U.S. Department of Transportation

Federal Railroad Administration

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Shipman, Illinois (MP 230) to Godfrey, Illinois (MP 253)

Track Improvement Project

Jersey, Macoupin and Madison Counties, Illinois

September 2014

Introduction: The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) proposes to undertake construction of a second mainline track by upgrading and connecting two siding tracks along the mainline service line of the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) and various track improvements between Milepost (MP) 230 to MP 253 in Jersey, Macoupin and Madison Counties, Illinois (the Project). This Project would include a nearly 22-mile section of the UPRR from the Town of Shipman to the Village of Godfrey. The Project has been evaluated in an Environmental Assessment (EA) prepared by IDOT to analyze and document whether the Project has significant effects on the environment. The EA also addresses improvements to signalization and at-grade rail-roadway crossings and reconstruction of the mainline track.

The Project is part of the Chicago-St. Louis High-Speed Rail Corridor Project (Original Project). For the Original Project, IDOT identified in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) upgrading the existing main track to 110 mph standards, including installation of four quadrant gates

at public crossings, upgrading farm crossings, and Positive Train Control (PTC) signals. The existing sidings at Shipman and Godfrey would be retained without upgrades to main track standards. The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) issued a Record of Decision (ROD), dated January 8, 2004, which selected the Preferred Alternative as described in the Original Project Final EIS, and adopted an incremental approach to upgrading the line to support 110-mph high speed rail (HSR) service using the existing Chicago–St. Louis Amtrak route.

FRA must comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 (42 USC § 4321 et seq.), as amended, as the Federal agency providing grant funding for the Project. This Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) is made by the FRA based on the information in the EA prepared by IDOT to comply with NEPA, FRA's Procedures for Considering Environmental Impacts (64 FR 28545, May 6, 1999), and other related laws.

Statement of Purpose and Need: The identification of the purpose and need is significant in determining the reasonable range of alternatives to consider for the Project. The need defines the key problems to be addressed and explains their underlying causes. The purpose states clearly why the Project is being proposed and identifies potential anticipated outcomes. The Shipman to Godfrey Track and Siding Construction Project is an important component of the Original Project.

Purpose: To provide a second mainline track and improved sidings at Shipman and Godfrey to improve reliability by reducing passenger train delays that occur because of frequent freight trains and a lack of passing opportunity and to allow for increased train speeds. Improvements to the existing sidings creating a second mainline track, gate reinforcements, and signal system upgrades will reduce passenger train delays and will allow trains to operate at speeds up to 110-mph.

Need: The Project will reduce passenger train delays that occur because of the number of trains that operate over this section of track, both passenger and freight trains, and the lack of a passing opportunity. The Project allows for additional capacity, reduced travel times, improved service reliability, and increased frequency of trips.

Study Area: The study area includes a nearly 22-mile section of the UPRR from Shipman, Illinois to Godfrey, Illinois, within the counties of Jersey, Macoupin and Madison. The UPRR Mileposts (MP) are MP 230 to MP 253. The study area encompasses the Town of Shipman, Village of Brighton, and Village of Godfrey. See the Project Location Map on the following page.

Alternatives: IDOT evaluated two alternatives for the Project in the EA: 1) the No-Build Alternative; and 2) the Build Alternative, which would provide a double track operation from Shipman to Godfrey.

The Build Alternative generally includes upgrading existing tracks, adding a second mainline track, constructing turnouts and fencing, adding Positive Train Control (PTC) signaling, and improving and modifying existing grade crossings. In addition, the Build Alternative would upgrade the track of the existing two sidings to main track standards (providing 20-foot track centers, concrete ties, and heavier welded rail). The enhanced standards are being applied to the existing Shipman and Godfrey sidings, which are being incorporated in the new section of second mainline. The Build Alternative would connect the two sidings with 10.9 miles of new second main track to create a section of continuous second mainline totaling 15.8 miles.

To construct the Build Alternative, approximately 18 acres of right-of-way (ROW) acquisition and 15 acres of temporary and permanent easements would be required. In some locations, constructing the second main track and the access roadway would extend the fill and cut sections beyond the existing ROW and additional ROW and access easements would be needed for grading and re-establishing ditch flow-lines.

To accommodate the new second mainline track, the Build Alternative also includes the widening of the railroad bridge over Illinois Route 16 (W. Railroad Street) in Shipman, and may involve modifications and extensions to various existing culverts and one bridge over a small waterway. No major waterways are located along this route.

