

Appendix

H

TIER 1 DRAFT EIS PUBLIC HEARINGS SUMMARY



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H.1 Introduction

H.1.1 Project Overview

IDOT proposes to improve high speed passenger rail service between Chicago, Illinois and St. Louis, Missouri, including the rail lines through Springfield, Illinois. The proposed project includes the following: 1) development of double tracking along the existing Amtrak railroad corridor to improve high-speed passenger service reliability and safety, 2) an increase in the number of trips between Chicago and St. Louis, and 3) improvements to railroad crossings, signals, and stations. The Tier 1 EIS presented the Program's purpose and need, identified all reasonable alternatives, described the affected environment, analyzed the potential environmental impacts of all the reasonable alternatives and the no action alternative, and identified appropriate mitigation measures to minimize the potential environmental impacts.

H.1.2 Publication of the Tier 1 Draft EIS

The Tier 1 Draft EIS was made available for public review on Friday, June 29, 2012. FRA established a 45-day public comment period for the Tier 1 Draft EIS that expired on Monday, August 20, 2012.

IDOT and FRA communicated the availability of the Tier 1 Draft EIS through several means:

- **Federal Register:** The Federal Register for June 29th, 2012 included a notice of publication of the Tier 1 Draft EIS and is included as the Federal Register Notice of Availability appendix.
- **Electronic Invitation:** The notice was sent out to local communities and stakeholders, and provided information on the public hearings including purpose, location, and times.
- **Newspaper Advertisements:** The ads were published in local newspapers, and provided information on the public hearings including purpose, location, and times.
- **Newsletter:** A newsletter, the third for this project, highlighting the availability of the Tier 1 Draft EIS was published and distributed in communities near the project.
- **Website:** FRA and IDOT created websites for the Chicago to St. Louis High-Speed Rail Program (which was referenced in all of the above media). The websites included project background and links to the Tier 1 Draft EIS, allowing the full document and appendices available for download or review at www.fra.dot.gov and www.idothsr.org.

Electronic and hard copies of the Tier 1 Draft EIS were available for review at a variety of locations, including the websites and local libraries. Federal, state, and local agencies received a distribution letter and either a hard copy or electronic copy of the entire document. FRA and IDOT also made copies of the Tier 1 Draft EIS available upon request during the public comment period. Distribution totaled 124 hardcopies and 119 electronic copies.

H.1.3 PUBLIC HEARINGS

FRA's NEPA implementation guidelines call for public hearings in the vicinity of a proposed project once a Draft EIS has been made available. Given the length of the proposed rail corridor, FRA decided to convene five public hearings in the major communities along the proposed

route: Chicago, Joliet, Bloomington, Springfield, and Alton. These meetings were held in August 2012.

The public hearings were publicized in all of the above-mentioned notices regarding the project and the Tier 1 Draft EIS. Meeting locations were as follows:

- **Joliet**
Wednesday, August 8, 2012
Jacob Henry Mansion / Victorian Ballroom
15 South Richards Street / Joliet / 60433
- **Chicago**
Thursday, August 9, 2012
Chicago Union Station / The Union Gallery
500 W. Jackson Street / Chicago / 60661
- **Bloomington**
Tuesday, August 14, 2012
Marriott Hotel / Redbird D
201 Broadway Street / Normal / 61761
- **Springfield**
Wednesday, August 15, 2012
President Abraham Lincoln Hotel / Ballroom
701 East Adams Street / Springfield / 62701
- **Alton**
Thursday, August 16, 2012
Holiday Inn / Ballroom
3800 Homer Adams Parkway / Alton / 62002

All of the public hearings were held from 4:00 PM. to 7:00 PM. In all, 386 people signed-in at these five public hearings, with the highest attendance (224 people) occurring at the Springfield hearing. Hearing attendees were requested to sign-in at the meetings. Each hearing was an “open house” where attendees could view exhibit boards showing the project and interact with IDOT and FRA staff in attendance. Attendees wishing to make comments were invited to complete a comment card or provide their statement to a court reporter.

H.2 Comment Summary

The Public Hearing Resource Agency and Public Comment Disposition Table appendix provides a summary of public and agency comments and responses. The matrix contains all IDOT and FRA responses to the comments received at the public hearings, as well as all public and agency comments received during the 45-day comment period for the Tier 1 Draft EIS.

FEDERAL REGISTER NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY



interchanges at S.R. 62/Port Road and Utica-Old Salem Road.

The actions by the Federal agencies, and the laws under which such actions were taken, are described in the Supplemental Final Environmental Impact Statement (SFEIS) for the project, approved on April 20, 2012, in the FHWA Revised Record of Decision (Revised ROD) issued on June 20, 2012, and in other documents in the FHWA administrative record. A Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and Section 4(f) Evaluation were previously issued for the Project on April 8, 2003 and were followed by the issuance of a Record of Decision on September 6, 2003. The SFEIS, Revised ROD, and other project records are available by contacting FHWA, the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet, or the Indiana Department of Transportation at the addresses provided above. The SFEIS and Revised ROD can be viewed and downloaded from the project Web site at www.kyinbridges.com, or viewed at public libraries in the project area.

This notice applies to all Federal agency decisions as of the issuance date of this notice and all laws under which such actions were taken, including but not limited to:

1. *General*: National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) [42 U.S.C. 4321–4351]; Federal-Aid Highway Act [23 U.S.C. 109 and 23 U.S.C. 128].
2. *Air*: Clean Air Act [42 U.S.C. 7401–7671(q)].
3. *Land*: Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966 [49 U.S.C. 303]; Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA) [7 U.S.C. 4201–4209].
4. *Wildlife*: Endangered Species Act [16 U.S.C. 1531–1544 and Section 1536]; Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act [16 U.S.C. 661–667(d)]; Migratory Bird Treaty Act [16 U.S.C. 703–712].
5. *Historic and Cultural Resources*: Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended [16 U.S.C. 470(f) et seq.]; Archeological Resources Protection Act of 1977 [16 U.S.C. 470(aa)–470(ll)]; Archeological and Historic Preservation Act [16 U.S.C. 469–469(c)].
6. *Social and Economic*: Civil Rights Act of 1964 [42 U.S.C. 2000(d)–2000(d)(1)]; Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Act of 1970 (42 U.S.C. 4601 et seq., Pub. L. 91–646) as amended by the Uniform Relocation Act of 1987 (Pub. L. 100–17); Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low Income Populations, February 11, 1994.
7. *Wetlands and Water Resources*: Clean Water Act (Section 404, Section

401, Section 319) [33 U.S.C. 1251–1377]; Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) [16 U.S.C. 4601–4604]; Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) [42 U.S.C. 300(f)–300(j)(6)]; Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 [33 U.S.C. 401–406]; Emergency Wetlands Resources Act, [16 U.S.C. 3921, 3931]; Wetlands Mitigation [23 U.S.C. 103(b)(6)(M) and 133(b)(11)]; Flood Disaster Protection Act, 42 U.S.C. 4001–4128.

8. *Executive Orders*: E.O. 11990 Protection of Wetlands; E.O. 11988 Floodplain Management; E.O. 11593 Protection and Enhancement of Cultural Resources; E.O. 13287 Preserve America; E.O. 13175 Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments.

(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Program Number 20.205, Highway Planning and Construction. The regulations implementing Executive Order 12372 regarding intergovernmental consultation on Federal programs and activities apply to this program.)

Authority: 23 U.S.C. 139(J)(1).

Issued on: June 20, 2012.

Jose Sepulveda,

FHWA Division Administrator, Frankfort, KY 40601.

[FR Doc. 2012–15931 Filed 6–28–12; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Railroad Administration

Notice of Availability of a Draft Environmental Impact Statement, for the Chicago, IL to St. Louis, MO High Speed Rail Corridor Program

AGENCY: Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) United State Department of Transportation (DOT).

ACTION: Notice of availability of draft environmental impact statement.

SUMMARY: FRA is issuing this notice to advise the public that a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (Draft EIS) has been prepared for the Chicago, Illinois to St. Louis, Missouri High Speed Rail Corridor Program. The Draft EIS includes a Tier 1 corridor-level evaluation and a Tier 2 project-level evaluation for the Springfield Rail Improvements Project. FRA is the lead federal agency and the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) is the lead state agency for the environmental review process.

IDOT proposes to improve high speed passenger rail service between Chicago, Illinois and St. Louis, Missouri, including the rail lines through Springfield, Illinois. The proposed

including the development of double tracking along the existing Amtrak railroad corridor to improve high-speed passenger service reliability and safety, and to increase the number of trips between Chicago and St. Louis, as well as including improvements to railroad crossings, signals, and stations.

The Draft EIS presents the Program's purpose and need, identifies all reasonable alternatives, describes the affected environment, analyzes the potential environmental impacts of all the reasonable alternatives and the no action alternative, and identifies appropriate mitigation measures to minimize the potential environmental impacts.

DATES: Written comments on the 45-day Draft EIS should be provided to IDOT on or before Monday, August 20th, 2012. Public hearings are scheduled to occur in August, 2012 in Chicago, IL, Springfield, IL, Alton, IL, Joliet, IL, and Bloomington, IL at times and dates to be announced on the High Speed Rail Program's Web site at <http://www.idothsr.org/>.

ADDRESSES: Written comments on the Draft EIS should be sent directly to Joseph Shacter, Illinois Department of Transportation, 100 West Randolph Street, Suite 6–600, Chicago, Illinois 60601, or submitted through the High Speed Rail Program's Web site at <http://www.idothsr.org/>, or via email with the subject line "Draft EIS" to Joseph.Shacter@Illinois.gov. Comments may also be provided orally or in writing at the public hearings.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Andrea E. Martin, Environmental Protection Specialist, Office of Railroad Policy and Development, Federal Railroad Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE., MS–20, Washington, DC 20590; email: andrea.martin@dot.gov; telephone: 202–493–6201 or Joseph Shacter, Illinois Department of Transportation, 100 West Randolph Street, Suite 6–600, Chicago, Illinois 60601; email: Joseph.Shacter@Illinois.gov; telephone: 312–793–2116.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The proposed High Speed Rail Program would include the development of double track along the existing Amtrak railroad corridor between Chicago, Illinois and St. Louis, Missouri to improve high-speed passenger service reliability and safety, and to increase the number of trips, as well as include improvements to railroad crossings, signals, and stations. These proposed improvements are in addition to those improvements associated with the

January 8, 2004 Record of Decision (ROD) for the Chicago-St. Louis High-Speed Rail Program and the 2011 Environmental Assessment (EA)/ Finding of No Significant Impacts (FONSI) concerning improvements to the existing track and the construction of additional side tracks. Implementation of those improvements is currently underway.

The current Chicago to St. Louis Corridor operates on a single track that is shared by both traditional freight and Amtrak passenger rail service. The EIS identifies and evaluates the environmental and transportation impacts associated with route alternatives and corridor-wide capacity enhancements, including double-track.

IDOT and FRA are using a tiered environmental process to evaluate the proposed Program. A tiered environmental process is a phased environmental review used in the development of complex projects. Under this process, the Draft EIS addresses broad, corridor-level issues and alternatives. Tier 2 environmental documents address individual component projects of the Selected Alternative carried forward from the Tier 1 environmental process. Concurrently with this Tier 1 study of the full Chicago to St. Louis Corridor, IDOT and FRA are conducting a Tier 2 analysis for the portion of the High Speed Rail corridor in Springfield, IL.

The corridor alternatives retained in the Draft EIS are the result of a screening process that used several evaluation criteria developed specifically for the Program. The screening criteria determined the route options that should be eliminated from further consideration. The four alternatives and no-build retained utilize combinations of the existing Amtrak passenger rail routes between Chicago and Joliet, Illinois, the City of Springfield, Illinois, and approaching St. Louis, Missouri and allow for eight daily round trips at 110 miles per hour (mph) on two tracks.

Other improvements identified in the Draft EIS include sidings, pedestrian grade separations at the stations, and grade separations along major roadways. After the public comment period for the Draft EIS and following completion of the Final EIS, individual component projects along the corridor would be advanced and studied in greater detail as Tier 2 project-level evaluations in the tiered environmental review process.

A Tier 2 project-level evaluation for improvements in Springfield is also included within the Draft EIS. The Springfield Rail Improvements Project

has been advanced concurrently as a component of the overall corridor program. The Tier 2 evaluation considers the environmental and transportation impacts of rail routes through the City of Springfield, Illinois; addressing safety, noise, and traffic delays that would result from increased volumes of both passenger and freight rail traffic on the three north-south rail corridors that pass through the City of Springfield.

This Draft EIS has been prepared by FRA and IDOT consistent with the provisions of Section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.), the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations implementing NEPA (40 CFR part 1500 et seq.), and FRA's Procedures for Considering Environmental Impacts (64 FR 28545; May 26, 1999).

Copies of the Draft EIS are available online at FRA's Web site: <http://www.fra.dot.gov> and IDOT's Web site: <http://www.idothsr.org/>; the document is also available for viewing at the following locations along the Corridor:

- Hayner Library, 326 Belle Street, Alton, IL 62002
- Atlanta Public Library District, 100 Race Street, Atlanta, IL 61723
- Auburn Public Library, 338 West Jefferson Street, Auburn, IL 62615
- Bloomington Public Library, 205 East Olive Street, Bloomington, IL 61701
- Blue Island Library, 2433 York Street, Blue Island, IL 60406
- Fossil Ridge Public Library, 386 West Kennedy Road, Braidwood, IL 60408
- Brighton Memorial Public Library, 110 North Main Street, Brighton, IL 62012
- Carlinville Public Library, 510 North Broad Street, Carlinville, IL 62626
- Chatham Area Public Library, 600 East Spruce Street, Chatham, IL 62629
- Chenoa Public Library District, 211 South Division Street, Chenoa, IL 61726
- Chicago Public Library-Harold Washington, 400 South State Street, Chicago, IL 60605
- Prairie Creek Public Library, 501 Carriage House Lane, Dwight, IL 60420
- East Alton Public Library, 250 Washington Avenue, East Alton, IL 62024
- East St. Louis Public Library, 5300 State Street, East St. Louis, IL 62203
- Elkhart Public Library District, 121 East Bohan Street, Elkhart, IL 62634
- Manhattan-Elwood Public Library District, 240 Whitson Street, Manhattan, IL 60442
- Frankfort Public Library District, 21119 South Pfeiffer Road, Frankfort, IL 60423

- Girard Township Library, 201 West Madison Street, Girard, IL 62640
- Six Mile Regional Library District, 2001 Delmar Avenue, Granite City, IL 62040
- Hartford Public Library District, 143 West Hawthorne Street, Hartford, IL 62048
- Joliet Public Library, 150 North Ottawa Street, Joliet, IL 60432
- Lemont Public Library, 50 East Wend Street, Lemont, IL 60439
- Lexington Public Library District, 207 South Cedar Street, Lexington, IL 61753
- Lincoln Public Library, 725 Peking Street, Lincoln, IL 62656
- Lockport Public Library, 121 East 8th Street, Lockport, IL 60441
- Madison Public Library, 1700 Fifth Street, Madison, IL 62060
- Mount Hope-Funks Grove Public Library, 111 South Hamilton Street, McLean, IL 61754
- Midlothian Public Library, 14701 South Kenton Avenue, Midlothian, IL 60445
- Mokena Community Public Library, 11327 West 195th Street, Mokena, IL 60448
- New Lenox Public Library, 120 Veterans Parkway, New Lenox, IL 60451
- Normal Public Library, 206 West College Avenue, Normal, IL 61761
- Acorn Public Library District, 15624 South Central Avenue, Oak Forest, IL 60452
- Odell Public Library District, 301 East Richard Street, Odell, IL 60460
- Orland Park Public Library, 14921 South Ravinia Avenue, Orland Park, IL 60462
- Pontiac Public Library, 211 East Madison Street, Pontiac, IL 61764
- William Leonard Public Library District, 13820 Central Park Avenue, Robbins, IL 60472
- Sherman Public Library District, 2100 East Andrew Road, Sherman, IL 62684
- Springfield Lincoln Library, 326 South Seventh Street, Springfield, IL 62701
- St. Louis Central Library, 1310 Olive Street, St. Louis, MO 63103
- Summit Public Library District, 6233 South Archer Road, Summit, IL 60501
- Tinley Park Public Library, 7851 Timber Drive, Tinley Park, IL 60477
- Towanda District Library, 301 South Taylor Street, Towanda, IL 61776
- Venice Public Library, 325 Broadway Avenue, Venice, IL 62090
- Grand Prairie of the West Public Library District, 142 West Jackson Street, Virden, IL 62690
- Williamsville Public Library, 141 West Main Street, Williamsville, IL 62693

- Wilmington Public Library District, 201 South Kankakee Street, Wilmington, IL 60481
- Wood River Public Library, 326 East Ferguson Avenue, Wood River, IL 62095

Issued in Washington, DC on June 25, 2012.

Corey W. Hill,

Director, Rail Project Development and Delivery.

[FR Doc. 2012-15993 Filed 6-28-12; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-06-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Surface Transportation Board

[Docket No. FD 35640]

Wyoming Connect Railroad LLC—Acquisition and Operation Exemption—Union Pacific Railroad Company

Wyoming Connect Railroad LLC (WCR), a noncarrier, has filed a verified notice of exemption under 49 CFR 1150.31 to acquire by lease from Union Pacific Railroad Company and to operate approximately 18.5 miles of rail line between milepost 0.0 at or near Yoder and milepost 18.5 at or near South Torrington, in Goshen County, Wyo.

The transaction is scheduled to be consummated on or after July 15, 2012 (30 days after the notice of exemption was filed).

WCR certifies that its projected annual revenues as a result of this transaction will not exceed those that would qualify it as a Class III rail carrier and will not exceed \$5 million.

If the verified notice contains false or misleading information, the exemption is void *ab initio*. Petitions to revoke the exemption under 49 U.S.C. 10502(d) may be filed at any time. The filing of a petition to revoke will not automatically stay the effectiveness of the exemption. Petitions to stay must be filed no later than July 6, 2012 (at least 7 days before the exemption becomes effective).

An original and 10 copies of all pleadings, referring to Docket No. FD 35640, must be filed with the Surface Transportation Board, 395 E Street SW., Washington, DC 20423-0001. In addition, a copy of each pleading must be served on Thomas F. McFarland, 208 South LaSalle St., Suite 1890, Chicago, IL 60604.

Board decisions and notices are available on our Web site at www.stb.dot.gov.

Decided: June 21, 2012.

By the Board.

Richard Armstrong,

Acting Director, Office of Proceedings.

Jeffrey Herzig,

Clearance Unit.

[FR Doc. 2012-15798 Filed 6-28-12; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4915-01-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Surface Transportation Board

[Docket No. FD 35641]

Sisseton Milbank Railroad Company—Acquisition and Operation Exemption—SLA Property Management Limited Partnership and Sisseton Milbank Railroad, Inc.

Sisseton Milbank Railroad Company (SMRC), a noncarrier, has filed a verified notice of exemption under 49 CFR 1150.31 to acquire from SLA Property Management Limited Partnership and Sisseton Milbank Railroad, Inc., their interests in, and to operate, an approximately 37.1-mile rail line between approximate railroad milepost 0.9 in or near Milbank and approximate railroad milepost 38.0 in or near Sisseton, in Grant and Roberts Counties, S.D.

This transaction is related to a concurrently filed petition for exemption in Docket No. FD 35642, *Twin Cities & Western Railroad Company, the Estate of Douglas M. Head and the DMH Trust fbo Martha M. Head—Continuance in Control Exemption—Sisseton Milbank Railroad Company*, in which Twin Cities & Western Railroad Company (TCW), the Estate of Douglas M. Head (Estate), and the DMH Trust fbo Martha M. Head (Trust) seek Board approval to continue in control of SMRC upon SMRC's becoming a Class III rail carrier.¹

The parties expect to consummate the transaction on or after July 16, 2012.²

SMRC certifies that its projected annual revenues as a result of this transaction do not exceed those that would qualify it as a Class III rail carrier and will not exceed \$5 million.

If the verified notice contains false or misleading information, the exemption is void *ab initio*. Petitions to revoke the

¹ SMRC states that it is a wholly owned subsidiary of TCW, which is currently controlled by the Estate, and that it is anticipated that the TCW stock held by the Estate will be distributed to the Trust in the near future.

² SMRC indicates that, because it is likely that the acquisition transaction will close prior to the Board's issuance of a decision on TCW's continuance-in-control petition, TCW has entered into a Voting Trust Agreement pursuant to 49 CFR part 1013, under which the shares of SMRC will be deposited in a voting trust.

exemption under 49 U.S.C. 10502(d) may be filed at any time. The filing of a petition to revoke will not automatically stay the effectiveness of the exemption. Petitions to stay must be filed no later than July 6, 2012 (at least seven days before the exemption becomes effective).

An original and ten copies of all pleadings, referring to Docket No. FD 35641, must be filed with the Surface Transportation Board, 395 E Street SW., Washington, DC 20423-0001. In addition, a copy of each pleading must be served on Rose-Michele Nardi, Weiner Brodsky Sidman Kider, PC, 1300 Nineteenth Street NW., Fifth Floor, Washington, DC 20036-1609.

Board decisions and notices are available on our Web site at www.stb.dot.gov.

Decided: June 26, 2012.

By the Board.

Rachel D. Campbell,

Director, Office of Proceedings.

Derrick A. Gardner,

Clearance Clerk.

[FR Doc. 2012-15957 Filed 6-28-12; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4915-01-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Surface Transportation Board

[Docket No. MCF 21046]

Professional Transportation, Inc.—Asset Acquisition—CUSA ES, LLC and CUSA CSS, LLC

AGENCY: Surface Transportation Board.

ACTION: Notice of Finance Application.

SUMMARY: Professional Transportation, Inc. (PTI or Applicant), an interstate passenger motor carrier (MC-217444), has filed an application under 49 U.S.C. 14303 to acquire the assets of two interstate motor passenger common carrier subsidiaries of noncarrier Coach America Holdings, Inc.—CUSA ES, LLC (MC-463168) and CUSA CSS, LLC (MC-522544) (collectively, Coach America Subsidiaries). On June 5, 2012, Michael Yusim, an individual, filed a letter in opposition, asserting that the public interest would not be served by allowing the transaction to proceed without certain Department of Labor proceedings first being completed. A copy of this notice will be served on Mr. Yusim. Persons wishing to oppose the application must follow the rules set forth at 49 CFR 1182.5 and 1182.8.

DATES: Comments must be filed by August 13, 2012. Applicant may file a reply to any comments by August 28, 2012.

