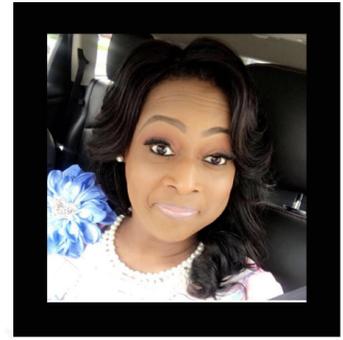


FROM THE CITY MANAGER OF YPSILANTI, FRANCES MCMULLAN



The City of Ypsilanti desired to seek the establishment of a permanent Amtrak train stop within the city to enhance public transit, provide needed transportation links from the city to other major cities throughout Michigan and beyond, reduce traffic congestion and adverse environmental impacts, and to promote economic activity and commerce

Through the use of feasibility studies, town hall meetings and surveys, the City continued the process and began to pursue opportunities for funding.

On February 1, 2011 City Council approved a request (Resolution No. 2011-023) to ask Amtrak to designate Ypsilanti as a stop on the Wolverine route when the boarding and building improvements at the stop are completed. On January 28, 2013, Amtrak developed a Route & Service Financial Evaluation which showed that an added stop in the City of Ypsilanti was warranted.

On March 15, 2016 the City of Ypsilanti pledged \$2,000,000 (Resolution No. 2016-043) of support for the development of a platform and train stop in Depot Town.

City Council received and accepted the Proposed Amtrak Scheduled Stop Feasibility Report dated November 13, 2018, from OHM Advisors and Bergmann Architects, Engineers, and Planners with rail platform design alternatives, cost estimates, and feasibility locations.

The scope of the project included:

1. The project design shall be in accordance with Alternative 1 contained in the November 13, 2018, Proposed Amtrak Scheduled Stop Feasibility Study with an estimated construction cost of \$4,600,000 in 2022.
2. The project shall be located in Depot Town as indicated in the Alternative 1 conceptual design outlined in the feasibility study.
3. The City shall submit a CRISI grant application seeking funding in the amount of 66.5% of the total project cost, 33.5% funding to be provided by the City.
4. City staff worked with OHM Advisors and Bergmann Associates to apply for the federal CRISI (Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements) grant program. The application was made on October 15, 2019. The city committed 33.5% of the funding to be competitive in the grant round, totaling a city match of approximately \$1,529,000 for the estimated cost of \$4,600,000 for the project. At the time of application, the city needed commitments from MDOT, Amtrak and other grant funding sources to apply for grant, as well as support letters from elected officials.

The City received letters of support from the following:

MDOT, Amtrak, AAATA, SEMCOG, RTA, City Planning Commission, City Historic District Commission, City Zoning Board of Appeals, City of Ypsilanti, Ypsilanti Economic & Community Development, City DDA, Eastern Michigan University, State Representative Ronnie Peterson, State Senator Jeff Irwin, Congresswoman Debbie Dingle, Senator Debbie Dingell, Senator Debbie Stabenow, Senator Gary Peters, County Commissioner Ricky Jefferson, City Sustainability Commission, Superior Township, Ypsilanti Township, Washtenaw County Sheriff, Ypsilanti Police Chief, Ypsilanti Fire Department, Ann Arbor / Ypsilanti (A2Y) Regional Chamber, Friends of the Ypsilanti Freighthouse, Washtenaw County Office of Community and Economic Development

CRISI Awards were announced in March 2020 and the city was not awarded funding.

The City Manager, staff, OHM and Bergmann Associates conferenced with Frances Bourne of the Federal Rail Administration on April 4, 2020.

Reasons why the grant was not awarded/suggestions made to strengthen a future application:

- 80 eligible applications requesting over \$900 million in funding received and could only fund \$250 million of the requests
- Good funding match, however due to the competitive nature of the applications, 50% would have been better
- Good State and Local Support
- Support from Wolverine Rail
- Categorical exclusion shows a great understanding of issues and a good understanding of requirements
- Awards based on votes from elected officials

Improvements:

- Additional detail of project readiness
- More explanation of operation and maintenance and who the key personnel would be to oversee the platform and the organization that would pay for maintenance.
- Justification of why a train is needed when the nearest station is only 8 miles away
- Service Development Plan did not find proof of connection to Chicago Rail
- Benefits Cost Ratio – Total cost versus construction. Capital Cost not in the total project costs
- Economic numbers don't reveal benefits, which included congestion, travel time savings, etc.
- The forecast data was taken from a 2013 Amtrak Study and the reviewers questioned if 2013 data is relevant. More recent study data would have provided clearer relevancy, however the 2013 data was the best Ypsilanti could provide and more recent data showed lower ridership.

Additional comments: FRA indicated that even if the City provided a 90% match it could still be hard to make a compelling argument of the need (economics) for a train stop only 8 miles away from an already approved and improved station that's coming in Ann Arbor.