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Michigan Association of
Railroad Passengers
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Grand Rapids

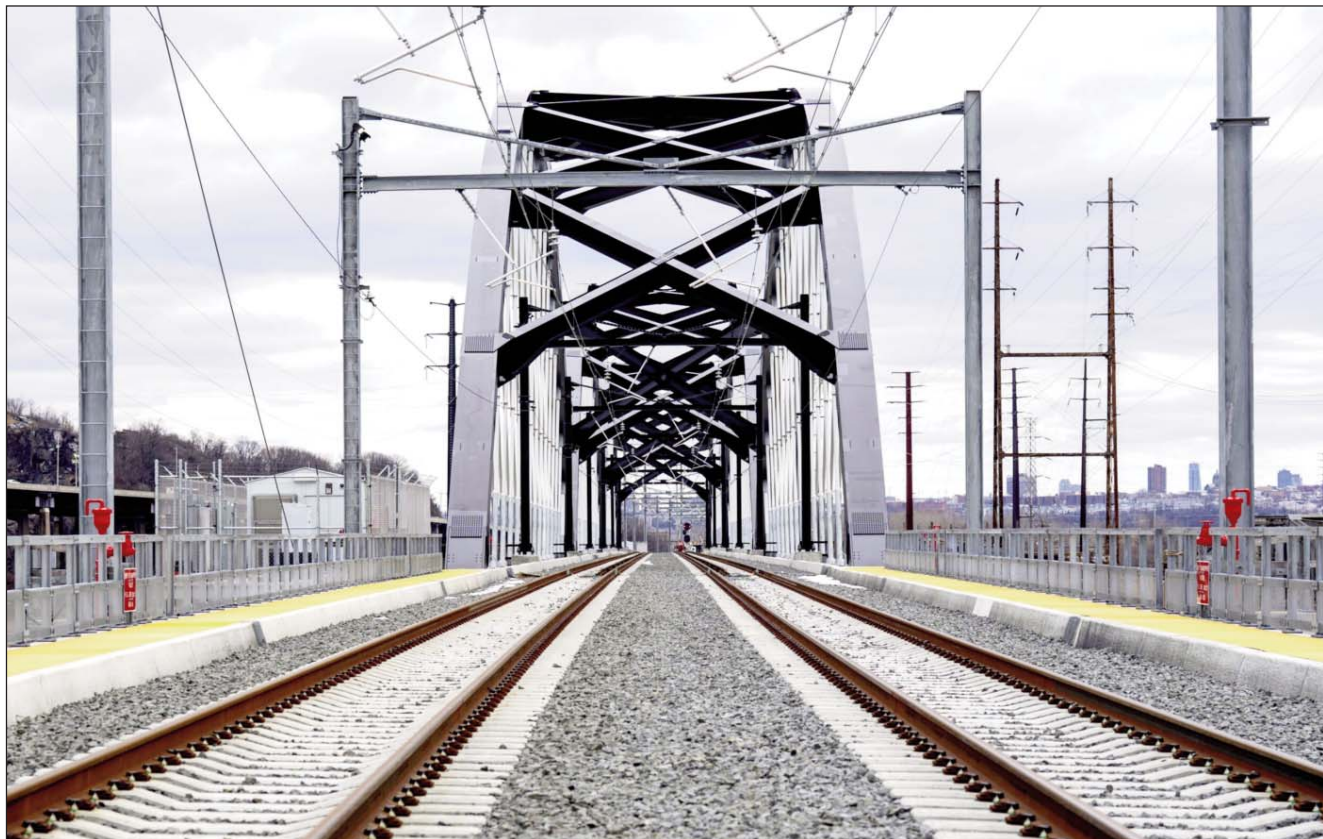
Saturday, May 30, 11 a.m.

Future meetings to be determined
See MARP.ORG

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Portage North bridge opens



The new Portal North Bridge is a two-track bridge providing a clearance of 50 feet above the mean water level of the Hackensack River. (Amtrak photo)

The First Gateway Project Bridge Replacement is Completed

The new Portal North Bridge in New Jersey on the Northeast Corridor (NEC) entered service on March 13, 2026. This is a key railroad bridge that carries NEC trains over the Hackensack River in Hudson County, New Jersey. It is located west of Secaucus Junction and east of Newark Penn Station in an industrial area with extensive tidal wetlands. The bridge will carry thousands of passengers daily in Amtrak and NJ Transit trains. Amtrak has estimated the cost of the bridge replacement to be \$1.5 billion.

The new bridge replaces a three-track, 115-year-old, swing bridge with a clearance of only few feet over the water. The replacement bridge is a new two-track, fixed span, steel tied arch bridge with a vertical clearance of 50 feet over the water. Continual delays to trains from having to open the bridge for water traffic will be ended.

The old bridge, which annually required millions of dollars of maintenance, will be removed, thereby freeing up space south of the new bridge for a second two or three-track bridge (Portal South) to be built in the future when funding is available. The Portal North project also included rehabilitation of 2.5 miles of rail viaducts and embankments between Secaucus Junction and the Sawtooth Bridges.

This is the first completed bridge replacement on the massive multi-billion dollar Gateway Program (See Map). The project includes other bridges, building two new tunnels under the Hudson River, rebuilding the two existing tunnels, expanding Penn Station, and rebuilding about 10 miles of the NEC between Newark Penn Station and New York Penn Station.

See *Gateway Program* page 3

New Buffalo, Michigan



The Amtrak station at New Buffalo, Michigan. A simple, 200-foot concrete platform, at the North Whittaker Street crossing, seven trains a day, a few steps from good restaurants, village shopping, marina facilities for your boat, and upscale apartment living. Used by about 30,000 Michiganders annually, many of whom work in Chicago and commute to and from on week days. Is this the closest thing to a Suncoast beach town in Michigan? (MARP photo)

