



Midwest Regional Rail Initiative

Taking a Bold Track into a New Century

*The **Midwest Regional Rail Initiative (MWVRRRI)** will change the face of intercity passenger rail service in the Midwest. With its hub conveniently located in Chicago, the system planned by the initiative **will dramatically increase available service and decrease overall trip times.** Under the plan, about 90 percent of the Midwest's population will be within one hour of a Midwest Regional Rail System (MWVRRS) station or 30 minutes of a feeder bus station.*

*The MWVRRRI is the combined effort of nine Midwestern state departments of transportation, which have worked since 1996 to plan and implement a **3,000-mile high speed rail system** to connect the region. This updated analysis of the MWVRRRI's continuing plan confirms that this initiative is a viable framework to develop and actualize 21st century passenger rail service in the Midwest.*

Imagine traveling between downtown Chicago and Minnesota's Twin Cities in just over five hours. Or picture being able to choose between eight daily roundtrip trains for your business trip from Cleveland to Chicago — all of which take you there in about 4½ hours.

Envision traveling to Indianapolis or Detroit for a meeting and, as soon as you sit down (and indeed, for the entire trip), having the space to get work done and the option of accessing any tool you'll need, from your laptop to your cell phone.

You could also visit friends in Kansas City by hopping one of six daily roundtrip trains from

St. Louis — you'd get there even faster than if you drove, and wouldn't have to fight any traffic. How about giving your parents the flexibility of taking a train from Omaha to Des Moines, choosing from four daily roundtrips? Wouldn't it be great to have train service for the first time between many cities, such as Fort Wayne, Indiana, to Toledo, Ohio; Milwaukee to Madison, Wisconsin; and Kalamazoo to Grand Rapids, Michigan?

Just think of the possibilities that a passenger rail system with convenient stations across the Midwest would provide. You'd have the ability to go just about anywhere in the region you want, and fast.

A Shared Vision: Connecting the Midwest Through Rail

The Midwest is taking a bold new track into the next century. Far from simply a dream, the Midwest Regional Rail Initiative (MWVRRRI) is the result of careful planning and significant investment by its member states to modernize the passenger rail system.

Through the Midwest Regional Rail System (MWVRRS), modern train equipment and upgrades to existing rail lines will allow speeds of up to 110 mph, whittling travel times. New travel schedules will increase the frequency of passenger rail service across the region.

For travelers, modern, efficient passenger rail service as envisioned by the MWVRRRI will

provide a worry-free and hassle-free alternative to other modes of transportation. There are no traffic jams or long waits to board, take off, or land. While you're on the train, you'll have a smooth ride with plenty of room to work or visit. You can take a walk to the café car for a bite to eat or to enjoy a change of scenery. Or, just sit back, stretch out your legs and relax.

The states of Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Ohio and Wisconsin are already laying the groundwork to serve their growing populations by train.

Look inside to see how the MWVRRS will change the way people travel!

The Many Attributes of Improved Passenger Rail



The Midwest Regional Rail System, with Chicago as its hub, will provide 3,000 miles of intercity passenger rail and serve 90 percent of the 60.3 million people living in its nine-state region. This means that the system has the

potential to carry **nearly as much traffic as regional air travel**. Ticket prices competitive with airfare should generate revenue levels that outpace operating costs after the plan's ramp-up period.

Service will be safe, reliable and convenient. Modern trains traveling at up to 110 mph will provide up to 10 daily round trips in most corridors. When fully implemented, the system is expected to carry an estimated 13.6 million passengers annually and reach areas previously untouched by passenger rail service. Downtown-to-downtown connectivity between major urban centers will provide convenient access to employment, business and tourist centers. Additional feeder bus routes will further expand the system.

