

TWIN CITIES - MILWAUKEE - CHICAGO INTERCITY PASSENGER RAIL SERVICE PROJECT

PHASE I STUDY COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MEETING

September 2017



AGENDA



- **Project Background and Overview**
- **Current Activities**
 - Purpose and Need Statement
 - Alternatives Analysis
 - Operations Modeling
 - Infrastructure Improvements
- **Next Steps**
- **Question and Answer**

TCMC PROJECT BACKGROUND

- Amtrak conducted a feasibility study for adding a “second frequency” passenger service between Chicago Union Station and the Twin Cities area
- 2015 feasibility report indicated favorable ridership and revenue
 - **Ridership projection:** 155,500 annually
 - **Revenue:** \$6.8 million



TCMC PROJECT BACKGROUND

- State DOTs recommended service between Chicago Union Station and Union Depot in St. Paul because of lower capital costs and less complex rail operations



TCMC PROJECT OVERVIEW

- Use ***Empire Builder*** route between St. Paul Union Depot and Chicago Union Station



TCMC PROJECT OVERVIEW

- About **4-6 hours apart** from *Empire Builder* schedule
- Up to **13 stations**
- Train utilizes existing or proposed slot between Chicago and Milwaukee from *Hiawatha* corridor to **minimize impacts**
- **79 mph** (max) service
- **Infrastructure improvements needed** to support additional service while maintaining freight performance

TCMC PROJECT OVERVIEW

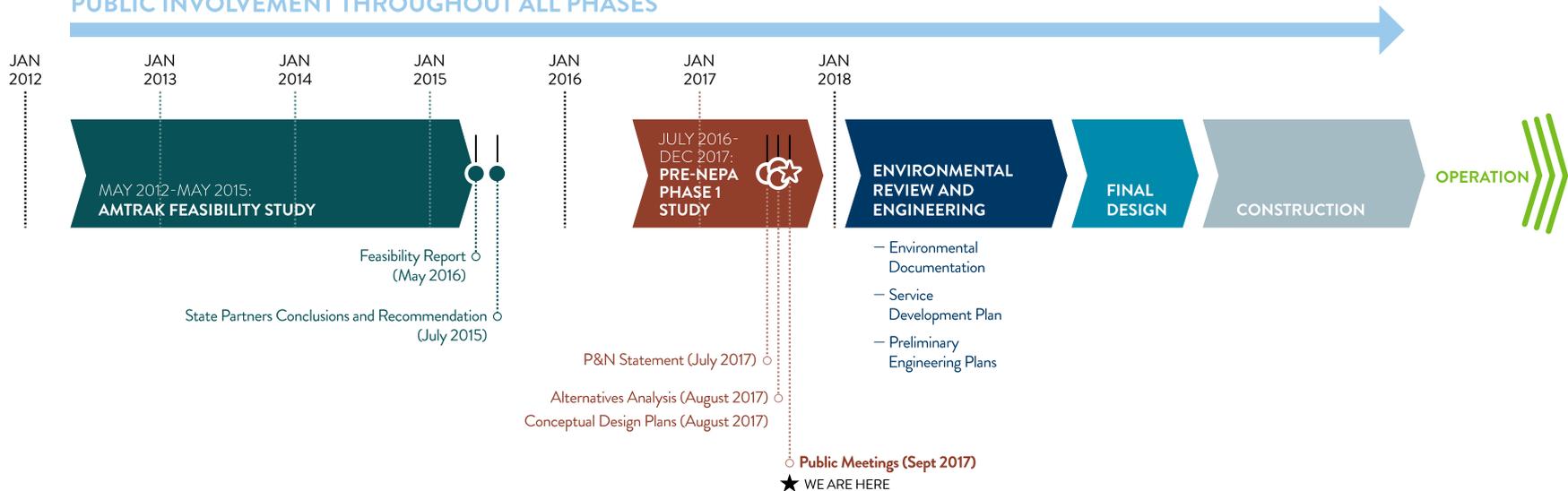
- **Phase I Study:** July 2016 – fall 2017

- Pre-NEPA activities
 - Purpose and need
 - Route and service
 - Alternatives analysis
 - Outreach
- Operations analysis
- Conceptual engineering and cost estimates

- **Phase 2 Study:** next phase

- Environmental review
- Service development plan

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT THROUGHOUT ALL PHASES



PURPOSE AND NEED STATEMENT

- Describes project purpose and transportation problems it aims to resolve
- Approved by FRA and posted to project website in July 2017

