



# Building Partnerships with Host Railroads

**Freight Railroad Outreach  
Team**

# Panelists



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**PROGRAM DELIVERY WORKSHOP**

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JULY 2024 | WASHINGTON, DC



# Building Partnerships with Host Railroads

FRA SUMMER 2024 WORKSHOP

Jason Biggs | Director  
WSDOT Rail, Freight and Ports Division

July 31, 2024

Jim Tylick | Assistance Vice President  
Passenger Operations  
BNSF Railway

# BNSF Passenger Operations Overview



=Amtrak Route

★ =Commuter Rail

- BNSF is the largest host of Amtrak on a train mile basis. 6.5M miles hosted in 2023.
- BNSF operates Chicago Metra, Minneapolis Northstar, Seattle Sounder, and hosts Los Angeles Metrolink.
  - Metra – 91 weekday trains
  - Northstar – 8 weekday trains
  - Sounder – 30 weekday trains
  - Metrolink – 43 weekday trains
- **Key Focus** – Collaborative relationship with key public partners (Amtrak, JPA's, commuter agencies, etc.) delivering SAFE, reliable, efficient passenger operations focusing on continuous improvement and adaptability to business needs.

# Amtrak Cascades corridor

- 18 stations from Vancouver, BC to Eugene, Oregon covering 461 miles
- Current daily roundtrips:
  - Two between Vancouver, BC and Seattle
  - Six between Seattle and Portland
  - Two between Portland and Eugene
- WSDOT and ODOT contract with Amtrak to operate the service
- As a federally designated Intercity Passenger Rail service, states pay for operating costs not covered by ticket sales
- Amtrak operates on BNSF and Sound Transit tracks in Washington and Union Pacific tracks in Oregon and Canadian National tracks north of the Fraser River in British Columbia



# WSDOT and BNSF delivered nearly \$800 million in capital projects



- Total of 20 projects completed between 2010 and 2017 – on time and under budget
- Accomplished through partnership:
  - Both WSDOT and BNSF put in place experienced and goal-oriented teams
  - Continuity of leadership without substantive change
  - Use of Program Management Tools
  - Established clear policy objectives
  - Focused and frequent communication
- Received 2017 Dr. W. W. Hay Award for Excellence from AREMA