Here are some of the benefits that the Midwest Regional Rail System will bring to the region:

Improved Mobility



- Enhances passenger rail service, as well as benefiting freight operations, throughout the region
- Reduces train travel times by up to 50 percent
- Introduces train service to areas not currently served by passenger rail
- Extends the system to outlying areas through a feeder bus system

Economic Development Stimulation

- Creates 2,000 permanent jobs to run the system
- Creates 8,000 construction jobs over the 10-year ramp-up period
- Generates a projected additional \$2.6 billion in public/private sector investment through the development of modern and spacious station facilities with increased amenities, as well as workforce development in the vicinity of these stations

Infrastructure Improvements

- Increased track capacity and signal system improvements result in reliable, frequent and convenient passenger train arrivals and departures
- Improvements to highway-railroad crossings enhance train, motor vehicle and pedestrian safety
- A state-of-the-art train control system improves operating safety, track capacity and coordination
- MWRRS infrastructure improvements will also benefit freight railroads



Connectivity

- Convenient downtown-to-downtown service between all major urban centers
- Direct connections to several major airports in the region allow for seamless inter-regional and international travel options
- Connects the Midwest to passenger rail routes in the Northeast and Canada
- Links smaller communities to the system through an extensive feeder bus system



Saved Resources

- Highway and airport congestion relief
- Reduced energy usage
- Decrease in exhaust emissions





Benefit-to-Cost Ratio

According to Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) studies, the Midwest offers the **highest level of economic benefit associated with rail investment** anywhere in the U.S. outside of the Northeast Corridor. An MWRRS economic analysis shows a benefit-to-cost ratio of 1.7 — that is, for every dollar invested, there will be a \$1.70 return. The study used the same criteria that the FRA used to analyze the potential benefits of rail investment in various corridors across the nation.

On Track in the Midwest

States across the Midwest are preparing for the new wave in railway transportation. All of the MWRRS states — Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Ohio and Wisconsin — have participated since 1996 in planning the system. Over these years, the states have provided funding annually to continue the ongoing planning and joint implementation of the project, including **specifications for train sets expressly designed for high speed corridor service in the Midwest**. In addition, several states have efforts underway to ensure that passenger rail projects are “funding ready” by undertaking environmental assessments, impact statements and preliminary engineering studies.

State-specific work includes:

Illinois spent \$50 million to complete rehabilitation work on the Chicago-St. Louis corridor between Dwight and Springfield, bringing the track up to Class 6 standards and allowing speeds of up to 110 mph. Four-quadrant gates have been installed at 69 grade crossings in the corridor. Illinois, the American Association of Railroads and the FRA have also invested \$60 million to develop and demonstrate a nationally applicable positive train control system in the corridor.



Indiana lawmakers overwhelmingly passed legislation in 2003 to begin the environmental assessments required to establish high speed passenger rail. Indiana has worked closely with Amtrak, Michigan and freight railroads on a study to identify better routes for passenger trains in southern Chicago and northwest Indiana, one of the nation's most highly congested areas.

MWRRS routes in **Iowa** and **Nebraska** would be new for the states, utilizing the current Iowa Interstate Railroad route and connecting to the existing Burlington Northern-Sante Fe railroad near Wyanet, Illinois. Stops would include Davenport, Iowa City, Newton, Des Moines, Atlantic and Omaha.

In **Michigan**, Amtrak and the FRA continue to test an Incremental Train Control System in the Chicago-Detroit corridor. Building on \$40 million in prior investments, this project has allowed for train speeds of 90 mph between Kalamazoo and Niles since 2002, and further testing is expected for the system to support speeds of up to 110 mph. The state is also eliminating some grade crossings and improving safety at the remaining ones.

Minnesota is incorporating improved passenger rail service into its station-area planning efforts. Communities like St. Paul and Red Wing are looking at transportation options, economic development opportunities and integration with other passenger rail investments. Also, in preparation for increased service, five at-grade crossings along the Twin Cities to Chicago corridor have been eliminated.

Missouri's DOT is working with Union Pacific Railroad to conduct preliminary capacity studies. Station improvement projects are in the development or planning stages in Kansas City, Sedalia, Kirkwood and St. Louis.

Ohio is working with Michigan, Pennsylvania and New York, along with VIA Rail in Canada, to examine the feasibility of a high speed rail network connecting the Midwest system to corridors and services in the Northeast and Canada. The state is also funding a variety of safety improvements to its high speed rail corridors.

