

# Passenger Rail Community Workshop

February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2019

Giovanni's Restaurant & Convention Center



# Agenda

- Welcome and Introductions
- Presentation
- Panel Member Discussion
- Questions & Comments



## Purpose

To provide information on passenger rail in response to the outcome of the November 6, 2018, referendum question:

*“Shall the State of Illinois pursue reinstating Amtrak passenger rail service to Northwest Illinois from Chicago, through Rockford, to East Dubuque?”*

***67% voted in favor***



[During Representative Sosnowski’s opening comments]

## State Legislators

- Representative Joe Sosnowski
- Representative Jeff Keicher
- Representative Maurice West
- Senator Steve Stadelman
- Senator Dave Syverson



## Panel Members

- Rick Harnish, Executive Director, Midwest High Speed Rail Association
- Derrick James, Senior Manager of Government Affairs, Amtrak
- Michael Stubbe, Executive Director, Rockford Mass Transit District
- Michael Dunn, Jr., Executive Director, Region 1 Planning Council



## Timeline

- **September 2002** = Senator Richard Durbin and Congressman Donald Manzullo provide \$200,000 (transit earmark) to fund a commuter rail feasibility study. The ***Northern Illinois Commuter Rail Initiative*** (NICRI) is created.
- **March 2006** = Senator Richard Durbin and Congressman Donald Manzullo provide \$3,000,000 earmark for a formal Alternatives Analysis in the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) New Starts Program. NICRI steering committee is changed to the ***Northern Illinois Commuter Transportation Initiative*** (NICTI).



NICRI (2001): Originally a subcommittee of the Tollway Station Point Project Group. Objective was to gain community support and obtain funding for a feasibility study to investigate commuter rail options within the Rockford Region.

NICRI (2002): 35 north central communities signed resolutions supporting NICTI initiative. Subsequently, feasibility study funding awarded.

NICRI (2004): Feasibility Study completed. Concluded that the proposed transportation project had: feasibility, community support, cost effectiveness (minimal capital needs), operational acceptability, potential as a catalyst for regional development, and potential for effective and successful service.

NICTI (2006): NICRI changed to NICTI on March 15, 2006 to better reflect the goals of the planned transportation alternatives analysis.

## Timeline (continued)

- **May 2008** = NICTI and the regional metropolitan planning organization select the Union Pacific Belvidere Subdivision route as the Locally Preferred Alternative.
  - ✓ Amtrak and IDOT are requested to co-locate intercity passenger service *and* commuter service in the same rail corridor to match the regional planning consensus. Regional leaders call for co-location as the most prudent expenditure of public funds.
- **July 2009** = The Illinois General Assembly approves a \$31 billion Capital Program, Illinois Jobs Now! Substantial funds are committed for the upgrade of rail assets in several corridors.
- **January 2010** = Governor Pat Quinn announces the award of \$60 million in state capital funds to establish passenger rail service from Chicago to Dubuque and Chicago to Quad Cities.



### **NICTI Executive Committee:**

Growth Dimensions

Boone County

City of Belvidere

Winnebago County

Rockford Area Transportation Study

RAEDC

RMTD

City of Rockford

IDOT (ex officio)

## Timeline (continued)

- **April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2014** = Governor Pat Quinn announces \$223 million to restore Amtrak service between Chicago and Rockford.
  - ✓ Service was to be restored to 1-round trip per day in 2015 and 2- round trips per day in 2016
  - ✓ Corridor Improvements include full FRA class IV standards (79-MPH) as well as the federally mandated Positive Train Control (PTC) technology.
- **January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2015** = Governor Bruce Rauner signs Executive Order 15-08 freezing discretionary state spending and temporarily barring agencies from awarding contracts without the administration's approval.
  - ✓ The restoration of Amtrak service between Rockford and Chicago is put on-hold pending further review.






http://www.illinoisrail.org/amtrak/illinois/chicago-to-dubuque/project-schedule/ Illinois Passenger Rail Act

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CHICAGO TO ST. LOUIS CHICAGO TO QUINCY CHICAGO TO CARBONDALE CHICAGO TO MILWAUKEE CHICAGO TO QUAD CITIES **CHICAGO TO DUBUQUE**

## CHICAGO TO DUBUQUE



### Project Schedule

The project schedule is currently on hold.

