

GLOBAL MIDWEST POLICY BRIEF

Ideas to ensure the Midwest's success in a global era

High-Speed Rail for the Midwest

by Richard Harnish

High-Speed Rail and Intercity Trains

High-speed rail (HSR) is a powerful transportation- and economic-development tool that has served billions of passengers for nearly fifty years. Many countries in Europe and Asia use the power of high-speed trains to collapse distances and bring people closer together. These systems utilize a broad network of trains, with core segments operating at speeds of 150 mph or more, to weave together powerful economic megaregions that are becoming the global players of the future.

The United States has not yet committed to high-speed rail, and we are increasingly at a competitive disadvantage compared with other countries that enjoy the efficiencies of HSR. Indeed, the United States has historically underfunded Amtrak, its national passenger-rail system, which struggles from year to year through a difficult annual appropriations process separate from all transportation funding. And yet, Amtrak's Acela Express—the fastest train in the United States, which runs between Boston and Washington, D.C., at speeds up to 135 mph in New Jersey and 150 mph on two sections of track in Rhode Island and Massachusetts—commands more than 50 percent of the combined air/rail market between New York City and Washington and operates at a profit, despite being hampered by aging track and electric catenary.

Barack Obama is the first U.S. president to make high-speed rail a national transportation priority. In 2009, his administration announced that \$8 billion for high-speed rail and other passenger-rail improvement projects would be part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA). And in February 2011, Vice President Joe Biden proposed the High-Speed and Intercity Passenger Rail Program, a comprehensive plan dedicating \$53 billion over six years to continue construction of a national high-speed and intercity passenger-rail network.

While the \$8 billion from ARRA was an encouraging first step and was significantly more money than the federal government has ever committed to intercity passenger rail in one appropriation, it is significantly less than what is needed to make HSR happen in the United States. A commitment more on the scale of what the nation spends on highways (about \$193 billion per year, as discussed below) will be necessary to build regional high-speed rail systems. The Midwest High Speed Rail Association's 2011 study *The Economic Impacts of High Speed Rail: Transforming the Midwest* calculated that a four-spoke, 220-mph bullet-train system with its hub at Chicago linking Cleveland/Detroit, Cincinnati, St. Louis, and Minneapolis-St. Paul would cost \$84 billion.

Illinois was awarded \$1.2 billion from ARRA to upgrade 183 miles of track on the Dwight–St. Louis segment of the Chicago–St. Louis rail line for 110-mph operations. While not HSR, the higher speeds will produce a 40-minute travel time reduction from the current schedule, which ranges from 5 hours 20 minutes to 5 hours 40 minutes. In 2006, a coalition of downstate leaders (with help from the Midwest High Speed Rail Association) pushed for the State of Illinois to double its Amtrak funding, which led to increased train frequencies, resulting in a 207 percent increase in ridership on the Chicago–St. Louis line from 2006 to 2010. This proved the existence of a tremendous demand for improved rail service. We expect to see even greater ridership gains once 110-mph operations begin on that line in 2014, making an even stronger case for investment in HSR.

The ARRA program also awarded Wisconsin \$823 million to initiate new Amtrak service between Milwaukee and Madison and awarded Ohio \$400 million to launch new Amtrak service from Cleveland to Cincinnati through Columbus. But the Republican governors-elect of Wisconsin (Scott Walker) and Ohio (John Kasich) caused regional rail-improvement projects in their states to be canceled. Soon thereafter, the newly elected Republican governor of Florida, Rick Scott, canceled the HSR project planned for his state. All three argued that cutting the passenger-train programs would help reduce the federal deficit.

In April 2011, the 112th Congress cut the high-speed rail and intercity passenger-rail appropriation in the FY2010 budget from \$2.5 billion to \$2.1 billion. And \$1 billion originally appropriated in the FY2011 budget was eliminated.

President Obama has asked that \$8 billion be appropriated in 2012 for the High-Speed and Intercity Passenger Rail Program. Half would be spent on high-speed rail and system expansion. Half would be spent on modernizing existing Amtrak service.

