>Adequate clear track length for 600' platform - may need to strengthen track. New station facility required with vertical circulation.</p>	<p>No observed wetland, wetweedy or historical/archeological impacts. Limited hazard issues nearby.</p>	<p>2001 EA: Retained for further analysis. 2004 EA FONSI. Serve as downtown terminal station</p>	<p>Significant positive impact on hotel and other pending redevelopment opportunities. Mutual-beneficial relationship between convention center and rail ridership.</p>
<p>Milwaukee Road Depot (Kohl Center)</p> 	<p>Travel time increase of 3 min. 6 sec. 2020 ridership estimate = 545,400. No significant impact on existing freight rail, but may impact future freight rail operations more than other alternatives.</p>	<p>Direct arterial access to W. Washington Ave. Additional access via N. Frances St. Regional access via S. Park St. and W. Washington to Balline and I-90/94/39</p>	<p>Very good pedestrian and bicycle access due to location near downtown, University and bike paths. Good bus route access.</p>	<p>0.8 miles from approximate Madison area population center</p>	<p>Station traffic has minimal impact to circulation and capacity. Affects on/off Kohl Center traffic need to be addressed. Additional 11 grade crossings (crossed in both directions), 2 road closures.</p>	<p>Little to no existing parking capacity for 300 vehicles. Parking structure may be needed (perhaps in place of University warehouse facility)</p>	<p>Estimated \$22.0 million for railroad infrastructure. Cost for station & amenities similar to Yahara Station</p>	<p>Adequate clear track length for 600' platform. Existing Depot can be re-used for station with amenities (e.g. ticketing, restrooms, etc.)</p>	<p>No observed wetland, wetweedy or historical/archeological impacts. No observed hazard issues.</p>	<p>2001 EA: Eliminated from further analysis. 2004 EA FONSI. N/A</p>	<p>Some redevelopment potential of the underutilized parcel near site, opportunity to construct structure parking structure. Depot structure to be re-used.</p>

V. PROPOSED MADISON TRAIN STATION LOCATIONS

Yahara Station

In 2010, the Campaign for Yahara Station promoted a new intercity station located along the existing mainline between the Yahara River, East Johnson Street, First Street, and East Washington Avenue. To be built next to Burr Jones Park, the site would place passenger rail patrons 1.6 miles from downtown Madison, a location that is as close as possible to still allow regional trains to make efficient passage through Madison.²⁹ The Federal Railroad Authority defined that an efficient location for a high-speed rail station entailed “through movement of trains,” and this criterion was used to differentiate the Yahara Station with locations closer to downtown, yet off the mainline, that would cause a train to reverse direction:³⁰

Building on American experience since the passage of the High-Speed Ground Transportation Act of 1965, as well as on successful examples abroad, the FRA has developed the following general guidelines for locating corridor rail passenger stations:

1. Each city should have a station located in or near the central business district. This is mandatory for larger Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs), with metropolitan populations of 150,000 or more, since to do otherwise would undermine the inherent advantages of rail passenger systems.
2. [Omitted]
3. Every effort should be made to have each corridor station serve as a regional intermodal passenger terminal for all forms of regional and local transportation systems.

[T]he following railroad operating characteristics need to be taken into account when evaluating and designing station sites for corridor applications.

1. Each station track configuration should provide for the through movement of trains along the corridor without having to reverse the train’s direction at any time. Through stations are almost always preferable to stub-end terminals, both at the endpoints and intermediate points in a corridor.
- 2-6. [Omitted]

The proposed Yahara Station would require the addition of a second siding track that would span between 700 and 800 feet. The station platform itself would span the full

²⁹ Barry Gore, “Yahara Station,” *BGore Design*, 2010, pp. 1.
https://dvqlxo2m2q99q.cloudfront.net/000_clients/1279252/file/yaharastation.pdf.

³⁰ Federal Railroad Administration, “Railroad Corridor Transportation Plans: A Guidance Manual,” *U.S. Department of Transportation*, July 8, 2005, pp 3-4. https://railroads.dot.gov/sites/fra.dot.gov/files/fra_net/2751/corridor_planning.pdf.

length of that siding track. The planner of the Yahara Station, Barry Gore, included in the 2010 proposal that, “it is unlikely that service on the Chicago to Madison route will require an 800’ long platform so the concept includes the potential to accommodate future expansion.”³¹

The Yahara Station would have the capacity to be multi-modal. The main entrance to the Yahara Station would be positioned along First Street, a location that would serve as a taxi stand. Second, the ground floor of the Yahara Station would accommodate a Madison intercity bus terminal, bike share, and car-share services. Both East Johnson and East Washington Metro bus, and BRT stops would be visible and within short walking distance so that travelers could transfer between these stops through the Yahara Station. Connecting the mainline tracks would be a second-level concourse. The Yahara Station envisions small shops along that concourse and a café looking out across Burr Jones field.³² Located along First Street will be the new Public Market, in addition to plenty of housing. many new housing developments in the area.

