

Ann Arbor Intermodal Station Environmental Assessment: Purpose and Need

The existing Ann Arbor rail station, located in the City of Ann Arbor, Michigan, is the busiest in the state and is frequently unable to accommodate existing passenger volumes. The station lacks both modern amenities and adequate intermodal connectivity for passengers accessing the station by walking, biking, local transit, or automobiles. Meanwhile, the number of passengers the station serves has increased by almost 70% in the past decade, and given the projected continuation of this trend in ridership, the station's inability to support intercity rail passengers will increase. Furthermore, passenger rail service improvements (operating between Chicago and Detroit/Pontiac) are currently under consideration that would significantly increase the number of passengers using the Ann Arbor Station. Additionally being planned is an introduction of commuter rail service to Ann Arbor (East-West Commuter Rail, operating between Ann Arbor and Detroit). Because of this, alternatives for a new Ann Arbor Intermodal station would be designed to be able to be implemented in phases in order to handle these proposed future improvements in rail service, and increases in ridership.

Purpose of the Proposed Action

The purpose of this study is to provide an intermodal facility that will accommodate existing and future intercity passenger rail ridership; improve intermodal connectivity, including the possibility of commuter rail in the City of Ann Arbor; and to improve the integration of the station with the City of Ann Arbor and its neighboring communities.

Need for the Proposed Action

The following elements contribute to the need for an Intermodal Station in Ann Arbor:

- ***Insufficient quality and comfort provided for passengers by the existing station***
The existing station is equipped with 60 seats in the waiting area, while most trains serving the station board between 80-120+passengers, overwhelming the indoor waiting area and other station facilities. In addition to inadequate seating, the station does not have food service or Wi-Fi service, which are expected services in modern transportation facilities.
- ***Inadequate space for intermodal connectivity at the existing station***
The existing Ann Arbor station site- does not have adequate space, to accommodate intermodal connections. The confined site makes intermodal connections difficult; it does not provide for off-street loading or drop-off areas for taxis and buses (intercity and local), adequate and accessible parking, or designated walking and bicycle paths directly to the station.
- ***Substantial existing and projected future passenger demand***
The existing Ann Arbor station is the busiest in Michigan and at times is not able to accommodate all passengers. The number of intercity rail passengers served by the Ann Arbor station was 155,421 in 2013, an increase of almost 70% compared to 91,619 in 2003. Even absent major improvements to the Wolverine service, annual intercity rail ridership at the station is projected to increase to 209,000 by 2035. If the proposed improvements on the Wolverine service that are currently under consideration are implemented, including increasing the frequency of intercity passenger rail service beyond the current three daily round-trips, ridership at the station could grow to up to 969,000 passengers per year by 2035. Should the proposed commuter rail service be implemented, it is projected that an additional 516,600 passengers per year would use the station, resulting in nearly 1.5 million total passengers per year in 2040.
- ***Lack of intermodal options between surrounding communities and the existing station***
While situated in a central location, the existing station does not allow for passengers to efficiently connect to and from surrounding communities, other than by automobile and local bus service. Connections to existing non-motorized facilities surrounding the station are inadequate and circuitous. Intercity bus routes do not exist.