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**ILLINOIS PASSENGER RAIL** Illinois Department of Transportation

## Northern Illinois Commuter Transportation Initiative (NICTI)

- “Alternatives Analysis”
- Comprehensive evaluation of the project (i.e. total project costs) regardless of who pays for project.
- Alternative Analysis Evaluation Methodology:
  - ✓ Capital Costs
  - ✓ Operating Costs
  - ✓ Ridership
  - ✓ Cost Effectiveness Index



### Three tiered approach to the selection of the LPA:

Evaluation of alternatives

Advancement of effective alternatives for further screening

Elimination of poor performers / alternatives

### Studies included in the Alternatives Analysis process include:

- Alternatives Analysis Scope
  - Purpose and Needs (2007) – Proposed purpose of passenger rail is address current and projected growth of the Rockford region and travel patterns between Rockford & Chicago
- Evaluation Methodology-
- First Level Screening (2007) – Developed the initial 13 alternatives (Bus Rapid Transit, Commuter Rail, Light Rail Transit)
  - Second Level Screening (2008) – Developed detailed alternatives for 4 of the initial 13 alternatives
  - Environmental Assessment (2009) – Examined project impacts on socio-economics, EJ, land use, air quality, noise, historic resources, natural areas, threatened species, etc.

## Locally Preferred Alternative

- Union Pacific Belvidere Subdivision route
  - Stations located in: Rockford, Belvidere, Marengo, Huntley, Elgin (Big Timber), South Elgin
- UP Belvidere Subdivision route would connect the region to the existing Metra station at Elgin- Big Timber
  - Milwaukee District West Line
- Co-location of intercity passenger service and commuter service on the same route



Alternatives Analysis: As identified in the Second Level Screening Report.

### **(1) Transportation Systems Management (TSM):**

- Bus rapid transit alternative which would operate on Interstate 90 (I-90). Under the TSM operating plan, the bus would be permitted to operate on the shoulder of the tollway when congestion is present. Anticipated that between IL Route 53 and Randall Road, the bus would operate on the shoulders 100% of the time. West of Randall Road, it is expected that the bus would only operate on the shoulders 20% to 30% of the time.

### **(2) Bus Rapid Transit:**

- This Bus Rapid Transit alternative provides a fixed guideway or busway between Elgin and Rockford parallel to Interstate 90/ Jane Addams. Median lanes would be built for exclusive bus use between Randall and Meacham Roads. Priority treatments include traffic signal priority and queue jump lanes at intersections. Branch line service would be provided to service selected park and ride lots and station stops.

### **(3) Commuter Rail 5 (CR 5):**

- Alternative that connects Elgin and Rockford utilizing the existing IC&E Railroad and IL Railway Line. Service would begin at the Elgin Big Timber Station on the

Metra Milwaukee District West Line and continue west toward Rockford. Stations are proposed in the communities of Elgin, Hampshire, Genoa, Kirkland, near Davis Junction (at I-39/IL 72) and Rockford, including Rockford Airport.

**(4) Commuter Rail 6 (CR6):**

- Alternative connects Rockford to the existing Metra service at the Elgin/Big Timber Station. CR6 utilizes the Union Pacific Railroad – Belvidere Subdivision. Stations are proposed in the communities of Elgin, Huntley, Marengo, Belvidere and Rockford.



**ILLINOIS  
PASSENGER RAIL**  
CHICAGO TO DUBUQUE

# Project Map



Illinois Department of Transportation

## Implementation Considerations

- The *first phase* in the approach is the re-establishment of Intercity passenger rail service.
- The *second phase* in the approach is the establishment commuter rail service.



## Intercity Rail Service

- As defined by the Code of Federal Regulations (C.F.R.), “intercity rail passenger transportation means rail passenger transportation, except commuter rail passenger transportation.”
- Intercity rail refers to passenger rail service that provides transportation between cities or metropolitan areas at speeds and distances greater than that of commuter or Regional rail
- *Amtrak* is an example in intercity passenger rail



## Commuter Rail Service

- As defined by the Code of Federal Regulations (C.F.R.), “short-haul rail passenger transportation in metropolitan and suburban areas usually having reduced fare, multiple ride, and commuter tickets and morning and evening peak period operations” (49 U.S.C. 24102(3)).
- Regional Service within a metropolitan area.
- *Metra* is an example of commuter rail.
- Intent was to have commuter rail service follow 1-2 years after the re-establishment of intercity passenger rail service.
- Estimated daily boardings (one way trips) = 5,221
  - \*assumes AM/PM peak: 3 trains eastbound / 3 trains westbound\*





## Travel Times

- Intercity Rail Service (i.e., *Amtrak*)
  - Stops include: Rockford, Belvidere, Bensenville, Chicago Union Station
    - ✓ Rockford to Bensenville = 2 hours 19 minutes (approximate)
    - ✓ Rockford to Chicago Union Station = 2 hours 49 minutes (approximate)
- Commuter Rail Service (i.e., *Metra*)
  - Stops include: Rockford, Belvidere, Marengo, Huntley, Elgin (Big Timber), South Elgin, \*Medinah, \*Bensenville
    - ✓ Rockford to Elgin = 1 hour 05 minutes (approximate)
    - ✓ Rockford to Bensenville = 1 hour 35 minutes (approximate)
    - ✓ Rockford to Chicago Union Station = 2 hours 30 minutes (approximate)
- Commuter Rail component would require a transfer to complete the trip into downtown Chicago