RESOURCE AGENCY AND PUBLIC COMMENT DISPOSITION TABLE



Joliet Public Hearing - August 8, 2012, Jacob Henry Mansion - Victorian Ballroom, 15 South Richards Street, Joliet, IL 60433

| Commenter ID | DEIS Volume | DEIS Section/Topic | Commenter | Comment | Parsons Response |
|--------------|-------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|--|---|
| JOLPH1 | Tier 1 | General - Opposes Project | Kohevar, Dan | Is the cost benefit (\$ spent-4 billion) to the ratio of riders really worth doing this project? By the numbers: I can't see it being worth it. Don't build it!!! | This comment that indicates opposition to the project is noted. |
| JOLPH2 | Tier 1 | General - Funding/Cost | Barker, Pat | Would like to see funding for next phase of study. | The current construction to implement the 2004 ROD improvements, which will allow three round trip passenger trains per day to operate at speeds up to 110 mph between Joliet and Alton, is funded by both state and federal funds. This Tier 1 EIS is also funded with a combination of both state and federal funds. The Tier 2 evaluation for the Springfield Rail Improvements is state funded only. Some state funding has also been set aside for final design of the Springfield Rail Improvements. However, additional funding would be required to complete that final design. Finally, there is no funding for additional Tier 2 studies in the corridor at this time. The source of future funding is unknown but could come from a combination of federal, state, local, and private sources. |
| JOLPH2 | Tier 1 | Alternatives - Routes | Barker, Pat | Prefer heritage corridor alternative. | The Heritage Corridor route (i.e., Section 1 between Chicago and Joliet) was not selected as part of the Preferred Alternative. Please refer to Section 3.5 of FEIS for a discussion of the rationale for the selection of the Preferred Alternative, the Rock Island District route (Section 2). |
| JOLPH3 | Tier 1 | Public Involvement | Mueller, Charles Plainfield | I am a resident of Joliet, 60435. I heard about this through the newspaper. I think the public hearing was somewhat helpful and somewhat informative also. | Comment noted. No response needed. |
| JOLPH3 | Tier 1 | General - Funding/Cost | Mueller, Charles Plainfield | My problem is that I'm --as I was telling the gentleman down there, is that I'm skeptical about any funding coming into our area. Who pays the rest of the funding, number one. Number two, have private sources been checked into to have a public/private alternative for the funding. | The current construction to implement the 2004 ROD improvements, which will allow three round trip passenger trains per day to operate at speeds up to 110 mph between Joliet and Alton, is funded by both state and federal funds. This Tier 1 EIS is also funded with a combination of both state and federal funds. The Tier 2 evaluation for the Springfield Rail Improvements is state funded only. Some state funding has also been set aside for final design of the Springfield Rail Improvements. However, additional funding would be required to complete that final design. Finally, there is no funding for additional Tier 2 studies in the corridor at this time. The source of future funding is unknown but could come from a combination of federal, state, local, and private sources. |
| JOLPH3 | Tier 1 | General | Mueller, Charles Plainfield | And then who maintains it? How does it get maintained. Some of that might be in the books but some of it is still fuzzy and unclear. | Maintenance agreements would have to be negotiated with the host railroads as the program moves forward. It is likely that the host railroads would maintain the railroad infrastructure in the corridor with financial support from the state. |
| JOLPH3 | Tier 1 | Purpose and Need | Mueller, Charles Plainfield | And when you live in Will County, when you have the whole airport issue that's been sitting out there for years and years and years and it is going nowhere -- and it probably will go nowhere -- the question I have, will this really help the transportation system? Highway? Air? Train service? Will it make it better in the long run? Is it needed in the long-run? IS it necessary? | As stated in Sections 2.2 and 2.3 of the FEIS, currently 99 percent of the 51 million trips made annually within the Chicago to St. Louis corridor are accomplished through automobile and air travel, with only one percent by passenger rail. This modal imbalance contributes to high congestion, reduced overall traveler safety, increased air pollutant emissions and energy consumption, travel delays, and increased travel unreliability. By improving high speed passenger rail service, a more balanced use of different corridor travel options would occur. Increased use of passenger rail would result in an overall improvement in traveler safety in the corridor, as well as a reduction in air pollutant emissions and energy consumption. |
| JOLPH4 | Tier 1 | Public Involvement | Brooks, Herbert | And in general the public hearing was very informative as well as planned and I say that because Matt was very helpful. He answered many questions for me, and here as a Will County Commissioner we get a lot of questions about these kind of projects, quick-take, what's going to happen to my property. Matt was very helpful. He put my mind at ease. They are not going to take my house. He answered questions very, very thorough for me. | Comment noted. No response needed. |

Joliet Public Hearing - August 8, 2012, Jacob Henry Mansion - Victorian Ballroom, 15 South Richards Street, Joliet, IL 60433

| Commenter ID | DEIS Volume | DEIS Section/Topic | Commenter | Comment | Parsons Response |
|---------------------|--------------------|--|-----------------------------|--|--|
| JOLPH5 | Tier 1 | Public Involvement | Bresica, Dan | Tony was very informative. Never hesitated to answer a question. Excellent Presentation. | Comment noted. No response needed. |
| JOLPH6 | Tier 1 | General | Anonymous, | Good info. Keep up the good work. | Comment noted. No response needed. |
| JOLPH7 | Tier 1 | Alternatives - Program Elements | Lang, Bill | Being an avid cyclist and I have used all the Illinois Amtrak routes with my bicycle, I would like to see more bicycles allowed on trains. This allows for personal transportation upon arrival at destination. We need a full range of transportation options from Chicago to St. Louis + return. Auto-phone-bus-train. We need high speed rail to encourage people to use rail vs. driving. Highways are too congested and with population growing, rail, Chicago speed passenger service will become a must. | Comment noted. No response needed. |
| JOLPH8 | Tier 1 | Public Involvement | Mueller, Charles Plainfield | Well, I've been attending these things, to me it seems like it was three days after Columbus discovered America. I was playing around with it before I moved out here. I moved out here from the south side of Chicago in 1996. In the 1990's they were talking about high-speed rail, what they would have to do, and know it's probably going through big metropolitan areas. You would be tearing down so many houses and that's a no-no. But I hate to say it but -- and I know there is a lot of work involved -- but it seems to be going along very slowly. | The 2004 ROD improvements are under construction now. These improvements will allow for three round trip passenger trains to operate at speeds up to 110 mph between Joliet and Alton. The 2004 ROD improvements should be completed by 2015. The improvements evaluated in this Tier 1 EIS are subject to future Tier 2 studies. Funding for these future studies has not yet been identified. Ultimately, if the program moves forward, the improvements identified in this EIS would be implemented incrementally and over several years. |
| JOLPH8 | Tier 1 | Alternatives - Routes | Mueller, Charles Plainfield | Secondly, we are talking about Chicago to St. Louis and you have all of these residential areas and farms and factories, and I never hear any of the railroads talking about Chicago to Los Angeles, because now that makes sense to me. You have got the property out there where there is space. We have got a couple trains running now. Improve those now before it gets to Chicago or Joliet or Springfield, where it is jammed and they can't do anything. | Comment noted. The scope of the EIS is to evaluate improving high speed rail between Chicago and St. Louis. The consideration of extending the study area is outside the scope of the EIS. |
| JOLPH9 | Tier 1 | General - Supports Project/Alternative -Routes | Johnson, Russell | I support using the Talgo Seares & railcars. I support using the Rock Island route Chicago to Joliet. | IDOT is still considering what type of rail equipment will be used in the corridor. The Rock Island District route (i.e., Section 2) is included as part of the Preferred Alternative. Section 3.5 of the FEIS describes the rationale for the selection of the Preferred Alternative. |
| JOLPH10 | Tier 1 | General - Supports Project | Anonymous, | I am totally in favor of high speed rail + all types of public transportation. I take the Amtrak + Metra whenever possible for my destination. | This comment that indicates support of the project is noted. |

Chicago Public Hearing - August 9, 2012, Union Station - Ballroom, 210 South Canal Street, Chicago, IL 60606

| Commenter ID | DEIS Volume | DEIS Section/Topic | Commenter | Comment | Response |
|--------------|-------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|--|
| CHIPH1 | Tier 1 | General - Supports Project | Ayers, Charles | I would think that supposedly the U.S. is innovators and everything. We're way behind in high-speed rail traffic. Europe has it. Japan has it. Even China has it. Why are we not on that list? We should be. We've been, like I say, innovators in all technology, and we're way behind. Air travel is getting ridiculous. If this is true that they can do it in under four hours to St. Louis, why, I could see where it would take traffic away from the airlines. You could waste that much time getting in and out of the airport, and this is downtown to downtown. I think it's a great thing. I think we're about 20 years too late pushing it. Thank you very much. Have a good day. | This comment that indicates support of the project is noted. |
| CHIPH3 | Tier 1 | Alternatives | Laing, Chris Advocate | There are good arguments for each alternative. I believe the alternatives should focus on passenger/customer satisfaction, social and environmental impact, and cost to taxpayers. I am sure no matter the decision the city population would adjust and city planners will accommodate. | Comment noted. No response needed. |
| CHIPH3 | Tier 1 | Alternatives - Routes | Laing, Chris Advocate | I will caution that in regards to the Chicago-Joliet connection that the integrity and timeliness of the existing Metra Rock Island service be maintained and allowed to grow. In order to obtain 10-daily round trips for Chicago-St. Louis service along the Rock Island route could severely hinder Metra Service and I must oppose this decision as a Metra employee and user of the Rock Island route. | The Rock Island District route (i.e., Section 2) is part of the Preferred Alternative. During the Tier 2 evaluation, a more detailed analysis will be performed of Metra service, which will include coordination with Metra. Where necessary additional capacity improvements will be included to ensure schedules can be maintained. |
| CHIPH4 | Tier 1 | General - Opposes Project | Dionesotes, Donald | Matt is a good man. Listened to everything I said and responded when appropriate and sensibly. But I am still critical of spending big bucks which may be wasted because development - I believe - will not occur. Please put me on mailing list. | This comment that indicates opposition to the project is noted. |
| CHIPH5 | Tier 1 | General - Supports Project | Bornal, Frank Amtrak Worker | It is a great thing for the state, as well as the country to advance into the 21st Century as far as high speed rail. It will bring the state together as with high speed rail will bring business and the travel industry together faster. I'm 100% being high speed rail and welcome the opportunity to use it. | This comment that indicates support of the project is noted. |
| CHIPH6 | Tier 1 | Alternatives - Program Elements | Kahler, Harvey | Unaware of 2 MT + sidings, explains higher cost than 1 expected. 2 MT saves times lost reducing & recovering speed, reduced speed through passing tracks with 3-4 passenger & UNK freight meets and overtakes, about 6 miles of less than 110 MPH each occurrence. 2 MT also avoids delays with less than punctual service for various reasons. I would urge the CN alternative into Chicago & invest in grade separations that would allow expansion of Metra HC service to relieve demand on BNSF. CN alt allows closest walk to downtown Joliet. Another costly improvement, apparently needed, is new McArthur Bridge into Saint Louis. ? What speed would be allowed for HS turnouts with 61' point rails | Speed through turnouts is subject to further review and engineering analysis. Currently, it is assumed that the speed through high speed turnouts will be 45 mph. |
| CHIPH7 | Tier 1 | Alternatives - Program Elements | Peterson, Jerry | The most important priority is double tracking entirely from Chicago to St. Louis. This double track should be designed to accommodate high-speed for the future. | This comment that indicates support of the project is noted. |
| CHIPH8 | Tier 1 | General - Supports Project | White, Keith | The project has been studied to death and the vast majority of the current schemes do little to get this much needed transportation improvement off the drawing boards. We do not need any more consultants, think-tank organizations or political demography as the people are fed up with the slow, arcane and useless studies that have been going on for forty plus years. Build this HSR corridor NOW!! | This comment that indicates support of the project is noted. |
| CHIPH9 | Tier 1 | Public Involvement | Kliwer, Laura MWRRRI Advocate | Would have been better if there were people stationed at key places along the way asking "can I answer any questions?" Most all the consultants were sitting down at the tables; had to approach them. | Comment noted. No response needed. |

Chicago Public Hearing - August 9, 2012, Union Station - Ballroom, 210 South Canal Street, Chicago, IL 60606

| Commenter ID | DEIS Volume | DEIS Section/Topic | Commenter | Comment | Response |
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| CHIPH9 | Tier 1 | Alternatives - Program Elements | Kliewer, Laura MWRRI Advocate | Although I understand (from information provided from one of the consultants) that station location identification is not necessarily part of an EIS, that is a critical component for ridership, & public support. In particular, for this DEIS, there are "unknowns". If the Rock Island alternative between Chicago & Joliet is chosen, where will a station between those 2 locations be? Access to Midway from such a station could be a critical component, as well as ease of access for the surrounding population. One of the best aspects of the current system in Springfield is that it is "downtown" within easy walking distance to the capital & other key sites. If the chosen alternative does indeed avoid downtown (as is noted in the flyer) that is a huge problem. | Potential new station locations would require additional evaluation. It is likely that new Chicago and St. Louis suburban station locations would be subject to future Tier 2 studies. In Springfield, the Tier 2 Evaluation analyzes the potential for shifting the passenger rail corridor from 3 rd Street to 10 th Street. |
| CHIPH9 | Tier 1 | Public Involvement | Kliewer, Laura MWRRI Advocate | Also, while the purpose of the meeting is to inform people about the alternatives on the route, I think a lot more constructive information would have been helpful - some history of where IL has come (increase in service, etc.) & also how it fits in the broader regional plan. | Comment noted. No response needed. |
| CHIPH10 | Tier 1 | Alternatives - Routes | Savoy, Morrell | From a passenger train operations perspective I feel the best alternative is 4B. Building a connection to Union Station to scale gives an all passenger controlled route between Chicago and Joliet. This will lead to a more consistent operation. It also lends better utilization of the Englewood project. Option 4D subjects passenger trains to potential freight delays. A single track connection between CUS and SCAL has benefit to other passenger routes. | Alternative 4B was eliminated from further consideration in Section 3.3.4.2 of the DEIS. Please refer to Section 3.5 of the FEIS for a discussion of the rationale for the selection of the Preferred Alternative. |
| CHIPH11 | Tier 1 and 2 | Alternatives - Routes | Darling, Philip MWHRSR Member | Very informative of issues involved and how they're being dealt with to assure all concerns are addressed and dealt with. Chicago-Joliet: I support current C Heritage corridor for its simplicity and serving existing Amtrak service route. It would appear to be the least complicated and cost. Springfield: Tenth St would be less costly, closely paralleling existing service and causing less public inconvenience. St. Louis: Option 1A is less complicated and would be less costly although 1B would probably have more physical advantage while maybe increasing costs and more time consuming to accomplish. | Please refer to Section 3.5 of the FEIS for a discussion of the rationale for the selection of the Preferred Alternative. The Heritage Corridor route (i.e., Section 1) was not selected as part of the Preferred Alternative. Please refer to Volume II of this FEIS for the selection of the Preferred Alternative through Springfield. |
| CHIPH12 | Tier 1 | General - Supports Project | Lang, Ray | Strongly support the implementation of high-speed rail in Illinois. Look forward to seeing faster more frequent service. I do not have a preference for route alignments - only a desire to see increased service! | This comment that indicates support of the project is noted. |
| CHIPH13 | Tier 1 | Alternatives - Routes | Decker, Ronald | MR. DECKER: One, the Chicago-Joliet route should be the fastest and shortest one, which is probably the route through Lemont. | Based on further evaluation, there is no projected time savings along either route between Chicago and Joliet. See Section 3.5 of the FEIS for discussion on the selection of the Preferred Alternative. The Heritage Corridor route which runs through Lemont (i.e., Section 1) was not selected as part of the Preferred Alternative. |
| CHIPH13 | Tier 2 | Alternatives - Routes | Decker, Ronald | Two, the route through Springfield should be the line as close to the State capitol as possible if that would generate more business. | Please refer to Volume II of this FEIS for the selection of the Preferred Alternative through Springfield. |
| CHIPH13 | Tier 1 | Alternatives - Program Elements | Decker, Ronald | Three, there should be a stop in East St. Louis which would provide an easy transfer to the St. Louis light rail line and, if necessary, stop in East St. Louis rather than Alton. That's my comment. | The Preferred Alternative does not preclude a new station in East St. Louis. Potential new station locations would require additional evaluation. It is likely that the new St. Louis suburban station location would be subject to future Tier 2 studies. |
| CHIPH14 | Tier 1 | Public Involvement | Kyle, William | Need Power Point presentation to bring everyone up to speed on the progress being made. More over, we need information on impediments being encountered and ideas for overcoming same. Lastly, we need information on the best estimate on when we might see a true Chicago to St. Louis high-speed rail line. | The 2004 ROD improvements are under construction now. These improvements will allow for three round trip passenger trains to operate at speeds up to 110 mph between Joliet and Alton. The 2004 ROD improvements should be completed by 2015. The improvements evaluated in this Tier 1 EIS are subject to future Tier 2 studies. Funding for these future studies has not yet been identified. Ultimately, if the program moves forward, the improvements identified in this EIS would be implemented incrementally and over several years. |
| CHIPH15 | Tier 1 | General | Anonymous, | We desperately need new, refurbished train equipment. Chicago Union Station was last refurbished in 1990, now 22 years later everything's falling apart, from the filthy carpet at the boarding lounges, to the bathrooms, tiles, ceiling, dirty platforms that never get power washed. For first time train passengers coming to Chicago its a bad first impression. | Comment noted. No response needed. |

Chicago Public Hearing - August 9, 2012, Union Station - Ballroom, 210 South Canal Street, Chicago, IL 60606

| Commenter ID | DEIS Volume | DEIS Section/Topic | Commenter | Comment | Response |
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| CHIPH16 | Tier 1 | Alternatives - Routes | Anonymous, | Route 4D between Chicago & Joliet makes the most sense. Seems like there'll be less conflict with freight trains. | Alternative 4D, the Rock Island District route (i.e., Section 2) is a part of the Preferred Alternative. Please refer to Section 3.5 of FEIS for a discussion of the rationale for the selection of the Preferred Alternative. |
| CHIPH17 | Tier 1 | Alternatives - Routes | Anonymous, | Very informative, and I feel that plan 4B would be the best option out of Chicago from a freight congestion stand point and option 1A coming into St. Louis. | Alternative 4B was eliminated from further consideration in Section 3.3.4.2 of the DEIS. Please refer to Section 3.5 of the FEIS for a discussion of the rationale for the selection of the Preferred Alternative. |
| CHIPH18 | Tier 1 | Public Involvement | Anonymous, | Appreciated this session/time/information. As a contractor look forward to seeing/following more information on participating in "doing business" on/with HSR Project. | Comment noted. No response needed. |
| CHIPH19 | Tier 1 | Public Involvement | Anonymous, | More additional notice of this hearing would be nice | Comment noted. No response needed. |
| CHIPH20 | Tier 1 | Public Involvement | Anonymous, | Very well displayed information put together very well. Study was very good information | Comment noted. No response needed. |
| CHIPH21 | Tier 1 | Public Involvement | Anonymous, Advocacy Organization | Would prefer a PowerPoint presentation explaining each chart followed by a Q&A | Comment noted. No response needed. |
| CHIPH22 | Tier 1 | Alternatives - Program Elements | Anonymous, | Increasing retail options within walking distance of stations would help attract more regular riders. | Comment noted. The scope of the EIS is to evaluate improving high speed rail between Chicago and St. Louis. The consideration of increasing retail options is outside the scope of the EIS. |
| CHIPH22 | Tier 1 | Alternatives | Anonymous, | The Alton to St. Louis segment should be focused on due to the current time being one of the greatest delays and slow areas in the system. | If the Chicago to St. Louis HSR Program moves forward, improvements would most likely be advanced incrementally. As noted in Chapter 7 of the FEIS, the portion of the corridor in the St. Louis area is one section that has been identified as higher priority. |
| CHIPH22 | Tier 1 | Alternatives - Program Elements | Anonymous, | Will more express service be included? | Potential train schedules will be evaluated as the Program moves forward. It is likely that if eight HSR round trips were operating in the corridor, some of these trips would provide express service. As noted in Chapter 6 of the FEIS, express service could include trains only stopping at Chicago, Joliet, Bloomington, Springfield, Alton, and St. Louis. |
| CHIPH23 | Tier 1 | Alternatives - Program Elements | Anonymous, Local design professional | I'm most concerned about this project providing an effective alternative mode of transportation that will keep pace with the world's best systems. Too many stops seem to be currently presented. It is imperative that this system leg maintains a focus on transportation between Chicago and St. Louis. The prime metro areas and basis of population and not pander to the multitude of small, rural communities along the way. | Under the Preferred Alternative, trains would continue to stop at all of the cities they currently do, with the exception of Summit, which is not along the Preferred Alternative. It is likely that if eight HSR trips were operating in the corridor, some of these trips would provide express service. As noted in Chapter 6 of the FEIS, express service could include trains only stopping at Chicago, Joliet, Bloomington, Springfield, Alton, and St. Louis. |
| CHIPH23 | Tier 1 | Alternatives - Program Elements | Anonymous, Local design professional | Maximum efficiency is what draws riders most and helps keep costs at an attractive level. I hope to see a focus on express service options. Grade separation at all costs! This helps with speed & safety, of course, while also providing state of the art look & feel. This will be a monumental achievement for HSR in the U.S. and needs to look and function that way. Don't forget that we are amongst the heart of auto enthusiasts, so please spare no costs to show the Midwest, U.S. and North America what high (er) speed rail can offer. | Potential train schedules will be evaluated as the Program moves forward. It is likely that if eight HSR round trips were operating in the corridor, some of these trips would provide express service. As noted in Chapter 6 of the FEIS, express service could include trains only stopping at Chicago, Joliet, Bloomington, Springfield, Alton, and St. Louis. Appendix E of the FEIS identifies grade crossings that could be studied for grade separation in future Tier 2 studies. |
| CHIPH24 | Tier 1 | General - Supports Project/Alternatives - Routes | Anonymous, Amtrak Official | The idea of double track is great and alternate routes from CUS station - JOL as well as St. Louis to Merchants Bridge | This comment that indicates support of the project is noted. |
| CHIPH25 | Tier 1 | General - Supports Project | Anonymous, | I support double tracking the route. State should have partial ownership and dispatching control of the line | This comment that indicates support of the project is noted. |
| CHIPH26 | Tier 1 | General - Supports Project | Anonymous, | Need the double track ASAP! | This comment that indicates support of the project is noted. |