To facilitate maintenance, the Build Alternative would include wider spacing between the tracks (20-foot track centers versus the original 13.5 feet as previously described in the 2003 FEIS) and an access roadway alongside the track. A PTC signaling system would be installed on the added main track and some crossing gates may need to be relocated to permit installation of the additional track.

Crossovers between the northbound and southbound tracks are proposed to be installed approximately at the middle of the new second mainline section, at approximately MP 242.

Selected Alternative: IDOT and the FRA have selected the Build Alternative for the Shipman to Godfrey Construction Project. The major components of the Build Alternative are the construction of the second mainline connecting the Shipman siding and the Godfrey siding.

The No-Build Alternative was not selected because it would not meet the purpose and need of the Project. The No-Build Alternative would not enhance capacity and would not increase the fluidity of operations on the UPRR line in the section between Shipman and Godfrey. The No-Build Alternative would also not provide operating flexibility required to accommodate the growing rail freight traffic and the maintenance needed for the existing Amtrak rail passenger service.

Benefits of the Selected Alternative: Implementation of the Build Alternative would be of immediate benefit to the rail passenger and freight services using the line. The Build Alternative would improve fluidity of train movement, decrease delays in passenger trains, and reduce congestion in the area between Shipman and Godfrey. The siding tracks would also improve the efficiency of the railroad by allowing for train meets and sorting of cars for freight trains as well as an area for storing trains during maintenance incidents. The upgrade improvements would enhance the safety of train operations through the zone, including those grade crossings within the Project limits.

Environmental Consequences: Based upon the EA, included by reference with its appendices in this FONSI in its entirety, the FRA has concluded that the Selected Alternative, including the mitigation measures for unavoidable impacts, would have no foreseeable significant impact on the quality of the natural and human environment.

The FRA finds that the Selected Alternative is best able to achieve the Project purpose and need without significant environmental impacts and by minimizing Project costs.

The FONSI focuses only on those resources that have a reasonable likelihood to be affected by the Project. The following potential impact areas are not located within the Project's study area or

would otherwise not be affected by the Project, and are not addressed in this FONSI: energy, socioeconomic resources, environmental justice, barriers and accessibility, cultural resources, special lands (Section 4(f), 6(f), and Illinois Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development land), and coastal zones. These resource areas are referenced in the EA.

The potential of the Project to result in an environmental impact is summarized in the following sections.

Wetlands and Waters of the U.S.: The assessment of potential wetland impacts from the Project is based upon direct and indirect impacts related to the placement of fill material, removing of materials and culvert replacements during construction within the proposed ROW and environmental survey limits. Wetland impacts related to construction would include vegetation removal, placement of clean fill, and changes to the wetland hydrologic regime. Approximately 5.53 acres from 51 wetlands would be impacted by the Project, accounting for 2.71 acres of temporary impacts and 2.82 acres of permanent impacts. Under the implementing regulations of the Illinois Interagency Wetland Policy Act of 1989 (IWPA), impacts to wetlands having a Floristic Quality Index (FQI) rating of 20 or greater require 5.5 to 1.0 mitigation ratios. An FQI score below 10 suggests a site of poor natural quality, between 10 and 20 suggests a site of fair natural quality, and an FQI of 20 or more suggests that a site has evidence of native character and may be considered an environmental asset. There are no wetlands in the Project area with an FQI rating of 20 or greater. The FQI ratings for all the impacted wetlands are less than 10, with the highest rating being 8.50 for two wetlands. The majority were 6.0 or less.

Recognizing the conceptual engineering detail of the Project, further efforts would be made in future phases of work to avoid and minimize additional wetland impacts. Avoidance and minimization can be accomplished by narrowing the railroad cross-section with the use of retaining walls, steeper embankments, and bridging critical wetland resources. Avoiding and minimizing impacts to wetland resources may be constrained by other critical resources or local issues. Objectives for mitigation would be established in consultation with regulatory and resource agencies.

The wetland sites and Waters of the U.S. (WOUS) come under jurisdiction of the St. Louis District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). This includes, but is not limited to the Section 404 permit from the USACE, Section 401 Water Quality Certification from the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA), or other permits that may be required. Prior to construction and as part of the wetland permitting process, the UPRR would coordinate with IDOT and USACE to secure the necessary wetland permits and mitigation as required for the Section 404 Permit and in compliance with the IWPA of 1989.

The layout for the Project has been designed to avoid wetland impacts to the extent feasible. The 2004 ROD states that all practical measures to minimize wetland impacts will be taken. The ROD further states that compensation for wetland impacts will be provided through purchase of credits in an approved wetland mitigation bank. If an approved wetland mitigation bank is not available at the time of permitting, then mitigation will occur by conversion of non-wetland areas into wetlands. Monitoring will occur for wetlands greater than 0.25 acres and will be monitored according to IDOT's Wetland Action Plan and any conditions stipulated by the USACE.

