



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
LANSING

JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM
GOVERNOR

GLORIA J. JEFF
DIRECTOR

March 14, 2003

The Honorable Shirley Johnson, Chair
Appropriations Subcommittee on
Transportation
Michigan State Senate
P.O. Box 30036
Lansing, Michigan 48909

The Honorable Scott Shackleton, Chair
Appropriations Subcommittee on
Transportation
Michigan House of Representatives
P.O. Box 30014
Lansing, Michigan 48909

Dear Senator Johnson and Representative Shackleton:

In accordance with PA Act 561 of 2002, Section 704, enclosed is the Michigan Department of Transportation's High Speed Rail Service Implementation report.

If you have any questions or comments regarding these reports, feel free to contact me or Rob Abent, Bureau Director, Bureau of Multi Modal Transportation Services, at (517) 335-9568.

Sincerely,

Gloria J. Jeff
Director

MMT:RA:TH

Enclosure

cc: Members of House and Senate Appropriations Subcommittee
L. Hank
M. Frierson
T. Hoeffner
✓ E. Timpf
L. Hostetler
C. Thiel, Senate Fiscal Agency
W. Hamilton, House Fiscal Agency

Detroit-Chicago Corridor High Speed Rail Service Implementation

As Required by Section 704 of PA 561 2002
February 12, 2003

This report is an update of the Michigan Department of Transportation's (MDOT's) efforts to implement high speed rail on the federally designated Detroit-to-Chicago high speed corridor. Activities associated with MDOT's incremental approach to improving service while reducing the travel time, can be categorized in the following broad areas:

Track Infrastructure: Rail, Switches, Sidings, etc.
Train Control & Communication Systems: Wayside Signals and In Cab Signals
Stations: Maintenance, Developments, and Passenger Issues
Grade Crossings: Improvements, Closures and Safety
Equipment: Train Sets and Passenger Coaches

Amtrak trains are continuing to operate in daily revenue service at 90 mph, on the 55 miles of Amtrak trackage in southwest Michigan. The 90 mph. speeds were successfully implemented on January 7, 2002, after extensive testing and approval by the Federal Railroad Administration. The system experienced minor delays during the first few months, while the locomotive engineers, signal maintainers, and technical experts became accustomed to the system. Today, with over a year of experience, the system is operating well.

The track infrastructure program was limited in fiscal year 2002 because the majority of the Rail Passenger Services program budget was consumed by the operating subsidy for the Grand Rapids-to-Chicago, *Pere Marquette*, and the Port Huron-to-Chicago, *International*, services.

MDOT did, however, invest approximately one million dollars in 20 miles of cross tie replacement between Niles and Dowagiac, the upgrade of grade crossing warning devices at five locations in the New Buffalo vicinity, and for preliminary engineering for a new track connection at West Detroit that will result in a significant reduction in travel time.

Work is continuing with the High Speed Positive Train Control System project. The focus of the project is eliminating specific minor delays and advancing the extension of the project beyond the current 55 mile limits. The project is nearly ready to begin intense safety verification and validation testing in preparation for increasing the speed limit to 100 mph.

There are several intermodal projects in progress. An enhancement project at the Niles station is well underway. The concrete cross ties in the main track and siding have been replaced, track drainage has been improved and modern 8-inch above rail platforms are nearly complete. This construction season will bring the installation of brick pavers around and in front of the station to enhance the historic beauty of the station, along with landscaping, lighting and parking lot improvements.

The city of Dearborn's consultant has recommended a location for a new rail station. This facility will be adjacent to Greenville Village on property currently owned by Ford Motor Company. The consultant is working with Amtrak on the preliminary design for the facility. MDOT is also working with the city of Jackson and Amtrak to create a multi modal transportation center, utilizing the existing station and surrounding property of the historical station. The proposal would introduce intercity bus and local transit services into the existing facility, along with possibly a restaurant and community offices. The city is currently looking for funds to match the MDOT funds provided to begin a feasibility study.

In addition, a decorative and protective fencing project was completed in 2002, along the Amtrak right-of-way through the village of Decatur and a similar fencing project is scheduled to be completed in the 2003 construction season through the village of Three Oaks.

Work is continuing to improve safety at grade crossings along this corridor. Several private crossings have been closed through negotiations between Amtrak and the adjacent property owners. A public crossing closure was recently finalized in Berrien County, with a second closure project to begin this Spring. There are ongoing discussions between road authorities, railroads and MDOT for proposed crossing closures in Washtenaw, Jackson and Berrien counties, as well as, with the cities of Albion and Kalamazoo and the villages of Grass Lake, Galesburg, and Galien.

With the current tight budget situations for most states, activities between Illinois, Wisconsin and Michigan associated with the purchase of new equipment have declined. MDOT has recently received a proposal from a manufacturer to lease new equipment. MDOT will investigate this proposal to see if there are opportunities to reduce operating costs on the State's subsidized routes, while increasing ridership and revenue. Based on the expertise and studies in other areas of the country, new equipment by itself, without significant travel time reduction, has increased passenger totals by up to fifty percent.

In addition to these specific projects, MDOT is working on several study teams to ensure the coordination of the efforts and work we have underway on the Detroit-Chicago corridor. MDOT continues to work with Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Ohio, and Wisconsin on the Midwest Regional Rail Initiative, a high speed network connecting the Midwest states via a Chicago hub.

In spring of 2002, MDOT agreed to work with Ohio, New York and Pennsylvania on a Cleveland Hub study to explore the potential for intercity passenger and high speed rail to service the travel needs on various routes through Cleveland. This project offers the potential to connect the passenger network in Michigan with the east coast via a Detroit-Cleveland route that would connect with Amtrak's Northeast Corridor Accela service from Cleveland.

Finally, MDOT is working with several local agencies on a commuter rail study between downtown Detroit and Metro Airport and between Ann Arbor and Detroit. These services could supplement and enhance high speed service on the Detroit-Chicago corridor.