Bloomington Public Hearing - August 14, 2012, Marriot - Ballroom, 201 Broadway Street, Normal, IL 61761

| Commenter ID | DEIS Volume | DEIS Section/Topic | Commenter | Comment | Response |
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| BMIPH1 | Tier 1 | General - Opposes Project | Anonymous, | There is no need for another rail the one we have works just fine. | This comment that indicates opposition to the project is noted. |
| BMIPH2 | Tier 1 | General - Funding/Cost | Stevens, Gary | I would appreciate funding being neutral to the overall budget for IDOT. Tolls should be increased on the highways to cover their costs and to decrease congestion to lower collisions and accidents. Then the money that is normally given to highways could be applied to improving passenger train connections. | The source of future funding for the HSR improvements evaluated in this EIS is unknown but could come from a combination of federal, state, local, and private sources. Collecting tolls on highways to pay for HSR improvements has not been considered. |
| BMIPH2 | Tier 1 | Alternatives - Routes | Stevens, Gary | I would also like passenger trains to the Chicago and St. Louis airports from central Illinois. I would appreciate having a train reach Chicago by 8 am from central Illinois so businessmen people could have a longer day to use the train to get to Chicago. | The scope of the EIS is to evaluate improving high speed rail between downtown Chicago and downtown St. Louis. The consideration of extending the study area is outside the scope of the EIS. Precise schedules for future HSR service have not been developed. Having a train arrive in downtown Chicago by 8:00 a.m. will have to be evaluated further in future Tier 2 studies. |
| BMIPH3 | Tier 1 | Noise and Vibration | Anonymous, | We are concerned regarding the noise the trains are making from the time they hit the city limits until they exit. We're looking forward to the new gates being installed and get the noise level under control. | Comment noted. Establishing quiet zones (i.e., where trains do not blow their horns at grade crossings) was not evaluated in the Tier 1 EIS. |
| BMIPH4 | Tier 1 | Noise and Vibration | Anonymous, | Trains are still making way too much noise in our residential area. One train last week blew his horn at max noise level, 32 times in a 3 block area. | Comment noted. Establishing quiet zones (i.e., where trains do not blow their horns at grade crossings) was not evaluated in the Tier 1 EIS. |
| BMIPH5 | Tier 1 | Public Involvement | Anonymous, | Hanson official very informed and answered questions I had about keeping old track. | Comment noted. No response needed. |
| BMIPH6 | Tier 1 | Public Involvement | Feeney, Steve | Matt Heyen was very helpful in explaining everything that I wanted to know about crossing sites at grain elevators. He offered to send me the information I needed. | Comment noted. No response needed. |
| BMIPH7 | Tier 1 | General - Consultation Process | Anonymous, | Thanks for letting me know about the project. | Comment noted. No response needed. |
| BMIPH8 | Tier 1 | Alternatives | Sicks, Jennifer Local Govt Staff | Local governments in McLean County are interested in further examination of HSR impact on two regional transportation project; the county's portion of the statewide historic route 66 bicycle trail, and the McLean/Bloomington/Normal East side highway, currently in Phase 1 engineering. Portions of the route 66 Trail are already in place, and construction of a section between Normal and Towanda is programmed for summer 2013. The realignment of 1800 N and the crossing configuration, and the track configuration on Towanda will substantially impact this project. | As part of the Tier 1 studies, detailed design of the proposed high-speed rail improvements is not available at this time. More detailed design will be developed and available during the Tier 2 studies. The schedule for these Tier 2 studies has not been determined. During the more detailed Tier 2 studies, IDOT will continue to coordinate with MCRPC regarding the project's potential impacts to the U.S Route 66 Bikeway Project and the East Side Highway. |
| BMIPH8 | Tier 1 | Alternatives | Sicks, Jennifer Local Govt Staff | The East side highway interchange alternatives at I-55 will also be substantially impacted by the HSR alternatives in McLean County. | The role of the Tier 1 EIS is to identify potentially impacted elements along the corridor based on the anticipated double tracking. The level of engineering at this point is not sufficient to detail whether or not the planned East Side Highway would be impacted. Part of the next level of study, referred to as Tier 2, would go to the level of detail needed to determine these impacts. IDOT will continue to coordinate with McLean County during the more detailed Tier 2 studies regarding potential impacts to the East Side Highway Project and any measures needed to avoid, minimize, and/or mitigate these impacts. |
| BMIPH9 | Tier 1 | Alternatives - Program Elements | Reece, Sonja | I'm in favor of reliable service - It's like "pretty much on time" service. If it can go faster, that would be a bonus. | Improvements included with the Preferred Alternative will meet the project's need for reduced travel time, increased frequency, and improved reliability. This would be achieved primarily by adding additional track capacity through the corridor. Speeds in excess of 110 mps would require closing or grade separating existing grade crossings, which is not considered a cost-effective way to meet the project's purpose and need. |

Bloomington Public Hearing - August 14, 2012, Marriot - Ballroom, 201 Broadway Street, Normal, IL 61761

| Commenter ID | DEIS Volume | DEIS Section/Topic | Commenter | Comment | Response |
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| BMIPH10 | Tier 1 | General - Supports Project | Brandt, Larry | So called experts say passenger rail in the US is of 19th century technology. The facts are: passenger rail moves people per mile for less money than any other form of transportation. Air corridors are saturated with planes - airports are obsolete and overcrowded and experts state also that building more is also not an option. The fact is existing highways are in bad repair with no means of keeping them in good repair. With sources of fossil fuel dwindling and exploring for more being ultra expensive, it is my opinion that rail travel, both conventional and high speed are indeed the best mode to be fully backed and funded for future travelers in our great country. | This comment that indicates support of the project is noted. |
| BMIPH11 | Tier 1 | General - Supports Project | Treadway, Roy | Some useful detail was missing on the information given. The alternatives chosen so far seem like the correct ones. I have no preference for one alternative or the other in the Chicago area based on the information given. I support moving forward on improvements in the Chicago - St. Louis corridor for more higher speed trains. I have grave reservations about the need or efficiency of an all new 220 mile per hour train service. No response needed, but keep me informed. | This comment that indicates support of the project is noted. |

Springfield Public Hearing - August 15, 2012, Abraham Lincoln Hotel and Conference Center - Ballroom, 701 East Adams Street, Springfield, IL 62701

| Commenter ID | DEIS Volume | DEIS Section/Topic | Commenter | Comment | Response |
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| SPI1 | Tier 1 | General - Funding/Cost | Anonymous, | This project will never happen due to the cost. Also, the time of travel reduction from Chicago to St. Louis is not cost efficient. | This comment that indicates opposition to the project is noted. |
| SPI2 | Tier 1 | General - Supports Project | Anonymous, | Just interested in seeing what is being proposed. The most important thing to me is the need for a double track. | This comment that indicates support of the project is noted. |
| SPI2 | Tier 1 | General - Funding/Cost | Anonymous, | But the freight railroads will get benefits from the double track, too. So I think they should pay a greater share of the cost. | The high speed rail improvements that are proposed for this project are those that are needed to operate passenger service over the freight corridor and maintain it. These improvements are not needed to support freight service. |
| SPI3 | Tier 1 | Cultural Resources | Dumbrowski, Rebecca & JP | I am writing to express my concern for Williamsville, Illinois as relates to the Tier 1 Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the high speed rail Chicago to St. Louis. Section 4, Exhibit 4.5-1Historic Architectural Resources shows a red marker in Williamsville, IL but it is not labeled on the map nor documented in the listing of historic sites. Within a few feet from the existing tracks is the old and restored Williamsville Train Depot that currently houses the Williamsville Library. A few yards immediately south of it is the Williamsville Historical society and museum that is contained in two converted railroad boxcars. Both of these historical resources would be destroyed under a double tracking plan and as such double tracking through Williamsville should not be allowed to happen. Currently there are no other buildings in the town available to house the thousands of historical documents and artifacts, nor is there one available to house the public library. Mr. J Frank Prather was the son of John Prather, one of the earliest settlers of Sangamon County, IL. He founded the Williamsville State Bank, was one of the founders of the Illinois national Bank, and was a founder and long-term president of the American shorthorn Cattle Breeders Association. He was a significant landowner in | The role of the Tier 1 EIS is to identify potential impacts to resources and structures along the corridor. The Tier 2 study will further evaluate impacts and measures to avoid and minimize those impacts. If an impact is identified that cannot be avoided, mitigation measures will be identified that may include relocation of the structures or any other measure deemed necessary. |

Alton Public Hearing - August 16, 2012, Holiday Inn – Ballroom 3800 Homer Adams Parkway, Alton, IL 62002

| Commenter ID | DEIS Volume | DEIS Section/Topic | Commenter | Comment | Response |
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| ALT1 | Tier 1 | General - Opposes Project/Safety | Kelting, A. | I am against increasing speed on the tracks for safety reasons. I think the money could be spent in other places more wisely, for example improving Amtrak and making sure it is there in the future. Many of the people I have seen going on Amtrak are poor and probably not interested in going 110 mph, but dependability would be their main interest. Safety is mine. | This comment that indicates opposition to the project is noted. Automobile travel, which represents 97.5 percent of the trips within the corridor, is the least safe mode of transportation when compared to air, rail, and bus travel. Overall passenger safety in the corridor is expected to improve as travelers divert from automobile travel. With additional trains operating in the corridor, the possibility of train collisions is increased. However, the implementation of a state of the art signaling system would mitigate this risk. |
| ALT2 | Tier 1 | General - Supports Project | Bernett, Derek | As a Republican that travels frequently, I never understand the resistance to public funding of rail passenger infrastructure when we pour billions into highways, the FAA, and airports. Full speed ahead on HSR rail, I say. I'm a licensed comm pilot and a trained locomotive engineer and rail is the most efficient city-to-city transportation available. Thank you for the public information. You all are doing an awesome job. | This comment that indicates support of the project is noted. |
| ALT3 | Tier 1 | Public Involvement | Winslade, James | It would be helpful if more information was directed to residents or small communities along the route. I live in Brighton, Illinois, 62012, and we are getting bits and pieces of information from various sources. | Public engagement was a key element in the development of the DEIS. Before the Public Hearings in August 2012, two rounds of public open houses were held in the Spring and Fall of 2011. Outreach efforts and meeting notification efforts included emails, study website, letters to public officials and other stakeholders, and press releases. |
| ALT4 | Tier 1 | General | Kelting, Marie | I need to read the whole draft because I haven't done that yet. And I'm concerned about the cost as far as being effective for me to use once it happens. Right now a good portion of the time it's cost effective if it's just me traveling. | The exact fare for the high speed rail service has not been determined at this time. An estimate of travel times and costs by mode of transportation is provided in Table 6.1-1 in the FEIS. |
| ALT4 | Tier 1 | General - Safety | Kelting, Marie | And I am concerned about possible accidents because of the high speed train. We have enough accidents, but they are saying it's supposedly part of the thing, but I'd like to make sure that the intersections in rural areas as well is very well marked. We don't need any more. | As stated in Sections 2.2 and 2.3 of the FEIS, currently 99 percent of the 51 million trips made annually within the Chicago to St. Louis corridor are accomplished through automobile and air travel, with only one percent by passenger rail. This modal imbalance contributes to high congestion, reduced overall traveler safety, increased air pollutant emissions and energy consumption, travel delays, and increased travel unreliability. By improving high speed passenger rail service, a more balanced use of different corridor travel options would occur. Increased use of passenger rail would result in an overall improvement in traveler safety in the corridor, as well as a reduction in air pollutant emissions and energy consumption. |
| ALT5 | Tier 1 | General - Funding/Cost | Anonymous, | Trains are a form of interstate commerce. Healthcare, education, the environment, and other subjects that Congress has used our tax dollars for are not any form of commerce. Trains should receive tax dollars equivalent to the highway trust fund, not from Congress each year. | Comment noted. No response needed. |
| ALT5 | Tier 1 | General - Supports Project | Anonymous, | I hope Illinois serves as an example to expand train service that will be an increasing demand. Since the 1980's I have said that the automobile was invented to replace the horse, not the horse and trolley and train. High speed trains will be a tremendous help in ridership. In fact, I feel we will get from DT St. Louis to DT Chicago quicker than flying air from airport to airport and then heading DT. Thank you. | This comment that indicates support of the project is noted. |
| ALT6 | Tier 1 | General | Anonymous, | I know funding is always a problem, but it's good to see the momentum continuing. Just have to wonder where we'd be if this had been done 20, 30, 40, even 50 years ago. | Comment noted. No response needed. |
| ALT7 | Tier 1 | Purpose and Need | Anonymous, | 1) Need. Seems questionable. It will be beneficial for tourists/casual visitors to Chicago, but useless to business travelers for locations in the suburbs. | Section 2 of the FEIS discusses the Purpose and Need for the proposed project. Improvements to the high speed rail corridor will help to achieve a more balanced use of transportation modes. Rail ridership has been increasing and is projected to continue to increase even more with the proposed project. |
| ALT7 | Tier 1 | Public Involvement | Anonymous, | 2) Information to residents is nonexistent. Local officials are not passing the word. I found out when crews showed up to locate property lines, then the Internet provided a wealth of information. Basically, the local officials need to hold public meetings to discuss the issue. | Public engagement was a key element in the development of the DEIS. Before the Public Hearings in August 2012, two rounds of public open houses were held in the Spring and Fall of 2011. Outreach efforts and meeting notification efforts included emails, study website, letters to public officials and other stakeholders, and press releases. |

Alton Public Hearing - August 16, 2012, Holiday Inn – Ballroom 3800 Homer Adams Parkway, Alton, IL 62002

| Commenter ID | DEIS Volume | DEIS Section/Topic | Commenter | Comment | Response |
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| ALT7 | Tier 1 | Land Use | Anonymous, | 3) Track 6 has very little information in Tier 1 study. Need more detail on the plans for acquisition of residents and other property along the track. | The role of the Tier 1 EIS is to identify potential residential displacements and land acquisition along the corridor based on the anticipated double tracking. The level of engineering at this point is not sufficient to detail these potential impacts. Part of the next level of study, referred to as Tier 2, would go to the level of detail needed to determine impacts. At that point, if an impact is identified that cannot be avoided, mitigation may be identified along with other measure deemed necessary, including any relocation assistance. |
| ALT7 | Tier 1 | General - Funding/Cost | Anonymous, | 4) Use of taxpayer money to improve assets of private company is questionable. | The high speed rail improvements that are proposed for this project are those that are needed to operate passenger service over the freight corridor and maintain it. These improvements are not needed to support freight service. |
| ALT8 | Tier 1 | General - Supports Project | Anonymous, | Keep pushing this alignment forward. We need transportation alternatives to highways. Having the trains go over 100 is a plus. Once the travel is closer to what a car can go from St. Louis to Chicago, people will take the train. More frequent trains spread out throughout the day is also a big plus to increase ridership. Good luck | This comment that indicates support of the project is noted. |
| ALT9 | Tier 1 | General | Anonymous, | Everything seems copacetic. You never know for sure. | Comment noted. No response needed. |

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| OC1 | Tier 1 | General | Scarfino, Gail | I am wondering if the "high speed" train and the "bullet train" are the same or different projects. | The Build Alternatives evaluated in this Tier 1 EIS would allow for maximum train speeds of up to 125 mph through portions of the corridor. In a separate feasibility study, IDOT is evaluating the Chicago-St. Louis 220 mph High Speed Rail Express project concept. This service, at speeds up to 220 mph, may utilize existing rail corridors, a new corridor, or a combination of both, and could serve different travel markets. The 220 mph concept is intended as a complementary service to the Chicago-St. Louis high speed rail service that is being evaluated by this EIS. |
| OC1 | Tier 1 | General - Schedule/Alternatives - Program Elements | Scarfino, Gail | I am also wondering when the estimated completion dates are for Chicago to St. Louis and how long the trip will be shaved down to. Thanks | The 2004 ROD improvements, which are under construction now, should be completed by 2015 and will reduce the trip time on express trains from Chicago to St. Louis from five hours 30 minutes to four hours and 30 minutes. With the exception of Springfield, the improvements evaluated in this Tier 1 EIS are currently not funded for Tier 2 studies, final design, or construction. As a result, there is no estimate available for a completion date. Under the Preferred Alternative identified in this Tier 1 EIS, the estimated end-to-end travel time, would be just under four hours between Chicago and St. Louis. |
| OC2 | Tier 1 | General - Schedule | Noll, Mae | I am just a regular citizen & train patron who lives in Springfield IL. I was wondering what the long term time line looked like for completion of HSR St L to Chicago. | The 2004 ROD improvements, which are under construction now, should be completed by 2015. With the exception of Springfield, the improvements evaluated in this Tier 1 EIS are currently not funded for Tier 2 studies, final design, or construction. As a result, there are not estimate available for a completion date. |
| OC2 | Tier 1 | General - Supports Project | Noll, Mae | I am looking forward to seeing the IL HSR complete! | This comment that indicates support of the project is noted. |
| OC2 | Tier 1 | General | Noll, Mae | I know there are some road blocks. What are the best and worst case scenarios for seeing this become a reality? Thank you! | Following the completion of the Tier I EIS, Tier 2 studies will be conducted where more detailed engineering and environmental evaluation is performed. After the Tier 2 studies are complete, the project can proceed to final design and right-of-way acquisition. When all these step are complete, construction can begin. It should be noted that at this time there is no funding identified for these future phases. |
| OC3 | Tier 1 | Alternatives - Program Elements | Williams, Otis | why no station in east st louis.remembering relay station TRRA EADS bridge? | The Preferred Alternative does not preclude a new station in East St. Louis. Potential new station locations would require additional evaluation. |
| OC4 | Tier 1 | General - Opposes Project | Madison, Dennis Madison & Associates, Inc. | This new high speed line is a total waste of taxpayer dollars in a state that is broke, as well as the new Alton, IL depot station, being built on a new site in. The old station handled the meager rider needs without spending hundreds of thousands on a new station. And, on top of all of that, AMTRAK needs a subsidy to exist...total BS!! | This comment that indicates opposition to the project is noted. |
| OC5 | Tier 1 | General - Supports Project | McClure, Matthew | I am a huge proponent of high-speed rail as are many of my friends and relatives. It is great to see the State of Illinois and the Federal Government working in concert to recognize HSR aids everyone, even those who don't use it, but reducing congestion and improving the quality of life for all. I write this email as a proponent with some expertise as my 1986 dissertation at the University of Chicago entitled, "The Evolution of Metropolitan Chicago's Railway Pattern 1957-1986" gave me considerable field and research experience in understanding Chicago's rail system. | This comment that indicates support of the project is noted. |

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| OC5 | Tier 1 | Alternatives - Routes | McClure, Matthew | I have a couple of suggestions. Neither route north of Dwight is especially compelling. Both the ex-RI route and the ex-GM&O routes have numerous rail and road crossings. The current ex-GM&O route (current Heritage Corridor) is choked with at-grade rail crossings and is always slow. It also shares space with HC Metra trains. The ex-RI has fewer rail crossings, but is also busy with RI District trains. Instead, consider routing east at Dwight along the Norfolk Southern route east to Kankakee. This route could feed into the broad ex-IC right-of-way (now CN). This ROW was once 3-4 tracks. There is plenty of room for two dedicated tracks adjacent to the CN. Especially important is that the last 29.4 miles into the South Loop are road and rail crossing free. CN is planning to pull all its trains from this original lakefront route. From a new Millennium Park station (to relieve congestion from Union Station) there is enough room for dedicated main tracks with wide track centers for HSR. These lines would feed down to Grand Crossing where the moribund ex-NYC ROW to the east could be utilized for Indiana and Michigan services following a connector track down to the CN. This would make for a single HSR entry into the city that trains east to Michigan and Indiana, south to Champaign and Carbondale, and southwest to St. Louis could all utilize. Yes, the distance toward St. Louis would be greater, but service reliability would be far | Routes to Kankakee were eliminated in the Notice of Intent, prior to the scoping process for the Tier 1 DEIS. The Notice of Intent included as Appendix G in the FEIS provides additional information. Additionally, capacity improvements will be evaluated between Chicago and Joliet to improve operations and provide acceptable service reliability. |
| OC6 | Tier 1 | Cultural Resources | Dombrowski , Rebecca | I am writing to express concern for Williamsville, Illinois as relates to the Tier 1 Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the High-Speed Rail from Chicago to St. Louis. Section 4, Exhibit 4.5-1 Historic Architectural Resources shows a red marker in Williamsville, IL but it is not labeled on the map nor documented in the listing of historic sites. Within a few feet from the existing tracks is the old and restored Williamsville Train Depot that currently houses the Williamsville Library. A few yards immediately south of it is the Williamsville Historical Society and Museum that is contained in two converted railroad boxcars. Both of these historical resources would be destroyed under a double tracking plan and as such double tracking through Williamsville should not be allowed to happen. Currently there are no other buildings in the town available to house the thousands of historical documents and artifacts, nor is there one available to house the public library. Mr. J. Frank Prather was the son of John Prather, one of the early settlers of Sangamon County, Illinois. He founded the Williamsville State Bank, was one of the founders of the Illinois National Bank, and was a founder and long-term President of the American Shorthorn Cattle Breeders Association. He was a significant | One of the roles of the Tier 1 EIS is to identify potentially impacted historic structures along the corridor based on the proposed infrastructure improvements. The level of engineering at this point is not sufficient to determine whether or not the buildings you mention located in Williamsville would be impacted by proposed improvements. Part of the next level of study, referred to as Tier 2, would go to the level of detail needed to determine impacts. At that point, if an impact is identified that cannot be avoided, mitigation of the impact may include relocation of the structures or any other measure deemed necessary. |
| OC7 | Tier 1 | General - Opposes Project | Linhardt, Marc | Ridership levels will be minimal. As an example my wife and I go to Detroit four or five times a year and there is no chance we would take a Chicago-Detroit train. First we don't live next to Union Station so there is that commute and then our final destination in Detroit is suburban so somebody would have to pick us up or we would have to rent a car. The train trip might be quicker than driving, but once you include all the add-ons it might take 50% longer via train. Even Intra-city trains such as the el can not even compete with buses on a cost per passenger basis. Furthermore Illinois can not afford its portion of the costs, regardless of whether the federal government can. No Build is the only correct choice. | This comment that indicates opposition to the project is noted. |
| OC8 | Tier 1 | General - Supports Project | Woods, Ellen | Bravo and thanks to the policy makers and the politicians that are partnering to make this ESSENTIAL addition to the infrastructure of our nation a REALITY. | This comment that indicates support of the project is noted. |
| OC8 | Tier 1 | Alternatives - Program Elements | Wood, Ellen | Please advise regarding any plans to integrate freight into this process. | As part of developing this Tier 1 FEIS, coordination with the potentially affected freight railroads occurred. Additionally, freight traffic was considered as part of the study in order to maintain the ability of freight movements in the corridor as well as increasing the speed and number of high speed passenger trains. Coordination with the freight railroads will continue as the Program moves forward. |
| OC9 | Tier 1 | Alternatives - Program Elements | Beck, George | When constructing second track, track centers should be wide enough to allow wide loads to pass and to keep train equipment apart at least 12 feet. Also extra precautions should be taken to prevent "HEAT KINKS". | Proposed track centers for new construction are 15 feet between Chicago and Joliet and in the St. Louis area. The proposed track centers between Joliet and the St. Louis area are 20 feet. Your comment regarding precautions of "heat kinks" will be noted. |
| OC10 | Tier 1 | General - Supports Project | Ernst, Robert | I am in total support of upgrading this rail line and others. | This comment that indicates support of the project is noted. |

