Ensure Passenger Rail is in Capital Plan

Fast, frequent and reliable trains promote economic and social mobility

The General Assembly should include at least $1.5 billion per year for railroads in the upcoming capital bill: $1 billion per year as requested by Metra and $500 million to spread the benefits of trains statewide. Both short-term upgrades to our current system and a long-term vision for true high-speed rail are needed.

Urgent Projects

Chicago Union Station: Union Station is at capacity. There isn't space to add the trains needed to connect downstate communities to Chicago for a business day. It can become dangerously overcrowded during rush hour if trains are delayed. Through tracks are needed for downstate trains to access O'Hare.

A-2 Flyover: The A-2 Interlocker is Metra's biggest choke point. It impacts 7 of Metra's routes and Amtrak service to Milwaukee. A new flyover is needed to improve today's services and allow expansion to Rockford, O'Hare Express trains, and set the stage for high-speed rail to Milwaukee.

Metra Coaches: Many of Metra's coaches are over 50 years old. New coaches are needed to expand capacity, improve accessibility, add wi-fi and full Ventra implementation.

Joliet – Bloomington/Normal – St. Louis: The Lincoln Corridor has been reconstructed to be faster and more reliable. At least two more daily roundtrips are needed to increase the usefulness of the corridor.

Rockford – Galena: New service is needed along the I-90/US 20 corridor – including frequent locals that serve Belvidere, Marengo and Huntley and express trains reaching out to Galena and East Dubuque.

Quad Cities: It is time to launch service to Moline and take advantage of federal funds.

Intercity Motor Coaches: Intercity buses will create more connectivity and expand service quickly if integrated into Amtrak and Metra routes.

Statewide Integrated Network Plan

The statewide rail and transit plans list projects that would create a web of connectivity throughout the entire state. But, the projects are currently considered in isolation. Several projects overlap and many would see substantially more traffic if coordinated. A statewide network plan will demonstrate the value of connectivity and create an implementation plan. Decatur, DeKalb, Peoria and other cities need to be added to the network.

Preliminary design for 220-mph backbone and CrossRail Chicago

A new, grade-separated 220-mph high-speed line linking downstate to Chicago and O'Hare would transform the state's economy. Initial design work and a business plan are needed to seek private and federal funds. The line would link with CrossRail Chicago, which would modernize and link Metra's Electric and North Central routes for shared-used with Metra, O'Hare Express and high-speed trains.
Potential Long-Term Network Vision

Learn more at MidwestHSR.org/Illinois-Fast-Track-Initiative

High-Speed Line: New electrified, grade-separated lines built for 125+ mph, for both local and express trains

Mixed Use Line: Upgraded freight lines host frequent and reliable passenger trains and improved local freight service