The FRA finds that no significant impacts to wetlands would occur considering the mitigation of the wetlands in coordination with the USACE and Illinois state agencies.

Prairie Vegetation: Evaluation of the prairie vegetation present in the Project study area came from the following reports: 1.) The Illinois Natural History Survey (INHS) report titled *Inventory of Roadside Prairies, Illinois Department of Transportation, District 6*, prepared by William Handel (2003); 2.) The INHS report titled *Inventory of Roadside Prairies, Illinois Department of Transportation, District 8*, prepared by William Handel (2004); and 3.) The INHS report titled *High-Speed Rail Chicago to St. Louis-Shipman to Godfrey (Tier 1) & Auburn to Shipman (Tier 2) Botanical Survey-Sangamon, Macoupin and Madison Counties*, prepared by William Handel (2012). The Project team confirmed the presence of prairie remnant locations in the field in the fall of 2011.

The natural quality of each site within the 2003 and 2004 INHS reports was assessed and assigned a letter value of A, B, C, or D, with A representing the highest quality, least disturbed

vegetation. In the 2012 Report, the natural quality of each site was assessed and assigned one of five classes: 1, 1/2, 2, 2/3 or 3, with 1 representing the highest quality, least disturbed vegetation. These values correspond, according to Handel (2003), as follows: Class 1= A or B, Class 2= C, and Class 3= D.

IDOT identified five prairie remnant sites whose natural quality ratings were Class 2/3. None of the prairie remnants are part of an Illinois Nature Preserve or Illinois Natural Area Inventory Site according to the IDNR. Of the five sites, two will have permanent impacts for a total of 1.59 acres.

Recognizing the conceptual engineering detail of the Project, IDOT would conduct further efforts in future phases of work to avoid and minimize additional prairie remnants impacts. Avoidance and minimization will be accomplished by narrowing the railroad cross-section with the use of retaining walls, steeper embankments, and bridging critical prairie resources. Avoiding and minimizing impacts to prairie resources may be constrained by other critical resources or local issues. Objectives for mitigation would be established in consultation with regulatory and resource agencies.

The layout for the Project has been designed to avoid prairie impacts to the extent feasible. The 2004 ROD states that all practical measures to minimize impacts will be taken. The ROD further states that acre-for-acres in-kind compensation shall be provided for temporary and permanent impacts to prairie Grade C+ and above by IDOT. Of the five prairie sites in the 2012 Survey, only one site is grade C+ (2) or above. Per current conceptual engineering details, this site is not being impacted.

Areas of temporary impact to prairies will be graded back to the original contour and then seeded with an appropriate seed mix. Seed should be planted according to Articles 250.05 and 250.06 of the IDOT Standard Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction (adopted January 1, 2012). On February 14, 2013, the IDNR cleared the Project for compliance with Ill. Adm. Code Part 1075.

The FRA finds that no significant impacts to prairie remnant vegetation would occur considering the mitigation of the prairie remnants in coordination with the appropriate federal and Illinois state agencies.

Critical Habitat, Threatened and Endangered Species: The Project may affect habitat of the Indiana bat, blazing star, bunchflower, and eastern prairie fringed orchid.

IDOT conducted field studies for Federal and State-listed plant species. The field studies were not able to locate federally listed species and IDOT concluded the plants did not exist in the study area due to lack of favorable habitat requirements. Habitat for state listed species was identified in five prairie sites delineated by INHS, sites 17 to 21. However, vegetation surveys conducted by INHS resulted in identification of two populations of the Illinois listed Bunchflower and Blazing Star at the north limits of the Project corridor which occur within site 18. UPRR will avoid and minimize impacts to prairie sites 17 through 21 and will notify the Illinois Department of Transportation Bureau of Design and Environment (BDE) when unavoidable impacts are known.

IDOT re-surveyed the Class 1, 1/2 and 2 prairie sites for the presence of federal and state listed species in 2013, including the eastern prairie fringe orchid. No new threatened and endangered species were observed in the 2013 survey. Surveys will be repeated in 2014. On February 14, 2013, the IDNR cleared the Project for compliance with Ill. Adm. Code Part 1075. IDOT will work with IDNR to assess impacts to these plant species after the 2014 survey is complete.