# Public private partnerships: Working together



## Salmon Bay Bridge

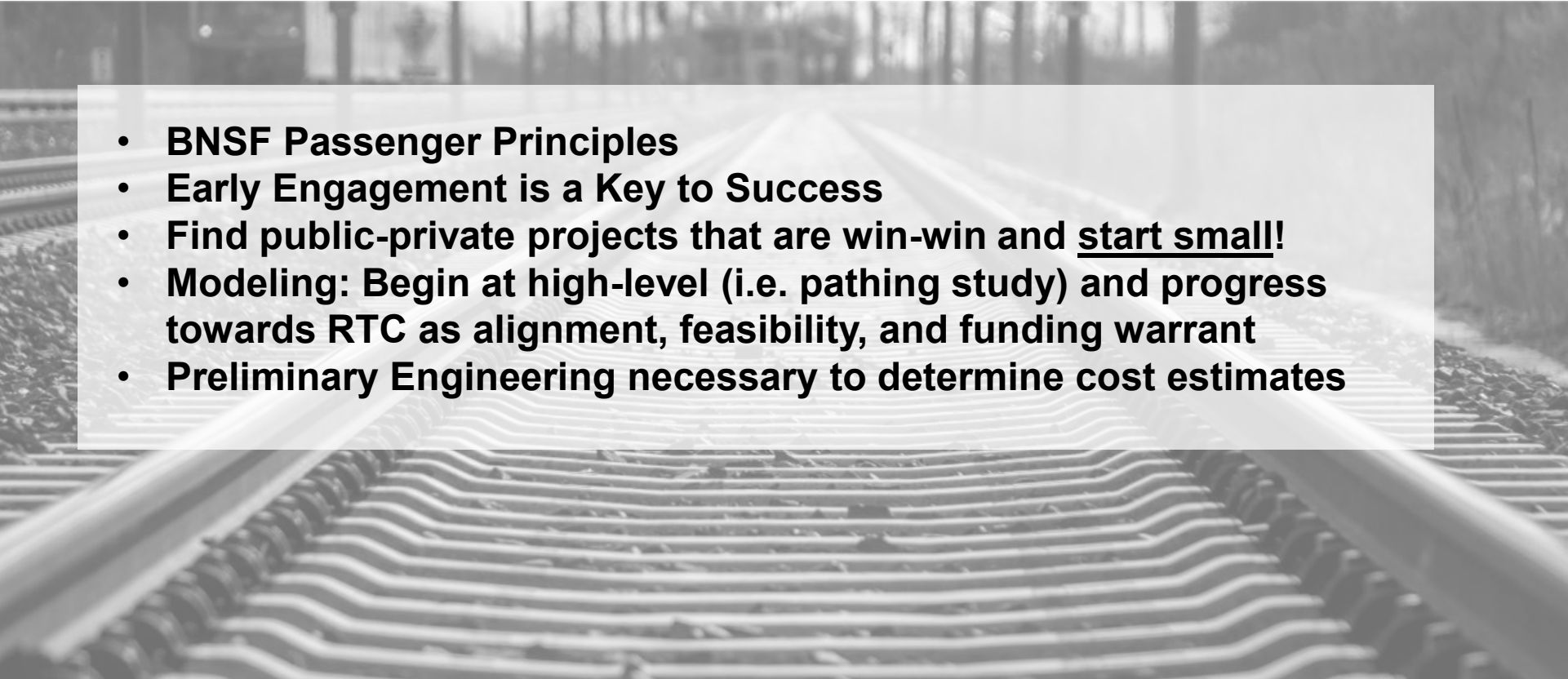
- 30 to 40 trains use the bridge each day
- In addition to freight trains, serves Amtrak Cascades trains traveling to and from British Columbia, Amtrak's long-distance Empire Builder and Sound Transit's Sounder trains
- Frequently opens and closes for both recreational and commercial marine traffic
- Essential infrastructure with no alternative rail routes
- Over 100 years old and needs rehabilitating before it fails completely
- WSDOT awarded \$25 million federal INFRA grant to rehabilitate
- BNSF Railway funding remainder of the \$110 million project





**BNSF** will continue to have a bias for freight growth. We will collaborate constructively with public partners on passenger rail expansion.

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- A grayscale photograph of railroad tracks receding into the distance, with a semi-transparent white box overlaid on the left side containing a bulleted list.
- **BNSF Passenger Principles**
  - **Early Engagement is a Key to Success**
  - **Find public-private projects that are win-win and start small!**
  - **Modeling: Begin at high-level (i.e. pathing study) and progress towards RTC as alignment, feasibility, and funding warrant**
  - **Preliminary Engineering necessary to determine cost estimates**

# Foundations of Success

- **No Surprises!**
- Recognize the value and expertise each group brings to the table
- Thoroughly express and understand each party's process and authority
- Identify and monitor joint risks
- Designate contacts to:
  - Expedite respective internal processes such as reviews and approvals
  - Address issues early
- Agree on data collection and modeling upfront
- Jointly engage and collaborate with FRA
- Be accountable



# Thank You

For more information, please contact:

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# State/Freight Coordination for Success

## A Case Study of Massachusetts' Inland Route

Meredith Slesinger, Rail & Transit Administrator  
Massachusetts Department of Transportation