³¹ Barry Gore, “Yahara Station,” pp. 4.

³² *Id.* at 6.



Source: Barry Gore, "Yahara Station," *BGore Design*, 2010, pp.6.

Amtrak Depot Concept Plan

The depot at Yahara Station is highly visible and approachable from E. Johnson, First St. and E. Washington. The main entrance on First St. is served by a taxi stand providing quick trips to the central business district.

The ground level of the depot is Madison's intercity bus terminal, with bus bays that facilitate transfers to regional bus service. Bike share, pedicab, community car, and station car rentals are also available.

Madison Metro bus stations on E. Johnson and E. Washington are visible from the front entrance of the depot, and real time arrival information is provided covering the 14 Metro bus routes that pass Yahara Station.

Stairs and ramps lead from First St. up to a second-level concourse that crosses over the mainline and siding track to the Amtrak platform. Escalators, stairs, and an ADA-compliant lift take patrons down to the platform level.

Small shops along the concourse include a newsstand, convenience food and drink, and outlets for Madison businesses.

A sit-down cafe on the platform level affords views of arriving trains, as well as the Yahara River, Burr Jones Field, and a landmark cottonwood tree.

The Yahara Station would be the closest possible downtown station location that would not cause a train to reverse directions to exit Madison. Granted, the footprint of the Yahara Station would be the smallest of the three station locations listed here. However, the Yahara Station does envision multi-modal transit integration like access to BRT, intercity bus, taxi, ride, and bicycle share within the development. Taken together, the Yahara Station is an example of transit-oriented development, as are the Oscar Mayer and Pennsylvania Avenue Campus locations.

The Federal Transit Administration describes transit-oriented as a mix of commercial, residential, office, and entertainment centered around a transit station.³³ This dense, walkable, mixed-use development near transit attracts people and adds to vibrant, connected communities. The Federal Transit Administration states that successful transit-oriented development provides many benefits, including:

- Increased ridership and associated revenue gains for transit systems
- Incorporation of public and private sector engagement and investment
- Revitalization of neighborhoods
- A larger supply of affordable housing
- Economic returns to surrounding landowners and businesses
- Congestion relief and associated environmental benefits
- Improved safety for pedestrians and cyclists through non-motorized infrastructure

Oscar Mayer

The City of Madison listed ten redevelopment objectives to stimulate economic growth in the 2020 Oscar Mayer Special Area Plan that would benefit those in the Northside community and region. Their seventh objective is to “create an integrated and connected multimodal transportation system,” that includes improved “bicycle, pedestrian, auto and localized transit...and continu[es] to plan for BRT and potential local and intercity rail.”³⁴

³³ Federal Transit Administration, “Transit-Oriented Development,” <https://www.transit.dot.gov/TOD>.

³⁴ Madison Common Council, “Oscar Special Area Plan (2.25.20),” *Resolution # 59745*, July 27, 2020, pp.7. <https://madison.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=8095927&GUID=0C8C0CF7-0191-4BB2-8B8A-EAF2A981979E>.

The existing rail corridor in the Special Area Plan was designated in the early 2000s for intercity passenger rail by the Federal Railroad Administration. The plan envisioned a relocated Northside Transfer Point as part of the multimodal transportation facility that would integrate rail, bus rapid transit, bus, and bikes into a single facility.³⁵ To create this multimodal transit facility on the northern end of Commercial Avenue and along either side of the Canadian Pacific railroad tracks, the Oscar Mayer Special Area Plan lists the following recommendations:³⁶

1. Relocate North Transfer Point to a more visible and accessible location integrated with the multimodal transit facility.
2. Seek public-private partnerships with developers to co-locate and integrate higher density mixed-use development with the facility.
3. Work with corresponding property owners to construct a multimodal facility for bikes, buses, BRT, park-and-ride, and reserve space for a potential intercity and local rail terminal.
4. Encourage appropriately located structured parking to serve commuters, area employers, and Madison College.
5. Work with private national and regional transportation operators (such as Greyhound, Badger Bus and VanGalder) to make the facility a Madison terminal.
6. Investigate options for improved service to connect various employment centers and daily services on the Northside. Metro Transit should evaluate this option as part of the larger route restructure anticipated with Bus Rapid Transit implementation.
7. Reserve the potential for a future intercity passenger rail terminal and local rail transit stop.
8. Work with car sharing and bike sharing services to create major hubs within the facility.
9. Work with MGE to incorporate electric vehicle charging infrastructure in the facility to help facilitate the transition to an electrified transportation system.