IDOT assessed the Project study area and identified three locations that have potential habitat for the Indiana bat. An undetermined number of trees would be removed to construct the proposed improvements. The locations of tree removals are unknown at this time. In order to minimize the potential for impacts to the Indiana bat, UPRR would commit to clearing trees while the Indiana bat is hibernating, September 30 through April 1.

The FRA finds that no significant impact to critical habitat or threatened or endangered species would occur as a result of the Project considering the extensive coordination with the Illinois state agencies and USFWS.

Agricultural Land: As part of the Project, the closure of a grade crossing (at MP 246.85) would change access to one farmhouse. The current crossing provides access across the tracks from Illinois Route 111

(S. Maple) to the farmhouse, via an unpaved driveway approximately 0.14 mile long. New access to the farmhouse would be provided, as part of the Project, via Conrad Road. A new driveway, approximately 0.17 miles long, would be required to connect to Conrad Road.

The Project would have minimal impact to agricultural land along the corridor resulting in no measurable losses in crop productivity. A total of 14.7 acres of agricultural land would be used for the roadway and railroad infrastructure. The Project would require the acquisition of narrow strips of land that are parallel to the mainline tracks. These acquisitions would not create severed, landlocked or uneconomic remnant farms.

Per IDOT policy and the Farmland Preservation Act (505 ILCS 75/1, *et seq*.), IDOT initiated coordination with the Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA). IDOT coordinated the Project with the United States Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). The IDOA and NRCS had no objections to the Project. The Project would convert three acres or less of farmland per mile and the conversion would only result in minor impacts.The FRA finds that, due to the availability of agricultural land within the Project study area and in the region, the conversion of agricultural land to transportation and developed use along the corridor does not represent a significant impact.

Floodplains: The Project would require 15 culvert and bridge crossings to allow for existing surface drainage swales to drain on either side of or underneath the rail line. The majority of the culverts are located in rural areas, dominated by agricultural uses. The 2003 FEIS for the Original Project stated that no work will be performed below the 100-year flood elevation and no encroachment will occur on the base floodplain elevation. However, design has progressed since the 2003 document and there would be, as a result of this Project, localized floodplain impacts, including fill material, below the base flood elevation associated with work near Macoupin Creek overflow structures. The existing floodplain capacity will not be affected and no further action or analysis will be required.

A stormwater permit would be required for all hydraulic structures, and permit coverage for the Project will be obtained either under the IEPA General Permit for Stormwater Discharges from Construction Site Activities (NPDES Permit No. ILR10) or under an individual NPDES permit. A

permit would also be required from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and may be required by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) Office of Water Resources (OWR) for structure replacements/ extensions within federal and state jurisdictional streams and waterways. Culvert replacements and extensions required for Project construction are anticipated to comply with the IDNR OWR Statewide Permit, which does not require the permit application to be filed if certain construction requirements are met, as detailed in IDNR Statewide Permit 12. The IDNR OWR permit process includes floodplain considerations.

IDOT would restore areas where temporary floodplain impacts occur following Project construction. Unavoidable, permanent impacts would require proper sizing of hydraulic structures and compensatory storage where required.

Transportation: There are no proposed changes in the number of Amtrak trains in the Project study area and no new stations proposed in this portion of the HSR corridor. The rail travel times and ridership estimates reported in the EA for Chicago and St. Louis are only achieved as part of the Chicago to St. Louis High Speed Rail full-build project, which issued a Record of Decision in 2012. Those travel times and ridership numbers would not be achieved by this Project.

Rail: This Project would improve on-time performance and provide more efficient trip-times for rail passengers. Projected freight operations would increase with the construction of new intermodal facilities proposed in Joliet and Alton that are not affiliated with the Project. The cities of Joliet and Alton are not within the Project area evaluated by IDOT in the EA, and although the new proposed intermodal facilities would be removed by a great distance from the Shipman to Godfrey track and siding construction, these new facilities would have an influence on the volume of freight traffic experienced in the Project area.

The Project will improve the efficiency of the railroad by providing passing opportunities at locations where there are train meets. The Project would result in improvements to passenger rail train on-time rail performance on the existing route and would provide for shorter trip times. Rail

passengers would experience temporary delays during construction as a result of reduced operating speeds in construction zones.

The FRA finds that the Project would not result in significant impacts to freight or passenger transport and would result in beneficial effects to the regional transportation of goods.

Motor Vehicles: The Project would result in temporary impacts to vehicular operations during construction of the second mainline track and siding tracks, at-grade roadway crossovers, and the installation of the new four-quadrant gates with vehicle detection equipment at roadway crossings. In some cases, temporary impacts to vehicular traffic could affect emergency services, schools, businesses, and other local activities requiring vehicular access, but only on a short term basis during Project construction.

