



# Toronto–Windsor–Detroit–Chicago Intercity Passenger Rail Service Expansion

Windsor Fact Sheet  
November 2023

## Project Opportunity

The project will link Amtrak and VIA Rail Canada services in Windsor, ON, leveraging two existing intercity passenger rail services that are separated by a 14.5 km (9 mi) gap. The proposed service would address population and traffic increases and support economic growth. The project provides a new passenger rail connection from Windsor to Detroit and Chicago. Additionally, from Chicago, passengers can access Amtrak's vast national network with connecting services to 35 US states.

The proposed service would be competitive to auto travel times and provide a safe, convenient, and comfortable alternative for travelers. This project is a cost efficient solution by using mostly existing stations and infrastructure.

Additionally, with improvements to the Essex Terminal Railway right-of-way, improvements will be made to 9 grade crossings, improving the safety of both passenger and freight operations.

66,500 passengers each year are projected to take advantage of this new cross-border connection with 14,000 passengers beginning or ending their trip in Windsor.

## Benefits to Windsor

- This proposed service would provide a new transportation option between Chicago, Michigan, and Windsor connecting passengers for both leisure and business travel without the need for a personal automobile.
- A proposed \$44 million investment in rail infrastructure and station improvements - all in Windsor - going towards construction and railroad industry jobs and suppliers.
- The *Tunnel Bus* operated by Windsor Transit provides a vital link for commuters, but does not serve the Amtrak station in Detroit, or the VIA station in Windsor. The new passenger rail service will complement the existing bus service as the solution for longer-distance passengers.
- A new cross-border connection between Windsor and Detroit will increase cross-border capacity without straining existing land crossings. Between FY22 and FY23, US CBP crossings in Detroit increased 35%. Between 2008 and 2018, cross border air travel demand between Toronto/London and Detroit/Chicago increased 37%. The rail connection will provide a new conduit for cross-border travel, through Windsor.

# Proposed Routing

A modified Amtrak *Wolverine* eastbound service would depart the station in Dearborn, MI and split off from the current routing onto Conrail and CPKC tracks on approach to a new proposed Amtrak station at Ford's Michigan Central Innovation Center in Detroit. This new facility would serve as a second Amtrak station in Detroit, specifically serving trains to/from Windsor. After departing Michigan Central Station, trains would continue into Windsor via the Detroit River Rail Tunnel (CPKC). Upon entry into Windsor, trains would utilize the Essex Terminal Railway (ETR) to access the VIA tracks using a new ETR-VIA connection track upon approach to the VIA station.

# Key Project Elements

- Total proposed investment in Windsor: \$44 million
- Improvements to Essex Terminal Railway between the CPKC and VIA tracks including grade crossing improvements at 9 locations
- A new track connection between ETR-VIA that would provide safe and quick access to the station.
- Modification to the existing station tracks and platform to allow seamless integration of Amtrak and VIA operations.
- Construction of a new joint border security facility for CBSA and US CBP screening.

# Proposed Service

Existing VIA and Amtrak services are well-aligned to connect passengers. Currently VIA train 73 departs Toronto Union Station at 11:30 and arrives in Windsor at 15:45, daily. Chicago-bound passengers would board VIA train 73 to Windsor, ON, where they would alight and enter a new joint border facility at Windsor station. Passengers would clear US CBP inspection before boarding an Amtrak train to Detroit and on to Chicago. The extended Amtrak *Wolverine* train 355 would depart Windsor at 16:45 and arrive in Chicago at 21:25 (central).

For eastbound passengers, Amtrak *Wolverine* train 350 originates in Chicago, departing at 6:45 central and would arrive in Windsor at 13:29. Passengers would exit the train into a secure area for CBSA processing within the new joint border inspection facility before entering Windsor Station. Passengers continuing towards Toronto would board the eastbound VIA train 76 that would depart at a revised schedule time of 14:29 and arrive in Toronto at 18:36.

Cross-border passengers would utilize both Amtrak and VIA services all on a single ticket.

Once funded, the cross-border service could be begin as soon as late 2027 with one daily Amtrak round-trip, with opportunity to increase the service in the future.

# Project Map

