

Railroad Guy, LLC

WHITEWATER SITE EVALUATION (Various) (Amended 2/20/2025)

January 29, 2025

The City of Whitewater (CITY) has identified three parcels as potential rail-served development sites. All three parcels have property boundaries with frontage along a similar railroad corridor Right-of-Way. The operating railroad in this ROW is the Wisconsin & Southern Railroad (WSOR), a subsidiary of WATCO. Having railroad frontage on the WSOR does not necessarily correspond to viable rail access or provide assurances that WSOR will provide rail service. Other factors for an approved rail site will be considered beyond the physical ability to connect to the WSOR mainline corridor. When a potential rail shipper has been identified, WSOR will undoubtedly review a conceptual rail design for compliance with engineering standards, but more importantly, WSOR will want to know the commodity being shipped, estimated rail car volumes, origins and destinations, and the shippers' operating plan.

However, this evaluation aims to conduct each site's high-level engineering and development analysis to identify rail access opportunities and encumbrances more clearly. Having been in the rail industry for over 40 years, I've referenced my site development experience to assist the CITY in determining which sites may be better suited for rail service and possibly included in economic development marketing efforts. A pros and cons approach has been utilized, reviewing rail and roadway access, building and rail capacity, and probable site challenges and encumbrances. Finally, I have included a lump sum cost for each site to further the analysis and prepare a conceptual design and opinion of probable construction cost. This level of work is in line with a rail-served site marketing initiative.

LOT 10B

Pros:

- Vertical rail alignment is favorable
- Rail corridor has tangent rail alignment for switch connection
- Existing roadway access to the site
- Adjacent to an existing industry
- Potential 100K SF industrial footprint

Cons:

- Horizontal rail alignment may encumber the building layout
- Non-uniform parcel boundary
- Private road crossing is required

In my opinion, this site does have rail service potential but is limited to a 100K SF building. The railroad connection and the transition through the parcel will be critical in determining the best fit for an industrial facility. In addition, ten acres are on the low end of a typical rail-served industrial property. Therefore, this site has marginal rail-served value.

CITY PROPERTY

Pros:

- Both vertical and horizontal rail alignment are favorable
- Uniform parcel boundary
- 40-acre development site
- Potential for mid-size industrial footprint

Cons:

- Cumbersome roadway access to the site
- Adjacent to residential development

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Rail corridor tangent track for switch connection on west half of parcel

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This site has good rail service potential, given its 40-acre size and parcel configuration. Development sites of this size can typically accommodate a 400 – 500K SF industrial building footprint. This site has good access to the WSOR mainline; however, due to the curved mainline along the east half, the switch connection is limited to the west half of the parcel. The significant encumbrance is the existing roadway access through the residential area on what appears to be a shared driveway. Otherwise, a new roadway easement will be required at a separate location. I would consider this site to be adequate for rail service.

HOFFMANN

Pros:

- Vertical and horizontal rail alignment is excellent
- Ideal rectangular parcel boundary configuration
- Unencumbered 100-acre development site
- Potential for large-size industrial footprint
- Existing industrial park roadway access
- Excellent access to US Hwy 12

Cons:

- Wetlands encumber the remaining two parcels

This site has excellent rail service potential due to the westerly 100-acre parcel and rectangular configuration. Development sites of this size can typically accommodate a 1MM SF industrial building, warehouse, or distribution facility. The parcel has good access to the WSOR mainline and existing roadway, with excellent access to US Hwy 12. The only encumbrance that comes into play is with the easterly two parcels, which are extensively impacted by wetlands and small. The westerly Hoffmann parcel is the most attractive parcel for rail-served development.

Conceptual Design Effort

Each site design will have multiple iterations for review and consideration. After the CITY has identified the most acceptable iteration, it will be formatted for WSOR review and feedback. We will incorporate any feedback, make necessary revisions, and then prepare a final exhibit layout and an associated opinion of probable construction costs for each site. Upon WSOR acceptance, these layouts can be utilized for economic development and marketing purposes.

Amendment 1:

Following my initial site assessment and as directed by the CITY, Conceptual Designs were prepared for the Hoffman site and the JC-Kow Farms parcel. Upon review by the CITY, both building site layouts were submitted to WSOR for informal review and feedback. The following response was received via email on February 13, 2025, from Brent Marsh, PE, WSOR Project Engineer. It should be noted that no markups or design comments were received from the WSOR reviewers.

“Thanks for sending these over. The layouts look good to us; we’d be happy to discuss these sites further with future developers and/or the City of Whitewater. It is good to note that these layouts will likely be tailored further to suit the needs of the sites once a buyer/user for the land is determined.”

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“I stopped by to brief our Marketing Department on these layouts. Brad advised that WATCO could maybe help with advertising the parcels if they are publicly owned and the City of Whitewater would be interested. Please reach out to Brad if this would be something that Whitewater would like to look into.”

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