All of the grade crossings were evaluated as part of the 2003 FEIS. IDOT's approach to analyze grade crossing treatments and make recommendations was intended to be responsive to: local concerns, including increased travel distance and time, particularly for emergency and school bus services; traffic and physical changes to crossings that remain open; changes in access to homes and businesses; barriers to community growth; and changes to existing traffic patterns. When identifying which grade crossings to close, IDOT selected only those on lower volume roadways. None of the crossings selected has an average daily traffic (ADT) count greater than 1,200 vehicles. Implementation of the grade crossing treatment recommendations would impact vehicular traffic within the Project study area. However, the impact would be limited to low volume roads.

Within the study area there are six crossings recommended for closure. There are five private crossings and one public at Gilworth Lane. The next nearest crossing to Gilworth Lane is 0.52 miles. Adequate reserve capacity exists on the adjacent crossings to handle the diverted traffic. Four of five private crossings are farm field access crossings where the next nearest crossing ranges from 0.38 to 1.25 miles away. While the changes in the route to the field might be longer for the property owner, crossing of the tracks would take place at a location with comprehensive grade crossing protection rather than at an unprotected crossing. The fifth private crossing would change access to one

farmhouse. However, there would be no significant impact regarding access for emergency services to the farmhouse. In order to provide access to the farmhouse, the emergency vehicles would travel via Conrad Road instead of the current path of travel along Illinois Route 111.

IDOT would not close any grade crossings before an agreement is reached with the local agency having jurisdiction over the crossing or an agreement is reached with the private crossing owner.

The Project is expected to have a positive impact on bicycle and pedestrian transportation through design improvements at the at-grade crossings that would accommodate crossing pedestrians and bicycles. Design elements include the dimensions, flatness, height, surface, and flangeway design (depth and width) of the crossing and also the crossing angle. Fencing installed in the municipalities of Plainview, Shipman, Brighton and Godfrey and would channel pedestrians to access locations at cross roads where crossings incorporate features specifically considering pedestrian movement.

The FRA finds that the Project would not result in significant impacts to motor vehicle traffic and would result in beneficial effects due to safety measures provided at the at-grade crossings. The Project would increase the use of rail over trucks or passenger cars for freight and passenger movements. Overall passenger safety in the corridor will increase as travelers divert from automobile to rail since rail is a safer mode of travel.

Land Use, Zoning, and Property Acquisition: Existing land use along the Project corridor is predominantly agricultural, with rural communities, including the unincorporated communities of Plainview and Shipman, and the Village of Brighton. These communities do not have existing zoning ordinances. However, the Village of Godfrey does have a zoning plan and has mixed zoning along the Project study area (generally consisting of business, residential, and manufacturing zoned areas). The general scope of the Project work is primarily within the corridor area. The land uses in the Project study area would not be affected by the Project.

The Project would require the acquisition of approximately 30 acres of ROW, including approximately 14.7 acres of agricultural lands, 3 acres of additional vacant land, and 15 acres of

temporary and permanent easements from primarily residential land uses. The Project may result in the displacement of businesses and residential properties. The displacement of businesses or residential properties is due to their location within the right-of-way, which is needed for track or access road construction. Thirteen of the 25 structures that could be displaced by the project are encroaching on UP ROW. These building and structures consist of nine residential, one commercial, ten industrial, and five other non-occupied structures. As the Project is in the design development phase, these numbers are subject to change. IDOT would acquire ROW in compliance with the *Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisitions Policies Act of 1970* (Uniform Relocation Act) (Title 42 USC 4601-4655), as amended. IDOT would implement the provisions of the State of Illinois Relocation Assistance Plan in accordance with the Uniform Relocation Act.

The FRA finds the Project would not result in significant impact as a result of these ROW acquisitions.

Public Health and Safety: The Project would not impact public health and safety because there would be no permanent change in the existing traffic flow patterns due to the proposed improvements. The Project would not result in permanent impacts to community services or facilities. The Project would also have a potential minor temporary impact on emergency response times from temporary delays at grade crossings due to construction. All measures would be taken during the construction phase to coordinate with emergency service providers in order to mitigate any potential impacts due to construction activity.