As of this writing, some members of Congress are

proposing to eliminate Amtrak and high-speed rail funding from the 2012 budget. Worse yet, some intend to take back all unspent funding for high-speed and conventional passenger rail, potentially up to \$2.3 billion, that has already been awarded to projects in twenty-two states. While progress must be made toward reaching a balanced budget, failing to fully fund these critically important infrastructure programs will jeopardize the nation's future economic prosperity.

High-Speed Rail: A Tool for Economic Strength

The Midwest has one of the world's largest economies, with a diverse base of manufacturing, agriculture, academic research, and business services anchored by nine major metropolitan areas: Chicago, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, Detroit, Indianapolis, Milwaukee, Minneapolis-St. Paul, and St. Louis. To remain globally competitive and achieve its full potential, however, this region needs a high-speed rail network that facilitates commercial collaboration, increased trade, commuting, and tourism at a level not possible with today's air and highway systems alone.

The Internet has made it easier to collaborate over long distances, but nothing can replace face-to-face transactions. Three hours one way, or about 120 miles, is the outside threshold for a productive day trip, but our Midwestern cities are too spread out to make interregional travel easily accessible by car or even plane. Doing business across the Midwest takes more time, costs more, and is less efficient than in most other economic regions around the world.

Air may be the fastest way to travel from airport to airport, but it's relevant for only a few Midwestern markets. Only routes between other major cities and Chicago have the frequency and competitive fares needed to make flying an attractive choice. Airlines cannot efficiently serve smaller markets; indeed, the number of regional feeder flights has been declining for over a decade. In a recent post on his blog, *The*

Midwesterner (“The Global Economy Flies Away,” July 22, 2011), Richard C. Longworth, senior fellow at The Chicago Council on Global Affairs, discusses Delta Airlines’ plans to shrink or eliminate service to nineteen small cities across the Midwest by 2013.

An integrated network of high-speed trains would transform the way we travel and do business in the Midwest. It is the only way to shrink travel times while simultaneously reducing the cost of travel. It is the only transportation alternative that can unite our region and allow a more productive and efficient use of our assets.

The investment in a truly high-speed rail system would be repaid many times over in expanded investment throughout the region, growth in Midwest business, and jobs tied to economic development in the new and emerging industries of the twenty-first century. According to the Midwest High Speed Rail Association’s study *The Economic Impacts of High Speed Rail*, the investment of \$84 billion in the four-spoke, 220-mph HSR system mentioned above would produce in the Chicago area alone \$118 billion in wages from new jobs and \$300 billion in new business sales over thirty years.

The Proposed High-Speed Rail Network

An Integrated Passenger-Rail Network

The Federal Railroad Administration has defined three categories of high-speed rail. Each tier will be needed to reach as many Midwest communities as possible and truly connect the regional economy:

- HSR Core Express: 125-to-250-mph trains operating on dedicated track, generally in rights-of-way separate from other railroads.
- HSR Regional: 90-to-125-mph trains generally operating on separate tracks in rights-of-way shared with freight tracks.
- HSR Emerging: up-to-90-mph trains operating on tracks shared with freight trains.

HSR Core Express

The backbone of the Midwest HSR network should be a four-spoke, 220-mph bullet-train system with its hub at Chicago linking Cleveland/Detroit, Cincinnati, Minneapolis-St. Paul, and St. Louis. This core network of bullet trains would allow that critical two-to-three-hour travel time between major Midwestern cities and Chicago, with twenty-five daily departures on each route in each direction. The system would serve 44 million riders annually. It would cost \$84 billion to build, and would generate \$2.2 billion in annual revenue.¹

Frequent departures throughout the day would provide an efficient and flexible mechanism to handle fluctuations in demand, and they would offer travelers multiple departure options, increasing the likelihood that they would choose the train over other alternatives.

On June 3, 2011, Governor Pat Quinn committed to a study of a Core Express line linking O’Hare International Airport, Chicago, and Champaign to Indianapolis and/or St. Louis, making Illinois the only state currently pursuing Core Express trains.