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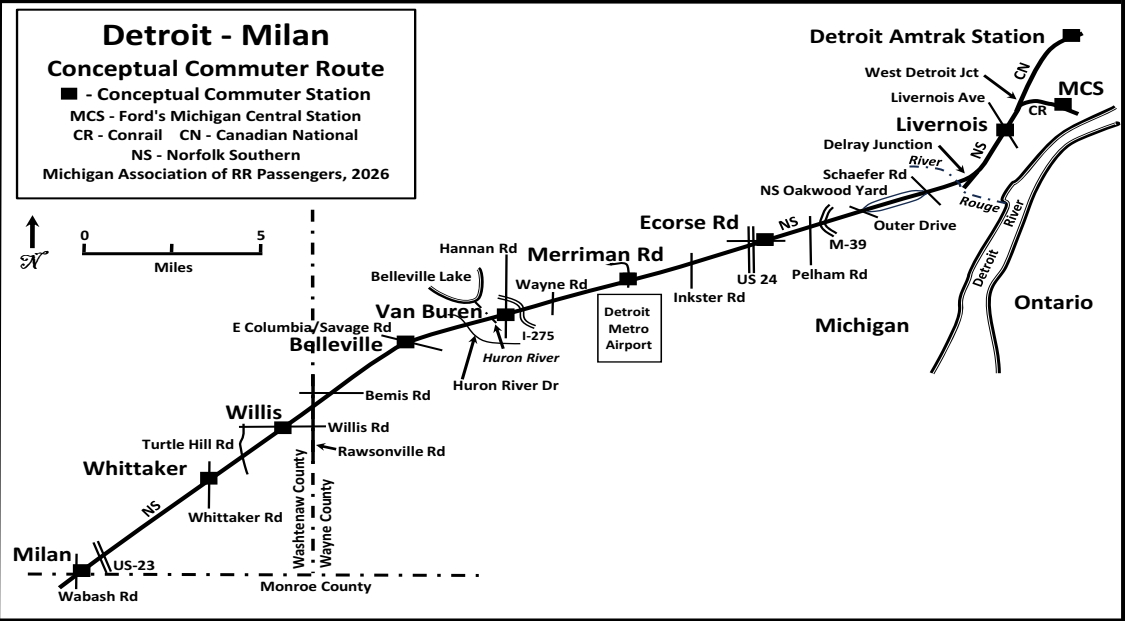
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A Detroit Area Commuter System

Possible Commuter Service Between Detroit and Milan



Introduction

This is the sixth article on a possible rail commuter system for the Detroit area. This article explores a 38.4-mile Detroit-Milan commuter route to the southwest of Detroit. (See map above) Two termination points in Detroit have been identified; Ford's Michigan Central Station (MCS) and the present Amtrak Station on Woodward Avenue. (The determination of which of these two station sites should serve the proposed commuter trains will involve the study of many complex issues not addressed here.) Except for the first few miles in Detroit from MCS or the Woodward Avenue Amtrak Station, which are owned by

Conrail (CR) or Canadian National (CN), the route described here is entirely owned by Norfolk Southern (NS). (See Table of Features at right)

Constructed during the decades after the Civil War, this was perhaps one of the last successful mainline railroads built in Michigan and the adjacent states. Following the merger of several railroads, the Buffalo-Detroit-Milan-Ft Wayne-St Louis/Kansas City mainline was organized into what became known as the Wabash Railroad. In 1964 the Wabash was merged into the Norfolk and Western, which in turn was merged in 1982 into today's Norfolk Southern (NS),

Previous Passenger Service

MARP is unaware of any commuter service having existed on this route in the Detroit area. However, a moderate number of long distance inter-city passenger trains have passed through the Detroit - Milan segment of the route. A Wabash Railroad schedule on page 115 of the January 1910 *Official Guide* shows six daily round trip trains on the route.

Features of Detroit - Milan Conceptual Commuter Route Conrail and Norfolk Southern Railroads			
Miles from MCS*	Feature	Municipality	Notes
0.0	Ford's Michigan Central	Detroit	Conrail, Wayne County
0.9	Bay City RR Junction	Detroit	
1.5	West Detroit RR Junction	Detroit	
2.0	Cross Livernois Avenue	Detroit	Conceptual Station Site
4.0	Cross Dearborn/Delray RR Jct	Detroit	From Conrail to NS
4.6	Cross River Rouge	Detroit	Dou Trk Bascule Bridge
5.3	Ecorse RR Junction	Detroit	
5.8	Cross Schaefer Road	Enter Melvindale	
6.8	Oakwood Railroad Yard	Melvindale	Lengthy RR yard
7.6	Cross Outer Drive	Melvindale	
7.6	Cross Boundary	Enter Allen Park	
9.1	Cross M-39 (Southfield Rd)	Allen Park	
9.6	Cross Pelham Road	Enter Taylor	Conceptual Station Site
11.5	Cross Ecorse Road	Taylor	Conceptual Station Site
11.7	Cross US-24 (Teleg. Rd)	Taylor	
13.7	Cross Inkster Road	Enter Romulus	Conceptual Station Site
15.5	Cross Merriman Rd (DTW)	Romulus	Conceptual Station Site
17.9	Cross Wayne Road	Romulus	
18.9	Cross Ozga Street	Romulus	Conceptual Station Site
19.3	Cross I-275	Romulus	
20.0	Cross Hannan Road	Enter Van Buren Twp	
20.7	Cross Huron River	Van Buren Township	Dou Trk Plate Grider Br
21.1	Cross East Huron River Dr	Van Buren Township	Conceptual Station Site
22.7	Cross Boundary	Enter Belleville	
22.9	Cross E Columbia/Savage Rd	Belleville	Conceptual Station Site
23.8	Cross Boundary	Re-Enter Van Buren Twp	
26.2	Cross Bemis Road	Enter Sumpter Twp	
27.0	Cross Rawsonville Road	Enter Willis	Enter Washtenaw County
28.0	Cross Willis Road	Willis	Conceptual Station Site
30.1	Cross Turtle Hill Road	Enter Augusta Twp	
30.9	Cross Whittaker Road	Whittaker	Conceptual Station Site
34.7	Cross Boundary	Enter York Township	
35.7	Cross Boundary	Enter Milan	
35.8	Cross US-23	Milan	
36.7	Cross Wabash Road	Milan	Old Wabash Depot
38.4	Cross Platt Road	Milan	Conceptual Station Site

NS - Norfolk Southern
* Add 2.0 miles for mileage from Detroit Woodward Avenue Amtrak Station.

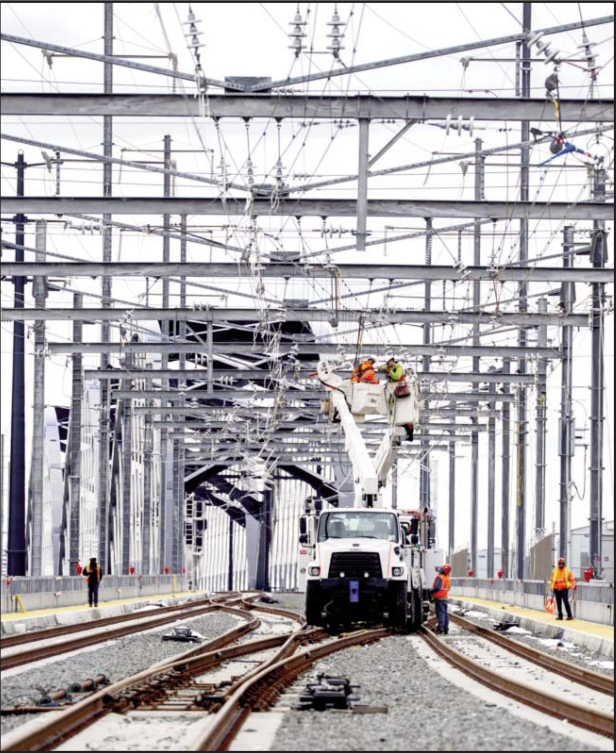
Two were local trains making intermediate stops on the Detroit-Milan segment at Delray, Romulus, Belleville, Whittaker, and Milan. Two were long distance trains on a Buffalo-Detroit-St Louis route, stopping only at Milan on the

Detroit-Milan segment. The final two trains were on the Buffalo-St Louis route, but passed through the Detroit-Milan segment without stopping.