Commuter Rail Element: As identified in the Second Level Screening report

- Two of three trains operate as “shuttle trains” and terminate in Elgin providing a cross-platform transfer to a scheduled inbound Metra train
- The third train would operate as a “through-route train” continuing east of Big Timber Road with a stop at the Elgin-Chicago Street Station, the Medinah Station, and then terminating at Bensenville. Feeder bus serving Woodfield from Medinah station.

## Capital Costs Considerations

Element	Capital Costs	Percent of Cost
Vehicles	\$47,900,000	25%
Guideway and Track	\$43,900,000	23%
Systems	\$43,000,000	23%
Sitework and Special Conditions	\$16,600,000	9%
Professional Services	\$16,300,000	9%
Stations, Stops, Terminals	\$14,300,000	8%
Support Facilities	\$4,800,000	3%
Right of Way	\$3,200,000	2%
Subtotal	\$190,000,000	100%
Contingency	\$57,000,000	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$247,000,000</b>	



**Approximately \$3 Million per Mile (48 mile rail line connection Rockford to Elgin/Big Timber)**

Guideway & Track = Track & tie upgrades, new signals, new sidings, etc.

Stations: Stops, Terminals, Grade Crossings, etc.

Support facilities: Yards, shops, administration buildings, etc.

Vehicles = Train Cars, etc.

**Regionally accepted unit costs were used to generate each alternative's cost estimate**

## Operating Costs Considerations

- Annual Operation & Maintenance Costs (est.) = **\$10,200,000**

- ✓ Does not include operating subsidy

- Vehicle operations for mainline service

- ✓ Labor

- ✓ Maintenance

- ✓ Fuel

- Infrastructure Maintenance

- ✓ Track and fixed asset maintenance

- Feeder Bus Service



**Operating and maintenance (O&M) costs estimates for each alternative are based on operating plans and ridership forecasts.**

O&M Costs: (Commuter Rail operations)

Overhead & Personnel; fuel, maintenance-of-way, station maintenance.

Operating costs associated with either feeder buses to the commuter rail stations or the costs to operate the bus service when commuter rail service is finished running for the day.

## Prior Analysis Findings

- FTA Cost Effectiveness Index (CEI)
  - Index examines the dollar cost of transit improvement per hour of user benefit
  - Project CEI must be less than \$23.99 to enter Preliminary Engineering Phase
  - CEI estimate for the Locally Preferred Alternative = \$66.97
- Second level screening results determined that the project was probably not a strong candidate for New Starts funding.
- Much more detailed ridership analysis needed.



**CEI:** Projects with lower cost per hour of projected travel time benefits are more cost effective than those with higher cost.

**Four of the measures are considered to be particularly important in measures of an alternative's competitiveness for federal funding:**

Daily transit trips

Capital costs

Annual operations and maintenance (O & M) costs

Cost Effectiveness Index (CEI)

## Prior Analysis Findings (continued)

- In order to continue project, other funding sources needed to be pursued.
  
- Potential funding sources for the project included:
  - State Infrastructure Program (i.e., capital program)
  - Other Federal
  - Local funding (i.e., sales tax, vehicle registration, gas tax, etc.)
  - Partnerships (Metra, Amtrak, Intercity Bus Service, Private Rail Operator)



Potential funding sources as identified in the Alternatives Analysis Second Level Screening Report

## Governance Alternatives

- Establishment of financial capacity to build and operate the project is needed.
- Representation from Winnebago and Boone Counties.
- Capacity to raise annual operating costs (approx. \$10,000,000) and at least 50% of capital costs.
- Governance Structure would have the power to enter into binding agreements and have authority to operate rail service.