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| OC11 | Tier 1 | General | Perryman, Nick | Will it ever happen? | Following the completion of the Tier 1 EIS, Tier 2 studies will be conducted where more detailed engineering and environmental evaluation is performed. After the Tier 2 studies are complete, the project can proceed to final design and right-of-way acquisition. When all these steps are complete, construction can begin. It should be noted that at this time there is no funding identified for these future phases. |
| OC12 | Tier 1 | General - Supports Project | Peterson, Jerry | I hope 2 tracks are being built between Chicago and St. Louis | This comment that indicates support of the project is noted. |
| OC13 | Tier 1 | Alternatives - Program Elements | Arbolino, Jennifer | I agree that the route planned between Chicago and Springfield should be built to accommodate the highest speed possible within fiscal restraints. We must plan for a significant improvement in service. For example, a 2 hour trip would attract more riders, more support and more interest. A 4-5 hour trip would hardly impress anyone who might alternately drive a car. | The project's goal is to optimize performance up to 110 mph. Speeds higher than 110 mph will require that all grade crossings along the corridor will need to be either closed or grade separated. Under the Preferred Alternative identified in this Tier 1 EIS, the estimated end-to-end travel time would be just under four hours between Chicago and St. Louis. |
| OC14 | Tier 1 | General - Supports Project | Farris, Jeffrey | I have a scheduling conflict with the public meeting in Alton, but wanted to let you know I fully support the St. Louis-Chicago high-speed rail corridor. I'm anxiously awaiting my first trip to Chicago on the new line. | This comment that indicates support of the project is noted. |
| OC15 | Tier 1 | General - Opposes Project | Anonymous | STOP BUILDING HIGH SPEED RAIL!!!! The survey sent out by IDOT was biased for High Speed Rail and presented the question with significant bias. Any survey stating the State wants high speed rail is significantly inaccurate. | This comment that indicates opposition to the project is noted. |
| OC15 | Tier 1 | General - Safety | Anonymous | It is a true shame that people's lives and property are less valuable than the high speed rail. Shame on the lawmakers for not valuing the lives of their constituents. Closing off crossings in the rural areas so ambulances and fire trucks have to travel greater distances, which are crucial in those areas, can cost lives, livestock and property. | As stated in Sections 2.2 and 2.3 of the FEIS, currently 99 percent of the 51 million trips made annually within the Chicago to St. Louis corridor are accomplished through automobile and air travel, with only one percent by passenger rail. This modal imbalance contributes to high congestion, reduced overall traveler safety, increased air pollutant emissions and energy consumption, travel delays, and increased travel unreliability. By improving high speed passenger rail service, a more balanced use of different corridor travel options would occur. Increased use of passenger rail would result in an overall improvement in traveler safety in the corridor, as well as a reduction in air pollutant emissions and energy consumption. |
| OC15 | Tier 1 | General - Funding/Opposes Project | Anonymous | Since Amtrak posts a deficient year after year, who will be subsidizing the high speed rail when it fails to make a profit or break even? Tax payers will be paying enough to bail out the broke State of Illinois. Please do not tax us any more. STOP HIGH SPEED RAIL!!!! | This comment that indicates opposition to the project is noted. The current construction to implement the 2004 ROD improvements, which will allow three round trip passenger trains per day to operate at speeds up to 110 mph between Joliet and Alton, is funded by both state and federal funds. This Tier 1 EIS is also funded with a combination of both state and federal funds. The Tier 2 evaluation for the Springfield Rail Improvements is state funded only. Some state funding has also been set aside for final design of the Springfield Rail Improvements. However, additional funding would be required to complete that final design. Finally, there is no funding for additional Tier 2 studies in the corridor at this time. The source of future funding is unknown but could come from a combination of federal, state, local, and private sources. |
| OC16 | Tier 1 | General - Safety/Opposes Project | Anonymous | STOP HIGH SPEED RAIL. The automobile/train and person/train deaths will increase but will not be reported due to the current reporting by rail roads. When has there been a publicly published number of train/auto or train/people accidents? Never, because they don't want the number of suicides published. It's high. | This comment that indicates opposition to the project is noted. Automobile travel, which represents 97.5 percent of the trips within the corridor, is the least safe mode of transportation when compared to air, rail, and bus travel. Overall passenger safety in the corridor is expected to improve as travelers divert from automobile travel. With additional trains operating in the corridor, the possibility of train collisions is increased. However, the implementation of a state of the art signaling system would mitigate this risk. |

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| OC16 | Tier 1 | General - Funding/Opposes Project | Anonymous | I don't want to have to pay more in taxes to subsidize another rail road like we do for Amtrak, who keeps draining money from working citizens. STOP HIGH SPEED RAIL. | This comment that indicates opposition to the project is noted. The current construction to implement the 2004 ROD improvements, which will allow three round trip passenger trains per day to operate at speeds up to 110 mph between Joliet and Alton, is funded by both state and federal funds. This Tier 1 EIS is also funded with a combination of both state and federal funds. The Tier 2 evaluation for the Springfield Rail Improvements is state funded only. Some state funding has also been set aside for final design of the Springfield Rail Improvements. However, additional funding would be required to complete that final design. Finally, there is no funding for additional Tier 2 studies in the corridor at this time. The source of future funding is unknown but could come from a combination of federal, state, local, and private sources. |
| OC17 | Tier 1 and Tier 2 | General - Supports Project | Harnish, Rick | This letter serves as the Midwest High Speed Rail Association's comment regarding the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) that has been prepared for the Chicago, Illinois to St. Louis, Missouri High Speed Rail Corridor Program. The Midwest High Speed Rail Association supports the proposed investments outlined in the document, with several modifications that would allow for faster and more frequent trains in the future. MHSRA believes that sufficient travel demand exists to warrant making these investments today. As such, the implementation plan outlined in in Section 7 is too conservative. The State should expedite construction of the Chicago – Springfield improvements outlined in the DEIS, with modifications as suggested below. | This comment that indicates support of the project is noted. |
| OC17 | Tier 1 and Tier 2 | Alternatives - Program Elements | Harnish, Rick | Our greatest concern is that this DEIS will be viewed as the State of Illinois's long-term goal for the corridor. This DEIS calls for an express trip time of 3 hours 50 minutes with only 9 daily round-trips. The long-term goal should be a Chicago – St. Louis trip time of less than 2 hours with at least hourly service. MHSRA recognizes that this aggressive service goal cannot be accomplished within the existing heavy-haul freight corridor studied in the DEIS. A new corridor, dedicated to high-speed passenger trains, will be needed for most of the route. We applaud IDOT for conducting a separate feasibility study for a 220-mph Core Express line that would achieve the 2-hour trip time. | Corridor improvements that would result in a two hour trip time between Chicago and St. Louis is beyond the scope of this study. In a separate feasibility study, IDOT is evaluating the Chicago-St. Louis 220 mph High Speed Rail Express project concept. This service, at speeds up to 220 mph, may utilize existing rail corridors, a new corridor, or a combination of both, and could service to the Chicago-St. Louis high speed rail service that is being evaluated by this EIS. |
| OC17 | Tier 1 and Tier 2 | Alternatives - Program Elements | Harnish, Rick | There are three locations at which this DEIS suggests the construction of new infrastructure. Any new infrastructure constructed as part of this corridor plan should be constructed to also serve as the urban access for 220-mph Core Express trains in the future. | The scope of this study was to evaluate the use of the existing railroad corridor. Evaluating improvements to accommodate 220 mph speeds is beyond the scope of this project. As noted above, IDOT is conducting a separate feasibility study that evaluates a 220 mph project concept. |
| OC17 | Tier 1 and Tier 2 | Alternatives | Harnish, Rick | Those three locations are as follows: Chicago Access: The DEIS does not adequately address the constraint created by the 21st street bridge over the Chicago River. This bridge has a very low river clearance and must be raised for small pleasure craft. The DEIS suggests a new bridge will be built alongside the existing bridge, but does not address how the clearance issues caused by the 16th Street bridge and the Orange Line bridge will be addressed. This oversight represents a serious flaw in the overall plan. The two routing options from Joliet to Chicago cannot be properly evaluated without a developing a true plan for this bridge. The St. Charles Airline bridge is substantially higher than the 21st Street bridge and may offer a better solution. | The 21 st Street bridge will be further evaluated in a future Tier 2 study. |
| OC17 | Tier 1 and Tier 2 | Alternatives - Routes | Harnish, Rick | MHSRA requests that Option 4B, which includes a new, direct connection from the St. Charles Airline into Union Station, be returned as an active option and that any further planning around the 21st Street bridge consider the needs of Core Express trains. | Alternative 4B was eliminated from further consideration in Section 3.3.4.2 of the DEIS. Please refer to Section 3.5 of FEIS for a discussion of the rationale for the selection of the Preferred Alternative. Improvements to accommodate Core Express trains are beyond the scope of this project. |

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| OC17 | Tier 2 | Alternatives - Program Elements | Harnish, Rick | Springfield Routing: MHSRA supports making short-term improvements to the 3rd Street corridor needed to improve trip times, reliability and safety until the 10th Street corridor is constructed. MHSRA requests that the 10th Street corridor be designed and constructed to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eliminate highway grade crossings • Allow for passenger trains to access Decatur and Champaign • Create separate passenger tracks, with provisions for future electrification. | Please refer to Volume II of this FEIS for a description of the Preferred Alternative through Springfield. |
| OC17 | Tier 1 and Tier 2 | Alternatives - Program Elements | Harnish, Rick | Mississippi River Bridge: The DEIS correctly identifies the need for additional railroad capacity over the Mississippi River at St. Louis. MHSRA requests that any new bridge or improvements to an existing bridge be designed to serve as the crossing point for Core Express trains. | Improvements to accommodate Core Express trains are beyond the scope of this project. |
| OC17 | Tier 1 and Tier 2 | Alternatives - Routes | Harnish, Rick | Additionally, the State should consider the potential of leaving the existing corridor south of Springfield. This would overcome the challenge presented in the Macoupin Bottoms and the additional curvature present south of Springfield. It would then eliminate duplicating state investment when the State moves to construct 220- mph track linking these cities. Thank you for the opportunity to comment. | The Preferred Alternative generally follows the existing rail corridor. During Tier 2 studies, the modification to some existing curves, including south of Springfield, will be evaluated further to determine if changes to these curves could be made to allow for higher speeds (up to 110 mph). |
| OC19 | Tier 1 | General - Supports Project | Pedraza, Bill | As a citizen of Illinois, I am pleased to know that we are taking a bold step in bringing high speed rail to the Midwest. After learning about the various construction periods and the alternate routes that are being considered, I get the sense that our state representatives are reaching out and listening to our comments regarding the future of passenger rail in Illinois. I am also gratified to see our tax dollars being used wisely to build a better future for all by investing in our transportation infrastructure. I look forward to the start of this new service in the near future. | This comment that indicates support of the project is noted. |
| OC20 | Tier 1 | General - Supports Project | Bell, Ed | Kudos to the people of Illinois (where I was born and raised) for seeing the benefits of this investment. Sadly, the people of my current state of residence did not. | This comment that indicates support of the project is noted. |
| OC21 | Tier 1 | General | Hein, Wally | It appears to me Illinois and California are leading the nation in high speed rail projects! | Comment noted. No response needed. |
| OC22 | Tier 1 | Alternatives - Program Elements | Wind, David | what is the layout or position of the second track you are going to build through Alton IL. I was at a public meeting concerning this today. One of your representatives told me that there was detailed info on the proposed layout of the second rail line on this website but I can find nothing here. | A second track east of the existing track through Alton is described in the Tier 1 FEIS. Appendix A of the document provides a series of maps that illustrate the location of additional track throughout the corridor. |
| OC24 | Tier 1 and Tier 2 | Alternatives - Routes/ General - Opposes Project | Grieser, Dale | This is in regard to the location of the high speed rail road tracks through Springfield Illinois (including other tracks). I believe the Alternative 2A to be the best choice for the good of Springfield. However, I have never thought building a high speed rail line between St. Louis and Chicago was a good idea. I think it is a big waste of public funds. I hope it never happens. | This comment that indicates opposition to the project is noted. |
| OC25 | Tier 1 and Tier 2 | Alternatives - Routes | Tornatore, Gregory | I am writing to comment on the draft Chicago-St. Louis EIS. I am concerned with the portions of the document that address the portions of the route south of Springfield. The State of Illinois is currently conducting a feasibility study for a 220 mph high speed rail line that also includes this segment. I do not think that it would be prudent to go forward with the proposed land taking and investment in track and other improvements proposed in this segment of the UPRR route. Two other studies have already been completed which include this segment under the auspices of the Midwest High Speed Rail Association. While both looked at the UPRR alignment currently used by Amtrak, neither selected it. The problems with it include: >> * It is a number of miles longer than other historic rail routes, thus inherently slower. > * It is a strategic UPRR freight route which would be unsuitable for sharing with 220 mph trains, especially with the hourly, or better, service assumed in those other studies > * The state's agreement with UPRR limits speed to 110 mph and a limited number of daily trains (not all of them even being allowed to operate at 110 mph). > * It has significant curvature, which will limit trains to less than 110 mph, never mind future upgrade to 220 mph. > * Several miles through the Macoupin Bottoms are not | The Build Alternatives evaluated in this Tier 1 EIS would allow for maximum trains speeds of up to 125 mph through portions of the corridor. In a separate feasibility study, IDOT is evaluating the Chicago-St. Louis 220 mph High Speed Rail Express project concept. This service, at speeds up to 220 mph, may utilize existing rail corridors, a new corridor, or a combination of both, and could serve different travel markets. The 220 mph concept is intended as a complementary service to the Chicago-St. Louis high speed rail service that is being evaluated by this EIS. The Preferred Alternative generally follows the existing rail corridor. During Tier 2 studies, the modification to some existing curves, including south of Springfield, will be evaluated further to determine if changes to these curves could be made to allow for higher speeds (up to 100 mph). |

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| OC25 | Tier 1 and Tier 2 | Alternatives - Program Elements | Tornatore, Gregory | In the Northeast Corridor Amtrak has recently developed what it calls a "stair step" approach to implementing 220 mph high speed rail. This should be considered for Springfield-St. Louis as well. Making a major investment in double-tracking the current UPRR/Amtrak alignment would be inconsistent with that concept. My concern is that if a large investment is made in double tracking the UPRR for passenger operations it is likely to be very difficult to justify subsequent investment in another route for 220 mph operation. In truth, Illinois does not need two very closely parallel double track routes south of Springfield. I have no problem with moving forward with the segment north of Springfield; Illinois needs a double track railroad between Chicago and Springfield via Normal, whether a new route via Champaign is built, or not. >> | The proposed infrastructure improvements throughout the corridor will occur incrementally. The sequence of the staged improvements will be coordinated with the additional service being provided and the results of the modeling detailing the specific infrastructure required. |
| OC25 | Tier 1 and Tier 2 | Alternatives - Program Elements | Tornatore, Gregory | The scope of the portion of the Tier 1 EIS covering the route south of Springfield should be revised to analyze a broader range of alignments and, perhaps, an evaluation factor added for suitability for future upgrade as part of a 220 mph operation. The other feasibility studies found very straight routes south of Springfield that have little or no freight operations (daytime freight curfews would be possible). To minimize costs those alignments would not need to be initially made free of grade crossings (as would eventually be necessary for operation at speeds above 110 or 125 mph). These alignments would bypass existing stations at Carlinville (the village's population is about 6000; a stop could be established to serve the area a few mile to the east) and Alton (it should be replaced by a station more centrally located in the Illinois portion of the St. Louis metropolitan area). >> | The scope of this study was to evaluate the use of the existing railroad corridor. Evaluating improvements to accommodate 220 mph speeds is beyond the scope of this project. |
| OC25 | Tier 2 | Alternatives - Program Elements | Tornatore, Gregory | Finally, the major improvements that are planned for the segment through Springfield should be designed so that the 10th Street alignment can accommodate high speed trains coming from Champaign, and eventually become passenger-only (avoiding the need to mix trains designed for 220 mph operation with major freight train operations), with no at-grade crossings, with UPRR freights routed via the 19th Street alignment. The description of the alignment recommended in the Tier 1 EIS may well be general enough to cover this concept, although the description should be revised to allow for the possibility of splitting passenger and freight trains coming from Chicago on the UPRR route. Presumably, this concept would need to be analyzed in Tier 2. | Please refer to Volume II of this FEIS for a description of the Preferred Alternative through Springfield. |
| OC26 | Tier 1 | Alternatives - Routes | Twitchell, Doug | 1. On Page 6-9, it says: "As sensitivity analysis to support this assumption, UP evaluated the full double tracking of the corridor and then also evaluated the corridor if two segments of the route remained with single track. These two segments are located in the Macoupin Bottoms and near Alton, where construction may be more costly and impacts more significant, and they total 16 miles." This statement indicates that these two segments have such impact and costs that an alternative sensitivity analysis was made. However, the segments are never mentioned (at least in the same manner) in the Affected Environment section or the Environmental Consequences section, nor is the additional cost indicated in the Alternative section. Finally, the potential lack of double track on these sections is not mentioned as a possible alternative in the description of the alternatives. It seems that if these sections really are so important as to warrant running a sensitivity analysis, then they should appear in the other sections. It is possible that they do appear on the various maps, but since the sections are never identified by name on the maps (e.g., labeled as "Macoupin Bottoms"), it is difficult to determine if they are mentioned. If the environmental analysis did not find significant impacts on these two segments, then the statement | The impacts included in the Tier 1 FEIS are shown assuming a double track was constructed through the Macoupin Bottoms. The analysis completed by the UP was a test in this area to determine the impacts of reliability and timing in the corridor if this remained single track based on the anticipated environmental impacts. This is only mentioned as background information in the analysis of the full corridor. The Tier 2 EIS will include a more detailed analysis of impacts based on the Preferred Alternative. |
| OC26 | Tier 1 | General | Twitchell, Doug | 2. On page 6-5 it discusses a "Services Outcomes Agreement" and a "maintenance agreement" between IDOT and UP. Could these documents be made publicly available on idothsr.org ? | These documents are not available for posting on the website at this time. |

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| OC26 | Tier 1 | Alternatives | Twitchell, Doug | 3. On Page 6-10 it says that UP and IHB expect to interchange traffic at Argo using a connection being constructed in 2012. Later, on page 6-19, when discussing traffic between Chicago and Joliet, it discusses UP trains operating "all the way to the new connection at Brighton Park." Using "the" here makes it seem to refer back to some connection already discussed, but it couldn't be the one at Argo. I couldn't find any discussion of a new connection at Brighton Park. | A new connection is planned at Brighton Park as part of the Chicago Region Environmental & Transportation Efficiency (CREATE) program. The new connection is not part of the Tier 1 EIS. |
| OC26 | Tier 1 | General | Twitchell, Doug | 4. Exhibit 6.1-9 on Page 6-25 does not match its caption. It is the same stringline as in Exhibit 6.1-8 instead of the one showing traffic between Bloomington and East St. Louis. | Exhibit 6.1-9 will be corrected in the FEIS. |
| OC27 | Tier 1 | Land Use | Miller, Kendall Evergreen FS Inc. | I am the General Manager of Evergreen FS Inc., a farm cooperative serving the needs of thousands of farmers in Dewitt, Livingston, Macon, McLean and Woodford Counties. I just became aware of the proposal to expand the rail lines running adjacent to properties that we operate. Due to the late date of being made aware of this proposal, I was unable to attend any of the recent public hearings on the topic. I wish to express the concern of our patrons and owners regarding the proposed rail expansion that is being discussed through some of the counties mentioned above. Evergreen FS currently owns, leases, or operates facilities in towns that appear to be impacted by this expansion including Lexington, Chenoa, Towanda, McLean Grain Elevator, and a fertilizer facility that lies South of the town of McLean Illinois. In each of these various locations, we operate facilities that appear to be negatively impacted by the addition of a second proposed railroad line, or in the instance of Towanda, a proposed "pull out" set of tracks for a train to occupy while another train passes the area. First let me say that we are not opposed to progress and improved service to the area, however, we do have serious concerns regarding the potential dislocation of major components of our grain elevator facilities, as well as safety and other | The role of the Tier 1 EIS is to identify potential impacts to resources and structures along the corridor. The Future Tier 2 studies will further evaluate impacts and measures to avoid and minimize those impacts. If an impact is identified that cannot be avoided, mitigation measures will be identified that may include relocation of the structures or any other measure deemed necessary. |
| OC27 | Tier 1 | Land Use | Miller, Kendall Evergreen FS Inc. | With the limited time I have had to research the project, it appears that at Towanda that at least three of our permanent structures and possibly more would be within the "set-back" that would be required to be relocated if the project were to be completed as proposed. Many of these structures are an integral part of our business and would cause severe disruption of the traffic flow and business conducted if we are forced to make significant changes. I assume that property owners who may be forced to relocate would be adequately compensated for the cost of removal, relocation, and business interruption during this process, although I have been unable to confirm that this will be the case. I understand that we are "early" in the process and key components of funding, environmental impact, property acquisition, etc are yet to be decided; but we do hope that our voices will be heard at a later date if and when the project moves along toward a more concrete proposal. | Right-of-way purchases conducted pursuant to a federally funded program would follow the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Act of 1970 (Uniform Relocation Act) (Title 42 United States Code Sections 4601-4655), as amended, which applies to all federal or federally assisted activities that involve the acquisition of real property or the displacement of residences or businesses. IDOT would implement the provisions of the State of Illinois Relocation Assistance Plan in accordance with the Uniform Relocation Act. A more detailed analysis of impacts will be conducted in the future Tier 2 studies. |
| OC27 | Tier 1 | Public Involvement | Miller, Kendall Evergreen FS Inc. | As a property owner that will most definitely be impacted by this proposal, I would ask you to please include us (to my attention at the address indicated below) in any future mailings, notifications, or communications about the project so that we can be in attendance at future meetings to learn and participate to a greater extent in this process. Thank you for registering our concerns and written comments regarding the Draft EIS. | Individuals submitting comments on the project have been added to the project mailing list and will receive updates as milestones are reached during completion of the study. |
| OC29 | Tier 1 | General - Supports Project | Brubaker, Kevin Environmental Law & Policy Center | On behalf of the Environmental Law & Policy Center (ELPC), I am writing to offer comments for the record in the Chicago to St. Louis High-Speed Rail Tier 1 Draft Environmental Impact Statement ("dEIS"). For more than fifteen years our organization has been a vocal supporter of high-speed rail in the Midwest and along this corridor. We commend you for the work now taking place to bring 110 mph service to the corridor and for planning this next round of improvements in capacity and speed. | This comment that indicates support of the project is noted. |