HSR Regional and HSR Emerging

Today’s Amtrak network serves over two hundred Midwestern cities and towns. With upgraded track, faster speeds, and more frequent and reliable schedules, this network could provide a higher level of connectivity beyond the limits of the new bullet trains. These services would be slower than HSR Core Express, but they would serve more riders, provide greater frequencies, offer shorter travel times, and provide more reliable service than Amtrak does today. They would complement the bullet trains that would connect certain cities but not smaller areas

¹ These trains would operate on dedicated, electrified tracks. They would not share tracks with freight trains and would not cross roads or other rail lines at grade. The tracks could handle up to ten trains per hour in each direction during peak hours, creating options for local and express services. This data is based on *The Economic Impacts of High Speed Rail: Transforming the Midwest*, a 2011 study by the Midwest High Speed Rail Association available at <http://www.midwesthsr.org/2011-economic-study-downloads>.

along established routes, and integrate those who would find themselves outside of the corridors of the new bullet trains.

The ARRA funded projects that are under way on the Chicago–St. Louis–Kansas City routes and the Chicago–Detroit route are HSR Regional projects.

Gateway to the World

O’Hare International Airport is a critical economic asset to the entire Midwest. With nonstop domestic and international flights, O’Hare is the Midwest’s gateway to the world.

The proposed HSR network would integrate directly with O’Hare, becoming a new feeder resource that would provide a more frequent, reliable, and cost-effective connection for minor markets in the Midwest. This would allow O’Hare to host more international flights. A direct connection from the high-speed-rail network to O’Hare would give the entire Midwest improved access to domestic and international markets.

Transit Connections

As part of the HSR network, railroad stations would be modernized to streamline connections to local transportation services, such as commuter rail and mass transit. Well-coordinated rail- and bus-feeder service is an essential component of an HSR system to expand its range, in terms of final destinations, and provide greater access to the HSR stations.

The Benefits of a High-Speed Rail Network

Greater Efficiency and Productivity

The proposed 220-mph bullet-train system would make travel more productive and efficient.

Bullet trains make door-to-door rail travel times competitive with air travel for cities within 500 miles of each other—which includes all metro areas on the proposed system in relation to Chicago and many other city pairs on the corridors—and competitive

with automobile trips over 100 miles. HSR would reduce to two hours or less trips between cities up to 300 miles apart, and roughly three hours those trips between cities up to 500 miles apart. This would make same-day round trips possible between many cities across the Midwest. And if people can travel farther in two or three hours, businesses get access to more workers with specialized skills, while workers get access to employers with more specialized needs.

A train station is physically much smaller than an airport, and it can be located within one or two square blocks of a dense urban area. Because a train station is much closer to more people than an airport terminal, on average ground travel time to a train station takes less time than getting to an airport. Furthermore, large metro areas can host two or three HSR stations on the same corridor (for example, a downtown station and two suburban stations), making HSR even more convenient to access than airports.

For example, with HSR, it would be possible to board a train in Milwaukee at 7 a.m., arrive in downtown Indianapolis by 8:50 a.m., leave at 5 p.m., and be back in Milwaukee by 6:50 p.m. Just the flight between those cities lasts almost sixty-five minutes. Factor in the time spent on ground transportation to and from the airports, getting through security, boarding and disembarking, and taxiing, and it can easily exceed three hours one way. Making that same trip by car would take much longer—four to five hours or more, depending on traffic through Chicago.

Trains could depart every hour, and perhaps every thirty minutes during peak periods, providing timetable options no air carrier offers (currently there are only two nonstop flights between Milwaukee and Indianapolis). So there would be no more worries about changing travel plans or having to pay \$1,000 for a last-minute fare.

HSR makes travel more productive. Transition times, long lines, and on-board restrictions on electronics make it hard to work when flying. Driving is almost entirely wasted time. Bullet trains allow one to work