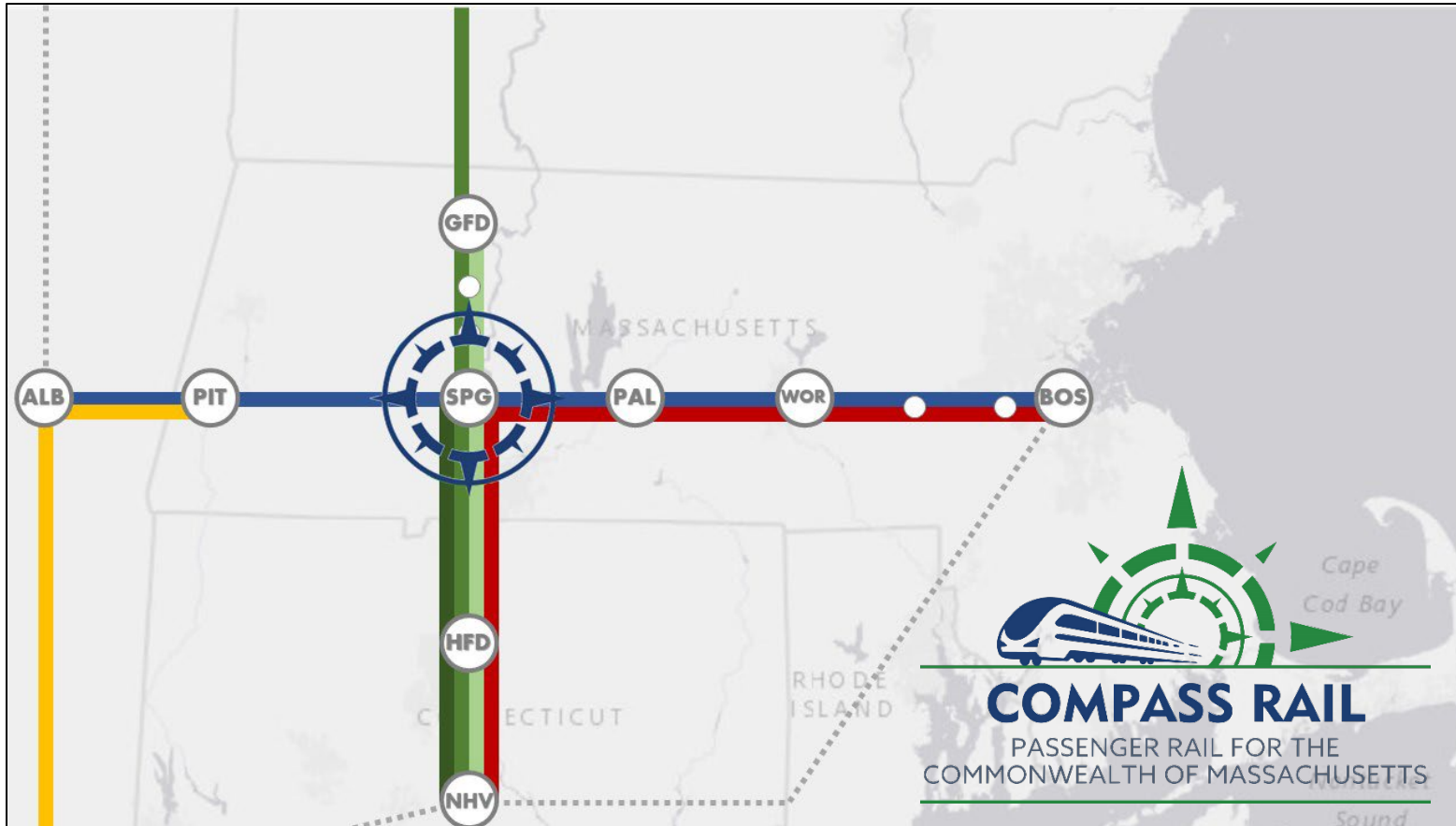
Andy Daly, Senior Director Passenger Operations  
CSX Transportation

*July 31, 2024*



# Compass Rail

## Passenger Rail for the Commonwealth



- West-East and North-South services comprise Compass Rail.
- Intercity rail not commuter rail; includes robust Springfield hub
- Administered by MassDOT Rail and Transit Division with partners Amtrak, CSX, CT/NY/VT, and others
- Increases transportation options, supports economic development, improves the freight network, and shifts car trips to greener modes
- Pursue federal funding from historic Bipartisan Infrastructure Law



