



JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
LANSING

GLORIA J. JEFF
DIRECTOR

February 28, 2005

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

The Honorable Shelley Goodman Taub
House Appropriations Subcommittee
on Transportation
Michigan House of Representatives
P.O. Box 30014
Lansing, Michigan 48909

Dear Senator Johnson and Representative Taub:

In accordance with Public Act 361 of 2004, Section 704, enclosed is the Michigan Department of Transportation's High Speed Rail Service Implementation Report.

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

Sincerely,

Gloria J. Jeff
Director

Enclosure

cc: Members of Senate and House Appropriations Subcommittee
on Transportation
M. Lannoye, State Budget Director
C. Thiel, Senate Fiscal Agency
W. Hamilton, House Fiscal Agency

MMTSB:RA;ADM:TH:djm

bcc: L. Hank
K. Steudle
V. Blaxton
R. Abent
T. Hoeffner
M. Frierson
E. Timpf
L. Hostetler
R. DeCook

425 WEST OTTAWA STREET • P.O. BOX 30050 • LANSING, MICHIGAN 48909

www.michigan.gov • (517) 373-2090

Printed by members of:



Implementation of High Speed Rail Implementation Update

As required by Section 704 of Act No. 361
Public Acts of 2004

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-Chicago high speed corridor. MDOT is using an incremental approach to improve service and reduce travel time. MDOT's activities can be classified into the following categories:

Track Infrastructure: rail, turnouts, sides, bridges, etc.

Train Control & Communication Systems: wayside and in-cab signals, radios, etc.

Stations: development, rehabilitation and passenger issues

Grade Crossings: safety improvements, eliminations and grade separations

Equipment: locomotives, passenger coaches, café cars and entire train sets

Track Infrastructure

MDOT provided Amtrak \$795,000 for crosstie replacement and various infrastructure improvements between the Michigan-Indiana border and Kalamazoo. This work includes the placement of an additional 9,000 crossties, right-of-way fencing, and work to eliminate a public at-grade crossing in Galien. This work is to ensure the continued 90 MPH operations and the imminent increase to 95 MPH.

In a separate project, a consulting firm for MDOT has developed three alternative plans to improve the track connection between the Norfolk Southern and Canadian National tracks in Battle Creek. MDOT will soon be selecting the preferred alternative, and the consultant will be scheduling meetings between the three operating railroads, Norfolk Southern, Canadian National, and Amtrak, to discuss the project. The construction of this project will reduce freight congestion, improve on-time performance and reduce travel time by ten to fifteen minutes per train.

Train Control & Communication Systems

Amtrak trains continue to operate at 90 MPH between Kalamazoo and Niles. This is still the only place in the country where maximum train speeds have been increased above 80 MPH, since the designation of federal high speed corridors in 1992. For over two years the system has operated as designed, operating with 100% efficiency and safety.

Additional signal and train equipment testing was conducted in 2004 using a test train under normal operating conditions. The federally required safety verification and validation is continuing under the auspices of an independent, third party auditor approved by MDOT and Amtrak.

Stations

MDOT and the City of Jackson have an agreement and have selected a consultant to study the feasibility of creating a multi-modal transportation center at the existing Amtrak station in Jackson. MDOT, Amtrak, and the City, along with other community agencies, are working to develop a revitalization strategy for the Amtrak owned station. This would increase Amtrak ridership and revenue and improve inter-modal transportation options for the Jackson area.

Preliminary engineering work continues for the Detroit-New Center station facilities. Amtrak's consultant has submitted plans which are currently being co-reviewed by Amtrak and MDOT.

The City of Dearborn's consultant is working to complete a conceptual design for the new facility. Currently, the project consultant is negotiating with Ford Motor Company and private property owners, to resolve real estate issues.

The cities of Lapeer and Bangor are currently refurbishing existing Amtrak Stations. Interior and exterior improvements are being completed at the structures, with plans to construct state of the art platforms this construction season. The new platforms will improve passenger safety and convenience when boarding and de-boarding.

A private developer in New Buffalo will be constructing a retail facility adjacent to Amtrak's mainline track, which will include a passenger station for riders to access the Detroit-to-Chicago corridor trains. Amtrak has approved this new station stop, which is being completely funded by the private developer. The new station should increase ridership between New Buffalo and Chicago, especially during the summer tourist season. This station should be in full operation by mid Summer of 2005.

Grade Crossings

MDOT provided Amtrak \$200,000 (FY 2003) of funding to continue the elimination of private crossings in southwest Michigan. Amtrak and MDOT are also considering alternative grade crossing warning devices at private crossings where a closure is not possible. The private crossing solutions are in conjunction with the Train Control & Communication Systems project.

MDOT and the City of Kalamazoo have agreed to consolidate three grade crossings into a single grade crossing. This new roadway will greatly improve safety and traffic circulation around the campus of Western Michigan University (WMU). The relocation/closure project is scheduled for a spring 2005 letting, with construction beginning in May and completing in August. WMU has requested an August completion date.

MDOT continues to work with the City of Albion and Norfolk Southern Corporation to develop a comprehensive plan to eliminate grade crossings along Michigan's high speed corridor. The latest proposal is for the potential elimination of five grade crossings and the upgrade of the warning devices at the remaining grade crossing locations in the city. Included in the latest proposal are plans to upgrade the signal circuitry and allow Amtrak to increase track speeds from 30 MPH to 45 MPH. Adding an additional station stop at the Albion station is also being considered.

Equipment

There has been limited activity related to new equipment during the past year. Amtrak and MDOT have focused more on increasing speeds to 95 MPH and above, improving on-time performance with existing equipment. However, MDOT is continuing to monitor manufacturers and other state projects regarding technological and equipment advancements.

Midwest Regional Rail Initiative (MWRRI)

MDOT along with eight other states is a member of the Midwest Regional Rail Initiative, which is a study to develop an improved and expanded passenger rail system in the Midwest. This is a partnership to examine the infrastructure, equipment and other capital costs necessary to implement such a system. The study also considers forecasts of future ridership and associate revenues, as well as identifying available funding sources. A copy of the 2004 Executive Report has been attached for your review.