Continued on next page

Gateway Program

continued from page 1



In addition to building the bridge, extensive work was required for building the track access ramps, a drainage system, modifying the signaling system, installing power lines, catenary, track, and many other project components. (Amtrak photo)

In December 2008, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) approved a \$1.34 billion project to replace the Portal Bridge with two new bridges, a three-track bridge to the north,

and a two-track bridge to the south. In the course of design work the number of tracks on the north bridge was reduced from three to two. The original timeline for

the project called for construction to begin in 2010, with the bridge replacement to be complete by 2017. Due to cancellation of the funding contribution of New Jersey by NJ governor Chris Christie in 2010 and other funding issues, this original plan was reduced to a single two-track bridge to be constructed on the north side of the old bridge.

By 2014, design work for the new Portal Bridge North had been completed. Preliminary site-preparation work began

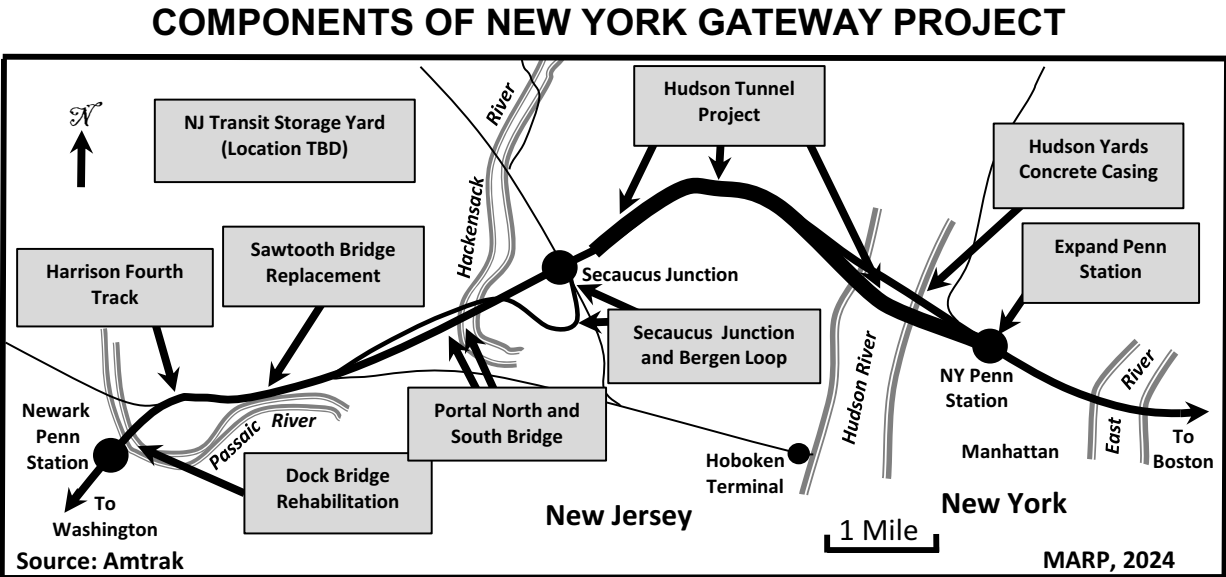
in October 2017. Early construction activities included realignment of a 138kV transmission line, constructing a temporary fiber optic cable pole line, building a finger pier for construction access, building a service access road, and building a 560-foot retaining wall. The work was completed in February 2019.

At this time, multiple funding delays occurred. However, in June 2018, a more progressive New Jersey governor approved \$600 million in bonds to help finance the

project. On June 24, 2019, the state governments of New York and New Jersey passed legislation to create the bi-state Gateway Development Commission to oversee the planning, funding, and construction of the Gateway Project.

During this time the FRA withheld funding for various reasons. After dinner with New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy, President Trump, although not in favor of the project, signaled that he would not stand in the

way of the project. Construction of the new bridge was given final approval and a Notice to Proceed was issued in April 2022. After multiple delays, the groundbreaking ceremony for the Portal North Bridge occurred on August 1, 2022, and the new bridge opened in March of 2026. The original Portal Bridge is now scheduled to be demolished in July 2028. (Information for this article came from Wikipedia, Amtrak, and various other sources.)



Detroit Commuter System . . . continued from page 3



The Wabash Depot at Milan, shown here about 1915, remains in place today. (MARP Photo)

The *Official Guide* on page 222 of December 1941 shows five eastbound and four westbound Wabash passenger trains on this route. One round trip was a mixed, triweekly, local stopping between Detroit and Milan at Oakwood, Romulus, French Landing, Belleville, Willis, Whittaker, and Milan. Two were daily long distance trains on the Detroit-St Louis route, one of which stopped only at Milan between Detroit and Milan. The other train did not stop on the Detroit- Milan segment. (One of these trains was the famous *Wabash Cannonball*.) The fifth train was a daily eastbound only train stopping at Milan, Belleville, Romulus, and Detroit.

By December of 1964 the *Official Guide* on page 281 shows only two Norfolk and Western long distance passen-

ger trains operating on the route between Detroit and St Louis. These trains stopped only at Milan on the Detroit-Milan segment. Upon the creation of Amtrak in May of 1971, all passenger service on this route was discontinued.

Few passenger facilities remain today. The Wabash depot in Milan at the Wabash Street crossing is still standing, apparently under NS ownership. The station building is shown in a postcard photo from about 1915 shown above.

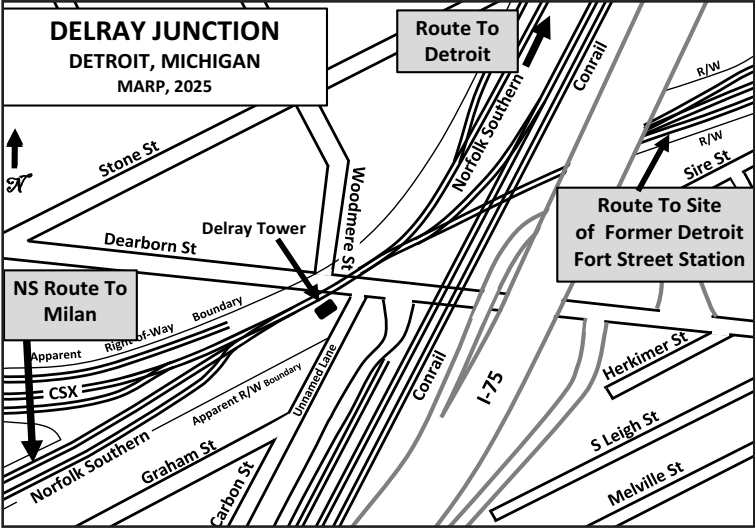
Description of Conceptual Commuter Route

Unlike Wabash and Norfolk and Western intercity passenger trains of the past, which originated at the Fort Street Station in Detroit (now demolished), the conceptual commuter trains would originate at

either Ford's Michigan Central Station (MCS) or the existing Amtrak Station on Woodward Avenue.