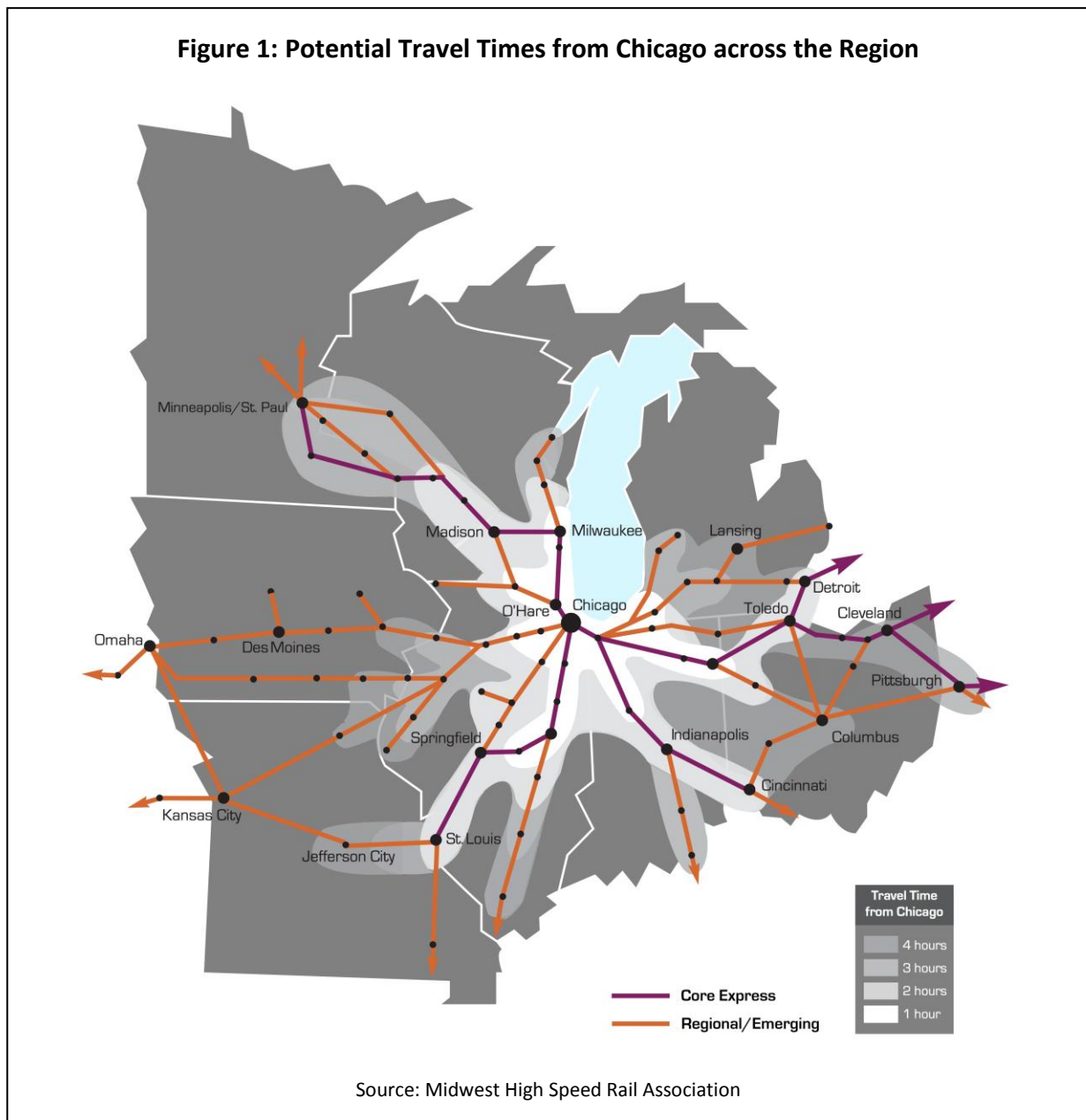
for the entire trip, making travel a productive part of a business traveler's day. Many trains have small tables for meetings; some even have conference rooms. On a train, you can talk on your cell phone or use your laptop at any time without fear of getting into an accident or receiving a ticket. Wide seats, substantial legroom, and the freedom to walk around are selling points for the train, at any distance or speed. (See Figure 1.)

More Jobs and Business Opportunities

The 220-mph network would create hundreds of

thousands construction jobs and new jobs at companies in business districts served by the network, and billions of dollars in business opportunities, all of which would enhance the region's global competitiveness.