Online Comments Received through the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) Website www.idothsr.org or Written Comments sent to IDOT

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| OC29 | Tier 1 | Alternatives - Routes | Brubaker, Kevin Environmental Law & Policy Center | 1. Access to Union Station: As you work to determine the preferred alternative from Joliet to Chicago, we urge serious consideration of the Rock Island route ("Alternative 4"). In our August 3, 2000 comments on the earlier Environmental Impact Statement for this corridor, we stated the following: "ELPC therefore requests that lot examine whether a connection to Union Station is feasible from the Rock Island line, a route that may prove preferable by offering less freight rail congestion and eliminating concerns raised by community leaders in Lockport. " A dozen years later, the freight congestion problems have only gotten worse while the cost to alleviate the congestion has risen dramatically. | Alternative 4D, the Rock Island District route (i.e., Section 2) is included as part of the Preferred Alternative. Please refer to Section 3.5 of FEIS for a discussion of the rationale for the selection of the Preferred Alternative. |
| OC29 | Tier 1 | Public Involvement | Brubaker, Kevin Environmental Law & Policy Center | Planning for the best approach to Chicago should not be done in a vacuum but should consider a host related: • High-speed trains from Detroit to approach Union Station without delays. Work is about to begin on an Environmental Impact Statement for rail improvements between Chicago and Detroit/Pontiac. Meanwhile, Illinois, Indiana, and Michigan have received federal funds to study for improvements between Union Station and Porter, Indiana. • A feasibility study is about to be released for 220 mph service between Chicago, Indianapolis, and St. Louis via Champaign. While it is premature to determine whether this particular proposal will prove feasible, planning for high-speed rail access to Chicago should be done in a way that contemplates major increases in speed and capacity in the future • The CREATE program has designated a "passenger express corridor" along the Rock Island Railroad between downtown and Belt Junction, then continuing along the Metra Southwest Service corridor. • An Environmental Impact Statement is being prepared for the Grand Crossing Rail Project to address the need for, among other things, Amtrak's City of New Orleans, Illini, and Saluki services to have a direct approach to Union Station. • Metra has plans for a variety of improvements to rail service on its | Undertaking a study of the entire terminal area is beyond the scope of the Tier 1 EIS. |
| OC29 | Tier 1 | Alternatives | Brubaker, Kevin Environmental Law & Policy Center | 2. Implementation Plan: Quite properly, this dEIS focuses almost exclusively on the potential impacts of a full build-out of the proposed project. While the Implementation Plan contained in Section 7 of the dEIS provides a rough outline of potential action steps, more analysis is necessary in order for IDOT and the public to identify those investments that can bring the most benefit for the least cost. This analysis should also identify the degree to which Metra and freight railroads benefit from the projects, thereby providing guidance on the appropriate share of the investment cost they should bear. The dEIS notes that "it is unlikely that a full double track corridor or a complete set of improvements listed in the Tier I DEIS would be necessary to support the initial incremental improvements along the corridor." We look forward to the time when the analysis is available to identify which investments will bring with them which benefits. In other words, we need value engineering as well as environmental documentation before investments can be made wisely. | Future Tier 2 studies will further evaluate implementing incremental improvements and the staging needed to achieve the full build out that comprises the Preferred Alternative. The high speed rail improvements that are proposed for this project are those that are needed to operate passenger service over the existing corridor and maintain it. These improvements are not needed to support Metra or freight service. The proposed project is intended to provide for the necessary improvements to allow the corridor to handle increased passenger service while avoiding impacts to the existing host service. |
| OC29 | Tier 1 | Energy | Brubaker, Kevin Environmental Law & Policy Center | 3. Environmental Benefits: We believe that in several instances the dEIS understates the benefits of high-speed rail to the environment. Section 5.3's analysis of energy consumption by high-speed trains appears to be based on the energy consumption of existing trains summarized in Table 4.3-1. In fact, modern locomotives and bi-level passenger cars are likely to be more efficient than existing rolling stock which is often decades old. Moreover, these figures are based on average load factors for each mode of transportation. In fact, high-speed trains along this corridor are likely to experience higher load factors than the average intercity train did in 2008. And on the other side of the equation, passengers who shift from automobiles to trains are likely to come from vehicles with below average occupancy levels; a business person travelling alone is more likely to find high-speed trains an attractive alternative from both a price and productivity perspective than is a large family. | The Tier 1 EIS did not identify the exact equipment that will be used for the future high speed service; therefore the energy savings could be conservatively low. More accurate data will be provided in future Tier 2 studies. |

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| OC29 | Tier 1 | Air Quality | Brubaker, Kevin Environmental Law & Policy Center | These same flaws apply to the air quality impacts described in Section 5.7. If more cars are taken off the road and if trains themselves are more crowded and more efficient, then the emissions reductions summarized in Table 5.7-2 are also understated. We also note that Table 5.7-1 appears to only show the emissions increases due to train operations but does not offset these with the reduction in emissions from other modes. * * * Thank you for this opportunity to provide comments. We look forward to continuing to work with the Illinois Department of Transportation to bring faster, safer, more convenient rail service to Illinois and the Midwest. | Comment noted. The FEIS acknowledges that there will be a reduction in emissions related to less automobile travel in the corridor; however, this reduction was not quantified. |
| OC30, OC33-36, OC38-49, OC51-59, OC60-66, OC67-74, OC76-82 | Tier 1 and Tier 2 | General - Supports Project | Multiple ¹ | Thank you for giving the opportunity to provide comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) that has been prepared for the Chicago, Illinois to St. Louis, Missouri High Speed Rail Corridor Program. Fast, frequent and dependable trains are critical to maintaining a vibrant economy. I applaud the State of Illinois for taking a leadership role in the development of high-speed rail in the Midwest. The investments outlined in the DEIS are urgently needed. The State should expedite construction of these improvements, with modifications as suggested below. | This comment that indicates support of the project is noted. |
| OC30, OC33-36, OC38-49, OC51-53, OC55-59, OC60-66, OC67-74, OC76-82 | Tier 1 and Tier 2 | Alternatives - Routes | Multiple ² | 1) Please develop a detailed plan for building a replacement for or parallel of the 21st Street bridge. As part of that planning, please return Option 4B, which includes a new, direct connection from the St. Charles Airline into Union Station, as an active option. | Alternative 4B was eliminated from further consideration in Section 3.3.4.2 of the DEIS. Please refer to Section 3.5 of FEIS for a discussion of the rationale for the selection of the Preferred Alternative. |
| OC30, OC33-36, OC38-49, OC51-53, OC55-59, OC60-66, OC67-74, OC76-82 | Tier 2 | Alternatives - Program Elements | Multiple ³ | 2) Please design the new 10th Street corridor in Springfield, IL to: * Eliminate highway grade crossings * Allow for passenger trains to access Decatur and Champaign * Create separate passenger tracks, with provisions for future electrification. | Please refer to Volume II of this FEIS for a description of the Preferred Alternative through Springfield. |
| OC30, OC33-36, OC38-49, OC51-53, OC55-59, OC60-66, OC67-74, OC76-81 | Tier 1 and Tier 2 | Alternatives - Program Elements | Multiple ⁴ | 3) Please design any new bridge or improvements to an existing bridge to serve as the crossing point for 220-mph Core Express trains. | Improvements to accommodate Core Express trains are beyond the scope of this project. |
| OC50 | Tier 1 | Biological Resources | Scheibelhut, David | Thank you for giving the opportunity to provide comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) that has been prepared for the Chicago, Illinois to St. Louis, Missouri High Speed Rail Corridor Program. Responsible management of design and construction of track improvements is necessary to safeguard the prairie remnants adjacent to the tracks. To protect these remnants I request: 1. New sidings and track be built on the right of way of past tracks. (The railroad was once completely double tracked between Joliet and the Alton Cutoff). 2. Prairie remnants should be surveyed and, as much as possible, be marked out of bounds for construction activities. Parking areas and places for holding construction materials and equipment should be outside of prairie remnants. These restrictions should be part of construction plans and clearly communicated to contractors. | Avoidance and minimization measures will be evaluated and identified in the future Tier 2 studies. |

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| OC51 | Tier 1 and Tier 2 | General - Supports Project | Zabaly, Nicholas | It is essential to the economic future of Illinois, and the entire Midwest, that rail infrastructure be continue to be improved. As the nation increasingly must seek energy efficient and user-affordable transportation alternatives in the coming decades, rail will need to take a larger share of the passenger mix. The improvements highlighted in the Draft EIS are commendable, and should be viewed as the first step toward a comprehensive plan to make the Midwest one of America's transportation leaders. As a user of Illinois' existing rail systems, both local/state-supported and long-distance Amtrak, the planned improvements will have a beneficial impact on my life, so I am very pleased with the progress being made. Thank you for striving to improve passenger rail in the Midwest, and please include plans for further improvements to true high-speed rail in your developments moving forward. | This comment that indicates support of the project is noted. |
| OC54 | Tier 1 | General - Supports Project | Osness, Glen | Thank you for giving the opportunity to provide comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) that has been prepared for the Chicago, Illinois to St. Louis, Missouri High Speed Rail Corridor Program. Fast, frequent and dependable trains are critical to maintaining a vibrant economy. I applaud the State of Illinois for taking a leadership role in the development of high-speed rail in the Midwest. The investments outlined in the DEIS are urgently needed. The State should expedite construction of these improvements, with modifications as suggested below. | This comment that indicates support of the project is noted. |
| OC54 | Tier 1 | Alternatives - Program Elements | Osness, Glen | It's great to see service improvements on this line which connects two of the largest cities in America via Springfield. Hopefully there will be double-track service with electric powered trains on this route soon. This could be an important beginning for a Chicago based Midwest Regional System involving electric-powered trains on existing tracks from Chicago to St. Louis, Indianapolis/Cincinnati, Detroit/Pontiac and Milwaukee/Madison. | Electrification of the corridor is beyond the scope of this study and is not required for 110 mph HSR service. IDOT is conducting a separate feasibility study to evaluate the 220 mph High Speed Rail Express project concept. |
| OC54 | Tier 1 | Alternatives - Program Elements | Osness, Glen | An airport shuttle could also be included that would provide direct service from Union Station to the O'Hare Transfer station on the Metra North Central line. | Evaluating an airport shuttle service is beyond the scope of this study. While this project does not include a shuttle service component, nothing would preclude private vendors from offering such services. |
| OC59 | Tier 1 and Tier 2 | Alternatives - Program Elements | Olson, Layton | 4) Please design the entire system and ROW assets to enable the system, surrounding communities, regions and the state benefit from fiber and wireless communication sharing, linked with; economic development, as well as to improve signaling and train management and world-class communication services for riders and transportation-oriented development., in concert with regional planning agencies all along the corridor, and with University of Illinois and other parties developing virtual infrastructure modeling and management tools for built and natural environment assets at grade, below grade and in the air. | Comment noted. No response needed. |
| OC66 | Tier 1 and Tier 2 | General - Supports Project | Thompson, Jim | I'm not an Illinois resident, but am from Iowa. I feel the progress made in Illinois toward developing high speed rail, especially to Iowa's borders, but other states too, will encourage not only Iowa, but these same other states, to build out a Midwest high speed rail network. The benefits have already been enumerated elsewhere, so I'll assume you know them. So, please seriously consider the Midwest High Speed Rail Association's proposals for the DEIS for the Chicago – St. Louis 110mph double tracking project. | This comment that indicates support of the project is noted. |
| OC72 | Tier 2 | Alternatives | Ratliff, Jerry | 4) I am curious how you will redo Springfield as it is residential trackage- switching to the other depot? | The passenger trains in Springfield will be routed on the new corridor to a new station along 10 th Street. |
| OC73 | Tier 1 | Alternatives - Program Elements | Woodard, Gwen | 4) I'd like to see Northwest Indiana included prior to Indianapolis. Gary, Indiana is the largest city in NWI and should be considered in the planned route. | The scope of the EIS is to evaluate improving high speed rail between downtown Chicago and downtown St. Louis. The consideration of extending the study area is outside the scope of the EIS. |
| OC74 | Tier 1 | Alternatives - Program Elements | Tomzik, David | 4) increase the number of trains to hourly service and work to reduce the travel time even further. | The Preferred Alternative includes nine passenger round trips daily in the corridor. End-to-end travel times are projected to be reduced by 35 to 39 minute travel time savings compared to the No-Build Alternative. |

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| OC75 | Tier 1 | General - Supports Project | Geigner Jr., Charles | As we speak my wife of 11 years and 3 year-old son are getting off the Texas Eagle at the Normal, IL station... We are from Bloomington/Normal and plan to return to that area someday in the future; however, we are now currently living in Dallas, TX. The reason I am taking the opportunity to write to you is to show strong support for double tracking the Chi - St. Louis regional corridor. I will keep this brief because I think I am preaching to the choir when I say: it makes no sense to have trains that travel 110 mph if every 30 miles they have to pull into a siding and stop and wait for an opposing train! Thank you for your time, and good luck on this historical project! | This comment that indicates support of the project is noted. |
| OC76 & 77 | Tier 1 | Alternatives - Program Elements | Multiple | 4) Please add more train lines to Lemont Illinois to Chicago and throughout other stops for the state. | The proposed infrastructure improvements included with the Preferred Alternative are considered sufficient to accommodate the projected level of passenger and freight train activity in the corridor. Additional evaluation will be conducted during future Tier 2 studies to confirm this. It should be noted, however, the route through Lemont was not selected as part of the Preferred Alternative. |

Logan County Regional Planning Commission

| Overall Comment Number | DEIS Volume | DEIS Section/Topic | Commenter | Comment | Response |
|------------------------|-------------|----------------------------|---------------|--|------------------------------------|
| LCRPC1 | Tier 1 | General - Supports Project | Will D'Andrea | Thank you for the opportunity to review the Tier 1 Draft EIS. The Logan County Regional Planning Commission would like to make IDOT and FRA aware of the fact that the adopted Logan County Comprehensive Plan does make the following statement: "The Plan supports the implementation of high-speed passenger rail service via Amtrak, which may provide alternative commuting options both to residents of the greater Lincoln area, and to persons from outside the County wishing to travel to Lincoln and Logan County". Given the limits of the scope of the Tier 1 review, the Logan County Regional Planning Commission does not have any specific comments at this time. We do look forward toward an opportunity to review a Tier 2 review when it is available. Thank you. | Comment noted. No response needed. |

McLean County Regional Planning Commission

| Overall Comment No. | DEIS Volume | DEIS Section/Topic | Commenter | Comment | Response |
|----------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---|---|
| OC18 | Tier 1 | Section 4(f) | Russell, Paul E. MCRPC | As the Metropolitan Planning Organization and the agency responsible for coordinating long range planning throughout McLean County, this Commission has reviewed the Chicago to St. Louis High-Speed Rail Tier I Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and offers the following comments. The Tier I DEIS does not discuss or appear to consider the proposed the McLean County - U.S. Route 66 Bikeway that extends from the Village of McLean to approximately 2.5 miles north of the Village of Towanda. The McLean County - U.S. Route 66 Bikeway project began in the late 1990's. In 1999, McLean County and the municipalities of Bloomington, Normal, Chenoa, Lexington, Towanda, and McLean entered into an intergovernmental agreement for the development of a bikeway in McLean County. The Project Development Report for this bikeway was approved by the Illinois Department of Transportation in September of 2008. McLean County received funding for a section from Shirley to Fox Creek Road in southwest Bloomington in 2009, with construction of the bikeway taking place in 2010. McLean County received notification of ITEP funding in October of 2010 for a section from Normal to Towanda. Phase II engineering is currently underway for this section with construction planned for the summer of 2013. | The role of the Tier 1 EIS is to identify potentially impacted elements along the corridor based on the anticipated double tracking. The level of engineering at this point is not sufficient to detail whether or not the existing or planned Route 66 Bikeway would be impacted. Part of the next level of study, referred to as Tier 2, would go to the level of detail needed to determine these impacts. IDOT will continue to coordinate with MCRPC during the more detailed Tier 2 studies regarding potential impacts to the U.S. Route 66 Bikeway and any measures needed to avoid, minimize, and/or mitigate these impacts. |
| OC18 | Tier 1 | Section 4(f) | Russell, Paul E. MCRPC | Further areas of concern that we have about the interaction of the projects are as follows: As previously mentioned, construction of the bikeway between the Town of Normal and the Village of Towanda is planned for 2013. We are currently developing plans for this construction project, but we need to have plan details for the high speed rail improvements at the intersection of Airport Road and U.S. Route 66 to move forward. We do not want to build a piece of the bikeway at this location in 2013 and have it removed by a intersection reconstruction project in immediate future; however, this project is very important to the community and a long term delay in the project is not desirable either. The participating municipalities would like a commitment on the planned timeframe for the intersection improvements to enable this section of the bikeway to move forward. Delays in the section of the project could also impede funding opportunities for future sections of the bikeway. | As part of the Tier 1 studies, detailed design of the proposed high-speed rail improvements is not available at this time. More detailed design will be developed and available during the Tier 2 studies. The schedule for these Tier 2 studies has not been determined. During the more detailed Tier 2 studies, IDOT will continue to coordinated with MCRPC regarding the project's potential impacts to the U.S Route 66 Bikeway Project. |
| OC18 | Tier 1 | General - Safety | Russell, Paul E. MCRPC | The need for safety and security fencing along this section of the bikeway is also a concern for the participating municipalities. If it is determined that fencing is required, the cost of such fencing installation and maintenance should be the responsibility of the High-Speed Rail project, as the fencing is not required to protect the bikeway as previously approved in the Project Development Report. | IDOT will coordinate with MCRPC throughout the project development process regarding safety issues for both projects. |
| OC18 | Tier 1 | Section 4(f) | Russell, Paul E. MCRPC | Coordination between the McLean County - U.S. Route 66 Bikeway project and the High-Speed Rail project is currently underway. Representatives from IDOT, McLean County, and the engineering consultant teams for the U.S. Route 66 Bikeway project and the Chicago to St. Louis High-Speed Rail met on June 8, 2012, in Bloomington, Illinois and on June 21 , 2012, in Chicago, Illinois to discuss the projects. We anticipate that these discussions will continue, but believe that this direct coordination effort should be reflected and supported in the formal Tier I Environmental Statement. | Those coordination meetings were part of the more detailed 2004 ROD improvement which are currently underway. These improvements represent a separate project than the improvements that are proposed in the Tier 1 studies. During the more detailed Tier 2 studies, IDOT will continue to coordinated with MCRPC regarding the project's potential impacts to the U.S Route 66 Bikeway Project. |

McLean County Regional Planning Commission

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| OC85 | Tier 1 | Transportation | Russell, Paul E. MCRPC | In its capacity as Metropolitan Planning Organization and agency responsible for coordinating long-range planning throughout McLean County, this Commission has reviewed the subject Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and offers the following comments for consideration. The Tier I DEIS does not discuss or appear to consider the proposed East Side Highway near Bloomington-Normal in McLean County, Illinois. The East Side Highway has been studied since the late 1990' s. A Feasibility Study was completed in 2005 and a Corridor Study was completed in 2009. Currently, an Environmental Assessment for the East Side Highway project is underway. The Environmental Assessment will be available for public review tentatively in the spring of 2013, and the study will be completed in 2014. The East Side Highway Environmental Assessment is led by McLean County, with a Project Study Group composed of IDOT District 5, FHW A, McLean County, the City of Bloomington, Town of Normal, and the McLean County Regional Planning Commission. An extensive Context Sensitive Solutions process has been employed for the study, and the public has been actively engaged. McLean County and the East Side Highway Project Study Group request that the Tier I DEIS be revised to acknowledge potential impacts of | The role of the Tier 1 EIS is to identify potentially impacted elements along the corridor based on the anticipated double tracking. The level of engineering at this point is not sufficient to detail whether or not the planned East Side Highway would be impacted. Part of the next level of study, referred to as Tier 2, would go to the level of detail needed to determine these impacts. IDOT will continue to coordinate with McLean County during the more detailed Tier 2 studies regarding potential impacts to the East Side Highway Project and any measures needed to avoid, minimize, and/or mitigate these impacts. |
| OC85 | Tier 1 | Transportation | Russell, Paul E. MCRPC | Details of possible interaction between these projects follow. The purpose of the East Side Highway is to improve local and regional mobility and access in the Bloomington-Normal area. Approximately 129 alternatives were developed and screened during the Environmental Assessment study. To date, four alignments remain. The East Side Highway is envisioned as a four-lane freeway with interchanges connecting to Interstates 55 and 74, with multiple intermediate interchanges to provide local access. Two interchange options at I-55 near the proposed location of the High-Speed Rail will be studied in the Environmental Assessment. One Connects to Northtown Road; the second connects to Ziebarth Road. Only one of these interchanges would be constructed. For the Northtown Road interchange, the intersection of Airport Road and US 66 must be realigned to the west. The East Side Highway Environmental Assessment will consider the proposed location of the High-Speed Rail. | Comment noted. No response needed. |
| OC85 | Tier 1 | Transportation | Russell, Paul E. MCRPC | Coordination between the East Side Highway and the High-Speed Rail projects is currently underway. Representatives from IDOT, McLean County, and the engineering consultant teams for the East Side Highway Environmental Assessment and the Chicago to St. Louis High-Speed Rail met on June 21, 2012, in Chicago, Illinois, to discuss the projects. | Comment noted. No response needed. |
| OC85 | Tier 1 | Section 4(f) | Russell, Paul E. MCRPC | The Tier I DEIS should also consider impacts on the continuing Historic Route 66 Bicycle Trail project. McLean County is the lead agency in this effort, which also includes the municipalities of Bloomington, Normal, Chenoa, Lexington, Towanda and McLean. A portion of the trail project connecting Normal and Towanda is programmed for construction in the summer of 20 13. This section of the trail will be substantially impacted by the rail improvements between the Town of Normal and the Village of Towanda. Continuing coordination between the high-speed rail project and the trail project is essential. Thank you for considering our comments. | As part of the more detailed Tier 2 studies, IDOT will continue to coordinate with McLean County regarding the High-Speed Rail Project's potential impacts to the East Side Highway Project. |