From MCS, the trains would follow Conrail to the west for 1.5 miles to West Detroit Junction. From the Amtrak Woodward Avenue Station, the trains would follow a CN line for 3.5 miles to West Detroit Junction. The remaining route to Milan is the same for either originating station. The route from the Amtrak Woodward Avenue Station would be 2.0 miles longer.

From West Detroit Junction the route proceeds south on NS 2.5 miles to Delray Junction. (See sketch of this junction above, right) This is the point where the original Wabash tracks crossed over the Conrail tracks for trains proceeding in and out of the Fort Street



and commercial areas. In Romulus the route crosses along the north edge of Detroit Metropolitan Airport. An airport station would need to be developed in this area at the crossing of either Middlebelt Road, Merriman Road, or Vining Road.

West of Romulus, the route enters Van Buren Township and the town of Bellevue. The area is more residential and rural. At Bellevue the route turns more directly to the southwest and crosses Rawsonville Road where the route leaves Wayne County and enters Washtenaw County. In this area the route passes through rural areas and the small communities of Willis and Whittaker to the end of the route at Milan.

Conceptual Commuter Operations

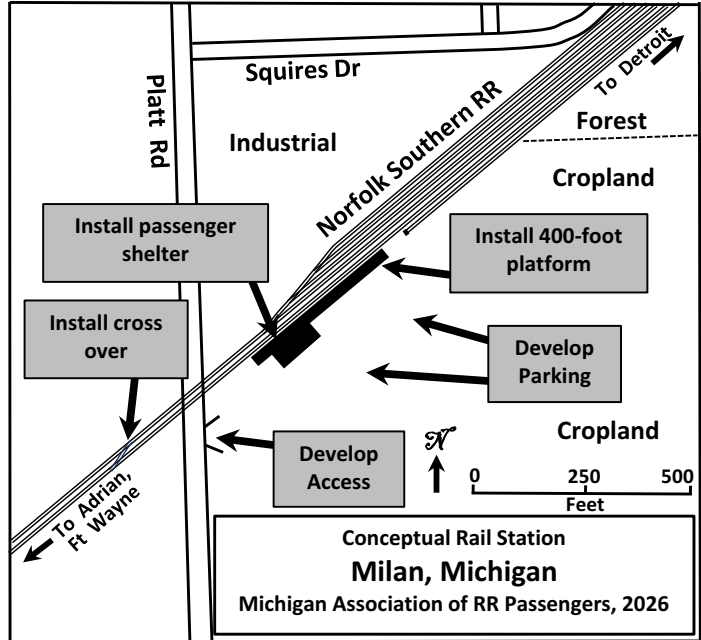
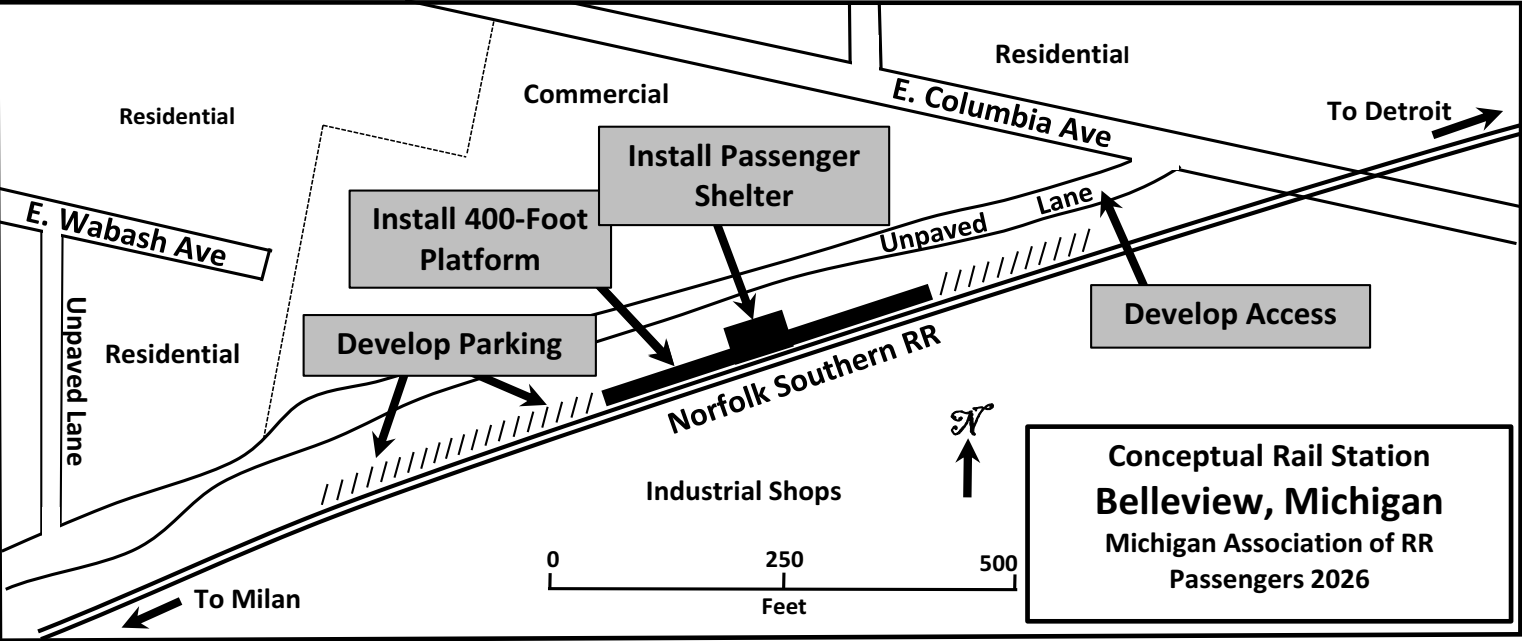
It is envisioned that commuter trains would operate in and out

Conceptual Station for Bellevue

The sketch below shows a conceptual layout for a commuter station in Bellevue west of the crossing of East Columbia Avenue, 22.9 miles west of MCS. The site appears to be a strip of unused land along an unpaved lane along the north side of the railroad. The site is on the east side of Bellevue with residential and commercial developments nearby. A passenger platform about 400 feet long and a passenger shelter would be built along the north side of the single track at this location. Access would be directly off East Columbia Avenue. Parking for the commuters would be developed along the tracks on the north side of the railroad right-of-way. This site should have minimal effect on the railroad and the surrounding land use.

Conceptual Station for Milan

The sketch at lower left shows a conceptual site layout for a station along the tracks on the southwest side of Milan, 38.4 miles southwest of MCS. The site appears to be undeveloped, level, cropland. The area around the site is primarily industrial, agricultural, and residential. A passenger platform about 400 feet long and a passenger shelter would be built along the southside side of the two mainline tracks. Access to the station and parking would be installed from Platt Road. A small three-track rail yard is on the north side of the tracks at this location. Working with NS, a portion of this yard could be developed for servicing and storing the commuter train equipment at the west end of the route.