Purpose

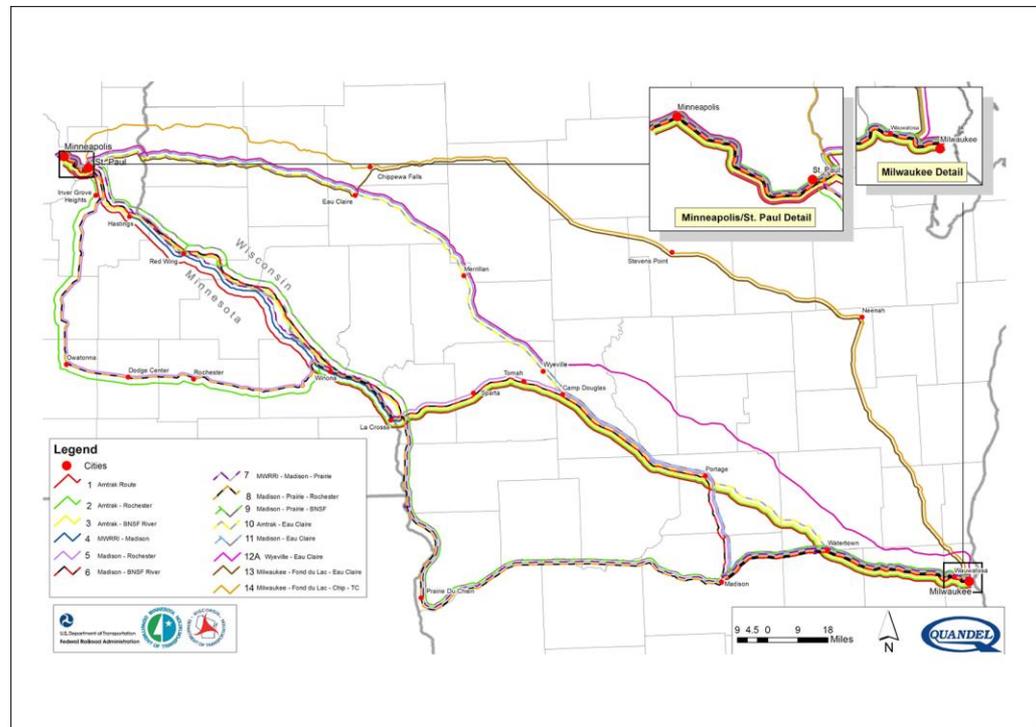
- Fill regional transportation system gaps
- Cost-effective to implement, operate and maintain
- Population increases, economic growth
- Integrate with *Hiawatha* service
- Avoid travel time delays sometimes experienced by the *Empire Builder* as it travels from the West Coast

Need

- Insufficient non-auto transportation options for communities; once-daily trip does not provide adequate connections
- Rising population, economic growth would create more travel delays
- Insufficient schedule choices for intercity travelers
- *Empire Builder* near capacity during peak travel months, and travel demand expected to rise

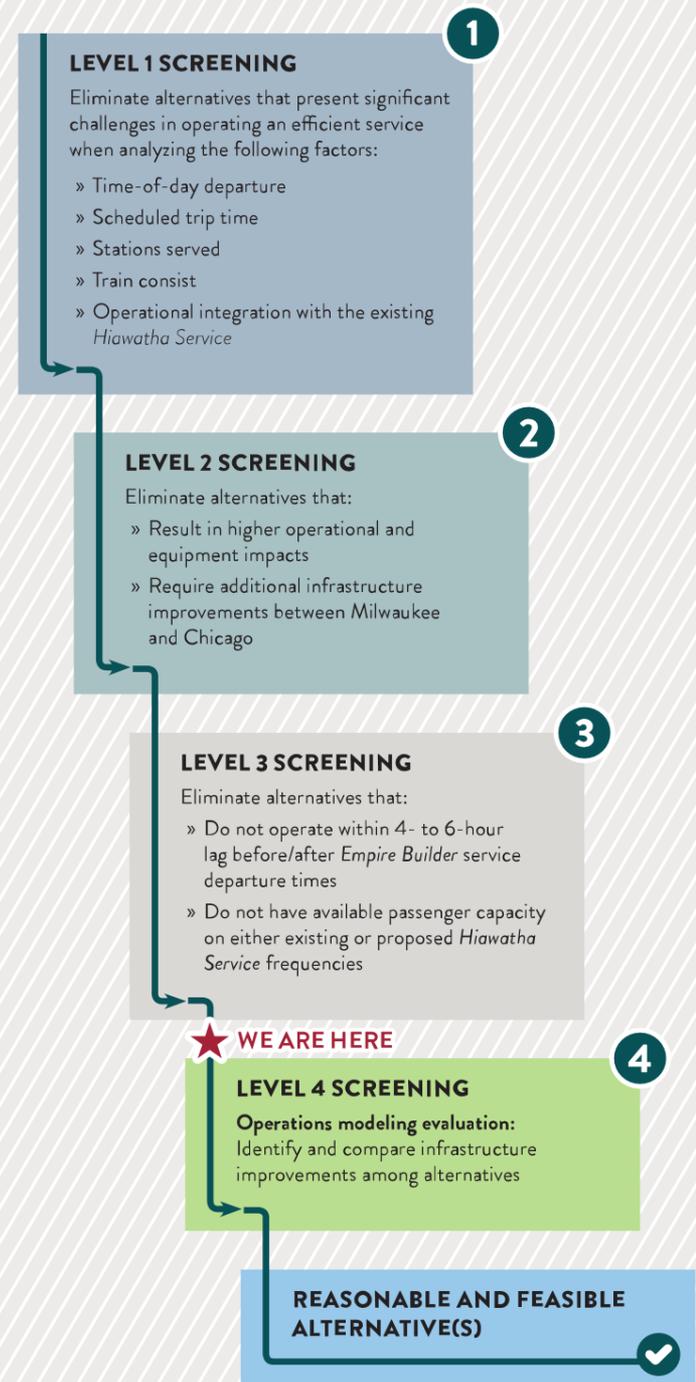
ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS: ROUTE ALTERNATIVES

