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FOR INFORMATION CALL

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Ald. Robert Bauman
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Upgrade of Intermodal Station Platform Areas Long Overdue

The planned train shed project will bring key downtown facility up to code and offer travelers improved service, Alderman Bauman says

The dark and dusty tunnel that is the boarding and departure area for Amtrak trains at Milwaukee's Intermodal Station will soon be upgraded to meet existing codes and to improve the overall experience of the travelers who use the facility, according to information from the state Department of Transportation (DOT).

Alderman Robert J. Bauman, a longtime public transit proponent who is in support of the project, said the existing 45-year-old train shed is badly outdated and deteriorating. "Quite frankly, the current (shed) doesn't meet current fire codes, is not ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) compliant, and doesn't meet Homeland Security standards for rail transportation facilities," he said. "The state has no choice but to perform these repairs and upgrades if intercity rail service is going to continue in Milwaukee."

"The platform areas simply do not mesh at all with the renovations and upgrades at the facility that were completed within the past five years," the alderman said.

The state DOT will hold a public informational meeting on the project tomorrow (Tuesday, August 24) from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. in the atrium at the station, 433 W. St. Paul Ave.

The upgrade will include constructing a passenger mezzanine with elevators and escalators as a primary way of conveyance for boarding and disembarking trains. Special photovoltaic cells will be installed on the shed's roof to collect solar energy, and other audio and platform improvements will also be part of the upgrade.

When the work is finished, the Intermodal Station will be completely compliant with ADA standards.

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Intermodal Upgrade /ADD ONE

According to the DOT, the project is expected to cost \$16-\$18 million – paid for by state and federal funds.

The station upgrades will position Milwaukee as a key stop on the Midwest high speed rail network. The federal government awarded Wisconsin \$823 million to develop high-speed passenger rail between Milwaukee and Madison and perform improvements on the Milwaukee-Chicago line. Both line segments will become part of this regional network.

The state Department of Transportation is expected to let contracts for all or most of the \$823 million prior to January 2011, Alderman Bauman said.

Alderman Bauman said the construction jobs created by the work, in addition to the economic benefits of having modern, high-speed rail in Wisconsin “can only create positive momentum and a better quality of life for our residents.”

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