



“This is just the beginning. It's the beginning of finally constructing a 21st century rail system that's long, long overdue in this country.” —President Biden, January 31, 2023



High Speed Rail Alliance

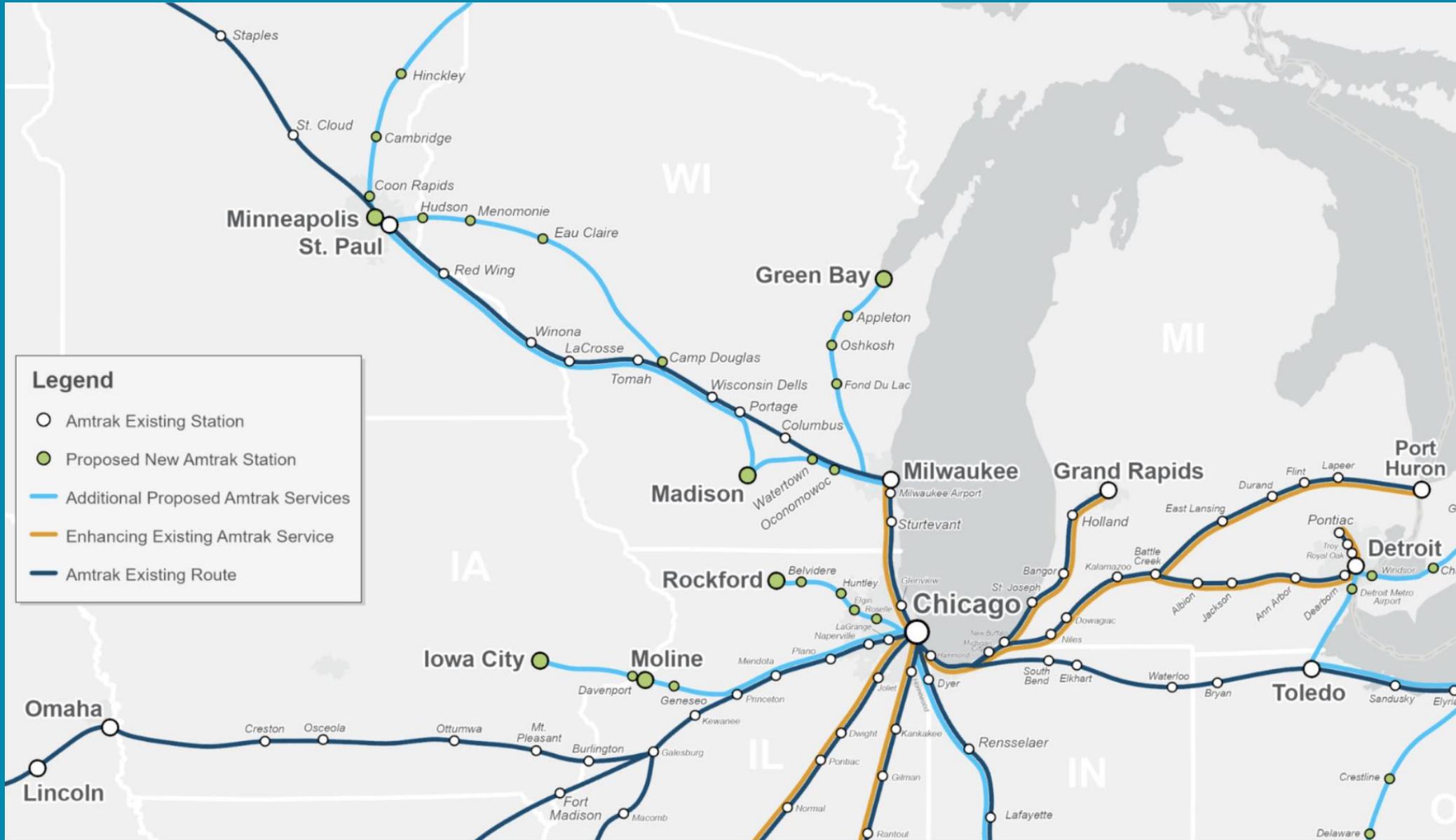
Getting Dane County on the Map