Town of Normal

| Overall Comment No. | DEIS Volume | DEIS Section/Topic | Commenter | Comment | Response |
|---------------------|-------------|--------------------|-----------------------------------|--|--|
| OC83 | Tier 1 | Section 4(f) | Brown , Gene C. Town of Normal | Town of Normal has reviewed the Chicago to St. Louis High-Speed Rail Tier 1 Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). The comments below are submitted on behalf of the Town of Normal. The Tier I DEIS does not discuss or appear to consider the proposed the McLean County - U.S. Route 66 Bikeway that extends from the Village of McLean to approximately 2.5 miles north of the Village of Towanda. The McLean County - U.S. Route 66 Bikeway project began in the late 1990's. In 1999, McLean County and the municipalities of Bloomington, Normal, Chenoa, Lexington, Towanda, and McLean entered into an intergovernmental agreement for the development of a bikeway in McLean County. The Project Development Report for this bikeway was approved by the Illinois Department of Transportation in September of 2008. McLean County received funding for a section from Shirley to Fox Creek Road in southwest Bloomington in 2009, with construction of the bikeway taking place in 2010. McLean County received notification of ITEP funding in October of 2010 for a section from Normal to Towanda. Phase II engineering is currently underway for this section with construction planned for the summer of 2013. McLean County and the municipalities participating in the project request that the Tier I DEIS be revised | The role of the Tier 1 EIS is to identify potentially impacted elements along the corridor based on the anticipated double tracking. The level of engineering at this point is not sufficient to detail whether or not the existing or planned Route 66 Bikeway would be impacted. Part of the next level of study, referred to as Tier 2, would go to the level of detail needed to determine these impacts. IDOT will continue to coordinate with MCRPC during the more detailed Tier 2 studies regarding potential impacts to the U.S. Route 66 Bikeway and any measures needed to avoid, minimize, and/or mitigate these impacts. |
| OC83 | Tier 1 | Section 4(f) | Brown , Gene C. Town of Normal | Further areas of concern that we have about the interaction of the projects are as follows: As previously mentioned, construction of the bikeway between the Town of Normal and the Village of Towanda is planned for 2013. We are currently developing plans for this construction project, but we need to have plan details for the high speed rail improvements at the intersection of Airport Road and U.S. Route 66 to move forward. We do not want to build a piece of the bikeway at this location in 2013 and have it removed by a intersection reconstruction project in immediate future; however, this project is very important to the community and a long term delay in the project is not desirable either. The participating municipalities would like a commitment on the planned timeframe for the intersection improvements to enable this section of the bikeway to move forward. Delays in the section of the project could also impede funding opportunities for future sections of the bikeway. | As part of the Tier 1 studies, detailed design of the proposed high-speed rail improvements is not available at this time. More detailed design will be developed and available during the Tier 2 studies. The schedule for these Tier 2 studies has not been determined. During the more detailed Tier 2 studies, IDOT will continue to coordinate with MCRPC regarding the project's potential impacts to the U.S Route 66 Bikeway Project. |
| OC83 | Tier 1 | Safety | Brown , Gene C. Town of Normal | The need for safety and security fencing along this section of the bikeway is also a concern for the participating municipalities. If it is determined that fencing is required, the cost of such fencing installation and maintenance should be the responsibility of the High-Speed Rail project, as the fencing is not required to protect the bikeway as previously approved in the Project Development Report. | IDOT will coordinate with MCRPC throughout the project development process regarding safety issues for both projects. |
| OC83 | Tier 1 | Section 4(f) | Brown , Gene C. Town of Normal | Coordination between the McLean County - U.S. Route 66 Bikeway project and the High-Speed Rail project is currently underway. Representatives from IDOT, McLean County, and the engineering consultant teams for the U.S. Route 66 Bikeway project and the Chicago to St. Louis High-Speed Rail met on June 8, 2012, in Bloomington, Illinois and on June 21 , 2012, in Chicago, Illinois to discuss the projects. We look forward to participating in the successful completion of this project and will put forth every effort possible to ensure that outcome. | Comment noted. No Response needed. |
| OC84 | Tier 1 | Transportation | Brown , Gene C. Town of Normal | Town of Normal has reviewed the Chicago to St. Louis High-Speed Rail Tier 1 Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). The comments below are submitted on behalf of the Town of Normal. The Tier I DEIS does not discuss or appear to consider the proposed East Side Highway near Bloomington-Normal in McLean County, Illinois. The East Side Highway has been studied since the late 1990's. A Feasibility Study was completed in 2005 and a Corridor Study was completed in 2009. Currently, an Environmental Assessment for the East Side Highway project is underway. The Environmental Assessment will be available for public review tentatively in the spring of 2013, and the study will be completed in 2014. The East Side Highway Environmental Assessment is led by McLean County, with a Project Study Group composed of IDOT/District 5, FHWA, McLean County, the City of Bloomington, Town of Normal, and the McLean County Regional Planning Commission. An extensive Context Sensitive Solutions process has been employed for the study, and the public has been actively engaged. The Town of Normal and the East Side Highway Project Study Group request that the Tier 1 DEIS be revised to acknowledge potential impacts of Chicago-St. Louis High Speed Rail implementation on the proposed East Side Highway, | The role of the Tier 1 EIS is to identify potentially impacted elements along the corridor based on the anticipated double tracking. The level of engineering at this point is not sufficient to detail whether or not the planned East Side Highway would be impacted. Part of the next level of study, referred to as Tier 2, would go to the level of detail needed to determine these impacts. IDOT will continue to coordinate with McLean County during the more detailed Tier 2 studies regarding potential impacts to the East Side Highway Project and any measures needed to avoid, minimize, and/or mitigate these impacts. |

Town of Normal

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|------|--------|----------------|-----------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| OC84 | Tier 1 | Transportation | Brown , Gene C. Town of Normal | <p>Details of possible interaction between these projects follows below. The purpose of the East Side Highway is to improve local and regional mobility and access in the Bloomington-Normal area. Approximately 129 alternatives were developed and screened during the Environmental Assessment study. To date, four alignments remain. A map of these remaining alignments is attached. The East Side Highway is envisioned as a four-lane freeway with interchanges connecting Interstates 55 and 74, with multiple intermediate interchanges to provide local access. Two interchange options at I-55 near the proposed location of the High-speed Rail will be studied in the Environmental Assessment. One connects to Northtown Road; the second connects to Ziebarth Road. Only one of these interchanges would be constructed. For the Northtown Road interchange, the intersection of Airport Road and US 66 must be realigned to the west. The East Side Highway Environmental Assessment will consider the proposed location of the High-Speed Rail.</p> | Comment noted. No response needed. |
| OC84 | Tier 1 | Transportation | Brown , Gene C. Town of Normal | <p>Coordination between East Side Highway and the High-Speed Rail projects is currently underway. Representatives from IDOT, McLean County, and the engineering consultant teams for the East Side Highway Environmental Assessment and the Chicago to St. Louis High-Speed Rail met on June 21, 2012, in Chicago, Illinois, to discuss the projects.</p> | Comment noted. No response needed. |

United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service

| Overall Comment Number | DEIS Volume | DEIS Section/Topic | Commenter | Comment | Response |
|------------------------|-------------|--------------------|-----------|--|---|
| NRCS1 | Tier 1 | Farmland | NRCS | <p>The proposed project as outlined in the EIS will have minimal impacts on prime farmland in Illinois. We have completed a Farmland Conversion Impact Rating (Federal Form AD-1006) for the corridor from Shipman IL to Godfrey IL in Jersey, Macoupin and Madison Counties. As the project progresses, we will need to complete additional ratings when corridor alignments have been finalized.</p> <p>Our contact for the Farmland Conversion Impact Rating process is Tim Prescott at (217) 353-6637. Please contact him directly if you have questions or need additional information.</p> | <p>Comment noted. No response needed. It is assumed that the AD-1006 completed for Shipman to Godfrey is related to improvements being advanced under the 2004 ROD.</p> |

Illinois Commerce Commission Transportation Bureau/Rail Safety Section

| Overall Comment Number | DEIS Volume | DEIS Section/Topic | Commenter | Comment | Response |
|------------------------|-------------|--------------------|-----------------------|--|--|
| ICC1 | Tier 1 | Safety | Stead, Michael ICC | <p>Section 4 (Affected Environment) of the Tier 1 DEIS document: Section 4.16.2.2 (Highway-Rail Crossing) indicates that the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) have regulatory jurisdiction over safety at crossings, pursuant to the Highway Safety Act of 1966. In Illinois, the Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC) has regulatory jurisdiction over safety at crossings. In addition, no mention is made of pedestrian-rail crossings or private highway-rail or pedestrian-rail crossings. This section needs to be rewritten to include that information. A suggested rewrite is noted below:</p> <p>There are two kinds of crossings: highway-rail and pedestrian-rail. Where a roadway, sidewalk or pedestrian trail/bikeway crosses the track at the same elevation, this is called a “grade” crossing. Where a roadway, sidewalk or pedestrian trail/bikeway passes over the tracks via an “overpass” bridge structure or passes under a railroad track via an underpass bridge structure, these crossings are referred to as “grade separated.”</p> <p>The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and FRA have regulatory jurisdiction over safety at crossings, pursuant to the Highway Safety Act of 1966 (HSA) (23 USC 401 et seq.). The HSA governs the distribution of federal funds to states aimed at eliminating hazards at highway-rail grade crossings. USDOT has issued regulations that address crossing safety and provides federal funding for the installation and improvement of warning devices through state departments of transportation. In addition to federal oversight and funding, states also monitor crossings and, in many cases designate funding to complement the federal funds.</p> <p>Jurisdiction over highway-rail grade crossings falls primarily to the states. This authority is set forth in the Railroad-Highway Grade Crossing Handbook (FHWA 2007a). Each state department of transportation is required to periodically inspect highway-rail grade crossings and to determine the adequacy of warning devices at each location, as well as to order safety improvements. USDOT oversees and approves the state determinations.</p> | This text has been modified in the FEIS to address this comment. |

Illinois Commerce Commission Transportation Bureau/Rail Safety Section

| Overall Comment Number | DEIS Volume | DEIS Section/Topic | Commenter | Comment | Response |
|------------------------|-------------|--------------------|-----------|--|---|
| | | | | <p>In Illinois, the Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC) has regulatory jurisdiction over safety at all public crossings (625 ILCS 5/18c-7401). No public road, highway, street, sidewalk or pedestrian trail/bikeway shall be constructed across the track of any rail carrier at grade, nor shall the track of any rail carrier be constructed across a public road, highway, street, sidewalk or pedestrian trail/bikeway at grade, without permission of the ICC.</p> <p>The ICC also has the power to require the separation of grades at any proposed crossing where a public road, highway, street, sidewalk or pedestrian trail/bikeway may cross the tracks of a rail carrier.</p> <p>All warning signs or automatic warning devices installed at public crossings in Illinois must meet the minimum requirements of 92 Illinois Administrative Code 1535. In addition, all warning signs or warning devices installed at crossings must comply with FHWA's Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) (23 CFR 646.214[b][1]). The MUTCD provides standards for the types of warning devices that must be installed at all highway-rail grade crossings (FHWA 2007b). FRA issued regulations under its railroad safety authority that impose minimum standards for highway-rail grade crossings (49 CFR 234-236). FRA maintains information for each highway-rail grade crossing based on information provided by the states and the railroads. FRA and FHWA coordinate research efforts related to highway-rail grade crossing collisions and provide guidance and solutions to problems.</p> | |
| ICC2 | Tier 1 | Safety | ICC | General - No information is shown for the installation of warning signs or automatic warning devices at pedestrian-rail grade and private highway-rail grade crossings. Based upon diagnostic reviews conducted at all crossings located within the Dwight to St. Louis portion of the Chicago-St. Louis Corridor, for which FRA issued a Record of Decision (ROD) in January 2004, it is our understanding that these types of crossings are scheduled to receive safety improvements. The proposed improvements should be included in the DEIS. | The proposed warning devices at the pedestrian and private crossings have been added to Appendix E. |
| ICC3 | Tier 1 | Safety | ICC | Page E-4 - Why are Four Quad Gates proposed for the Stephen Street grade crossing (MP 25.15) under the "No-Build" option? | The information regarding this crossing has been revised in Appendix E to address this comment. |
| ICC4 | Tier 1 | Safety | ICC | Page E-4 - Why are no warning devices shown for the West 135th Street grade crossing (MP 28.95) under the "No-Build" and Build" columns? | The information regarding this crossing has been revised in Appendix E to address this comment. |
| ICC5 | Tier 1 | Safety | ICC | Page E-17 – The Washington Street grade crossing (MP 73.95) is listed as being equipped with Four Quad Gates under "Existing". Our records show the crossing is currently equipped with standard flashers and gates (Gates). | The information regarding this crossing has been revised in Appendix E to address this comment. |
| ICC6 | Tier 1 | Safety | ICC | Page E-27 - There appears to be a duplicate entry for Sangamon Avenue. The railroad bridge that carries UP tracks over Sangamon Avenue (MP 182.80) is also listed on page E-26. | The information regarding this crossing has been revised in Appendix E to address this comment. |
| ICC7 | Tier 1 | Safety | ICC | Page E-28 - There is an entry for Iles Avenue (MP 187.35) with no crossing protection listed under the three conditions. According to the ICC and FRA databases, this crossing has been closed since December 2001. | The information regarding this crossing has been revised in Appendix E to address this comment. |

Illinois Commerce Commission Transportation Bureau/Rail Safety Section

| Overall Comment Number | DEIS Volume | DEIS Section/Topic | Commenter | Comment | Response |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|------------------|---|---|
| ICC8 | Tier 1 | Safety | ICC | Page E-31 - Four Quad Gates are proposed for Allen Road (MP 216.08) under the No-Build and Build options. It should be noted that local highway authority agreed to voluntary close this crossing (Commission Order T12-0048). | The information regarding this crossing has been revised in Appendix E to address this comment. |
| ICC9 | Tier 1 | Safety | ICC | Page E-33 - Four Quad Gates are proposed for Gilworth Lane (MP 234.57) under the No-Build and Build options. It should be noted that local highway authority has voluntary closed this crossing (Commission Order T12-0007). | The information regarding this crossing has been revised in Appendix E to address this comment. |
| ICC10 | Tier 1 | Safety | ICC | Page E-35 - An existing public grade crossing is not listed (Evans Street, Wood River, AAR/DOT #294453D, MP 264.20). Please note that an agreement is out to the parties regarding the voluntary closure of this crossing. | The information regarding this crossing has been revised in Appendix E to address this comment. |
| ICC11 | Tier 1 | Safety | ICC | Page E-35 – E. 7th Street (MP 265.2) is a private crossing according to ICC and FRA records. | The information regarding this crossing has been revised in Appendix E to address this comment. |
| ICC12 | Tier 1 | Safety | ICC | Page E-35 – The Pontoon Road (MP 272.64) grade crossing has been replaced with a Railroad-Under grade separation (Commission Order T02-0067). | The information regarding this crossing has been revised in Appendix E to address this comment. |
| ICC13 | Tier 1 | Safety | ICC | Page E-35 - Four Quad Gates are proposed for 20th Street (MP 275.05) under the No-Build and Build options. This crossing has been closed since March 2011 (Commission Order T02-0067). | The information regarding this crossing has been revised in Appendix E to address this comment. |
| ICC14 | Tier 1 | Safety | ICC | Page E-36 – Four Quad Gates are proposed for 2 grade crossings in St Clair County (Missouri Avenue and Trendley Avenue) under the No-Build and Build options. Diagnostic reviews of these crossings for proposed improvements were not included under the ROD project. Which railroad owns these crossings? | These crossings are not located along the HSR route and have been removed from Appendix E. |

Department of the Army, Chicago District, Corps of Engineers

| Overall Comment Number | DEIS Volume | DEIS Section/Topic | Commenter | Comment | Response |
|------------------------|-------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|---|
| ACC1 | Tier 1 | Permits | Corps of Engineers Chicago District | In the event that a Corps permit is requested in the future, the Corps must be provided with all coordination documentation for any alternative selected that would affect the Hine's emerald dragonfly, designated critical habitat for the Hine's emerald dragonfly, or other species yet to be identified within the project area. | A statement was added in Section 5.17 of this Tier 1 FEIS indicating that the Corps will be provided with this information when pursuing a Corps permit. |
| ACC2 | Tier 1 | Alternatives Biological Resources | Corps of Engineers Chicago District | Table 3.3-3 indicates the wetland acreage for each alternative. The alternatives that contain the lowest acreage of wetlands are: 2, 5a, 5b, 5c, 6a, 6b, and 6c with acreages ranging from 9.06 to 10.20 acres. For the two alternatives that were carried forward for further consideration, Table 3.3-3 identified 10.2 acres of wetlands for Alternative 2 (Section 1) and 21.57 acres of Alternative 4d (Section 2). | As noted in the comment, Alternative 2, which was carried forward, represents one of the alternatives with the lowest wetland impacts. It impacts only 1.16 acres more wetlands than the alternative with the lowest wetland impacts (i.e., Alternative 6B - 9.06 acres). Although Alternative 4D would result in one of the higher wetland impacts, it is important to note that, as indicated in Table 3.3-3, a combination of many other reasons were used in determining whether an alternative was carried forward or not. For the other alternatives with the lowest wetlands impacts (i.e., 5A, 5B, 5C, 6A, 6B, and 6C), the primary reasons for their elimination was passenger travel times and operational issues. Secondary reasons for their elimination included combinations of some of the following: passenger travel time; connectivity to passenger rail; number of railroads along the route; schools within the 200-foot corridor; length of residential areas along the alignment; floodplain impacts/crossings; potential Environmental Justice impacts; and cultural resources within the proposed right-of-way. As a result, it was determined that the combination of these primary and secondary reasons for eliminating these alternatives outweighed the single reason for carrying them forward based on lower |
| ACC3 | Tier 1 | Alternatives Biological Resources | Corps of Engineers Chicago District | Table 5.11-1 identified 1.1 acres of wetland impact for Section 1 and 5.6 acres of wetland impact for Section 2. The amount of wetland acreage present within each alternative corridor does not necessarily correspond with the amount of anticipated wetland impact, so it is difficult to use the acreage totals in Table 3.3-3 as a factor in dismissing any of the alternatives (with the possible exception of Alternative 1 with 73.12 acres). | Due to the number (16) and lengths (37-52 miles) of the preliminary alternatives evaluated in this section, it was not practical to develop detailed designs/construction limits of each alternative and conduct wetland field delineations. As a result, a standard 200 foot wide corridor was used to calculate wetland impacts based on NWI data for each alternative. Once the 16 alternatives were screened down to two, more detailed design was conducted on the remaining two alternatives to develop construction limits that were narrower than the original 200 foot wide corridor. These construction limits were then used to refine the wetland impacts, which were still based on NWI data. This explains why the wetland impacts presented in Table 3.3-3 are greater than those in Table 5.11-1. Although there may be a difference in the magnitude of wetland impacts between the two studies, it is assumed that the ranking of alternatives based on their wetland impacts would remain the same (i.e., The alternatives with the lowest and highest wetland impacts would be the same for both levels of study). More detailed alternative designs and wetland studies will be conducted during the Tier 2 level of analysis. Given the preliminary nature of this analysis, wetland impacts were not used |
| ACC4 | Tier 1 | Alternatives Biological Resources | Corps of Engineers Chicago District | In addition, Alternatives A and B (Section 1) involve a potential direct impact to designated critical habitat for Hine's emerald dragonfly, whereas Alternatives C and D (Section-2) do not result in this impact. Potential wetland impacts for Alternatives A and B in Section 1 are less than those in for Alternatives C and D in Section 2. As such, Alternatives A and B would be more favorable from a wetland impacts perspective, but Alternatives C and D would be more favorable from a Section 7 perspective. This could create a potential point of conflict. | Alternatives C and D (which include Section 2) have been identified as the Preferred Alternatives. The reasons for this decision are presented in Section 3.5 of this Tier 1 FEIS. |

Department of the Army, Chicago District, Corps of Engineers

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| ACC5 | Tier 1 | Alternatives Section 4(f) | Corps of Engineers Chicago District | The Joliet to Alton section has 2 alternatives around the Springfield area, but the remainder of this section contains only 1 alternative. Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie is located along the route. As stated in the document, Midewin is the first national tallgrass prairie in the country. Midewin is well known as being a high quality resource for the region. | The Tier 1 DEIS estimates that the impacts to Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie will involve a narrow strip of land generally less than 4 feet wide and approximately 1.4 miles long totaling approximately 0.6 acre. All of this land is immediately adjacent to the existing railroad right-of-way. Based on these impacts and because the prairie is already bisected by the existing railroad corridor, it would not be practical to develop and evaluate other new alignments or existing railroad corridor alternatives that would completely avoid the prairie. Such alternatives would likely result in substantially greater impacts to other resources and/or operational issues. During the Tier 2 study, however, more detailed engineering analysis will be conducted along the existing alignment to determine if these impacts can be minimized or avoided. |
| ACC6 | Tier 1 | Alternatives Biological Resources | Corps of Engineers Chicago District | Due to the difference in wetland acreages listed in Table 3.3-3 and the potential impact acreages listed in Table 5.11-1 as well as the potential conflict point between wetland impacts and Section 7 impacts in choosing a preferred alternative, additional alternatives should be retained. | See responses to comments ACC2, ACC3, and ACC4. Based on these responses, no additional alternatives were retained for further study. |
| ACC7 | Tier 1 | Alternatives Section 4(f) | Corps of Engineers Chicago District | Due to the high quality nature of Midewin, the feasibility of alternatives that avoid impacts to this resource should be investigated. | See response to comment ACC5. |

