

Status Report
Midwest Regional Rail Passenger Initiative and Passenger Rail Service in Iowa
February 1, 2012

This report fulfills the requirements of the following Code of Iowa Sections:

Section 327J.3(1): “The director may expend moneys from the fund to pay the costs associated with the initiation, operation, and maintenance of rail passenger service. The director shall report by February 1 of each year to the legislative services agency concerning the status of the fund including anticipated expenditures for the following fiscal year.”

Section 327J.3(5): "The director shall report annually to the general assembly concerning the development and operation of the midwest regional rail system and the state's passenger rail service."

Status of Passenger Rail Service Revolving Fund 327J.3 (1)

See summary spreadsheet that documents the status of fiscal year (FY) 2009, 2010 and 2011 appropriations to the Passenger Rail Service Revolving Fund (attached).

Passenger Rail in Iowa 327J.3 (5)

The Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT), working with the state of Illinois, Iowa cities, planning organizations and advocacy groups, worked diligently to apply for federal High Speed Intercity Passenger Rail (HSIPR) grants through the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA). Those applications were for the following:

- **Chicago to Iowa City Passenger Rail Service Implementation:** The states of Iowa and Illinois jointly submitted an application seeking \$248 million of federal funding for environmental studies and capital expenditures to initiate passenger rail service from Chicago to Iowa City. A \$230 million grant was awarded to both states which will be matched with 20 percent state and local funds in both Iowa and Illinois. In order to adequately assess demand and costs for a broader regional high-speed passenger rail system across Iowa, the Iowa DOT requested that FRA split the grant into two multiple phases. FRA agreed to the phased approach which permits Illinois to move forward with implementing service from Chicago to Moline while Iowa’s funding is on hold pending completion of the Chicago to Omaha Regional Passenger Rail System Planning Study. The results of that study will provide the basis for determining the next steps to support passenger rail service in Iowa.
- **Iowa Statewide Travel Demand Model-Rail Plan Component:** Iowa DOT applied for \$400,000 of federal funding for an enhancement to Iowa’s current statewide travel demand model to further develop freight and passenger modeling capabilities. The grant will allow Iowa’s rail network to be added to the existing highway model and result in the development of commodity flow projections throughout the state of Iowa and passenger rail travel demand projections for

routes identified in the 2009 Iowa Rail System Plan. A \$400,000 grant was awarded to Iowa which will be matched with 20 percent state funds in the amount of \$100,000. A consultant has been selected and work will begin on this project in early calendar year 2012.

- **Chicago to Omaha Regional Passenger Rail System Planning Study:** Iowa DOT applied for \$1,000,000 of federal funding to develop a Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and a Service Development Plan (SDP) for new passenger rail service on the Chicago to Omaha Corridor. Together, these two documents will provide sufficient information to support a potential future FRA decision to fund and implement a major investment along the corridor. A \$1,000,000 grant was awarded to Iowa which will be matched with 50 percent state funds in the amount of \$1,000,000. The project has begun and public input meetings will begin in February 2012. It is expected that preliminary results from this study will be available in late CY 2012 or early CY 2013.

Passenger Rail Initiatives:

Iowa DOT has been involved with studies for expanded passenger rail service, for both individual routes and for a larger regional system in the Midwest.

Midwest Regional Rail Initiative

The Midwest Regional Rail Initiative (MWRRI) is a nine-state effort to develop an implementation plan for a 3,000-mile, high-speed rail system hubbed in Chicago. Studies completed since 1996 have concluded that such a regional system, including a line from Chicago to Omaha through Davenport, Iowa City and Des Moines, is viable. Most of the system would be upgraded to allow 110 mile-per-hour service. The Iowa portion of the line would be initially upgraded for 79 mile-per-hour service. A copy of the **Midwest Regional Rail System, Executive Report, September 2004**, is available at www.iowarail.com. Participation of the Iowa DOT in the MWRRI is authorized under Iowa Code section 327J.3.

The ongoing work of the nine-state MWRRI steering committee is currently focusing on:

- Further efforts of system planning by updating and refining key MWRRI plan elements and public information materials.
- Developing support and advocating for a federal program to provide funding for passenger rail initiatives.

