

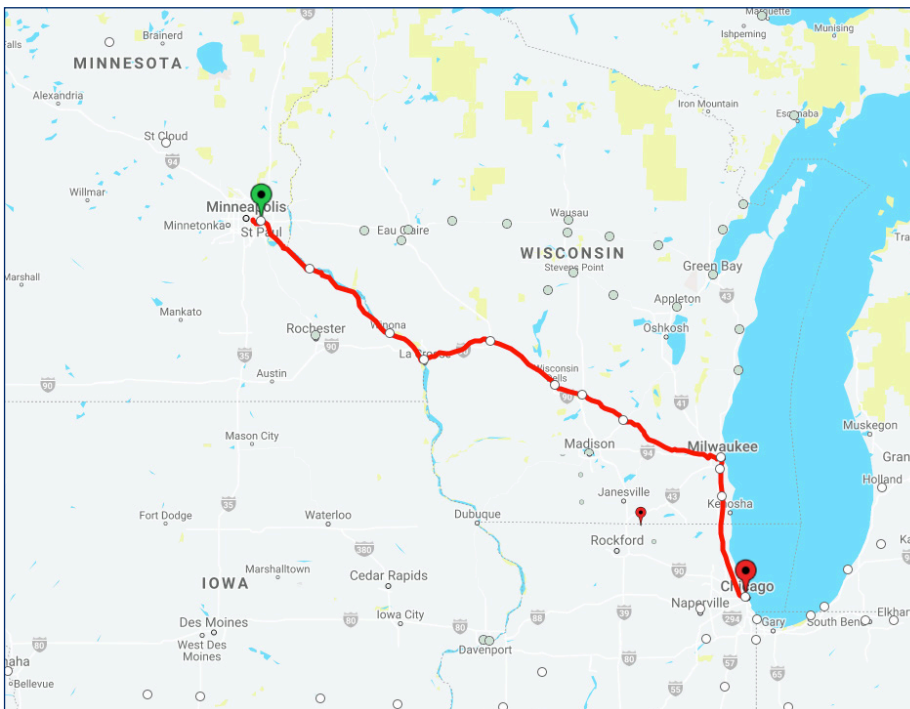
# Second Daily Train Between the Twin Cities, Milwaukee, and Chicago - Support the Great River Rail Commission's Request For State Funding



State funds (\$10 million) are sought for capital improvements to make a second daily train between the Twin Cities, Milwaukee, and Chicago a reality.

## Issue At-A-Glance

- 120,000 trips are taken annually on the Amtrak *Empire Builder*.
- A second daily train would utilize the existing Amtrak corridor from Union Depot to Chicago to serve 124,000 riders annually.
- Additional Minnesota stations include Red Wing and Winona.



## Support

Washington County is a member of the Great River Rail Commission (GRRC), which has advocated for state funding and has secured resolutions of support from cities, counties, universities and chambers of commerce along the Minnesota portion of the corridor.

## No Action

If the proposal is not enacted by September 2021, Minnesota will not meet the FRA grant match requirement and \$31.8 million in federal grant funds will have to be returned. This would represent a missed opportunity for increased connectivity for businesses and residents through partnership between the FRA, Amtrak, Wisconsin, Minnesota Department of Transportation, and the GRRC. Additionally, declining to make capacity improvements for passenger trains would miss an opportunity to produce more reliable rail shipping and to reduce transportation expenses and uncertainty.

\$10 million in state funding is the last piece to fund the capital improvements necessary to operate the service

In September 2020, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) announced a \$31.8 million grant that is contingent on a \$10 million match from the state of Minnesota – the state of Wisconsin has already committed \$6.2 million. The proposed \$10 million Minnesota commitment, together with the funds committed by the state of Wisconsin and Amtrak, would result in \$40 million of upgrades to Minnesota tracks, sidings, and switching.

## Contact

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