United States Environmental Protection Agency Region 5

| Overall Comment Number | DEIS Volume | DEIS Section/Topic | Commenter | Comment | Response |
|------------------------|-------------|--------------------|-----------|--|---|
| USEPA1 | Tier 1 | Purpose and Need | USEPA | <p>The background, current conditions and developing conditions that warrant considering the proposed HSR project are concisely presented and provide some clarification of this complex rail system.</p> <p>We understand that the Purpose and Need for this proposal is not to improve freight train operations in this corridor and that simply acknowledging this connected action is sufficient and adequate at this point in the DEIS.</p> <p>An increased ridership is projected for the 2030 horizon year. This raises some questions not addressed in the presentation. What is the minimum increase in ridership needed to support this project? Assuming the project is very successful in attracting new rail travelers, what maximum capacity will the proposed build rail system be able to accommodate? What is the ridership growth potential of this build proposal before additional system construction would be needed? If built as proposed, the projected ridership could vary dependent upon the fares charged. The DEIS indicates that this HSR proposal (maximum speed of 110 miles per hour) is an incremental step toward much higher speeds in the more distant future. The FEIS should discuss what factors would influence the pursuit of further upgrades to passenger train speeds in this corridor.</p> | <p>Additional analysis of ridership forecasts will occur during future Tier 2 studies. It is likely that when the Preferred Alternative is implemented, it will be done incrementally. The additional ridership forecasting and analysis will be used to assist in determining what incremental improvements (e.g., rail capacity improvements, additional trains, etc.) should be implemented first. The Preferred Alternative with eight HSR passenger round trips per day could accommodate over 5,000,000 passengers annually with maximum loading. At this time, future expansion of the Chicago to St. Louis Corridor beyond eight HSR passenger round trips per day is not envisioned.</p> |
| USEPA2 | Tier 1 | Alternatives | USEPA | <p>We commend the provision of screening selection comparison charts such as Table 3.3-3 and similar tables, Table 3-12, in the Springfield Tier 2 DEIS. They assist understanding what factors went into certain decisions.</p> <p>Because both the Merchants and the MacArthur Bridges over the Mississippi River are to be reconstructed, the FEIS should clearly commit to both Alton to St. Louis alternatives and include the impacts of both bridge improvements in the environmental analysis.</p> | <p>The Merchant Bridge Alternative(s) were eliminated during the preliminary screening process and were not carried forward for further evaluation in the Tier 1 DEIS (See Section 3.3.6 of this Tier 1 FEIS).</p> |
| USEPA3 | Tier 1 | Transportation | USEPA | <p>We appreciate that project impacts and costs are concisely summarized in Table 5.22-1.</p> <p>Freight Trains - The Purpose and Need section of the DEIS acknowledges the increased freight train operations associated with this project. However, the impacts of changes in freight operations are not discussed in the DEIS. These changes in freight operations include increase in the number of trains, length and speed of trains and shifts in time of day to accommodate HSR. These changes resulting from this project are direct impacts, add their own direct and indirect impacts, and should be fully addressed in the NEP A analysis. Section 6.3 (HSR train operations impacting freight rail service) does not address these project-related changes to freight operations. Subjects such as air quality, wildlife impacts, noise, vibration, crossing delays in urban and rural settings, and accident/spills/safety should be included in the impacts analysis. Regarding HSR impacts on freight trains, we recommend the FEIS include discussion of the compression wave and air turbulence impacts of HSR trains on passing freight trains, particularly those trains carrying containers. This air turbulence should also be discussed for its potential impacts to pedestrians (flying debris) and vehicles at crossings.</p> | <p>The increase in the number of freight trains is not a result of this project. Those additional trains are projected with or without HSR. Therefore, there are no air quality, wildlife, vibration or accident/spills/safety impacts related to increased freight train activity that should be attributed to the HSR project. There could be noise and crossing delay impacts associated with adjusting train schedules. However, there is not enough information available at this time to identify these impacts. The projected number of freight trains operating in the corridor was included in the noise analysis. A detailed analysis of the potential impacts of air turbulence was not conducted for this Tier 1 Study. Typically, these effects can be minimized through modification of the aerodynamic design of the locomotive.</p> |
| USEPA4 | Tier 1 | Alternatives | USEPA | <p>Major Bridges - The DEIS describes some design consideration for the three major river crossing bridges, the Chicago River at 21st Street and the St. Louis Merchants and MacArthur bridges over the Mississippi River, but impacts are not addressed. We recommend the FEIS specify all impacts associated with these reconstructions.</p> | <p>Because this is a Tier 1 level of study, there are no detailed designs for these or any other bridges to provide specific impacts. Also, Merchants bridge was eliminated as an alternative during the preliminary screening process (See Section 3.3.6 of this Tier 1 FEIS). Impacts are included as part of the overall impacts for the alternatives.</p> |

United States Environmental Protection Agency Region 5

| Overall Comment Number | DEIS Volume | DEIS Section/Topic | Commenter | Comment | Response |
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| USEPA5 | Tier 1 | Alternatives | USEPA | <p>Access Road - There is no DEIS discussion concerning impacts related to the access road to be constructed the entire length of the rail corridor, which is mentioned on page 3-19. While such a road may be simple by comparison to the railroad work, this should be studied to assure possible impacts are fully considered. One area may be threatened and endangered species and their habitats. Other topics that should be addressed in the NEP A documents for this construct include but are not limited to waterway crossings where applicable, stormwater runoff, dust particulate matter and safety.</p> <p>A significant number of Special Waste sites are noted within 200 feet of the rail right-of-way (ROW) (Table 5.14-2 and Appendix D). Most of these will only be a problem if construction disturbs them, and this is one specific reason the access road needs to be included in this NEPA analysis.</p> | An access road is included as part of the project's proposed footprint (See the Typical Sections in Appendix A of this Tier 1 FEIS). Therefore, the potential impacts associated with this access road are included. |
| USEPA6 | Tier 1 | Biological Resources | USEPA | <p>Threatened and Endangered Species - Summary information on page S-II and Section 5.6.2.3 addresses impacts to threatened and endangered species. After acknowledging critical habitat impacts and potential increased direct hit losses for the federally listed Hine's emerald dragonfly in proposed Section I, between Chicago and Joliet, the summary concludes "that this potential increase would have a minimal overall impact on the species." The DEIS does not provide information to support such a statement. The DEIS states, based upon computer database research, "there are no other critical habitats or known habitats or populations of other federally listed species located within the study corridor that could be impacted by any program alternatives. However, this Tier 1 level of documentation did not include detailed fieldwork to identify potential habitats and/or populations of threatened and endangered species."</p> <p>Table 5.6-3 and Exhibit 5.6-1 indicate that there is some knowledge of State Threatened and Endangered Species along the corridor south of Joliet. While the project intent is to remain on existing ROW, we recommend that FRA undertake a field analysis in this area. We believe gathering such information is prudent now so that options to avoid, minimize or mitigate impacts can be considered in the FEIS. We</p> | The statement "that this potential increase would have a minimal overall impact on the species." was removed from this Tier 1 FEIS. The results from the <i>Hine's Emerald Dragonfly Monitoring, Chicago to St. Louis High Speed Rail, October 2010</i> report have been summarized in Section 4.6.3 of this Tier 1 FEIS. Alternatives C and D have been identified as the Preferred Alternatives. Because both of these alternatives include Section 2, they would avoid any impacts to the Critical Habitat for the Hine's emerald dragonfly. Additional and more detailed field studies for threatened and endangered species will be conducted, as needed, as part of the Tier 2 studies. |
| USEPA7 | Tier 1 | Biological Resources | USEPA | <p>Migratory Birds - The DEIS analysis does not address protection of migratory birds, which is a concern for the corridor. Recent studies by the Illinois Natural History Survey (INHS) confirm that railroad corridors do have an impact on wildlife including migratory birds. We recommend further coordination with FWS and IDNR to address these impacts, including but not limited to impacts at the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie.</p> | Sections 4.6.2.3 and 5.6.2.2 of this Tier 1 FEIS have been revised to include a brief discussion regarding migratory birds and the project's potential impacts. More detailed analysis of migratory birds and further coordination with USFWS and IDNR will be conducted during the Tier 2 studies. |
| USEPA8 | Tier 1 | Socioeconomics | USEPA | <p>Environmental Justice - The DEIS provides limited information on Environmental Justice (EJ). The EJ Section simply identifies the number of qualifying EJ census blocks, with no accounting for numbers of people or households in those census blocks that may be impacted, Table 5.2-1. The DEIS lacks support for a conclusion of "no disproportionate impacts."</p> | The level of EJ analysis is acceptable for this Tier 1 study and it is noted in the document that more detailed analysis and conclusions will be made during the Tier 2 studies. The "no disproportionate impacts" statement was removed from this Tier 1 FEIS. |
| USEPA9 | Tier 1 | Noise and Vibration | USEPA | <p>Sensitive Noise Receptors - The noise and vibration impacts to receptors, especially EJ communities, are important. We commend the construction and operation reductions and mitigations presented on pages 5-54 through 5-58, and recommend these be clearly committed to in the FEIS. However, the noise analysis in Section 5.8.3 only considers train horn noise, and does not include the rail/wheel noise and distinct HSR noise(s) of operating trains at faster speeds. Here again, the freight traffic with heavy loads will contribute differently than the HSR trains and should be included in these DEIS impacts. We recommend the FEIS clearly delineate all project noise and vibration, so that impacts to sensitive community facilities and wildlife can be appropriately considered both in terms of decibels and increased numbers of HSR and freight trains. The DEIS is unclear as to the distance from the HSR corridor that was analyzed for sensitive receptors. Please clarify this in the FEIS.</p> | In addition to the train horn noise, the noise analysis also included the rail/wheel noise and the noise associated with the operation of the HSR and freight trains. The area of analysis extended out as far as necessary to identify impacts. As a result, the distance fluctuates throughout the corridor. Section 5.8.3 of this Tier 1 FEIS has been revised to provide clarification. |

United States Environmental Protection Agency Region 5

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| USEPA10 | Tier 1 | Transportation | USEPA | At-Grade Crossings - Appendix E presents the extensive list of rail crossings through the entire corridor. Most are grade separated and some additional ones, such as in Springfield, are being considered for grade separation. We recommend the FEIS discuss how increased speed and frequency of trains will affect users of the many at-grade private or commercial "access crossings. " | Impacts to users of the at-grade crossings are discussed Section 6.6.2 of the Tier 1 DEIS and FEIS.. |
| USEPA11 | Tier 1 | Water Quality/Resources | USEPA | Surface Water Crossings - Some of the 216 stream crossings will be replaced and others lengthened to accommodate the additional tracks. We recommend the FEIS commit to using bridging and/or three-sided open bottom culverts for waterway crossings wherever possible, to retain natural functions and avoid disturbing stream beds. | The Tier 1 level of analysis lacks the detailed design and environmental information necessary to make specific commitments regarding the use of bridges or culverts at stream crossings. This information will be provided in the Tier 2 studies. |
| USEPA12 | Tier 1 | Transportation | USEPA | Sustainability - We commend your agency for its consideration of sustainability concepts, Section 6.1.1.4, and recommend those concepts be clearly committed to in the FEIS and included in project contracting documents. These include commitments to maintenance, energy efficiency, water use minimization, green buildings, and corridor development synergies. | For a Tier 1 level of analysis, Section 6.1.1.4 sufficiently documents the project's consideration and general commitment to sustainability. Further consideration of sustainable measures will continue as part of the Tier 2 studies. |
| USEPA13 | Tier 1 | Mitigation | USEPA | We commend the inclusion of Table S.5-1 as a concept. We recommend it be expanded in the FEIS to list all project mitigation commitments and their associated implementation schedules, locations, responsible parties, and monitoring/maintenance/adaptive management. | The Tier 1 level of analysis lacks the detailed information necessary to make these types of mitigation commitments. The more detailed mitigation commitments will be presented in the Tier 2 studies. |
| USEPA14 | Tier 1 | Water Quality/Resources | USEPA | The DEIS mentions wellhead protection areas as a concern, but does not discuss how the proposal will avoid, minimize, mitigate impacts to wellhead protection areas. While these may be Tier 2 level details for final resolution, the Tier 1 document should discuss how these might be approached. | Section 5.9.2.5 of this Tier 1 FEIS has been revised to include additional information regarding measures to avoid, minimize, and mitigate impacts to wellhead protection area. |
| USEPA15 | Tier 1 and Tier 2 | General | USEPA | We commend the DEIS for its many clear and helpful exhibits. However, some exhibits are too small or poorly labeled to convey adequate information, including but not limited to: Exhibits 6.1-6 and 6.1-8 and the Springfield Tier 2 DEIS Exhibits 4-4 and 4-5. The Tier 1 DEIS includes stringline diagrams, Exhibits 6.1-4, through 6.1-9, which are more appropriately put in a technical appendix, as they are not self-explanatory to the general reader. The Springfield Tier 2 DEIS exhibits in Section 5 are insufficiently labeled to clearly describe the alternatives. | Exhibits 4-4 and 4-5 in the Tier 2 FEIS have been enlarged and the labels adjusted to improve clarity. The exhibits 5-1 and 5-2 in Section 5 of the Tier 2 Evaluation only depict Alternative 2A (5-1) and any difference associated with Alternative 2B (5-2). A complete description of the Preferred Alternative is included in Section 5.22 of the Tier 2 Evaluation. Exhibits 6.1-4 through 6.1-9 have been retained in the FEIS. A general description of a stringline diagram has been added to the text. |

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| USDOI1 | Tier 1 | Alternatives | USDOI | <p>3.3.4.2 – Screening Results for Chicago to Joliet Alternatives</p> <p>This section summarizes the results of Tier One screening of alternatives in the Chicago to Joliet portion of the project and provides reasons for eliminating alternatives from further consideration. Two alternatives, Alternatives 2 and 4D, are proposed to be carried forward for further study in Tier One based on meeting the screening criteria and purpose and need.</p> <p>The information and data developed for the Tier One screening process (summarized in Table 3.3-3) does not support the elimination of all alternatives except for Alternatives 2 and 4D. Specifically, Alternatives 4A through 4C should be retained because for some of the criteria for which they were eliminated, these alternatives performed as well (or nearly as well) as Alternative 4D, which is being retained. Some of these criteria include: operational issues, estimated average number of trains per day, capital cost, wetland impacts, and environmental justice. Alternatives 4A through 4C also performed better than Alternative 2 for some criteria such as: capital cost, right of way impacts, and threatened and endangered species impacts. Similarly, Alternative 3 should be strongly considered for retention because it performed as well (or nearly as well) as Alternatives 4D and Alternative 2 for several criteria. As noted in previous correspondence, Alternative 2 would impact the Hine’s emerald dragonfly and its critical</p> | <p>The primary reasons why Alternatives 3 and 4A through 4C were eliminated is explained in Section 3.3.4.2 and presented in Table 3.3-3 of the Tier 1 DEIS and this FEIS. As discussed in Section 3.5 of this Tier 1 FEIS, Alternatives C and D (which include Section 2) have been identified as the Preferred Alternatives. One of the reasons these alternatives were identified as the Preferred Alternatives was that they avoided the impacts to the Critical Habitat of the Hine’s emerald dragonfly.</p> |
| USDOI2 | Tier 1 | Section 4 Affected Environment | USDOI | <p>Subsection 4.6 – Natural Resources</p> <p>4.6.3 – Threatened and Endangered Species</p> <p>This section discusses critical habitat for the endangered Hine’s emerald dragonfly. Alternatives 1 and 2 intersect or are adjacent to designated critical habitat for the Hine’s emerald dragonfly. Please see the attached figure prepared by the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service, based on the project shapefiles that were provided by FRA and FWS’s own data on critical habitat locations. None of the other Chicago to Joliet alignments would impact federally threatened or endangered species or designated critical habitat.</p> | <p>Comment noted. No response needed.</p> |
| USDOI3 | Tier 1 | Biological Resources | USDOI | <p>Subsection 5.6 - Natural Resources</p> <p>5.6.2.2 – Ecological Resources</p> <p>The Affected Environment section (Section 4) contains information about the habitat and wildlife located within the project corridor, including: birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, and aquatic species. However, the Environmental Consequences section does not provide information about the wildlife that could be impacted by the proposed project (besides federal and state listed species). Wildlife identified in Section 4 should be discussed in the Tier One Final EIS. In particular, impacts to migratory birds should be discussed in detail as the project would result in the loss of suitable habitat (e.g., forest, prairie, and wetland). Additionally, migratory birds could be impacted by noise generated from the project. This issue will be further discussed in Subsection 5.8.</p> <p>This section also briefly discusses the impacts on wildlife habitat. Impacts to forest, prairie remnants, and protected natural areas are discussed. However, the discussion of protected natural areas focuses mostly on prairie remnants and state protected natural areas (e.g., nature preserves). The Tier One Final EIS should focus on all natural areas that are providing wildlife habitat along the corridor. It would be</p> | <p>Section 5.6.2.2 of this Tier I FEIS was revised to include a brief discussion of the project’s potential impacts to wildlife, including migratory birds and the potential for noise related impacts. This Tier 1 level of analysis did not include a detailed field survey of all general wildlife habitat along the corridor. As a result, these impacts were not determined as part of this Tier 1 study but will be evaluated in greater detail in the Tier 2 studies.</p> |

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| USDO14 | Tier 1 | Biological Resources | USDO1 | <p>5.6.2.3 – Threatened and Endangered Species</p> <p>Limited information is provided about the potential impact to the federally endangered Hine’s emerald dragonfly, though the impacts to its critical habitat and impacts to flying adults via collisions with trains are noted. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has provided substantial information regarding potential impacts to this species in our prior correspondence on this project, since we first reviewed the 2003 EIS and including our most recent comments on the 2011 Dwight to Joliet EA. These comments are enclosed and all comments regarding impacts to the Hine’s emerald dragonfly should be incorporated in the Tier One Final EIS. We agree that further coordination on threatened and endangered species impacts will continue during the Tier Two stage of the project, for all federally listed species (as suitable habitat may occur within the proposed right-of-ways). We anticipate that review of the habitat assessments and associated floristic quality assessments discussed in our November 10, 2011, correspondence with FRA regarding the Joliet to Dwight Project EA and FONSI will be needed to determine if suitable habitat is present for other federally listed species throughout the alternative corridors.</p> <p>The Draft EIS should clarify that the Hine’s emerald dragonfly occurs not only in designated critical habitat but is additionally known to occur around critical habitat units 4 and 7.</p> <p>Table 5.6-3, which lists state threatened and endangered species, should include the Hine’s emerald dragonfly, which is also a state endangered species. The EIS should also be edited to clarify that the state listed species leafy prairie clover is also federally listed as endangered, and the state listed Mead’s milkweed is federally listed as a threatened species. The leafy prairie clover has at least three</p> | <p>As discussed in Section 3.5 of this Tier 1 FEIS, Alternatives C and D (which include Section 2) have been identified as the Preferred Alternatives. One of the reasons these alternatives were identified as the Preferred Alternatives was that they avoided the impacts to the Critical Habitat of the Hine’s emerald dragonfly. Based on the Tier 1 level of analysis, more detailed information regarding potential impacts to the Hine’s emerald dragonfly can not be provided at this time. However, additional information from the <i>Hine’s Emerald Dragonfly Monitoring, Chicago to St. Louis High Speed Rail, October 2010</i> report has been included in Section 4.6.3 of this Tier 1 FEIS. As part of the Tier 2 studies, further coordination with USFWS will continue and more detailed studies will be conducted as needed for all federally listed species that may be located within the project area. All USFWS comments/correspondence regarding the Hine’s emerald dragonfly have been included in Appendix F of this Tier 1 FEIS.</p> <p>Sections 4.6.3 and 5.6.2.3 of this Tier 1 FEIS have been revised to include a brief discussion regarding the critical habitat units. Exhibit 4.6-11 has also been revised to show all of the critical habitat units.</p> <p>Table 5.6-3 and Section 5.6.2.3 of this Tier 1 FEIS have been revised in accordance with the comments provided regarding the Hine’s emerald dragonfly, leafy prairie clover, and the Mead’s milkweed.</p> |
| USDO15 | Tier 1 | Noise and Vibration Biological Resources | USDO1 | <p>Subsection 5.8 – Noise and Vibration</p> <p>Noise impacts to wildlife resources, particularly migratory birds, are not discussed in this section. Several studies indicate that noise can adversely affect migratory birds (we can provide reference materials to FRA if requested). The Tier One Final EIS should evaluate the potential impacts to wildlife, particularly migratory birds, from increased noise and vibration resulting from increases in train frequency and speed for the alternatives considered. These impacts should be addressed in either Subsection 5.6 or 5.8.</p> | <p>Section 5.6.2.2 of this Tier 1 FEIS has been revised to include a brief discussion regarding the potential noise impacts to wildlife.</p> |
| USDO16 | Tier 1 | Biological Resources | USDO1 | <p>Subsection 5.17 - Permits</p> <p>This section includes the statement that “if endangered species are identified during program implementation, all activity in the immediate area would cease.” We assume this statement should read “if previously unknown occurrences of endangered species are identified during program implementation, all activity in the immediate area would cease. Coordination with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service would be initiated as required by section 7 of the ESA.”</p> <p>For all federally listed species and critical habitat already known to occur in the project area, we anticipate continuing to work with FRA through the Tier 2 and informal consultation process to avoid and minimize impacts to listed species in compliance with section 7 of the ESA.</p> | <p>Section 5.17 of this Tier 1 FEIS has been revised in accordance with the comment.</p> |

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| USDO17 | Tier 1 | Indirect and Cumulative | USDO1 | <p>5.19.2 – Build Alternatives</p> <p>In regard to indirect impacts, the Tier One Draft EIS focuses on the project’s potential to induce development in the vicinity of the train stations and determined that the project would result in negligible indirect impacts. The U.S Fish and Wildlife Service believes this assessment of indirect impacts is narrow in scope and that FRA should expand its assessment of indirect impacts. Specifically, FRA should consider the indirect impacts to wildlife and their habitats. Examples of these indirect impacts would be the loss or fragmentation of forested, wetland, or prairie habitats and the associated loss of wildlife. Potential impacts of noise on wildlife could also be considered as there are areas identified within the corridor with concentrations of migratory birds that could be affected (e.g., Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie). The Tier Two Final EIS should fully assess all possible impacts to wildlife resources.</p> <p>Similarly, the Tier Two Final EIS should fully assess all possible impacts to wildlife resources as related to cumulative impacts. The Tier One Draft EIS indicates that cumulative impacts to natural resources would be negligible. Without additional information on the habitats described in the Draft EIS, specifically for information on these natural resources outside of the project corridor, we cannot concur with FRA’s assessment.</p> | <p>The impacts to wildlife would primarily be limited to narrow, linear strips of edge habitat that are immediately adjacent to the existing and active railroad right-of-way. As a result, habitat fragmentation would not be an issue with this project. In addition, the wildlife species typically inhabiting these areas will likely be considered edge species that are associated with disturbed conditions and have become habituated to railroad activity. Section 5.6.2.2 of this Tier 1 FEIS has been revised to include a brief discussion regarding the potential noise impacts to wildlife.</p> <p>Based on the level of analysis for a Tier 1 study and the reasons provided in Section 5.19.2.1 of this Tier 1 FEIS, it is anticipated that the project will have negligible cumulative impacts to natural resources. However, the project’s potential cumulative impacts to natural resources will be evaluated again in greater detail during the Tier 2 studies.</p> |
| USDO18 | Tier 1 | Biological Resources | USDO1 | <p>Subsection 5.21 - Irreversible and Irrecoverable Commitments of Resources</p> <p>This section is confusing, in that it appears to say that impacts to prairie and forested habitats are irreversible, but that the build alternatives would not result in irreversible and irretrievable commitments of resources for natural areas, threatened or endangered species, or water resources. We do not agree with this assessment since prairie and forested habitats are natural areas which could provide habitat for listed species. We note also that this section should recognize that extirpation of a federally listed species from its critical habitat would represent an irretrievable commitment of resources. The Tier Two Final EIS should be updated to consider all wildlife resources.</p> | <p>Section 5.21 of this Tier 1 FEIS has been revised to address the confusion raised about this section.</p> |
| USDO19 | Tier 1 | Mitigation | USDO1 | <p>Subsection 5.23 – Potential Mitigation Measures</p> <p>This section discusses mitigation for impacts to prairies, federal and state listed species, and wetlands. However, this section does not discuss mitigation for impacts to forested areas or migratory birds (from loss of habitat or noise impacts); mitigation for these should be discussed in the Tier Two Final EIS.</p> | <p>Section 5.23 of this Tier 1 FEIS has been revised to include mitigation measures for forests. Potential mitigation measures for migratory birds will be addressed during the Tier 2 study when more detailed information is available.</p> |