Wisconsin completed its environmental assessment and preliminary engineering work for 110 mph service in the Milwaukee-Madison corridor and the FRA has issued a “Finding of No Significant Impact” (FONSI). The state is rehabilitating the Milwaukee Amtrak Station, funded with \$2.6 million from the Federal Transit Administration, state matching funds and \$1.4 million in private equity, and has just opened a new \$6.8 million passenger rail station at General Mitchell International Airport in Milwaukee. Also, the state and Canadian Railway Pacific completed a \$2 million positive train control study.

Moving Ahead ...

But What Does It Cost?

Upgrading existing track and cooperatively purchasing new equipment allows the MWRRRI to update and significantly expand the entire region's train service — **at a fraction of the cost of building new capacity** for any other major mode of transportation.

The total capital cost for the entire 3,000-mile network of the Midwest Regional Rail System is \$7.7 billion, while access will be expanded dramatically. Many communities that will be served by the system currently have only one train option per day. Under the MWRRS, that service will increase four- to six-fold. In addition, many new communities will be served. Even communities that now have more than one train per day will see a service increase.

A single railroad track can carry as many people as a 10-lane highway, at a fraction of the cost. The regional connectivity of the system, and the efficiencies of its operating plan, also help make the proposed system cost-effective. The Midwest Regional Rail System can be fully built in 10 years, and **all corridors are projected to generate enough revenue to cover operating costs by the year 2025.**

Benefiting financially from volume discounts and equipment manufacturing in the Midwest, the system will need:

- Sixty-three train sets for the entire system, at a cost of approximately \$1.1 billion
- Improvements to track, sidings, signals, communication systems and grade crossings, at an estimated cost of \$6.6 billion

Federal Funding Is Essential

The Midwest needs a balanced, intermodal transportation system, and state officials realize that passenger rail is a critical component of such a system. Planes, trains and automobiles are all important to developing and sustaining a healthy transportation system. Yet, **passenger rail is the only transportation mode that currently has no federal dedicated source of funding** that states can draw from to expand passenger rail options.

Modern, efficient passenger rail service holds great promise for our region and our nation. The MWRRRI states have already invested much, and will do more, to implement this innovative plan to dramatically improve passenger rail service — as well as overall transportation flexibility and capacity — in the region. But it cannot succeed without serious federal investment.

To make the initiative a reality, **a dedicated, multi-year federal capital funding program for infrastructure and equipment is required.** The MWRRS funding plan is based on establishing an 80/20 federal-to-state funding program. Similar funding structures already exist and are widely used for interstate highways, transit and airports. Passenger rail must be afforded equal footing in federal transportation policies and funding.

You can help the region continue to lay a bold track into a new century by supporting the establishment of a dedicated source of federal funding for rail.

Corridor	Daily Round Trips			Trip Times (One Way)		
	Current Amtrak Service	Fully Implemented MWRRS	Increase with MWRRS	Current Rail Trip Time (Fastest)	MWRRS Trip Time (Express)	MWRRS Time Reduction
Chicago-Cincinnati	.5*	5	+ 4.5	8:10	4:08	- 4:02
Chicago-Cleveland	2*	8	+ 6	6:24	4:22	- 2:02
Chicago-Detroit	3	9	+ 6	5:36	3:46	- 1:50
Chicago-Indianapolis	1.5*	6	+ 4.5	4:00	2:43	- 1:17
Chicago-Milwaukee	8*	17	+ 9	1:29	1:04	- 0:25
Chicago- Minneapolis/St. Paul	1*	6	+ 5	8:05	5:31	- 2:34
Chicago-Omaha	1*	4	+ 3	8:37	7:02	- 1:35
Chicago-St. Louis	3*	8	+ 5	5:20	3:49	- 1:31
St. Louis-Kansas City	2	6	+ 4	5:40	4:14	- 1:26

*Includes Amtrak long distance trains.

Cooperating agencies in the Midwest Regional Rail Initiative include the Illinois Department of Transportation, the Indiana Department of Transportation, the Iowa Department of Transportation, the Michigan Department of Transportation, the Minnesota Department of Transportation, the Missouri Department of Transportation, the Nebraska Department of Roads, the Ohio Rail Development Commission and the Wisconsin Department of Transportation

Download a copy of the MWRRS Executive Report at www.miprc.org/pdfs/railmidwest1.pdf, or call your state department of transportation to receive a copy.