Three aspects of the Project would have a positive safety impact: installation of four-quadrant gates, a Positive Train Control signal system, and fencing along the tracks in the adjacent communities. By providing enhanced grade crossing protection that consists of four-quadrant gates to reinforce driver-gate compliance and restrain vehicles from entering the path of a train. Improvements to the at-grade crossings would also have a positive safety impact on pedestrians and bicyclists. Fencing at the edge of roadway crossings without dedicated sidewalks would be extended to the crossing signal preventing pedestrians and bicycles from circumventing the crossing arm when

it is down. In addition, overall passenger safety in the corridor will increase as travelers divert from automobile to rail since rail is a safer mode of travel.

The FRA finds that the Project would not result in significant impacts to public health and safety.

Contaminated Sites and Hazardous Waste: The Preliminary Environmental Site Assessment (PESA) identified 19 potential recognized environmental conditions (REC's). Based on the PESA report prepared by GSG Consultants, Inc. in January 2012 each of the 19 RECs were characterized as having potential to impact the Project work area. The evaluation of potential adverse environmental impacts contained in the PESA includes observations, historical records search and review of database information.

IDOT would make an avoidance determination at a future date pertaining to the identified RECs for State and State jurisdiction roadway ROW. If the Project cannot avoid the identified RECs, then a PSI would be prepared for the applicable location(s) in compliance with IDOT Bureau of Design and Environment Chapter 27 Manual Procedures. IDOT would conduct additional studies if the proposed improvements require excavation, including subsurface utility relocation, on a property with an easement. IDOT would conduct a Preliminary Site Investigation (PSI) for State and State jurisdiction roadway ROW prior to acquisition of any contaminated parcel, and/or required temporary or permanent easements. In some cases, the portion of the Project that involves an REC can be risk managed and not require additional assessment. If risk managing is not possible, further environmental study is required, specifically a PSI, to determine the nature and extent of possible contamination for State and state jurisdiction roadway ROW.

Accidental spills of hazardous materials and wastes during construction of the transportation system require special response measures. Occurrences will be handled in accordance with local government response procedures. Refueling, storage of fuels, or maintenance of construction equipment will not be allowed within 100 feet of wetlands or water bodies to avoid accidental spills impacting these resources.

Special waste issues encountered during construction will be managed in accordance with UPRR standard specifications and special provisions or the "IDOT Standard Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction and Supplemental Specifications and Recurring Special Provisions."

In the case of an emergency involving hazardous material, UPRR would enact a hazardous materials emergency response plan.

Visual Resources: The proposed Project is located parallel to the existing mainline track. The tracks run through both residential and commercial areas within the communities of Shipman, Brighton, and Godfrey, but the majority of the track runs through open agricultural land between these three communities. Agricultural lands contain open fields planted in a variety of row crops such as corn and soybeans with intermittent pasture land and farmsteads. There are no historic properties within the viewshed of the Project area.

The Project took into consideration viewsheds, residences and developments and their proximity to the tracks, vegetative cover and grade changes. The proposed Project can be constructed by incorporating appropriate landscaped design and structural and railway design in such a manner as to limit the potential for any significant or adverse long term impacts to the existing visual qualities of the Project area. The Project would have possible visual impacts due to the addition or modification of four-quadrant gates, PTC towers, removal of trees/shrubs, and the movement of the tracks closer to residential properties. PTC tower locations would be included in the final plans.

Temporary easements would be needed for construction access and to stage materials; however, these easements would not require the relocation of residences, or permanently impact scenic resources.

The FRA finds that there would be no significant long-term impacts to the visual setting of the Project area due to the Project's location adjacent to the mainline track and the general land use setting.

Construction Impacts: Impacts associated with construction of the improvements would be local and temporary and include noise, vibration, dust, and traffic disruptions. There is also the potential for temporary impacts to intermittent streams and wetlands.

These temporary impacts would occur from operation of equipment for the construction of an additional mainline track and two siding tracks, installation of new crossing gates and signal devices and equipment, and reconfiguration and realignment of at-grade roadway crossings. Normal traffic may be flagged at various times to allow entry and exit of construction equipment to the Project sites using adjacent or nearby rail/highway grade crossings. Such occurrences may be viewed by motorists as an inconvenience. However, these impacts would be temporary, and existing vehicular travel would be restored after construction has been completed.

The Project may require periodic reduction in the operating speed of trains that pass through construction zones. Also, there may be a need to adjust the schedule of rail operations if activities require temporary shutdown of selected track sections. Such schedule and/or operations adjustments would be necessary when there is a potential safety risk due to the proximity of moving trains and construction activities that are incompatible with ongoing train traffic. Such delays or disruptions may be similar to normal maintenance activities under existing conditions.