The reduced travel times provided by HSR would expand Midwestern labor markets and business-travel opportunities, supporting local growth of the financial-services, insurance, technical-services, and technology-industry firms in downtown business districts and other office centers served by the HSR routes or the local transit connections. Faster travel



would also boost tourism. People who would not normally travel to the region would bring hundreds of millions of dollars per year in new spending.

According to *The Economic Impacts of High Speed Rail*, the potential economic effects of 220-mph service for the Chicago metropolitan area alone would be \$13.8 billion per year of additional business sales and \$5.5 billion per year in worker wages by 2030. All other cities served by HSR would likely see new jobs, growth in business revenues, and a more diverse economic base.

More R&D, Fuel Savings, Greater Reliability

The proposed HSR network would support development of technology clusters by reducing travel times and increasing schedule options (with more train departures per hour) between research-and-development centers, university research centers, and sites where high-tech products are produced. In Chicago, high-speed trains would enhance existing links between local research centers (focusing on energy, physics, and biotechnology) and other technology R&D centers in places like Madison, Wisconsin, and Champaign/Urbana and Peoria, Illinois.

HSR consumes nearly one-tenth the fuel of cars and one-sixth that of planes, which would cut the Midwest's energy needs and reliance on oil and reduce harmful emissions. A Midwest bullet-train network would reduce carbon emissions by more than 1 million pounds a year, cut vehicle miles traveled by 4.3 billion annually, and reduce oil consumption by 3 million barrels a year.

In addition, HSR systems are exceptionally dependable. Trains run when scheduled, and there are generally no delays. Unlike planes and cars, high-speed trains operate reliably in all weather conditions thanks to advanced signaling and positioning systems (that Amtrak does not yet employ). Congestion is no problem, since trains run on their own tracks. Rail travelers can plan trips by the schedule, confident that they do not need to include extra time. Japan's HSR system (see below)

claims average arrival times within six seconds of scheduled arrival times.

Countries around the World Are Investing in High-Speed Rail

High-speed rail is a new concept in the United States, but Europe and Asia have been running bullet trains for nearly half a century. Where HSR exists, the quantum leap in frequency, speed, and capacity inherent in true HSR service, along with commensurate feeder services, has revolutionized travel behavior. With true HSR service, the train dominates travel for business or pleasure between destinations along the route. Faster travel times allow rail to capture market shares of 30 percent or more.

When Japan launched the Tokaido Shinkansen high-speed rail line in 1964, it transported passengers between Tokyo and Shin-Osaka at 130 mph. Three years later, it had transported its 100 millionth passenger. By 1976, it had already transported 1 billion passengers. Trains on that original line now travel at 186 mph and offer up to eleven departures per hour in both directions. The Japanese HSR network now stretches over 1,500 miles and serves 350 million passengers per year.

Europe will celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of bullet trains this year. Since 1981, its system has grown from a single, 280-mile line linking Paris and Lyon to an international network with trains running at nearly 200 mph through to Great Britain, Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, Italy, Spain, and Switzerland. SNCF, the French rail operator, reportedly posted profits of \$1.75 billion in 2007, most from its *Train à Grande Vitesse* (TGV high-speed train) operations. In several markets, such as Paris-Lyon, Madrid-Seville, and Frankfurt-Cologne, the TGV has replaced air travel.

China opened its first high-speed line for the 2008 Summer Olympics. Trains cover the seventy-four-mile line linking Beijing and Tianjin in just thirty

minutes. Today, China has four thousand miles of high-speed line. It plans to double that by 2012. By 2020, China foresees nearly ten thousand miles of high-speed rail, connecting all provincial capitals and cities with populations over five hundred thousand, covering over 90 percent of the country's population.

Current Challenges of High-Speed Rail in the Midwest

Despite its many benefits, a 220-mph HSR network in the Midwest faces several challenges, including political opposition, economic constraints, land-use issues, and grade crossings, among others.

Political Opposition

The greatest challenge to high-speed rail in the United States has become political opposition from some lawmakers. As mentioned above, two Republican governors-elect caused regional rail-improvement projects in their states to be canceled soon after their elections in November 2010. John Kasich in Ohio and Scott Walker in Wisconsin both ran on platforms opposing their states' federally funded rail-improvement projects. They claimed the projects were a waste of federal funds, and they opposed having any state revenue support operations of the trains. The Obama Administration redistributed \$1.2 billion of those funds to Florida for its 84-mile Tampa-Orlando high-speed rail project. Florida's newly elected Republican governor, Rick Scott, canceled that project soon after taking office.