Station. At Delray Junction the commuter route turns to the southwest and moves to the original Wabash route (now NS) for the remaining distance to Milan. The area is intensely developed for industrial uses.

The River Rouge is crossed on a double-track Bascule Bridge, Schaefer Road is crossed (leaving Detroit), and the 1.8-mile long Oakwood Yard in Melvindale is passed. This is a busy, major yard for NS freight operations. The surrounding area is densely developed with industrial and residential developments.

Beyond the Oakville Yard the route continues to the southwest passing through Taylor and Romulus in densely developed residential, industrial,

of Detroit on a schedule to be developed once commuting patterns have been studied and identified. The goals would be to attract the greatest number of passengers to reduce road congestion and to, secondly, to minimize interference with NS rail freight operations. Track and signal facilities would be adjusted or built to allow the commuter trains to operate, and servicing facilities would be built at each end of the line to maintain and store the commuter train equipment. The location of conceptual commuter stations shown in the table would be adjusted as necessary to meet commuter patterns and the availability of property for station facilities.

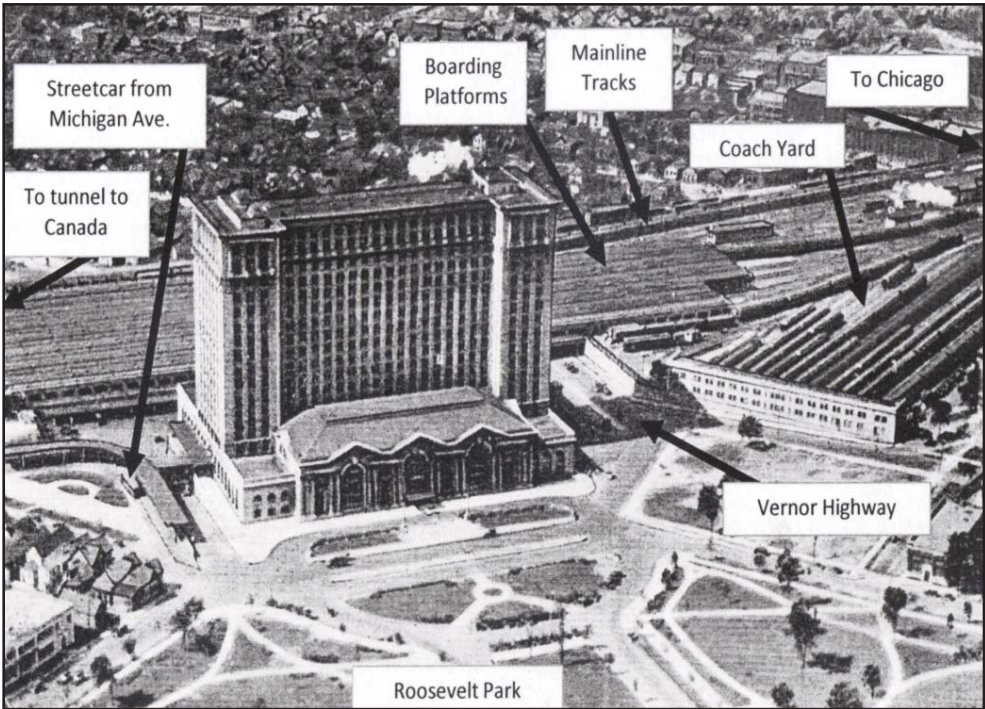
Conclusion

Although this route sees a considerable number of freight trains, the route is attractive for commuter trains with long straight sections of track. It is owned primarily by one railroad company. It is a direct route to Detroit from a southwest suburban area that is growing. Adequate right-of-way width seems to exist so that an additional track could be added if needed for commuter trains. Although preliminary studies would be necessary, this route has good potential as a commuter route for the Detroit urban area.

MARP Tours Ford’s Michigan Central Station



Opened in 1913, Michigan Central Station was the home office and Detroit station of the Michigan Central Railroad (MC). The MC’s principal main line extended from Buffalo to the west across Ontario, through the Detroit River Tunnel, to Detroit, and on to Chicago’s Central Station (after 1950 to Chicago’s LaSalle Street Station). To the east of Detroit, the next large station on the MC route is Buffalo’s Central Station. Perhaps there is another company in Buffalo that could take guidance from Ford and take on the restoration Buffalo’s large station.



Annotated aerial photo of MCS from about 1925. Today the coach yard, boarding tracks, and streetcar facilities are gone and the spaces are vacant. The location of the new intermodal station likely would be along the mainline tracks west of Vernor Highway, to the right in the photo.



MARP members look up and admire the 29,000 Guastavino tiles in the restored ceiling of the waiting room. Ford brought in masons from Italy to carefully reproduce missing tiles, install them in the ceiling, and clean the existing tiles.

On March 21, 44 MARP members and 36 guests toured Michigan Central Station in Detroit. For those of us who remember the station 50 to 60 years ago under New York Central and Penn Central ownership it was an astounding experience.

The restoration effort is complete, professional, architecturally correct, with only minimal alterations that are required for modern use. Bill Ford and the Ford Motor Company, whose backgrounds are tied irrevocably to Detroit, have performed a magnificent restoration. Detroit has received the gift of the century.



The restored waiting room is certainly one of the most magnificent interiors in Michigan.



Ford representative, Mark Delavergne (in orange), guided us on the 90-minute tour.

ALL MODERN PHOTOS BY MARP



Left: A gift shop and small restaurant are on the main floor.

Right: Looking up through the glass ceiling of the restored concourse at the back of the office tower. Ford will occupy about three floors and the remaining floors will be leased out. The upper five floors will be an upscale hotel.



SHORT LINES

Pennsylvania DOT meets to discuss restoration of passenger rail service between Scranton and New York City. As reported by the *Scranton Time-Tribune* on February 12, this would be the first passenger service on the 136-mile route since 1970. The train would generate an estimated \$84 million in new economic activity annually, according to an Amtrak study released in March 2023. The Scranton - NYC proposal is one of just five in the nation to have advanced to the second-step milestone of the three-step federal Corridor Identification and Development Program to identify new, viable passenger train routes..... **A second firm has downgraded Brightline's credit rating** as the passenger train company struggles to grow fast enough to keep up with its debt payments. As reported in the Miami Herald on January 29, Fitch Ratings cut its view of Brightline's debit. The actions by Fitch and S&P Global put some of Brightline's bonds further into junk bond territory..... **The president of Mexico, Claudia Sheinbaum, opened the final 8.4km section of the Toluca commuter line** from Observatorio to Santa Fe. The long-running project to build a 57.7km (35.9 miles) commuter line between Ciudad Mexico and Toluca was completed on February 2nd with this new segment. The project required a total of investment of 100bn pesos (\$US 5.79bn), according to the Mexican government. It is expected to carry up to 140,000 passengers a day, with trains operating every 12 minutes. The fleet comprises 20 CAF EMUs, each able to accommodate 719 passengers at a maximum speed of 160km/h. As of January 30, the existing Santa Fe - Toluca section handled a total of 15 million passengers since its opening..... **Amtrak Mardi Gras ridership greatly beat expectations.** As reported in *Progressive Railroading* on February 24, Amtrak's Mardi Gras service along the Gulf Coast exceeded ridership expectations after its inaugural run in August 2025, according to the Southern Rail Commission. As of January 31, 2026, nearly 70,500 passengers traveled on the Gulf Coast route during these 6 months compared to an estimated 60,000 passengers for the first 12-month year..... **The Kansas City Streetcar Authority noted that new developments along the route roughly doubled** following the extension of 5.7 miles of rail from Main Street to the University of Missouri at Kansas City. As reported in *Mass Transit Online*, data analyzed from 10 years of construction permit activity by the Mid-America Regional Council revealed that for both the starter route from City Market to Union station and for the University extension, the pace of new construction roughly doubled following the transit investment.....**The Mardi Gras's hottest Amtrak ques-**