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| USDOI10 | Tier 1 | Biological Resources | USGS | <p>In addition, the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) had specific comments on wildlife.</p> <p>4.6.2.3 Wildlife</p> <p>Pg. 4-32: The document provides a cursory description of wildlife that may be impacted; however, the information on bird species and population trends is limited. We suggest the Final EIS include the data and information available in the USGS Breeding Bird Survey, and in Sauer et al, 2011. The USGS Breeding Bird Survey includes routes that are close to the project area.</p> <p>The locations of the routes can be found on the internet at http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/BBS/results/routemaps/routeMapStatic.html</p> <p>The list of species for each route can be found on https://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/BBS/PublicDataInterface/index.cfm</p> <p>Routes can be found on http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/BBS/results/routemaps/routeAssignMap.cfm.</p> <p>Additional information on the trends in bird populations can be found at http://www.mbrpwrc.usgs.gov/bbs/bbs.html and in the publication: Sauer, J. R., J. E. Hines, J. E. Fallon, K. L. Pardieck, D. J. Ziolkowski, Jr., and W. A. Link, 2011, The North American Breeding Bird Survey, Results and Analysis 1966 - 2010. Version 12.07.2011 USGS Patuxent Wildlife Research Center, Laurel, MD; available online at http://www.mbr-pwrc.usgs.gov/bbs.</p> | <p>More detailed information and analysis regarding the project's potential impacts to birds will be provided during the Tier 2 studies.</p> |

Illinois Historic Preservation Agency

| Overall Comment Number | DEIS Volume | DEIS Section/Topic | Commenter | Comment | Response |
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| IHPA1 | Tier 1 and Tier 2 | Cultural Resources | IHPA | <p>We have reviewed the referenced documents in accordance with our responsibilities pursuant to section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended. First, let me say that I really appreciate the time and effort that the Federal Railroad Administration, the Illinois Department of Transportation and the various consultants have devoted to this project to ensure cultural resources are fully considered during this planning process.</p> <p>These documents adequately identify historic resources and possible effects that will occur as a result of project implementation.</p> <p>We understand that for the Phase I for the project as a whole from Joliet to the Mississippi River, a literature search for historic properties was all that was performed but that a more in depth look at properties and affects to them will be completed as a part of the Phase II Environmental Impact Statement.</p> <p>For the Springfield Tier 2 portion, we concur that the 10th Street Corridor will have minimal adverse effects to historic properties as compared to the 3rd Street corridor. We urge the 10th Street Corridor be adopted as the preferred alternative.</p> | Comment noted. No response needed. |

Illinois Department of Natural Resources

| Overall Comment Number | DEIS Volume | DEIS Section/Topic | Commenter | Comment | Response |
|------------------------|-------------|----------------------|--|---|------------------------------------|
| IDNR1 | Tier 1 | Biological Resources | Hamer, Steve Illinois Department of Natural Resources | The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) has reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) Tier 1 for the Chicago to St. Louis High-Speed Rail. We offer the following comments for your consideration. The main thought that should continue to be considered as this project progresses through the planning and design phase, is to implement the "avoidance and minimization" concept of impacts to natural resources on the landscape. In the DEIS, reference is made to the continued coordination with IDNR for studies/surveys to be completed concerning prairie remnants, state listed species and wetlands. Results of those surveys will be made available for review and comment as the project progresses during the Tier 2 phase. Currently, coordination efforts are ongoing for the Eryngium stem borer (state listed insect) that is present within the proposed improvements along the UPRR tracks, between Dwight and Pontiac Illinois. Application for an Incidental Take Authorization (ITA) has been submitted and is being processed at this time. In keeping with the resource policies established by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, the Interagency Wetland Policy Act allows a three year time period for wetland impact determinations and wetland compensation plans to be | Comment noted. No response needed. |

Illinois Environmental Protection Agency

| Overall Comment Number | DEIS Volume | DEIS Section/Topic | Commenter | Comment | Response |
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| IEPA1 | Tier 1 | Water Quality/Resources Special Waste | Bonnett, Lisa IEPA | Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Chicago to St. Louis High-Speed Rail Corridor. The Agency has no objections to the project; however a permit will be required from the Division of Water Pollution Control for modifications to any existing sewer or the construction of new sewer mains or connections. In addition, a Section 401 water quality certification will have to be obtained. If one or more acres are disturbed during construction, a construction site activity stormwater NPEDS permit will be required as well. Please contact Al Keller at 217-782-0610 with questions. Also demolition, asbestos and lead paint should be addressed before actual repairs are preformed to ensure proper abatement is done if needed. If demolition and/or abatement are needed, notification will be required 10 days prior to the project start date. Contact Alan Grimmett for all questions on this matter at 217-557-1438. In addition, solid and hazardous waste must be properly disposed of or recycled. | Comment noted. No response needed. |

United States Coast Guard, Ninth Coast Guard District

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| USGC1 | Tier 1 | Permits | Striffler, Scot Ninth Coast Guard District | I am responding to the Draft EIS and request for comments regarding the Tier 1 evaluation for the Chicago to St. Louis High-Speed Rail Corridor Program. Commander, Ninth Coast Guard District, would only be involved for aspects of the Program within the Chicago to Joliet portion of the study. Our Area of Responsibility includes Chicago Sanitary Ship Canal, Des Plaines River, and Chicago River northward of Lockport Lock in Lockport, IL (approximate river mile 291.0 and above). The alternatives carried forward within the Chicago to Joliet area (#2 and #4D) appear to include utilization of the existing AMTRAK bridge and facilities over South Branch of Chicago River (between Canal Road and 18th Street on the river). The drawbridge provides 10-feet of vertical clearance for vessels in the closed position. The existing AMTRAK bridge is the only drawbridge on South Branch of Chicago River required to open for every commercial tug/barge passage between downtown Chicago and Lockport, as well as for other commercial or recreational vessels that cannot pass under the drawbridge in the closed position. It is our understanding the existing drawbridge carries Union Pacific freight trains, AMTRAK trains, and other local commuter trains into Union Station. It is a very busy crossing for both rail and vessel traffic. Efficient management | Comment noted. No response needed. |

United States Department of Commerce

| Overall Comment Number | DEIS Volume | DEIS Section/Topic | Commenter | Comment | Response |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|--|--|------------------------------------|
| USDOC1 | Tier 1 | Socioeconomics | Tamayo, Jeannette US Department of Commerce | Thank you for your letter July 3, 2012 requesting Economic Development Administration (EDA) comments with regards to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Chicago, Illinois to St. Louis, Missouri High-Speed Rail Corridor Program. EDA's mission is to generate jobs, help retain existing jobs and stimulate industrial and commercial growth in economically distressed areas. This is accomplished through grant programs that are available to rural and urban areas experiencing high unemployment, low income or other severe economic distress. At this point, EDA does not have any concerns or issues that need to be addressed regarding the DEIS for the high-speed rail service from Chicago to St. Louis. If you have any other concerns or questions, you may contact Robin D. Bush, Coordinator, Environmental & Strategic Analysis at 312-353-8143 ext. 146. EDA encourages investments that will significantly benefit areas experiencing or threatened with substantial economic distress and has the potential to increase high wage jobs and private sector investment. We appreciate your recognition of EDA and its programs. | Comment noted. No response needed. |

RAILROADS

| Overall Comment Number | DEIS Volume | DEIS Section/Topic | Commenter | Comment | Response |
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| RR1 | Tier 1 | Alternatives | METRA | Metra supports the conclusion of the DEIS that further study is required to determine whether the CN/Heritage Corridor or the Metra/Rock Island District and Norfolk Southern route is preferable for the operation of HSR service between Joliet and Chicago. Metra requests the opportunity to provide input at all appropriate opportunities during this more detailed Tier 2 evaluation. Metra supports the development and analysis of the "Further improvements ... to support future additional commuter rail service," as described in the Summary (S-20). | Comment noted. No response needed. |
| RR2 | Tier 1 | Public Involvement | METRA | In the subsequent Tier 2 studies, additional efforts should be made to include all stakeholders, especially right-of-way owners in the process early and often during the studies. | Comment noted. No response needed. |
| RR3 | Tier 1 | Transportation | METRA | S-19 The text asserts that Metra has no plans for changing or expanding the existing service along the Rock Island District. Note that Metra is currently embarking on a strategic planning effort and final determination of what service modifications or expansions are reflected in the resulting strategic plan have not yet been determined. Furthermore, Metra reserves the right to consider service expansions in the future in order to meet passenger demand and operating requirements. (see also 6-45) | As the Chicago to St. Louis HSR Program moves forward, coordination with Metra will continue. |
| RR4 | Tier 1 | Transportation | METRA | S-20 Note that Metra's plans to construct the new Romeoville Station on the Heritage Corridor, referenced as "a new station between Lemont and Lockport," are not dependent on the proposal to increase commuter service on this line. The current phrasing suggested they are related. (see also 6-45) | Comment noted. The text related to the planned changes along Metra's Heritage Corridor has been modified in the FEIS. |
| RR5 | Tier 1 | Transportation | METRA | S-22 Why is it assumed that the additional vehicular traffic that necessitates proposed parking expansions would not create any access or traffic congestion problems associated with the Build Alternatives? | Planning for the intercity passenger stations has been conducted and includes an evaluation of parking. Additional parking has been identified at these stations where it is projected that it will be needed. Based on the number of parking spaces planned, impacts to vehicular access around the stations is not anticipated. |
| RR6 | Tier 1 | Alternatives | METRA | 1-2 This list of anticipated decisions does not clearly reflect that the selection of the preferred alternative from Chicago to Joliet routing is subject to a further Tier 2 Analysis. This should be reflected to address this more clearly. | A Preferred Alternative has been identified in this FEIS. See Section 3.5. |
| RR7 | Tier 1 | Transportation | METRA | 3-33 Note that the proposed Metra HC station at Romeoville (135th Street) and the proposed Metra Rock Island station at Auburn Park (78th Street) should be reflected in this list that would require further study in Tier 2 environmental studies. These stations are currently being designed, but appropriate accommodations should be reflected into the station designs. | These stations will be added to the referenced list. |
| RR8 | Tier 1 | Alternatives | METRA | 3-53 Section 1 and Section 2- The text does not discuss the congestion at the 21st Street vertical lift bridge. There are over 100 passenger, freight and yard movement trains a day that use this bridge. This bridge is a source of train congestion and delays. The EA evaluated building a new double track bridge over the Mississippi River at the Merchants Bridge location that has 64 trains a day. Since this bridge has over 100 trains a day, the bridge and the associated track interlocking plants on both sides of the bridge should be evaluated. Since there are more trains over this bridge than the Merchants Bridge, it would be logical for the study to consider adding a second double track bridge at the Chicago 21st Street Bridge location which would reduce running time a little, significantly reduce train delays and thus improve on-time performance. There is an operational double track railroad bridge that does not have tracks connecting to it anymore, the C&WI bridge just north of Torrence Avenue and 126th Street in Chicago over the Calumet River. This railroad bridge is a few feet longer than the existing 21st Street railroad bridge. Section - 2 The study does not address track and route capacity issues between 40th Street on the Metra RID and also on the NS between 40th Street and the 21st Street Chicago River Vertical Lift | The 21st Street bridge as well as other needed capacity improvements will be further evaluated in a future Tier 2 studies. |

RAILROADS

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| RR9 | Tier 1 | Alternatives | METRA | 3-58 The assumption that a new station between Chicago and Joliet should be developed at I-294 ignores the fact that new highway entrance/exit ramps on I-294 would likely be impossible or incredibly expensive due to existing geography including bridges over the Des Plaines River and the Sanitary & Ship Canal. The current access from I-294 to the Metra Willow Springs Station via 75th Street, Willow Springs Road, Archer Avenue and Market Street provides easy access to an existing rail station location in this vicinity from an existing highway interchange that could be easily signed to provide clear motorist direction to the station. We recommend removing or revising this reference accordingly. The need to analyze impacts in the Tier 2 study to existing Metra stations on both routes between Joliet and Chicago should be mentioned. Also, it may be better to analyze utilizing an existing Metra station that is convenient to the Interstate Highway system for HSR trains instead of building a new station. Passengers could easily transfer to and from Metra trains at that station in addition to Joliet. It would also reduce track maintenance problems associated with station platforms at an additional location. Pedestrian grade crossing improvements or pedestrian grade separations at Metra stations should be considered in | Text related to future station locations has been modified in the FEIS. The reference to I-294 was made to indicate that access to existing highway facilities would be considered as part of determining where a future station would be located. The potential for using an existing Metra station is also now noted. The need to evaluate modifications at existing Metra stations, including the pedestrian improvements identified in this comment, was included in Section 3.3.4.1 of the DEIS. This language has been retained in the FEIS. |
| RR10 | Tier 1 | Alternatives General - Funding/Costs | METRA | 3-62 Since this appears to account for the largest source of variation in the cost estimates between alternatives, the description in the first non-bulleted paragraph could be made clearer to the reader by specifically citing the number of flyovers proposed in each of the two Chicago to Joliet segments. The Joliet EJ&E flyover may negatively impact Metra's Joliet Coach Yard. This impact and related cost are not included in the document. There is no mention of potential additional crossovers on 3rd mainline track on the Metra RID alignment in the report. The potential construction of pedestrian underpasses at Metra stations is not mentioned nor included in the cost estimate. The current 2012 under construction Tinley Park 80th Avenue pedestrian tunnel underpass has a cost of \$2 Million. | The description on page 3-62 of the DEIS provides an overview of what was included in the cost estimate and is not intended to quantify project elements. Any potential impact to Metra's Joliet Coach Yard would have to be further evaluated in future Tier 2 studies. Additional crossovers were included in the per mile track costs used to develop the cost estimates for the Program, including for the Rock Island District route (i.e., Section 2). Estimated costs for improvements that would be required at the existing Metra stations were also included in the overall alternative cost estimates. |
| RR11 | Tier 1 | Alternatives General - Funding/Costs | METRA | 3-62-4 The cost estimates do not appear to reflect additional costs for commuter station reconstruction when new grade separations are constructed on adjacent roadways. If this cost is reflected in the estimates, it should be clearly identified. The following locations proposed for highway grade separations may impact adjacent commuter rail station facilities: ID Crossing Name Station Name 1265 West 95th Street Longwood (95th Street) 1261 West 103rd Street Washington Heights (103rd Street) 1252 West Vermont Street Vermont Street 1244 139th Street Robbins 1241 147th Street Midlothian 1231 Oak Park Avenue Tinley Park 1229 80th Avenue 80th Avenue 554 West 135th Street Romeoville (proposed) | In the Tier 1 study, no grade crossing is recommended for grade separation. A list of crossings has been developed where grade separation studies should be conducted in the future. It is assumed that these future studies would include a cost-benefit analysis. Many of these crossings may never be grade separated due to potential impacts, lack of local support, or other reasons that might surface as these studies progress. Grade separation costs were included for a portion of the grade separations listed to account for some of the studies that would result in proposed grade separations. |
| RR12 | Tier 1 | Transportation | METRA | 6-13 Table 6.1-4 "Trains Per Day - Chicago to Joliet (Section2)" and the associated text need to be corrected. On an average basis, Metra operates an average of 23 engine and deadhead movements between LaSalle Street Station and our 47th Street Yard. This table also does not reflect that IAIS operates three round-trips a day and yard movements out on the mainline, CSX operates one round trip a day and Chicago Rail Link operates two round trips a day for a total average of 12 freights a day on the RID mainline. Table 6.1-4 is also missing the freight and passenger traffic on the NS between 40th Street and the 21st Street vertical lift bridge over the Chicago River along with the over 100 trains a day on this bridge. The CREATE Program will connect the SWS to Metra's Rock Island District around 75th Street and those 30 scheduled trains a day will operate into LaSalle Street Station. The corresponding engine and deadhead movements between LaSalle Street Station and 47th Street Yard would double to 46 movements on weekdays. This future impact on Rock Island District mainline and yard movements is not discussed in the report and should be added. A third mainline track from Gresham northward may be needed if HSR trains are also on this route. | Text in Chapter 6 has been modified to address these comments. |

| RAILROADS | | | | | |
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| Overall Comment Number | DEIS Volume | DEIS Section/Topic | Commenter | Comment | Response |
| RR13 | Tier 1 | Transportation | METRA | 6-33 The text description for improvements in the "Build Alternatives" needs to add information about track and signal improvements on both routes between Joliet and Chicago and that this should be investigated in further detail in the Tier 2 analysis. | This text has been modified to clarified the need for this analysis in future Tier 2 studies. |
| RR14 | Tier 1 | Transportation | METRA | 6-34 The text description for improvements in the "Build Alternatives" needs to add information about station improvements on both routes between Joliet and Chicago and that this should be investigated in further detail in the Tier 2 analysis. | This text has been modified to clarified the need for this analysis in future Tier 2 studies. |
| RR15 | Tier 1 | Transportation | METRA | 6-35 Do the ridership estimates accurately account for the fact that travel within the Metra service area on Amtrak trains is only permitted for persons connecting from other Amtrak service (i.e. Chicago to Joliet Amtrak trips are only allowed to be purchased in combination with a trip from Chicago to somewhere beyond the Metra service territory)? | Yes, this assumption is included in the ridership forecasting. |
| RR16 | Tier 1 | Transportation | METRA | 6-47.1 In addition to 23 engine or train deadhead moves to and from the yard facilities at 47th Street, the Metra Rock Island District operates four inbound and five outbound deadhead moves between LaSalle Street and Blue Island and one inbound deadhead move between Joliet and Blue Island. This should be made clear in the first paragraph on this page. Note that overnight and weekend storage and servicing of Rock Island District trains is also performed at the Blue Island Coach Yard. This should be made clear in the first paragraph on this page. Add the following text: The CREATE Program will connect the SWS to Metra's Rock Island District around 75th Street and those 30 scheduled trains a day will operate into LaSalle Street Station. The corresponding engine and deadhead movements between LaSalle Street Station and 47th Street Yard would double to 46 movements on weekdays. This future impact on Rock Island District mainline and yard movements is not discussed in the report and should be added. A third mainline track from Gresham northward may be needed if HSR trains are also on this route. The potential Rock Island District grade separation over the EJ&E may impact Metra's Joliet Coach Yard. The coach yard has a yard track on the south side of the mainline tracks in addition to the yard tracks north | Text has been added to Chapter 6 to address this comment. |
| RR17 | Tier 1 | General | METRA | 6-48 In the "Section 6.6.2", the text references "Appendix D", when it should reference "Appendix E" instead. | This correction has been made in the FEIS. |
| RR18 | Tier 1 | Public Involvement | METRA | 8 This section does not reflect coordination efforts with the railroad owners. Descriptions of these efforts should be added to this chapter. In the subsequent Tier 2 studies, additional efforts should be made to include all stakeholders, especially right-of-way owners in the process early and often during the studies. | Information has been added to Chapter 8 to summarize coordination conducted with the operating railroads. During future Tier 2 studies, coordination with the operating railroads will continue. |
| RR19 | Tier 1 | Alternatives | CREATE Partners, | Rail Tier 1 DEIS. As you know, the CREATE (Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency) Program is a public/private partnership between the U.S. DOT, the State of Illinois, City of Chicago, Metra, Amtrak, and the nation's freight railroads. A program of regional and national significance, CREATE consists of 70 separate yet interrelated projects, including roadway and rail overpasses and underpasses, improvements to existing viaducts and grade crossings, and upgrades to tracks, switches, and signal and dispatch systems. The benefits of the program include improved passenger rail service, reduced freight rail congestion to boost regional and national economic competitiveness, reduced motorist delay due to rail conflicts at grade crossings, enhanced public safety, enhanced economic development, creating and retaining jobs, improved air quality, and reductions in noise from idling or slow-moving trains. The CREATE partners have identified ten improvement projects that intersect with the High-Speed Rail (HSR) alternatives under consideration. The table below lists the ten projects with the project number, project name and DEIS Alternative that causes the potential CREATE/HSR conflict. In the following pages, we have attached more detailed information on each of these CREATE projects and | In future Tier 2 studies additional coordination with the CREATE Program will occur to ensure compatibility between CREATE Program improvements and Chicago to St. Louis HSR Program improvements. |

RAILROADS

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|------------------------|-------------|--------------------|------------------|--|--|
| RR20 | Tier 1 | Alternatives | Vena , Jim CN | <p>In June, IDOT and the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) issued a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) to address, among other matters, various routing alternatives for IDOT's proposal to improve high-speed rail (HSR) passenger service between Chicago and St. Louis. IDOT has asked parties to comment on the DEIS by August 20, and CN appreciates the opportunity to do so. The DEIS includes a Tier I corridor-level evaluation that includes numerous routing alternatives, including several alternatives for the portion of the route between Chicago Union Station (CUS) and Joliet. Of those, the DEIS has recommended two options for further consideration: the current route, largely over CN, on which 10 Amtrak trains now run daily (Alternative 2), and a route using Metra's Rock Island Line (Alternative 4D). CN understands that after the comment period IDOT and FRA will fully review the alternatives analysis and include a recommendation for the preferred CUS-Joliet route to be used for HSR and other Amtrak trains as part of the final Environmental Impact Statement that is expected by the end of this year. The DEIS recognized that at-grade rail-rail crossings create significant concerns and noted that "it is being assumed that railroad flyovers would be provided to eliminate conflict point[s] and improve rail</p> | <p>The Rock Island District Route has been identified as part of the Preferred Alternative. See Section 3.5 of the FEIS. Future Tier 2 studies will include the evaluation of grade separating the Rock Island District from the EJ&E.</p> |