Investing in infrastructure can be a bipartisan cause. Democratic and Republican leaders support high-speed rail and intercity passenger rail. This may be surprising given that the governors who have turned away federal funding have been Republican. But it is important to note that eleven Republican governors applied for ARRA grants in 2009. Rick Snyder, the Republican governor of Michigan, is working to purchase a 135-mile segment of the Chicago-Detroit Amtrak line and upgrade the track for 110-mph operations.

U.S. House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman John L. Mica of Florida, a Republican, has supported "true high-speed passenger rail" in the Northeast Corridor. Republican Bill Shuster of Pennsylvania, chairman of the House Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines and Hazardous Materials, has also publicly supported HSR in the Northeast Corridor. Republican Rep. Steven LaTourette of Ohio backs a high-speed rail line along Lake Erie linking Cleveland with Buffalo, Chicago, Detroit, and Toledo. And U.S. Sen. Mark Kirk of Illinois, also a Republican, said he wants to get an HSR project under way in Illinois within his term.

Public Perception of Transportation Spending

A major stumbling block that confronts advocates of high-speed rail is the public perception that highways are self-funded, with no government subsidies. Add to this lower support for transit and rail funding in the United States compared to Europe and Asia, and HSR has become a target for those who oppose big federal programs. The truth is that user fees now account for only half of highway funding. Federal funds make up a declining share of the other half, while state and local governments increasingly make up the shortfall. Infrastructure, rail or highway, requires significant federal, state, and local investments. Given this reality, does it make sense to continue to publicly fund highways at high rates but limit our country's investment in rail?

Because almost all American railroad infrastructure is privately owned, it has been treated separately from roads, airports, and waterways in terms of federal funding. Amtrak, the only intercity passenger-rail carrier, owns only a small percentage of the track it uses, and its operational funding comes from outside the federal transportation budget through a separate annual appropriations process. As a result, public ownership and funding of railroads is largely unknown in the United States.

Because many Americans perceive highways as "free" and Amtrak as "subsidized," there is more opposition to spend public funds on intercity rail during this

period of budget cutting, especially when even federal highway funding will be reduced. The truth is that railroads are cheaper to build and maintain than highways. According to the Federal Highway Administration, “Total highway funding by all units of government—Federal, State, and local—reached nearly \$193 billion in 2008.” The president’s six-year, \$53 billion high-speed rail proposal is but a fraction of what the nation spends on highways—\$2.8 trillion from 1982 to 2008.

Land Acquisition

Trains that travel 220 mph must run on track composed primarily of straight segments and curves with large radii (that is, curves that are typically much more gradual than what automobiles require). In some cases, existing railroad rights-of-way and interstate highway rights-of-way satisfy the geometry required by 220-mph bullet trains. It is typically more cost-effective to build a high-speed rail corridor on as much existing rights-of-way as possible. But in areas where that is not possible (for example, when HSR is routed along an interstate highway that makes a sharper curve than the trains can accommodate), land must be acquired to continue the alignment of the corridor.

Fortunately, the Midwest generally has a flat topography that hosts many relatively straight rail corridors and interstate highways. In *The Economic Impacts of High Speed Rail*, the Midwest High Speed Rail Association proposed running HSR exclusively on the Canadian National Railway line right-of-way for the segment of the network from Chicago to Champaign, Illinois. Trains could run at 220 mph on nearly the entire corridor with little land acquisition required.

Grade Crossings

A 220-mph train is traveling 323 feet—farther than the length of a football field—each second. For safety purposes, 220-mph trains must run on tracks that do not cross any other tracks or roads at grade. The high-speed corridor crosses above or below roads and other rail lines on bridges or in tunnels, similar

to how Interstate highways are designed. But the rural geography of the Midwest is defined largely by an orthogonal grid of highways at one-mile intervals. The HSR corridor would interrupt some roads. It would be impractical to build an overpass at every mile along the track.