tion: Which city packs the Mardi Gras Service? *Mass Transit Online* reports that New Orleans is the heavyweight. More than 41,500 of the 83,079 riders from Aug. 18 to March 10 stepped off the train at Union Passenger Terminal. Mobile has seen 26,174 riders board in just under seven months, or one boarding for every seven to eight Mobilians. A standout performer so far is Bay St. Louis, the waterfront Mississippi town of about 10,600 residents. With 4,755 boardings, it has by far the highest per-capita ridership, roughly one train rider for every two residents. These early ridership figures will be watched closely as states and cities must eventually reconsider subsidies after the first three years for the state-supported route.....**Michigan Gubernatorial candidate Jocelyn Benson wants to bring high-speed rail to Michigan.** According to *Bridge Michigan* on February 19th, Jocelyn Benson wants to connect Michigan's major cities with high-speed rail, arguing it would attract new residents and boost the economy. The Democratic gubernatorial hopeful is still ironing out her rail plans and funding methods. Benson, who currently serves as Secretary of State, notes that many young people have consistently reported they want to live in walkable communities with more transportation options... **California plans to extend the Caltrain route to Salinas.** The *Monterey Daily Herald* and *Mass Transit Online* on February 12, 2026, reported that a layover facility in Salinas is under design and track improvements in Gilroy are under review with Union Pacific Railroad. The Monterey County Rail Extension project would extend commuter passenger rail service about 38 miles from Gilroy south through Aromas, Watsonville, Las Lomas, and Castroville to Salinas..... **The Chicago Transit Authority filed a lawsuit against the Federal Government** after the feds "paused" funding for two major rail transit projects. According to *Rail, Track and Signal* on March 24, 2026, the lawsuit was filed after the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) failed to provide funds for the Red Line Extension and the Red and Purple Modernization projects. This was after the FTA signed Full Funding Grant Agreements for both projects in early 2025, leading the CTA to expect the receipt of \$764 million in 2025. The lawsuit says that says the federal government has not upheld their statutory and regulatory requirements and the pause risks harm to residents and the projects. The Red & Purple Modernization project is close to completion.....**A recent dip in San Diego trolley ridership is being blamed on the federal immigration crackdown** and on lower-income users making fewer leisure trips because of rising household expenses.

According to the *San Diego Union-Tribune* and *Mass Transit Online* on March 23, 2026, Ridership rose 7% last fiscal year and had been projected to rise another 6.5% this fiscal year. Instead, it's down 1.3% since July, a drop that will cost the cash-strapped Metropolitan Transit System (MTS) \$8.4 million. Sharon Cooney, MTS's chief executive, said "We're seeing it across the country, that border regions are facing lower transit ridership in relation to fears of traveling due to ICE activities..... **A federal judge ruled unlawful the efforts to kill congestion pricing by USDOT Secretary Sean Duffy in NY City.** According to *AM New York* on March 3, U.S. District Judge Lewis Liman made clear on March 3 in a 149-page decision, that Duffy lacked the legal authority to unilaterally void a program established through a contract signed by the previous Transportation Secretary. Liman said, "The Secretary's actions were arbitrary and capricious, an abuse of discretion, and not in accordance with law." Congestion pricing was approved by Duffy's predecessor, former DOT head Pete Buttigieg, under President Joe Biden in 2024.... **In late December the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) took delivery of it 60th and final new Alstom streetcar.** The new vehicles increased the fleet by 30%, allowing the TTC to offer six minute or faster service. All TTC streetcars are fully accessible and zero emission, supporting Toronto's climate and equity goals. Produced by Alstom at its Thunder Bay, Ontario, facility, delivery began in 2023. With 11 streetcar routes spanning 308 kilometers (191.4 miles), the TTC's streetcar network is the largest and busiest in North America with over 34.5 million streetcar trips in 2024. Toronto is also one of the fastest growing major metropolitan area in North America..... **In a rare victory for a railroad over a trail proposal,** the US Surface Transportation Board denied a petition by the Great Redwood Trail Agency to force the abandonment of a 40-mile railroad line in California between Fort Bragg and Willits. The Board ruled that the railroad retained potential for freight service and must remain part of the nation's interstate rail network. The Board found and that the Mendocino Railway had secured a \$31.4 million federal loan to rehabilitate a collapsed tunnel east of Fort Bragg, and reached a preliminary agreement to ship at least 400 annual carloads of aggregate once repairs are complete. Caryl Hart, speaking for the Great Redwood Trail Agency, said her agency plans to move forward with a "rail with trail" proposal.....**In Florida, Tri-Rail has ordered seven new Charger diesel electric locomotives from Siemens.** According to *Mass Transit Newsletter*, on January 2, 2026, the South Florida

Regional Transportation Authority (SFRTA) expects the locomotives to enter service in 2029. SFRTA says the Charger locomotives will replace its aging fleet of six EMD GP49 units, enabling Tri-Rail to retire older equipment and enhance service quality for riders. Tri-Rail operates a 73.5-mile corridor that links Miami, Fort Lauderdale and West Palm Beach, as well as an additional eight-mile line on the Florida East Coast Corridor to access Miami Central Station..... **The St. Paul City Council passed a resolution for Minnesota to study passenger rail service** to the north to Fargo/Moorhead and to the south to Kansas City. According to the *Pioneer Press* on February 9, the proposals take the great success of the Chicago-St Paul *Borealis* as an example of pent up demand. The routes are listed as passenger rail priorities in the Minnesota DOT state rail plan and the FRA Long-Distance Service Study. The city council resolution calls upon the Legislature to direct MnDOT to submit Corridor Identification grant applications to the FRA..... **The North Carolina DOT is interested in restoring passenger rail service between Salisbury and Asheville, N.C.** According to *Mass Transit Online* on Feb. 5, 2026, the NCDOT has released a new study that details the benefits of this route to better connect western North Carolina to the state's existing intercity passenger rail network. Benefits include improving access for visitors, workers and residents, supporting long-term economic growth, and strengthening links between the Blue Ridge Region of North Carolina and the rest of the state. This route would add about 138 miles to the NC passenger rail system.....**Amtrak to hold a public meeting to receive comments on plans to bring passenger rail to Madison, Wisconsin.** The *Wisconsin State Journal* reported on April 9, 2026, that a public webinar was planned for April 14 to allow for public input on a new route that would link Milwaukee, Pewaukee, Watertown and Madison as early as 2029. To speed up things, Amtrak said it would use the Wisconsin & Southern Railroad tracks for part of the