Rail Finance: requires a stable & dependable local and/or state financing plan

Cost Effectiveness: Incremental cost / hour of system user benefit (i.e. cost per rider must be low)

## Overview of Governance Options

- Create or Expand a Mass Transit District
  - ✓ Either new or expand existing RMTD
  - ✓ Originally formed for receiving Federal capital grants
  - ✓ Permits entity to levy property tax
- Expand the Greater Rockford Airport Authority / Winnebago County Rail Authority
  - ✓ Equitable funding is concern since taxing authority is only within corporate limits of Winnebago County
- Develop Intergovernmental Agreements between Counties where service is operated
  - ✓ Capacity to raise annual operating costs (approx. \$10,000,000) and at least 50% of capital costs
- Join the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) region
  - ✓ Subject to the collar county sales tax
  - ✓ Limited to RTA funding sources



### **Establish Mass Transit Districts**

Governed by the Mass Transit District Act  
Well understood approach to provide transit service

#### **Challenges:**

- ✓ Would require modification of MTD Act to allow levying any tax except property tax
- ✓ Referendum needed to create a taxing district

### **Expand GRAA / Winnebago County Rail Authority**

Established by State law  
Permitted to for Rail Authority by vote of GRAA Board, which has been done  
Cannot directly engage in rail operations  
Freight and passenger capabilities

#### **Challenges:**

- ✓ Operation beyond Winnebago County implied, but not clearly defined
- ✓ Intergovernmental Agreement needed to include other counties

### **Develop Intergovernmental Agreements for operation**

Binding agreements between established entities to fund and provide specified services  
Assumes contracting with existing operator of transit service

Challenges:

- ✓ Assurance of continuity of service
- ✓ Cannot establish a dedicated funding source – therefore subject to annual appropriation by entities
- ✓ No provision for dedicated staff

**Join the RTA**

Become part of the Northeastern Illinois RTA  
Request annexation into RTA service area  
Votes by County Boards, RTA, and public needed

Challenges:

- ✓ Representation diluted by existing RTA counties
- ✓ Project funding in competition with regional priorities



# Existing Regional Transportation Options



## Van Galder Bus Company (1 of 2)

RMTD East Side  
Transfer Center

Union Station  
(Downtown Chicago)

Chicago Midway  
International Airport



|---13 Daily Trips, \$22 One Way---|

|-----11 Daily Trips, \$25 One Way-----|

Service Line also makes 11 daily connections from Rockford to South Beloit, Janesville, Madison's Dutch Mill Park & Ride, and the University of Wisconsin



ESTC-Union Station-- 1:25 Min to 3:10 Max

ESTC-Midway-- 2:10 Min to 3:40 Max

## Van Galder Bus Company (2 of 2)

Van Galder  
Rockford Terminal

Chicago O'Hare  
International Airport



|-----18 Daily Trips, \$21 One Way-----|

Direct service to terminals 1, 2, and 3 (Domestic) and terminal 5 (International)



Van Galder-O'Hare—1:10 Min to 1:30 Max

## Burlington Trailways

RMTD East Side  
Transfer Center

Greyhound Bus Station  
(Downtown Chicago)



|---1 Daily Trip, AVG\* \$22 One Way---|

Service line also makes 1 daily connection to Freeport, Stockton, Galena, Dubuque, & other Iowa cities.

\*Trip price varies based on multiple demand factors



Burlington ESTC-Chicago Bus Station—1:45

# Greyhound

RMTD East Side  
Transfer Center

Elgin Transportation  
Center & Metra

Greyhound Bus Station  
(Downtown Chicago)



| -1 Daily Trip, AVG\* \$17 One Way- |

|-----1 Daily Trip, AVG\* \$18 One Way-----|

Service Line also makes 1 daily connection from Rockford to Rochelle, Oglesby,  
Bloomington-Normal, Champaign, and Danville

\*Trip price varies based on multiple demand factors



Greyhound ESTC-Elgin—1:00

Greyhound ESTC-Chicago Bus Station—1:50

## Nearby Metra Connections

### Harvard, IL Station

30 Mile Drive from Downtown Rockford

\$2.00 Daily Parking

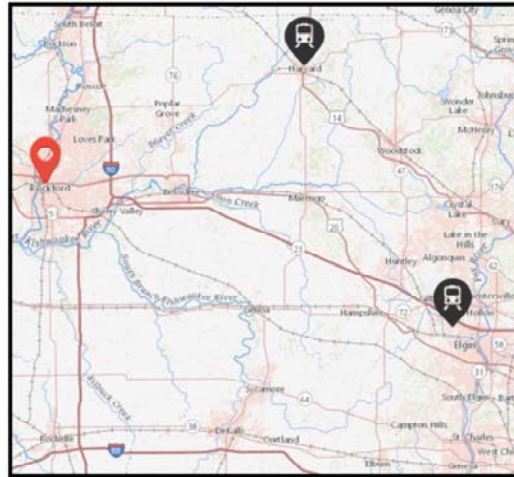
\$10.75 One Way to Ogilvie  
Transportation Center (Downtown  
Chicago)

### Elgin, IL Big Timber Station

49 Mile Drive from Downtown Rockford

\$1.50 Daily Parking

\$8.25 One Way to Union Station  
(Downtown Chicago)



## Panel Discussion

- Response to presentation
- Response to audience comments and questions



# Thank you

for your attendance and participation

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