The MWRRI states participate in a variety of regional and national outreach activities to encourage congressional support for a dedicated, federal passenger rail-funding program. The states have cooperated with a number of passenger rail support groups, including the Midwest High Speed Rail Coalition, Iowa Association of Railroad Passengers, States for Passenger Rail Coalition, and American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials. All of these support groups recognize that a strong state and federal funding partnership is essential to the development of a national passenger rail system.

Passenger Rail Advisory Committee

The Iowa Passenger Rail Advisory Committee, formed by the Iowa DOT in 2008, meets two to four times per year to assist in shaping and implementing the vision for passenger rail service in Iowa. This group has members that represent statewide interests and provides input to the Iowa DOT on passenger rail developments and needs in the state.

2009 Iowa Railroad System Plan

After a several year initiative to solicit public input and the input of railroad shippers, users and service providers, the Iowa DOT completed the 2009 Iowa Railroad System Plan. This document defines a long-range vision for Iowa's freight and passenger railroad system that will meet Iowa's quality of life, safety, efficiency and economic development goals.

Iowa DOT 10 Year Strategic Passenger Rail Plan

In early 2010, Iowa DOT embarked on preparing a mid-range plan to examine the potential passenger rail corridors identified in the 2009 Railroad System Plan in greater detail. The strategic plan provides a better understanding of each corridor's capability to meet Iowa's transportation needs and documents the potential cost to implement, operate and maintain passenger rail service in each corridor. The plan also documents the prioritization of corridors and provides the foundation for a prioritization of Iowa's resources as it develops the passenger rail transportation system. A draft of the plan was completed in late 2010.

Midwest High-Speed Rail Steering Group

In July of 2009, eight Midwestern governors participated in a Midwest High Speed Rail Summit. The purpose of this summit was to assure Midwestern efforts to develop a regional intercity passenger rail service was coordinated. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed by all the governors at this summit documenting their commitment to work cooperatively to secure federal funding to implement this Midwest system. In 2011, this group became inactive.

Prepared by the Office of Rail Transportation, Iowa Department of Transportation

2009 RIIF Appropriation for Dubuque Passenger Rail Depot/Platform

Description of Project	Total Estimated Project Cost	State Share	Other Revenue Sources	State Funds Used	Remaining Obligated	Status of Project	Date Completed or Estimated Completion Date
Construction of a depot and platform to accommodate the future AMTRAK service from Dubuque to Chicago	\$2,000,000	\$300,000	Federal Transit Administration/Local	\$299,955	\$45	In Progress	6/30/2012
TOTAL	\$2,000,000	\$300,000		\$299,955	\$45		

2010 Passenger Rail Service Revolving Fund (RIIF)

Description of Project	Total Estimated Project Cost	State Share	Other Revenue Sources	State Funds Used	Remaining Obligated Funds	Status of Project	Date Completed or Estimated Completion Date
Support in Development of Intercity Passenger Rail efforts	\$ 500,000	\$ 500,000	None	\$ 499,935	\$ 65	Completed	4/11/2011
Funding reserved to match FY 2009 Recovery Act award to Iowa DOT for Chicago to Omaha Planning Study	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 1,000,000	Federal Railroad Administration FY 2009 HSIPR award	\$ 19,962	\$ 980,038	In Progress	5/1/2013
Funding reserved to match federal FY 2010 High Speed and Intercity Passenger Rail (HSIPR) award to Iowa DOT for Chicago to Iowa City. Award announced by FRA in October 2010 to Iowa.	\$ 108,600,000	\$ 1,500,000	Federal Railroad Administration FY 2010 HSIPR award	\$ 413,539	\$ 1,086,461	In Progress	7/1/2015
TOTAL	\$ 111,100,000	\$ 3,000,000		\$ 933,436	\$ 2,066,564		

2011 Passenger Rail Service Revolving Fund (funding from Underground Storage Tank Fund)

Description of Project	Total Estimated Project Cost	State Share	Other Revenue Sources	State Funds Used	Remaining Obligated Funds	Status of Project	Date Completed or Estimated Completion Date
Funding reserved to match federal FY 2010 High Speed and Intercity Passenger Rail (HSIPR) award to Iowa DOT for Chicago to Iowa City. Award announced by FRA in October 2010 to Iowa.	\$ 108,600,000	\$ 2,000,000	Federal Railroad Administration FY 2010 HSIPR award	\$ -	\$ 2,000,000	In Progress	7/1/2015
TOTAL	\$ 108,600,000	\$ 2,000,000		\$ -	\$ 2,000,000		