route, meaning train speeds would be under 60 mph for the start of the new route..... **White House agrees to release frozen funds for Second Avenue Subway moments before a hearing in MTA lawsuit.** *AM New York* reported on April 16 that funding for the East Harlem leg of the Second Avenue Subway, which it has withheld since last fall, would be released. The lawsuit was filed by the MTA a month ago to unfreeze the money. The subway tunnel in East Harlem between 110 St and 120 St was built in the 1970s and has long awaited funding for tracks and signals. Shortly before a Federal Court of Claims judge was set to hear arguments in the MTA's suit, the U.S. Department of Transportation released a letter to the transit agency, noting that they had struck a deal to release the funds. In celebratory statements, both Gov. Kathy Hochul and MTA Chair and CEO Janno Lieber attributed the feds' move to their legal action. The project will extend the Q Line trains from its current terminus at 96th Street on the Upper East Side to 125th Street and Lexington Avenue in East Harlem and serve an additional 110,000 daily riders at three new stations slated for 106th, 116th, and 125th Streets. The MTA's suit alleged that by freezing the funds, USDOT breached the contract it inked with the transit agency in 2023 under former President Joe Biden.....**Funds for Gateway Tunnel Released.** The *New York Times* and *Railway Age* reported on February 13, that federal funding for the Gateway railroad tunnel between New Jersey and New York City was restored by a federal judge. The funding was halted in September 2025 because the White House wanted to review the contracts associated with the project to ensure that they followed recently revised federal requirements. The contract for the Gateway Tunnel calls for \$16 billion; a payment for \$205 million toward the Gateway work was due at the time of the September funding halt. The withheld funding also resulted in the layoff of 1,000 union workers. The Gateway Tunnel project is considered by many to be the most important infrastructure project underway in the U.S.



Following the tour of MCS, MARP members and guests walked across Michigan Avenue to fill the Corktown Slow Bar BQ Restaurant and enjoy a delicious lunch. (MARP photo)

Dallas Area Transit Agency Approves Changes to Avoid a Revolt



A light rail station on the Silver Line, one of four light rail lines operated by DART. (DART photo)

On February 20, 2026, the Texas Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) board approved a compromise that hopefully will avoid serious damage to DART, and to all

area transit authorities in general. Various local news reports say that the chief concerns of the 13 member cities of DART were that they were not receiving benefits that jus-

tified the cost of DART membership and that DART did not listen to their concerns. Seven of the member cities had planned to schedule votes to leave DART, which, if passed

by the voters, would seriously damage DART. The issue has been widely followed by other regional transit organizations.

The *Dallas Morning News* reported on April 20, that Nadine Lee resigned as the DART CEO and David Leininger will oversee the daily operations of DART until a new CEO can be identified. Leininger previously served as DART's interim president in 2021 and was in various management positions at DART until he left in 2018.

The new funding model proposed by DART relies on a mixture of DART funding, Regional Transportation Council funding, and future funding initiatives. Under this agreement, DART would send part of its sales tax revenue that currently funds DART to member cities. To help DART, the Regional Transportation Council of the North Central Texas Council of Governments recently approved \$75 million to fund transportation-related

projects in DART member cities.

DART was created in 1983 by voters to address highway traffic congestion through a regional sales tax-funded network. Today DART receives an area wide sales tax of 1 percent to fund the operation of a network of bus, light rail, paratransit, and the TRE commuter rail system. The system covers over 700 square miles. The system evolved from its initial 11-mile light rail system to a extensive area wide network, with recent focus on connecting suburbs to the city center and integrating transit-oriented development.

Similar transit systems exist in many US metropolitan areas (including Detroit) to provide transit services. The care and feeding of member municipalities, whose political leaders are constantly changing, is always a major concern of the central transit organization.

OBITUARY

John DeLora, 1943-2026



John DeLora, as a policeman for Grosse Pointe Woods in the 1970s. (Family photo)

John Dale DeLora Sr., founder of MARP, passed away in Henry Ford-St. John Hospital in Detroit, Michigan on April 8, 2026. He was 82 years old.

John was Born in Detroit, Michigan, and attended Cody High School and later both Ferris State and Wayne State University where he earned a Bachelor's Degree in Public Service.

He worked as a Sheriff's Deputy in Wayne County, Michigan before volunteering for the U.S Navy in September of 1961. He proudly served the U.S. Navy on active duty during the Vietnam War from January 1965 to January 1967 and was honorably discharged as a 3rd Class Petty Officer in September of 1967. During his service he was awarded numerous medals including the National Defense Service Medal, the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal, and



John Dale DeLora, founder of MARP, about 1990. (Family photo)

the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal (Vietnam).

Following his service, he joined the City of Grosse Pointe Woods as a Public Safety Officer and served as a Police Officer, Firefighter, and Emergency Medical Technician (EMT). He married and raised two children in the same city. After 14 years as a police officer, he briefly left law enforcement and began a new career as a stockbroker, before returning to Law Enforcement for Detroit Public Schools as a Police Officer. He retired from Detroit Public schools to his home in St. Clair Shores, where he lived until his passing.

Always an advocate for passenger rail service, John founded the Michigan Association of Rail Passengers (MARP) in 1973 and worked tirelessly for over 50 years to improve both the quality

and access to train service for everyone. This allowed him to connect with countless others who shared his same commitment resulting in a number of lifelong friends. While serving as the Vice-Chairman of the National Association of Rail Passengers (NARP) he volunteered his own time and resources to champion improving passenger rail service in Michigan and nationwide. His drive and passion earned him time with U.S. Senators and U.S. Congressman, and well as state and local government officials. This commitment allowed him an opportunity to testify before U.S. Congressional subcommittees on behalf of passenger rail service. He received numerous accolades both nationally and on the local level, including the Key to the City for Jackson Michigan.

John passed peacefully under hospice care in Ford-St. John Hospital. He remained friends with his former wife, Gloria Durocher who was by his side when he passed. He is survived by his two sons, John II and Douglas. Plans are for him to be buried next to his father at White Chapel Cemetery in Troy, Michigan

See tributes to John on page 2.

IBX Moves Forward in New York City

The long proposed Interborough Express (IBX) has received recent support from New York's Governor Kathy Hochul and the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA). This 14-mile light rail line in the boroughs of Brooklyn and Queens would be built alongside existing rail freight lines and connect underserved areas in the surrounding neighborhoods to the MTA subway and

bus system. (See map below)

According to an MTA news release of April 3, 2026, Governor Hochul directed the MTA to begin the environmental review process in 2023. Funding was included in the MTA Capital Plan for 2026-2029. A consulting design engineer was retained in July 2025. Numerous public meetings have

occurred or are scheduled during 2026 in Brooklyn and Queens. The rail line is tentatively scheduled for operation in the early 2030s.