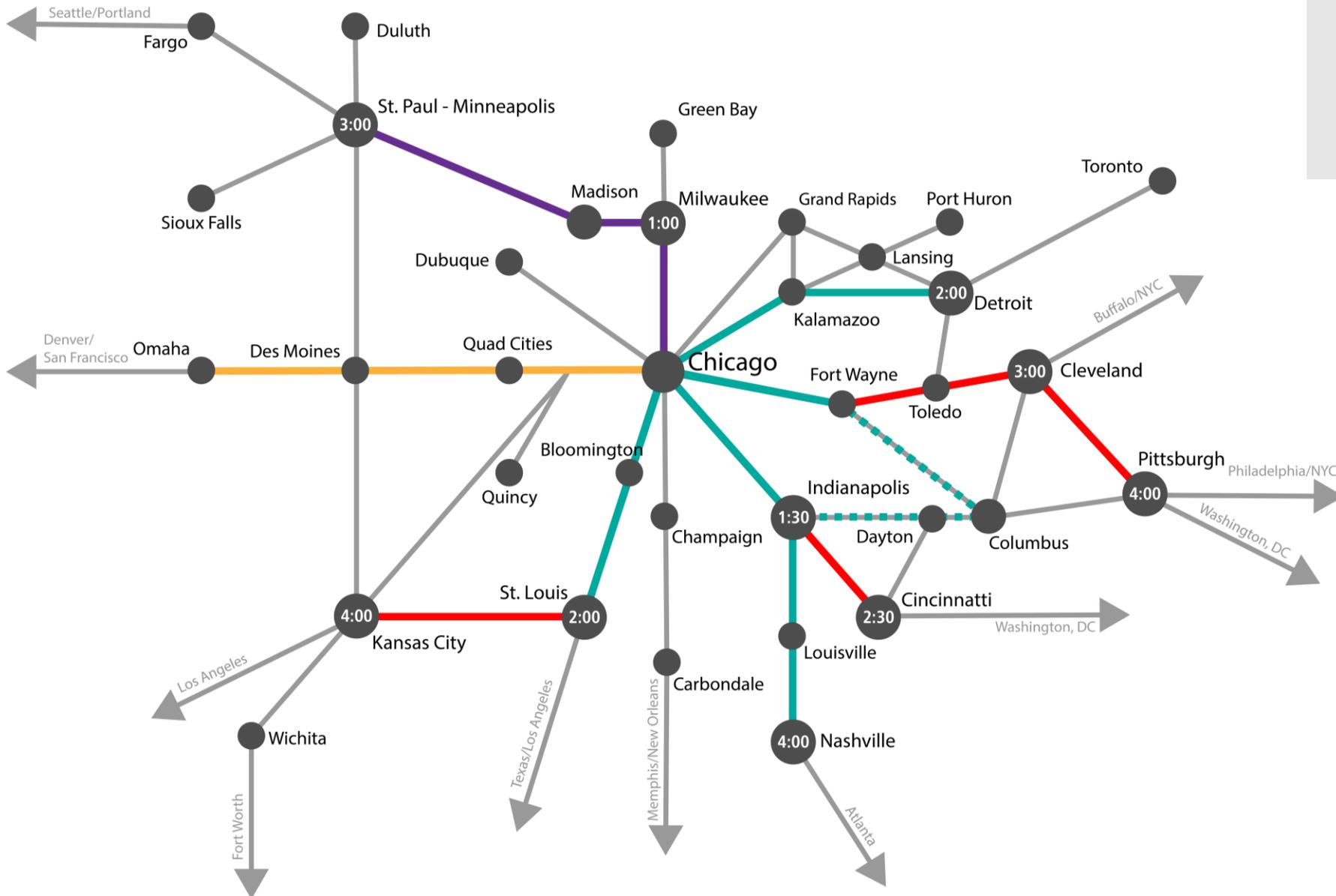
HighSpeedRail.US

Top Objectives

- A federal railroad program with annual funding
- At least one high-speed line in service at 180+ mph by 2030
- Investment in Chicago rail hub for fast, frequent service to neighboring states like Wisconsin