Construction could cause temporary impact to wetlands, streams, and surrounding stream banks as the track improvements are made (replacement of rail, crossties and track ballast, removal and replacement of trackside equipment). In the section where the mainline and siding tracks are being constructed, culverts or bridge structures would be extended or replaced. These procedures are primarily restricted to the existing ROW, although there are also wetlands located within the additional ROW necessary for the Project.

IDOT will minimize potential impacts by requiring contractors to: 1.) avoid wetlands during the establishment of construction staging areas and other construction activities; and 2.) employ erosion, sedimentation and bank stabilization practices at or near creeks or creek crossings.

Construction of the proposed Project will comply with BMPs for dust suppression. Debris and spoil disposal, if generated, would be removed according to state and local regulations.

The FRA finds that the construction impacts and the construction traffic would cease following completion of the Project.

Secondary and Cumulative Impacts: Indirect impacts can be associated with the consequences of land use change and development that would be indirectly supported by changes in local access or mobility. Indirect impacts differ from those directly associated with the construction of a project itself and are often caused by what is commonly referred to as "induced development." Induced development includes a variety of alterations such as changes in land use, economic vitality, property values and/or population density. The potential for secondary impacts to occur is determined in part by local land-use and development-planning objectives and the physical location of the Project.

As with any new construction, there would be additional energy expended as a result of the Project that would contribute to the cumulative impact.

The Project would provide some beneficial contributions to cumulative impacts. The proposed improved operability of freight and passenger rail service by the construction of expanded and new siding is expected to provide an overall benefit to air quality. Air quality benefits are also expected as potential motorists move to the faster Amtrak service that would be using energy efficient equipment. The improvements to the grade crossing treatments would benefit the safety of motorists crossing the railroad.

FRA finds that the Project would not result in any significant adverse indirect or cumulative impacts.

Public Comments on the Environmental Assessment: Coordination efforts began in the early stages of the Project and were designed to maintain consistent communication with residents, public officials, businesses, property owners, stakeholders, and regulatory agencies during the environmental process. On March 25, 2014, the EA was released for 30-day public review and comment period. The document

was on display on the IDOT and FRA websites. On April 10, 2014, an open house was held in Godfrey, Illinois, where the public was invited to attend the meeting to review the document, provide comment and ask questions of the Project team.

Commitments and Mitigation Measures: IDOT will be required to comply with all applicable federal, state, and local permitting requirements during the implementation of the Project; which will include:

- Public Law 95-217, Clean Water Act of 1977, 33 USC § 1251-1376
- Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, 16 USC § 470
- Section 404 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (CWA), 33 USC § 1344
- Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended, 42 USC § 4601 et seq.
- Executive Order 11990, Protection of Wetlands, 42 FR 26961, signed May 24, 1977
- Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 USC Chapter 126, and 47 USC Chapter 5)

The following commitments and mitigation measures have been identified to further reduce impacts of the Project. Additional measures may also be implemented as necessary and as identified.

Biological Resources, Threatened and Endangered Species:

- UPRR Commitment. Unavoidable adverse wetland impacts are subject to the applicable replacement ratios specified in 17 Ill. Adm. Code Part 1090.50 (c)(8). In accordance with the IDOT Wetlands Action Plan, the proposed improvements are Programmatic Review Actions and coordination with the IDNR is not required. Programmatic Review Actions are those which involve impacts to wetlands only in areas where construction is within existing ROW or in new ROW which is contiguous to the existing ROW and for which there is no practicable alternative

which would avoid adverse wetlands impacts. Prior to construction and as part of the wetland permitting process, necessary wetland mitigation as required for the Section 404 permit would be secured.

- UPRR Commitment. UPRR will not conduct tree clearing between the time periods of April 1 and September 30 to protect the Indiana bat.

- IDOT and UPRR Commitment. Coordination is ongoing with the U.S. FWS and the IDNR to assure that the proposed Project would minimize or avoid impacts to protected plant and animal species during Project construction. This effort includes an agency consultation process. IDOT and UPRR will coordinate project improvements with these agencies and will develop and implement appropriate avoidance and mitigation measures for listed species and or their habitats.

- UPRR Commitment. UPRR will avoid and minimize impacts to prairie sites 17 through 21 and will notify the Illinois Department of Transportation Bureau of Design and Environment (BDE) when unavoidable impacts are known.

- UPRR Commitment. UPRR will provide acre-for-acre in-kind compensation for temporary and permanent impacts to prairie Grade C+ or above. The IDOT Bureau of Design and Environment recommends that any compensation for impacts to Site 19 be combined with the same impacts to high quality prairie within the Auburn to Shipman (Tier 2) Track Improvement project from mile posts 203 to 230.