The benefits listed by the MTA include a new public transit option between Brooklyn and Queens; connections with up to 17 existing subway lines; a faster commute (end to end times are expected to be 32 minutes); and expanded access to economic opportunities, essential services, recreational and cultural resources for an area where more than a third of the residents live below the federal poverty line.

Using the existing rail lines and off the shelf equipment means that the system can be built at far less cost and more quickly than a subway line. Freight service on the existing railroad will be maintained and be provided an opportunity to connect to the Port Authority's Cross-Harbor Freight Project.



Former Izaak Walton Inn Closed, up for Sale



The Izaak Walton Inn in Essex, Montana, under previous owners in September of 2012. Hopefully the Inn will return to operation under new owners. (MARP Photo)



The Inn dining room served delicious home-cooked meals. (MARP Photo)

Several reports reaching MARP report that the former Izaak Walton Inn in Essex, Montana, was closed in early March and is now listed for sale. *Trains On-Line Newsletter* reported on March 17 that the Inn, now known as the LOGE Glacier hotel, is being offered for \$18 million and includes about 90 acres of land. The inn is well known

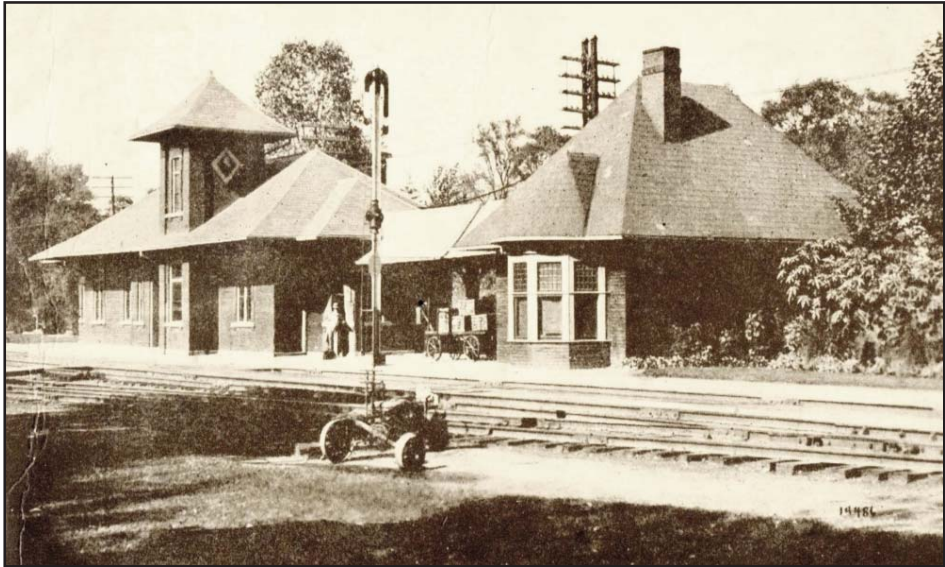
among rail passengers seeking a quiet mountain experience in a historic hotel with good food and access to rental cars for local trips. The inn is adjacent to BNSF's main line just outside Glacier National Park, with its own Amtrak platform within a short walking distance of the inn. The real estate listing notes

that recent renovations under LOGE ownership included updates to rooms, kitchen, bar, restaurant, boilers, and heaters. The boarding platform adjacent to the inn will continue to serve as a stop for Amtrak's Empire Builder. The inn closed as part of financial problems that shut down the entire LOGE chain

of outdoors-oriented properties, reportedly because of issues related to the former LOGE CEO. The inn, opened by the Great Northern Railway in 1939 as lodging for railroad crews, was purchased by LOGE for \$13.5 million December 2022, and reopened after remodeling in September 2024.

The *Flathead Beacon* reported last month that LOGE, its CEO, and another party were sued last October for defaulting on two loans totaling \$9.4 million. The holder of the loans, Stockman Bank of Billings, Montana, asked for the property to be sold at a sheriff's sale to recover the debt.

Ypsilanti Depot to be sold



Above, left: Amtrak train 350 passes the Ypsilanti Depot in 2022. (Jack Stryker photo) Right: The Michigan Central Ypsilanti Depot as a one story building about 1940. (Post Card photo)

According to the real estate agent handling the sale, the prospective buyers of Michigan Central Depot in Ypsilanti are currently in contract negotiations to purchase the building. The red brick depot building has been empty and boarded up for decades after several others were unable to adapt it for other uses. The property includes about 0.6 of an acre of land. The current buyers apparently want to convert it into a retail business, such as a coffee shop. The City of Ypsilanti, which owns about an acre of parking adjacent

to depot, has talked with the new owners and has an interest in seeing the building preserved. City Planner Joshua Burnes told MARP that the city would like to see Amtrak trains stop in the future at Ypsilanti either at the station or nearby. The city owns several pieces of property along the railroad including the Freight House. If the depot is converted to retail use, it should not preclude use of the platform for passengers. However, the city would need funding assistance to develop passenger facilities.

The depot was built about 1865 and was once a three-story Victorian building. A fire and damage from a derailment about 1939 resulted in it being rebuilt as a one story building. The depot is within walking distance of many restaurants, shops, and entertainment venues in Ypsilanti's historic Depot Town. Eastern Michigan University is along the railroad about two miles west of the depot. The depot platform was used from 1975 to 1984 as a stop for Amtrak's Jackson-Detroit *Michigan Executive*, a commuter train now discontinued.

Amtrak Begins to Select a Manufacturer of New Long Distance Equipment

Mass Transit Newsletter, reported on April 16, 2026, that Amtrak issued a request to car builders to bid on new long distance cars to replace the current Superliner, Amfleet II cars, and other cars, many of which are close to 50 years old. The new fleet of coaches, sleepers, diners, lounge cars, and probably baggage cars, will be deployed on the 14 existing long distance, overnight routes and hopefully on some new routes. The new order is expected to include more than 800 new cars, the largest car order in Amtrak history. Amtrak says it plans to announce the manufacturer of the equipment by the end of 2027 and then commence an extensive evaluation of the proposed car designs. Funding for the replacement program was developed in close coordination with the Federal Railroad Administration.

The new long distance fleet will prioritize standardization for operational simplicity and broaden competition among potential car builders. All long distance routes will employ single-level cars and the existing mix of bi-level equipment will be retired. Amtrak continues to receive new high-powered ALC-42 locomotives for long distance service, with 79 of 125 units delivered to date. The interest in ordering new long distance cars come as Amtrak is receiving new NextGen Acela trains for the Northeast Corridor and new Airo trainsets. In the future, new Northeast Corridor Regional and other short/mid distance equipment will follow. Amtrak will then have a new national fleet.