Chicago - Detroit/Pontiac Passenger Rail Corridor Program

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) published in the Federal Register on November 30, 2018, a notice to advise the public that FRA is rescinding the Notice of Intent (NOI) for the Chicago to Detroit/Pontiac Corridor Investment Program. The project sponsor and FRA have agreed to rescind the NOI; however, the associated alternatives analysis and service development plan may be used for further environmental reviews where necessary.

 Below is archived web content regarding this project.

Environmental Impact Statement

The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) has evaluated passenger rail improvements to improve mobility along a 304-mile rail corridor between Chicago, Illinois and Detroit/Pontiac, Michigan and provide a competitive alternative to automobile, bus and air service. The Chicago-Detroit/Pontiac Rail Corridor Program (Program) is being prepared in partnership with the Indiana Department of Transportation and the Illinois Department of Transportation, in association with the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), and will provide sufficient information for the FRA to potentially support future decisions to fund and implement a major investment in the passenger rail corridor.

A tiered environmental process, commonly used in the development of complex projects, is being utilized for the Program. With a tiered approach, the Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) evaluates impacts of a broad-scale project with focus on more qualitative than quantitative impacts on specific resources, in accordance with 40 CFR 1508.28. The EIS will evaluate the effects of upgrading rail infrastructure and facilities to safely accommodate potential passenger rail service improvements. Effects on the natural environment, jobs, the economy, air quality, traffic, and neighborhoods will be considered.

Current Activities and Next Steps:

The Program team (FRA and MDOT) are in the process of reviewing and preparing responses to public and agency comments on the Draft EIS received between September and December 2014. Responses to the comments, and updates to the environmental analysis will be included in the Tier 1 Final EIS is anticipated for release in the summer of 2017. The A subsequent Record of Decision (ROD) will present FRA's final decision on the Tier 1 EIS after public release, and the ROD will identify the Program's selected route and service alternative for the corridor.

Following completion of the Tier 1 Final EIS NEPA document and issuance of the ROD by FRA, subsequent Tier 2 NEPA documents are developed to quantitatively evaluate the environmental impacts within one or more specific logical sections or phases of the Program, which would be developed through separate but related projects.

Documents available for download:

- Notice of Intent (published August 31, 2012)

TIER 1 DRAFT EIS

Please click on the links below to download and view an electronic copy of the Tier 1 Draft EIS. Options for downloading the document in its entirety or by individual section are available below. Downloading of the PDF may take several minutes.

Complete Tier 1 DRAFT Environmental Impact Statement
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Chapter 2 Alternatives Considered
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Chapter 4 Public Involvement and Agency Coordination
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Permitting Dashboard

The U.S. Permitting Dashboard is an online tool for Federal agencies, project sponsors, and interested members of the public to track the Federal government's environmental review and authorization processes for large or complex infrastructure projects. The Dashboard is part of a government-wide effort to improve coordination, transparency, and accountability. A link to this project's page on the Dashboard is below.

- [Permitting Dashboard Link](#)