

News Release
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High Speed Train Not Expected to Impact Columbus

“With yesterday’s announcement of the high speed rail plan proceeding between Madison and Milwaukee, I want to assure Columbus businesses and citizens that there are no plans to close the Columbus Amtrak station,” said City Administrator Boyd Kraemer.

The high speed rail line between Milwaukee and Madison is a separate line from the Amtrak Empire Builder line that stops in Columbus.

“One major disadvantage of re-routing the Empire Builder line through Madison and eliminating the Columbus stop and station, is that it would add 45-60 minutes to the line’s schedule”, he added

Because of this and the fact that the Columbus station remains a very high profit depot for Amtrak with growing numbers of passenger traffic every year, any future plan, if any, to close the Columbus station would be very long range future development, according to Kraemer.

“The City of Columbus remains vigilant and will continue to strategically work to keep the Amtrak station open in Columbus, including working with Amtrak, our federal and state legislators and officials, and others,” stated Steve Sobiek, Columbus Economic Development Director.

The Columbus Amtrak station will receive \$100,000. in federal stimulus monies this year to upgrade handicap train access and make the station and train access more user friendly, Sobiek added.

Sobiek has been monitoring and meeting with Amtrak and elected officials for over a year to keep the Columbus station a viable long term depot on the Empire Builder line. In particular, he praised Columbus Station Manager Rod Musel for his dedication and advocacy in increasing Columbus passenger volume with friendly, efficient customer service coupled with excellent management.

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