# Supporting Projects

Advancing Passenger and Freight Initiatives in Tandem

## Springfield Area Track Reconfiguration

PE/NEPA

FY21 CRISI \$1.75 million



*Track infrastructure on top of  
Springfield Union Station*

## West Springfield Grade Crossing Elimination

Design/Construction

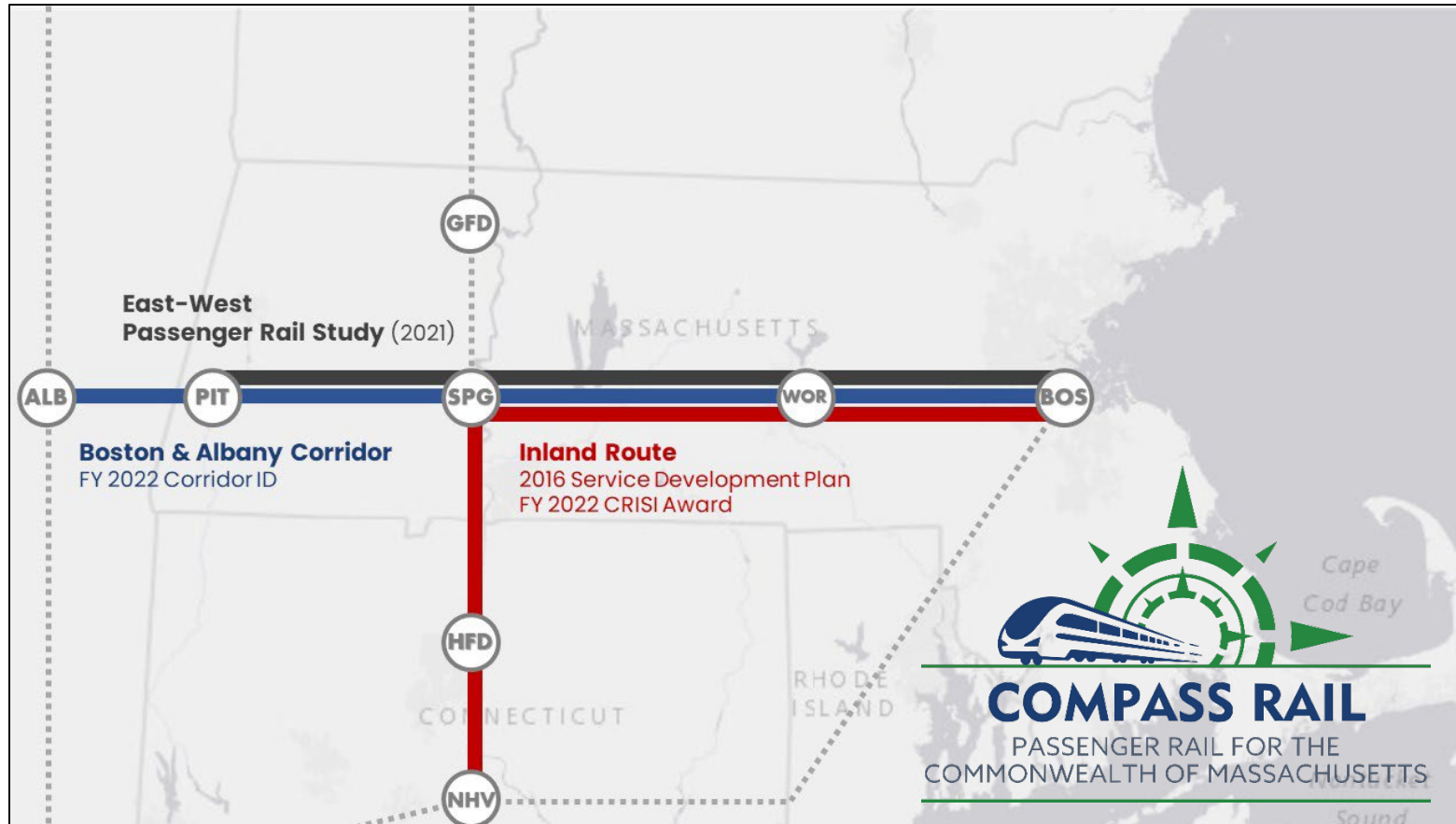
\$20+ million



*A train blocks automobiles*

# Compass Rail

## Supporting Plans and Proposed Corridors



- 2016 Inland Route Service Development Plan established service and capital objectives.
- 2021 East-West Passenger Rail Study expanded planning to additional Western Mass communities.
- Routes are consistent with Amtrak ambitions.
- FRA programs have provided paths towards implementation for these routes.