Given the numerous opportunities listed above for the City to redevelop the Oscar Mayer plant, there are also a few notable drawbacks to locating Madison's intercity train station at this site. To begin with, this site is far away from downtown, putting in place a barrier to disembarking from the train at the city's downtown. Second, while the Oscar Mayer Special Area plan is forward-thinking in its redevelopment ambition, the City will need to consider the near-term time horizon to develop plans, infrastructure, and consensus before partnering with federal transit authorities to bring train service and a train station to Madison. The timeline to make the Oscar Mayer site ready may take longer than the near-term opportunity window. Third, the cost to deliver on the Oscar Mayer Special Area Plan's recommendations, as outlined above, may greatly exceed the cost to develop just a multi-modal transit at other sites that are closer to downtown.

³⁵ *Id.* at 15.

³⁶ *Id.* at 37.

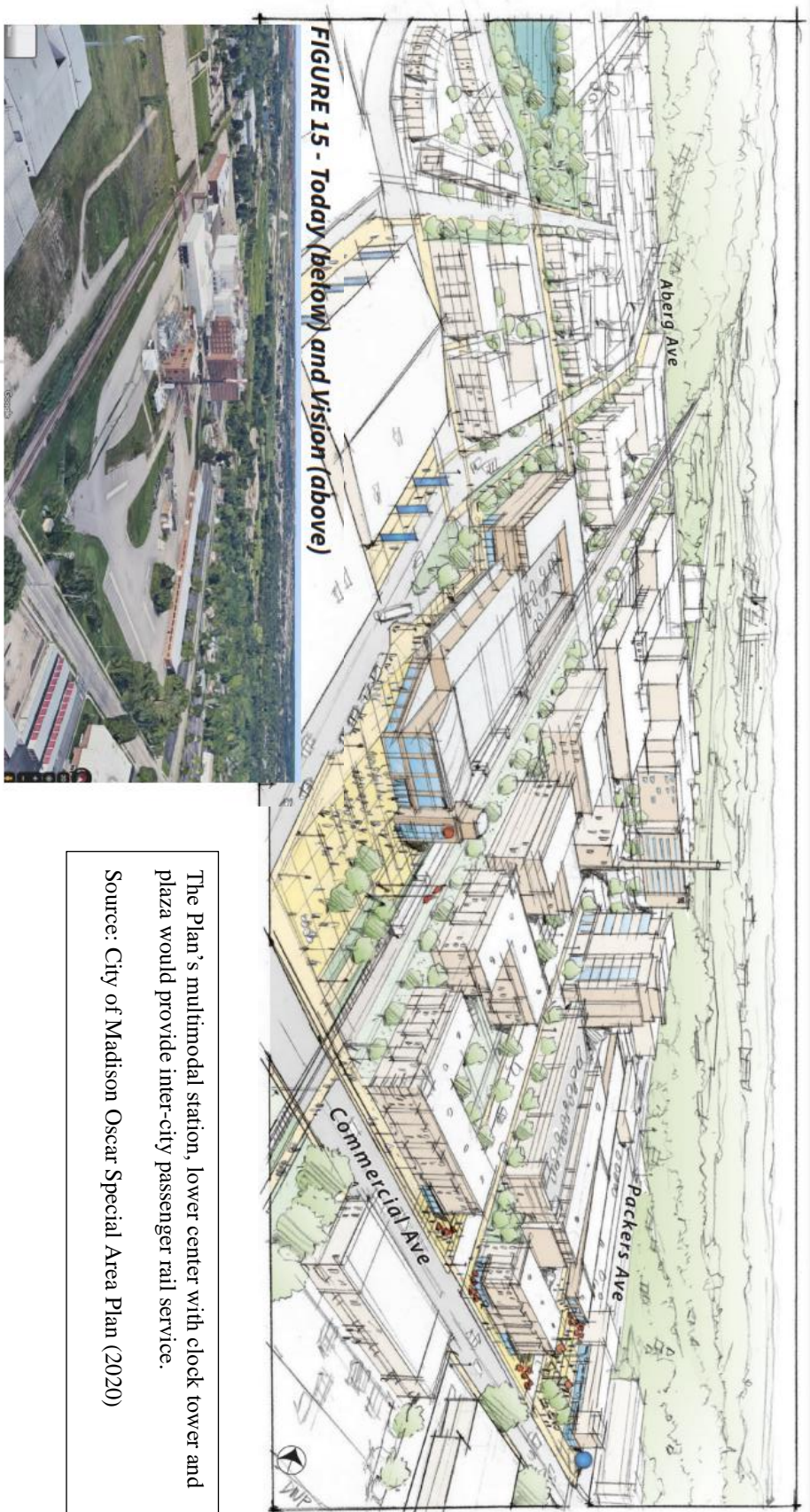
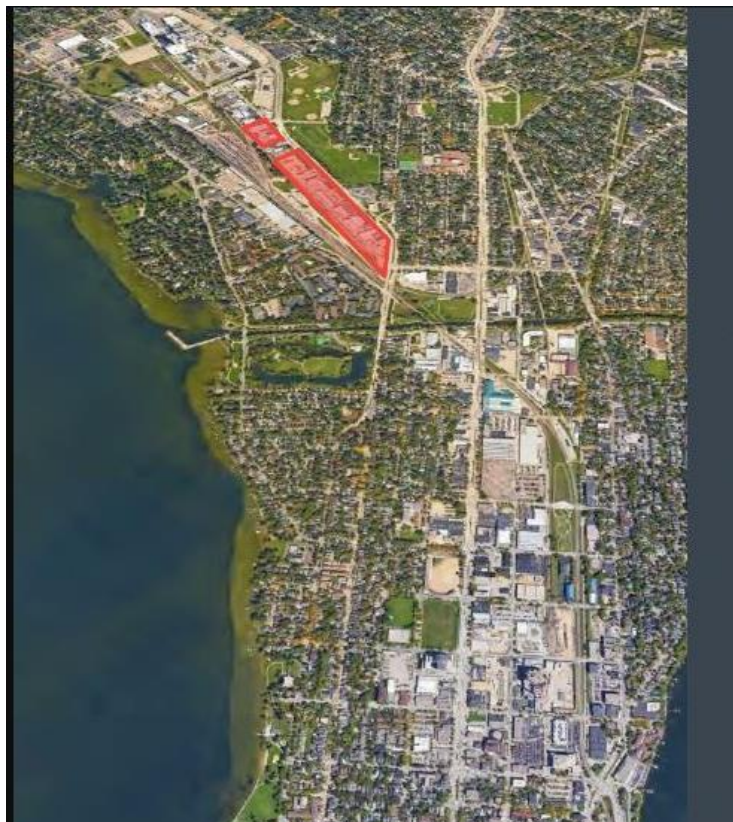