- IDOT Commitment. In 2014, the BDE will re-survey the class 1, 1/2, and 2 prairie sites for the presence of federal and state listed species of plants, including the eastern prairie fringed orchid.

Air Quality, Noise and Vibration:

- UPRR Commitment. Construction of the Build Alternative would create temporary construction impacts to air, noise and vibration during construction. UPRR will ensure that all equipment will be in good working order and maintained, including the exhaust systems.

Water Quality and Permitting:

- UPRR Commitment. In order to prevent construction impacts on water quality in the Project area, UPRR will comply with NPDES permit requirements and commitments and UPRR will use proper sediment and erosion control measures during construction. Additionally, a SWPP would contain BMPs for proper materials handling and management to prevent any chemical or material discharge into surface waters. UPRR will obtain required local and state permits for all hydraulic structures.

Community Access:

- UPRR Commitment. It is not expected that access to any community facilities would be restricted during construction. UPRR will coordinate with representatives from these facilities if access to the facility is altered.

Contaminated Sites and Hazardous Waste:

- UPRR Commitment. Accidental spills of hazardous materials and wastes during construction of the transportation system require special response measures. UPRR will handle such in accordance with the applicable local government response procedures. UPRR will not allow refueling, storage of fuels, or maintenance of construction equipment within 100 feet of wetlands or water bodies to avoid accidental spills impacting these resources.

- IDOT Commitment. IDOT would make an avoidance determination at a future date pertaining to the identified RECs for State and state jurisdiction roadway ROW. If the proposal cannot avoid the identified RECs, then a PSI would be prepared for the applicable location(s) in compliance with IDOT Bureau of Design and Environment Chapter 27 Manual Procedures.

- IDOT Commitment. IDOT would conduct additional environmental studies if the proposed improvements require excavation, including subsurface utility relocation, on a property with an easement for state or state jurisdiction roadway ROW. IDOT would conduct a PSI for state and state jurisdiction roadway ROW prior to acquisition of any contaminated parcel, and/or any required temporary or permanent easements.. In some cases, the portion of the Project that involves an REC can be risk managed for state or state jurisdiction roadway ROW and not require additional assessment.

- IDOT and UPRR Commitment. IDOT and UPRR will manage special waste issues encountered during construction in accordance with UPRR standard specifications and special provisions or the "IDOT Standard Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction and Supplemental Specifications and Recurring Special Provisions."

- UPRR Commitment. In the case of an emergency involving hazardous material, UPRR would enact a hazardous materials emergency response plan.

Floodplains:

- UPRR Commitment. UPRR will properly size hydraulic structures and compensatory storage where required.

Construction Impacts:

- UPRR Commitment. UPRR will implement BMPs for dust. Debris and spoil disposal, if generated, will be removed according to state and local regulations.

- UPRR Commitment. UPRR would obtain a NPDES permit from the IEPA for construction stormwater discharges. UPRR would prepare a SWPPP containing BMPs to minimize the discharge of sediment. Additionally, the SWPPP would contain BMPs for proper materials handling and management to prevent any chemical or material discharge into surface waters.

UPRR would prepare a local stormwater permit for all hydraulic structures. UPRR would obtain a permit from the IDNR for all structure replacements/extensions. Culverts within the project study area would comply with the non-notification Statewide Permit requirements.

Public Health and Safety:

- IDOT Commitment. IDOT would coordinate fencing construction with the local communities. Fencing is provided to increase safety for pedestrians.

Conclusion: FRA finds that the Shipman to Godfrey Track Improvement Project, as presented and assessed in the attached Environmental Assessment (EA), satisfies the requirements of FRA's Procedures for Considering Environmental Impacts (64 FR 28545, May 26, 1999) and NEPA (42 USC § 4321 *et seq*.), and the Project would have no foreseeable significant impact on the quality of the human or natural environment provided it is implemented in accordance with the commitments identified in this Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). As the Project sponsor, IDOT is responsible for ensuring all environmental commitments identified in this FONSI are fully implemented. The EA provides sufficient evidence and analysis for FRA to determine that an environmental impact statement is not required for the Project as presented.

Melissa L. Porter

10/16/14

Joseph C. Szabo
Administrator
Federal Railroad Administration

Date

This document has been prepared in accordance with FRA's Procedures for Considering Environmental Impacts and NEPA by the FRA's Office of Railroad Policy and Development, with assistance from FRA's Office of Chief Counsel. This document was prepared in June 2014. For further information regarding this document contact:

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