



**ILLINOIS
HIGH-SPEED RAIL**
CHICAGO TO ST. LOUIS

Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement

Issue #2

Next Round of Public Meetings Scheduled for High-Speed Rail Study

Many route alternatives will be studied for high-speed rail service from Chicago to St. Louis and they will be presented at upcoming public meetings hosted by the Illinois Department of Transportation and the Federal Railroad Administration. These meetings are the next step in the Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), which is currently being conducted to identify improvements for higher speed trains and additional trips in the corridor providing reduced travel time, increased service reliability, and enhanced safety. Through more convenient connections to Chicago and St. Louis, this project will attract new investment to station communities creating new jobs and improving the environment by reducing green house gas emissions.

Comment forms will be available at the meetings. Attendees may provide their input, which will be considered when deciding on alternatives to move forward into the EIS. Illinois Department of Transportation officials will be available at the meetings to answer

questions. An open house format will be used for all meetings and the public is invited to attend at their convenience.

The meetings will be held between 4:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. in Joliet, Bloomington, Springfield, Carlinville and Alton.



Visit www.idothsr.org for more project specific information, business opportunities, and to comment on the Illinois High-Speed Rail project.

 Visit us at www.facebook.com/IllinoisHighSpeedRail

Project Hotline 1-855-IDOT-HSR (436-8477)

Visit www.connectthemidwest.org for Midwest High-Speed Rail information.

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What is the High-Speed Rail Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)?

Preparation of a Tier 1 EIS is part of an overall high-speed rail project to enhance passenger service between Chicago and St. Louis. It will identify additional improvements necessary to increase the number of daily round trips in the corridor to eight. The current Chicago to St. Louis corridor operates on a single track that is shared by both traditional freight and passenger rail service (Amtrak). However, future visions for this corridor include the full build-out (additional second track and other improvements). The Tier 1 EIS will assess the following:

- Potential addition of a second mainline track;
- Potential routing alternatives between Chicago and Joliet, the Springfield area, and Alton to St. Louis; and
- Associated transportation and environmental impacts of these improvements.

How is this different from the current High-Speed Rail program that is under construction?

In 2003, the Illinois Department of Transportation completed an EIS for high-speed rail from Chicago to St. Louis. This resulted in a Record of Decision (2004) that included provisions for accommodating high-speed (110 mph maximum) trains along the existing Chicago to St. Louis corridor. After applying for and receiving federal funding, track improvements along a 76.5-mile segment in the corridor began in September 2010. Completion of all improvements outlined in the 2004 Record of Decision will make it possible to operate more daily round trips between the two cities. The Tier 1 EIS is a study within the program that will address broad corridor-level issues and environmental impacts associated with the full build-out (additional second track and other improvements) needed to accommodate an increased number of high-speed trains and daily round trips between Chicago and St. Louis. Subsequent phases or tiers will analyze site-specific projects and alternatives based on the decisions made in Tier 1.



What is the Tier 1 EIS process?

The EIS process generally includes the following components in this order:

- Scoping – an open coordination process with agencies and the general public to identify the scope of issues to be addressed in the EIS;
- Purpose and Need – identification of what the project is intended to address;
- Preliminary Alternatives – development of a range of alternatives that address the purpose and need;
- Alternative Analysis – evaluation of the preliminary alternatives using established evaluation criteria;
- Draft EIS – identification of the preferred alternative with public review and comment; and
- Final EIS and Record of Decision – based on the comments on the Draft EIS, the final EIS is written and submitted to the Federal Railroad Administration for a Record of Decision.

Who will make the final decision on which alternatives are chosen?

The Federal Railroad Administration, in coordination with the Illinois Department of Transportation, makes the final decision on the Preferred Alternative for the Tier 1 EIS. This decision-making process will include input received from the local municipalities, agencies, community members and the general public.