FIGURE 15 - Today (below) and Vision (above)

The Plan's multimodal station, lower center with clock tower and plaza would provide inter-city passenger rail service.
Source: City of Madison Oscar Special Area Plan (2020)

Pennsylvania Avenue Campus

Fortunately, over 17 acres are now for sale across the street from the Yahara Station. In addition to the proximity to downtown, the Pennsylvania Avenue Campus has the added benefit of a straight-line track on which to build an intercity train station along. While there are examples of intercity train stations along curved tracks like Grand Forks, Oxnard, Davis, and Vancouver WA, typically intercity stations are located along a straight track.



Source: "2030 Pennsylvania Ave," *LoopNet* <https://www.loopnet.com/Listing/2030-Pennsylvania-Ave-Madison-WI/23841048/>

Like the Oscar Mayer site, the Pennsylvania Avenue Campus could generate several public-private partnerships with developers to co-locate and integrate higher-density mixed-use development. Given that the Pennsylvania Avenue Campus is situated on 17 acres, an appropriately located structured parking to serve commuters and area employers would be feasible.

The Pennsylvania Avenue Campus would be large enough to provide room for car and bike sharing, electric vehicle charging, intercity bus service, and local transit service to various employment centers or the close by East and North Metro Transit stations. Less than 400 feet away from the Pennsylvania Avenue Campus location will be the First Street stop of Madison's Bus Rapid Transit line along East Washington Avenue. Given the geographical constraint along

the isthmus, Pennsylvania Avenue's proximity to East Washington builds in the immediate, intended, access to downtown for people who arrive by train.

A potential drawback to the Pennsylvania Avenue location is that the City does not currently own the site. Instead, Hooper is the property owner, having moved their headquarters and operation buildings to their new campus in DeForest last fall.³⁷ Another potential drawback is that, unlike the Yahara Station, the Pennsylvania Avenue location is just outside TID #36, an area in which tax incremental financing (TIF) is allowed to be used to build public infrastructure improvements at a location that would not otherwise experience development. Lastly, the Pennsylvania Avenue Campus would not be close to planned BRT stops.

Next Steps

Looking ahead, DMI recognizes the once-in-a-generation opportunity for passenger rail to expand to Madison. This report highlights three possible locations for an intercity train station. Two of which are located within a few blocks to the east of the Yahara River and the other is further east at the Oscar Mayer site. Each site has its unique advantages and disadvantages. Given that this new opportunity to connect Madison with other Midwestern downtowns touches on many of the goals of the DMI Civic Engagement Agenda, DMI will need to remain active in our advocacy work.

³⁷ Barry Adams, "Hooper Unveils \$60 Million Campus in DeForest," *Wisconsin State Journal*, November 15, 2021 https://madison.com/wsj/business/watch-now-hooper-unveils-60-million-campus-in-deforest/article_54773b02-ad64-5fe2-bc34-64601e142fd3.html.