Federal Railroad Administration Framework



Legend

- 24 Daily Roundtrips
- 16 - 24 Daily Roundtrips
- 16 Daily Roundtrips
- 8 Daily Roundtrips
- Alternative Corridor Alignment Options
- Other Important Routes



Key steps

- Expressions of interest to Federal Railroad Administration 
- Apply to FRA's Corridor Identification & Development Program
- City of Madison report on recommended station location in April
- Build Wisconsin support for state matching funds, likely 2025-2027

What Alliance is doing

- Supporting local leaders, including Feb. 10 talk on federal process
- Helping build Wisconsin Business Coalition for Passenger Rail
- Working with new Illinois High Speed Rail Commission and Passenger Rail Caucus
- Laying groundwork for Wisconsin lobbying
- Advocating statewide vision with statewide benefits

Instead of this...





Let's aim for this

- Cleaner, safer, faster travel than by car or even plane
- Statewide service, to and from most cities in Wisconsin
- Statewide benefits give best chance of building support for Dane County



Thank you!

- Chris Ott, Deputy Director
 - chris@hsrail.org
 - 608-470-1470
- The Federal Process—How to Advance Your Passenger Rail Project
 - Friday, February 10, 12:00
 - HighSpeedRail.US

We also lined up support for Chicago hub investment from mayors of 56 cities, including:

- Fitchburg
- Madison
- Middleton
- Monona
- Verona

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

The Honorable Amit Bose
Administrator
Federal Railroad Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

September 27, 2022

Dear Secretary Buttigieg and Administrator Bose,

We write today as mayors of Midwest cities to express our enthusiasm for the MEGA Program grant application supporting the Chicago Access/Michigan East Program, the purpose of which is to reduce passenger rail travel time, improve reliability, and permit the expansion of service throughout the Midwest. We recognize that passenger rail has the vast potential to lead to greater interconnectivity and cooperation among governments, enterprises, communities, and individuals in the Midwest region and nationwide.

There are two key components of the Chicago Access/Michigan East Program. The first is to add new, and improve existing, rail infrastructure just south of Chicago Union Station (CUS) and in southwest Michigan. By so doing, passenger train movements between Chicago and cities all over the Midwest will require less time. In addition, train movements in and out of CUS will be more in the control of Amtrak and other passenger railroads, leading to improved reliability. Specifically, this program will:

- Significantly reduce delays and trip time on the Chicago-Champaign-Carbondale line by increasing the speed of the connection to CUS;
- Improve train schedule reliability along the Chicago-Joliet-Normal-Springfield-St. Louis route;
- Lay a new section of double-track in Michigan to improve service and increase capacity between Chicago, Kalamazoo, Ann Arbor and Detroit

Second is a program of improvements planned at CUS itself, the fourth-busiest Amtrak station nationwide and the busiest station outside of the Northeast Corridor. Almost 40 million passengers pass through CUS annually. On an average weekday, the station handles approximately 140,000 passengers and hosts more than 300 trains. The program brings the nearly century-old CUS into a state of good repair and significantly improves passenger circulation and safety. Based on the Union Station Master Plan developed with the City of Chicago, the program will improve the passenger experience by modernizing and expanding CUS platforms and concourses. Plus, new platforms and waiting areas will be added, thus allowing for service expansion. Finally, the program will address the longstanding ventilation issues that have affected passengers and employees of both Amtrak and Metra for decades.

Chicago Union Station plays a central role in Amtrak's vision for passenger rail in the Midwest and is the hub of Amtrak's vision for expansion that will connect the Midwest and the nation, all while increasing ridership. That vision calls for creating new and improved routes serving Illinois, Missouri, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Ohio, Indiana and Kentucky. Further, CUS is identified in the Federal Rail Administration's Midwest Regional Rail Plan as the center of a "hub and spoke" Midwest rail network. Similar to Amtrak, FRA envisions CUS as the connection point for most existing and proposed routes in the Midwest.