

Status Report
Midwest Regional Rail Passenger Initiative and Passenger Rail Service in Iowa
Due February 1, 2017

This report fulfills the requirements of the following Code of Iowa Sections:

Section 327J.3(1): “The director may expend moneys from the fund to pay the costs associated with the initiation, operation, and maintenance of rail passenger service. The director shall report by February 1 of each year to the legislative services agency concerning the status of the fund including anticipated expenditures for the following fiscal year.”

Section 327J.3(5): "The director shall report annually to the general assembly concerning the development and operation of the midwest regional rail system and the state's passenger rail service."

Status of Passenger Rail Service Revolving Fund 327J.3 (1)

The fund received the following appropriations:

FY 2010 = \$3,000,000

FY 2011 = \$2,000,000

As of December 31, 2016, the fund had a balance of \$2,876,217.70.

The Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT) anticipates utilizing 327J funds to continue work activities associated with the Chicago to Iowa City Passenger Rail Service Implementation in FY 2017 and FY 2018.

Passenger Rail in Iowa 327J.3 (5)

The Iowa DOT, working with the state of Illinois, Iowa cities, planning organizations and advocacy groups, worked diligently to apply for federal High Speed Intercity Passenger Rail (HSIPR) grants through the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA). Those applications were for the following:

- **Chicago to Iowa City Passenger Rail Service Implementation:** The states of Iowa and Illinois jointly submitted an application seeking \$248 million of federal funding for environmental studies and capital expenditures to initiate passenger rail service from Chicago to Iowa City. In 2010, a \$230 million grant was awarded to both states which will be matched with 20 percent state and local funds in both Iowa and Illinois. In order to adequately assess demand and costs for a broader regional high-speed passenger rail system across Iowa, the Iowa DOT requested that FRA split the grant into two multiple phases. In 2011, FRA agreed to the phased approach which permitted Illinois to move forward with implementing service from Chicago to Moline. In September 2014, Iowa obligated a portion of the federal funds to complete Preliminary Engineering (PE) and National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) activities from Moline to Iowa City. Those studies are anticipated to continue through 2018. Illinois continues work activities for their phase of the project to implement service to

Moline. It has not yet been determined if Iowa will move forward with final design and construction from Moline to Iowa City.

- **Iowa Statewide Travel Demand Model-Rail Plan Component:** In 2010, Iowa DOT applied for \$400,000 of federal funding for an enhancement to Iowa's current statewide travel demand model to further develop freight and passenger modeling capabilities. The grant allowed Iowa's rail network to be added to the existing highway model and resulted in the development of commodity flow projections throughout the state of Iowa and passenger rail travel demand projections for routes identified in the 2009 Iowa Rail System Plan. In 2010, a \$400,000 grant was awarded to Iowa which was matched with 20 percent state funds in the amount of \$100,000. This project was completed by its June 30, 2014 deadline.
- **Iowa City-Cedar Rapids Passenger Rail Conceptual Feasibility Study:** In 2015, CRANDIC Railway, MPO JC (the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Iowa City area) and Iowa DOT agreed to support study activities to further examine the conceptual feasibility of a passenger rail service operating between Iowa City, Iowa and Cedar Rapids, Iowa. An initial feasibility study was completed in October 2015 and then a further refined study investigating the feasibility between Iowa City and North Liberty was completed in October 2016. Funding in the amount of \$30,152 from 327J funds was allocated to support the feasibility activities.

Passenger Rail Advisory Committee

The Iowa Passenger Rail Advisory Committee, formed by the Iowa DOT in 2008, assists in shaping and implementing the vision for passenger rail service in Iowa. This group has members that represent statewide interests and provides input to the Iowa DOT on passenger rail developments and needs in the state.

Prepared by the Office of Rail Transportation, Iowa Department of Transportation