# CRISI Grant Notice of Funding Opportunity

## Coordinating a Grant Application



*U.S. Rep. Richard E. Neal steps out of Amtrak's "theatre car" at Union Station in Springfield Tuesday afternoon, Aug. 23, 2022.  
(Hoang 'Leon' Nguyen / The Republican)*

- Anticipating funding opportunities for intercity rail, MassDOT and Amtrak find project consensus.
- Early Actions for the Inland Route project is conceived.
- CRISINOFO is published
- Partnership with CSX is sought prior to application
- Application is submitted with MassDOT as sponsor, Amtrak a willing and able operator, and CSX as an amenable host railroad.



# Early Actions for the Inland Route

## CRISI Funds are Awarded for Design and Construction

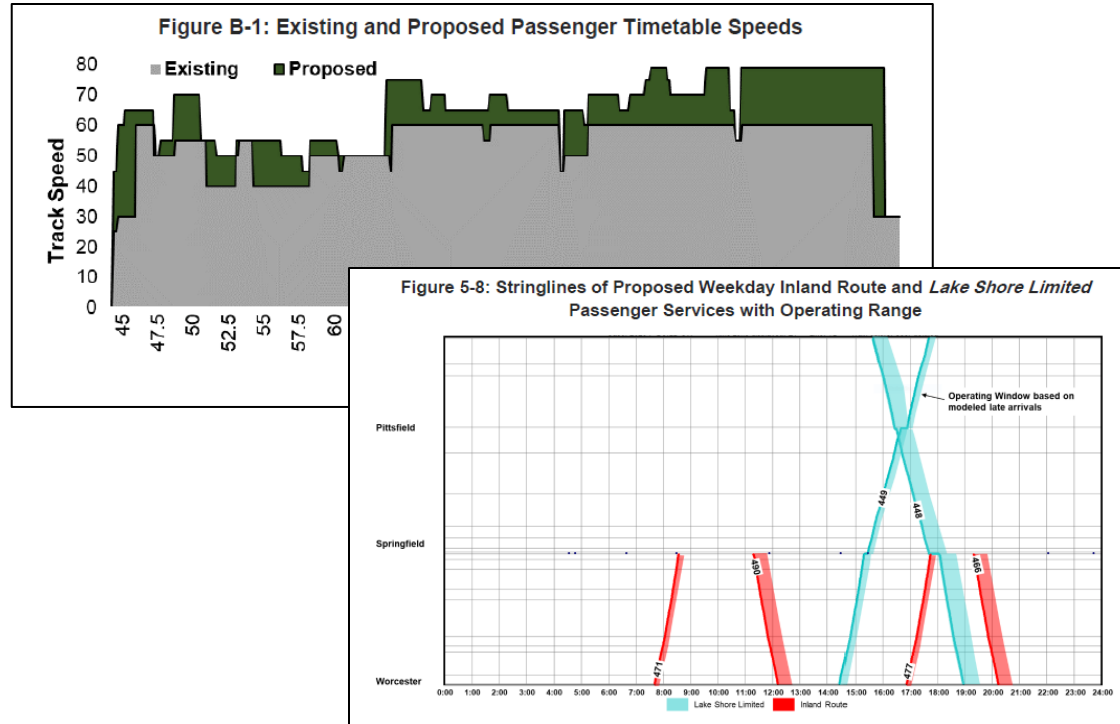
- \$108M federal + \$27M match = \$135M project
- Planning, design, and construction
- Track realignments and sidings between WOR-SPG
- Added capacity for freight and passenger trains
- Two round trips between BOS-NHV via SPG; Amtrak-operated
- Reduced travel time (i.e. higher speeds) BOS-SPG
- Working with CSX and Amtrak to refine scope
- Summer 2024: begin design
- Spring 2027: begin construction

*Governor Healey speaks at 9/22/23 press event announcing \$108 million federal grant for Inland Route*



# Operations Modeling Analysis for Inland Route

## Pre - Grant Activities Accelerate Project



- MassDOT, CSX, and Amtrak collaborate to produce *Operations Modeling Analysis for Inland Route Passenger Service* report
- Modeling effort includes simulating existing and future conditions, projecting growth in freight movements, and evaluating infrastructure improvements to increase capacity and reduce travel time.
- Report concludes with identifying infrastructure to be built through CRIS grant.
- Model will continue to be useful for Pittsfield Track Capacity Project and Boston & Albany Corridor service development plan.