- 11 route alternatives and a no-build alternative considered
- Utilized work completed under Midwest Regional Rail Initiative and Chicago-Milwaukee Intercity Passenger Rail Service study



ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS: SERVICE ALTERNATIVES

- Project team used 4-level screening process to identify reasonable and feasible service alternatives
- Each screening level provided greater level of detail in analyzing the identified alternatives



ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS: SERVICE ALTERNATIVES

The project team analyzed these five identified alternatives:

- **No-Build Alternative:** No additional passenger rail service provided.
- ✓ **(Recommended) Alternative 1:** TCMC service frequency operates as extension of one of the existing seven *Hiawatha* service schedules.
- **Alternative 2:** TCMC service frequency operates as extension of one of the proposed additional *Hiawatha* service schedules.
- **Alternative 3:** TCMC service frequency and *Hiawatha* service operate individually – except between Milwaukee and Chicago, where they would be attached and operate as one train.
- **Alternative 4:** TCMC service frequency operates as separate, additional frequency to existing *Hiawatha* service.

OPERATIONS MODELING

- Evaluate and determine how TCMC service can operate most efficiently
- Operations modeling between Milwaukee and St. Paul
- Trains utilize existing or proposed *Hiawatha* service schedule slots between Chicago and Milwaukee
- Schedules complement current *Empire Builder* schedules, with arrival and departure times at endpoints that maximize ridership potential
- Develop appropriate infrastructure improvements needed for TCMC while minimizing freight and passenger rail delays and accommodating freight growth

TCMC PROPOSED SCHEDULE

Westbound Train 333		
Chicago, IL	Dp	10:20 AM
Glenview, IL		10:42 AM
Sturtevant, WI		11:20 AM
Milwaukee Airport, WI		11:34 AM
Milwaukee, WI	Ar	11:49 AM
Milwaukee, WI	Dp	11:54 AM
Columbus, WI		12:58 PM
Portage, WI		1:25 PM
Wisconsin Dells, WI		1:44 PM
Tomah, WI		2:23 PM
La Crosse, WI		3:07 PM
Winona, MN		3:42 PM
Red Wing, MN		4:44 PM
St. Paul, MN (Union Depot)	Ar	5:39 PM

Eastbound Train 340		
St. Paul, MN (Union Depot)	Dp	11:47 AM
Red Wing, MN		12:35 PM
Winona, MN		1:39 PM
La Crosse, WI		2:17 PM
Tomah, WI		2:56 PM
Wisconsin Dells, WI		3:36 PM
Portage, WI		3:54 PM
Columbus, WI		4:22 PM
Milwaukee, WI	Ar	5:40 PM
Milwaukee, WI	Dp	5:40 PM
Milwaukee Airport, WI		5:55 PM
Sturtevant, WI		6:08 PM
Glenview, IL		6:46 PM
Chicago, IL	Ar	7:14 PM

CONGESTION AREAS, PROPOSED INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS



Area of congestion

PROPOSED INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

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

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



TCMC NEXT STEPS

- **Phase 1 Study: Complete fall 2017**
 - Complete conceptual design plans for proposed infrastructure improvements
 - Develop capital cost estimates for proposed infrastructure improvements
- **Phase 2 Study: Obtain funding/begin Phase 2**
 - Environmental review process and preliminary design
 - Service Development Plan
- **Final design, construction, operation**
 - Initiate upon completion of Phase 2 Study
 - Service could begin by 2022, pending receipt of funding

COMMENT ON THE PROJECT

- Comment forms are available tonight for submitting written comments
- Comment online on project website:
www.dot.state.mn.us/passengerrail/tc-mil-chi/
- Question-and-answer session with agency staff during this meeting
- Receive project updates through “Connect with us” link on project website