

## Information on proposed passenger rail service to Iowa City

### BACKGROUND

#### 2007

The Iowa and Illinois Departments of Transportation begin work on a proposal to develop passenger rail service that would link Chicago to the Quad Cities and Iowa City as part of a nationwide intercity rail transportation program. The Chicago-to-Iowa City proposal is part of a nine-state plan for developing passenger rail in the Midwest, with Chicago serving as the hub. Long-range plans would extend the service to Des Moines, western Iowa, and Omaha.

#### 2010

The Chicago-to-Iowa City project is approved for a \$230 million grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) High-Speed Intercity Passenger Rail Program. Total cost, which includes rail stations for Iowa City, Geneseo, and Moline, Illinois, is estimated at \$310.3 million.

#### 2011

Newly elected Iowa Governor Terry Branstad asked the Iowa DOT to conduct a study regarding ridership and operational costs for a passenger rail route connecting Chicago, the Quad Cities, Iowa City, Des Moines, and Omaha. These findings will provide information for future decision-making related to passenger rail in Iowa.

#### 2013

The Iowa State Legislature is expected to review the Iowa DOT study during its 2013 session.

#### If approved

With approval from the Iowa State Legislature, the line would be operational within 4-5 years, providing round-trip service twice a day. The 219.5-mile trip from Iowa City to Chicago's Union Station would accommodate up to 230 passengers and take less than 4.5 hours. Coach seating and food service are planned to be available.

### BENEFITS OF PASSENGER RAIL IN IOWA CITY

#### Improved infrastructure

The passenger rail route from Chicago to Iowa City would help build the nation's rail infrastructure, which would support passenger and freight transportation. In addition, upgrades to warning systems would be made to more than 70 highway - railroad crossings in Iowa, improving motorist and train safety.

#### Expanded transportation service

Passenger rail would provide a reliable, low-cost, energy-efficient mass transit alternative that does not currently exist in Iowa City.

#### Convenience and ease of travel

Projected annual ridership for the Chicago-to-Iowa City service is 246,800\*, which would include students; University of Iowa staff; civic, business, and industry representatives; travelers; disabled; senior citizens; and passengers who don't drive or who don't own a car; and Hawkeye sports fans from throughout the Midwest.

#### Economic development

Estimates indicate that after passenger rail service is implemented, business activity in the rail corridor would increase by \$25 million per year.\* Passenger rail would also encourage transit-oriented development, including residential developments, hospitality-related businesses such as lodging and restaurants, as well as tourism and other businesses.

#### Job creation

Economic development and business organizations have endorsed the project to help boost job growth. In the first four years of the design and construction process, high-skill, high-wage engineering and construction would be generated. After implementation, new jobs associated with the new development near the Iowa City depot would also become available.

#### Environmental protection\*

In its first 30 years, the Chicago-to-Iowa City passenger rail link would:

- reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 89,943 tons
- save 10,791,109 gallons of fuel, as passengers opted for train travel over cars
- reduce vehicle travel by 25,611,484 miles each year
- reduce traffic congestion, and save \$16.3 million in highway user costs
- advance the state's sustainable initiatives and practices

#### Other benefits

- Passenger rail would increase Iowa City's competitive edge for recruiting students, employees, and business clients, and draw new patients to Iowa City's hospitals and clinics for medical treatment.
- Opportunities exist for an expanded tourism industry

#### For more information

Visit the Iowa DOT website at [www.iowadot.gov/iowarail](http://www.iowadot.gov/iowarail) or the Iowa City Area Chamber of Commerce website at [www.iowacityarea.com](http://www.iowacityarea.com)

\*Information provided by the Iowa Department of Transportation.