*Excerpt analysis from Operations Modeling Analysis for Inland Route Passenger Service*

# MassDOT/ CSX/ Amtrak Partnership

A national model



- MassDOT/ CSX/ Amtrak collaboration received an award to recognize efficiency and productivity of partnership on Inland Route modeling effort.
- FRA is seeking to replicate this partnership model and service planning methodology elsewhere in the nation.



# Next Steps

## Inland Route Implementation

- 22905 letter
- Execute CRISI grant agreement with FRA
- CSX-led preliminary engineering
- MassDOT-led environmental review
- Construction in spring 2027
- Two daily round trips to operate in 2029



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# Host Railroad and State Passenger Agency

## *Elements of a good partnership*

- Relationship is comprehensive
  - High levels of trust often developed over many years.
  - Must be able to address issues of concern for both partners that may be outside the passenger project.
  - Respects the value of the region's freight rail network.
  - Good communication and agreement development processes.
  - No negotiations through the press.
- Respects each party's environment
  - Host RRs have shareholder and return on investment requirements.
  - Public agency's goals are different. Help us understand.
  - Host RR has very limited resources to work on projects.
  - Parts of the host's network may be off limits.
  - Railroad business strategies and State politics may change quickly.
- Consider Non-Traditional Project delivery
  - Don't settle for the Amtrak model. Alternative models are more flexible.
  - UP has successfully used a Direct Access model with Illinois DOT.
  - Remove obstacles that create risk and prevent host RRs from cooperating with Passenger proposals. Consistent with a partnership.





# Illinois DOT and Union Pacific Partnership Successes

EXPERIENCE IT YOURSELF.



## Chicago to St. Louis

### High-Speed Rail

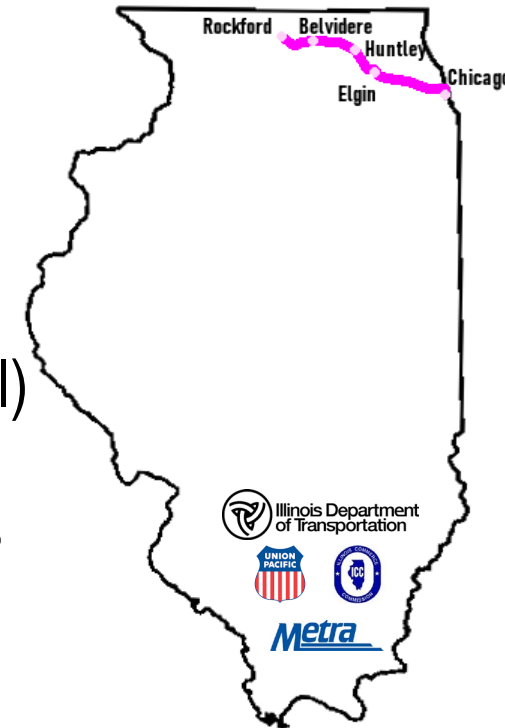
*Lincoln Service*

4 daily round trips

110 mph service

Operated by Amtrak

- » Roadmap of required program agreements
  - Memorandum of Understanding
  - Service Outcomes Agreement (IDOT/UPRR/Amtrak)
  - Construction Agreement
  - Maintenance Agreement / Escrow Agreement
- » Top-down commitment by Leadership (CEO / Secretary level)
  - Emphasize priority status within each organization
  - Identify and enable decision makers/champions/technical experts across all disciplines
- » Constant coordination and breakouts across all disciplines
  - Frequent specific subject meetings (e.g. grade crossings, engineering, real estate, signal, environmental, LEGAL)
  - Monthly Executive meeting to identify/elevate major issues and problem solve as early as possible
  - Willingness to find mutually beneficial solutions



## Chicago to Rockford

### Intercity Passenger Rail

*Service-to-be-named*

2 daily round trips

79 mph service

Operated by Metra

UP Direct Access Model



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for more updates!

**Thank you!**

**Building Partnerships  
with Host Railroads**

**Freight Railroad Outreach Team**

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