Much of the new trackage could be constructed along interstate highways and existing railroad rights-of-way, minimizing the impact on local communities and roads. The 2011 Midwest High Speed Rail Association study determined that between Chicago and Champaign, grade crossings would be closed on highways that were closed by the adjacent Interstate Highway 57. Where I-57 provides a crossing, overpasses would be built over the HSR alignment as well. This would allow three-to-four-mile stretches of at-grade trackage, with road access above or below the HSR line at the same intervals as I-57.

Policy Priorities for Bringing High-Speed Rail to the Midwest

Current Funding

In January 2010, President Obama allocated \$8 billion for high-speed rail in ARRA funds. In early 2010, Congress included \$2.5 billion for HSR in the fiscal year 2010 appropriation. The 112th Congress, elected in November 2010, cut the 2010 appropriation to \$2.1 billion and eliminated the high-speed rail appropriation for fiscal year 2011.

Policy Recommendations

The U.S. Department of Transportation should be responsible for leading the charge on studying, planning, and funding HSR systems. But in a case where the federal government lacks the resources to move forward, it is up to the Midwest states, either collectively or individually, to proceed with the steps necessary to make HSR happen. The states are capable of investing in HSR with their own resources. In 2009, the Midwest High Speed Rail Association persuaded the State of Illinois to set aside \$400

million for high-speed rail development, making it the only state to ever appropriate funds for HSR. Currently those funds are being held to match future federal grants to expand capacity on the Chicago–St. Louis corridor. Of that money, \$1 million is being allocated to Governor Quinn’s study of the O’Hare–Chicago–Champaign HSR Core Express line.

Here is what needs to be done to bring high-speed rail to the Midwest:

1. Gather travel data. Most intercity travel in the Midwest is by car. All U.S. states collectively spend \$100 billion dollars per year on highways. Yet almost no data exists on who is traveling and why, nor on the origins or destinations of the trips, nor on travel-mode preferences. This lack of data makes it difficult for governments to make educated decisions about transportation budgeting.

2. Establish a predictable stream of funds. As with highways and airports, planning and constructing railroad infrastructure is a multiyear process requiring a long-term commitment to predictable funding.

3. Step up the planning. The Midwest Regional Rail Initiative is a cooperative effort of nine state departments of transportation to design and implement a system of regional trains radiating from Chicago. It originally proposed train departures roughly every two hours at speeds of 90 to 110 mph on tracks shared with freight trains. Because of this planning, Midwestern states were ready in 2009 to quickly apply for ARRA funds for intercity passenger-rail improvements.

More recently it has become apparent that 90 mph is the practical limit for passenger trains operating on busy freight main lines. As a result, the Midwest Regional Rail Initiative is being redesigned. Ideally, planning for 220-mph infrastructure will be integrated into this process.

(Two projects already under way—Chicago–St. Louis and Chicago–Detroit—will operate at 110 mph. Most of the Chicago–Detroit route will be publicly owned

and will therefore host few if any freight trains. Passenger trains traveling 110 mph will share track with freight trains on the Chicago–St. Louis route because that corridor is being completely rebuilt and has been grandfathered in because the line’s owner has changed its intentions regarding freight traffic on the line since planning for 110-mph operations began.)

4. Clarify governance. Building high-speed rail is hindered by state lines. It will be difficult to establish a structure of governance and funding that satisfies each state. The interstate highway system overcame this hurdle by creating a nationwide plan that provided 90 percent federal funding on the condition that the network be built to federal standards.

5. Get one built. The only way to prove the case for bullet trains is to get one up and running. Just as the Pennsylvania Turnpike proved the case for limited-access highways in the United States, and the Paris–Lyon line proved the case for bullet trains in Europe, a single bullet-train line is needed in the Midwest.

A Future with High-Speed Rail

An integrated network of 220-mph bullet trains and 90-to-110-mph regional trains would dramatically change the Midwest. While cities like Chicago and Minneapolis–St. Paul have prospered in recent years, many smaller urban areas have not. HSR would breathe new life into urban centers, bring people back downtown, regenerate local economies, and provide unprecedented mobility.

HSR would bring Midwest factories, research centers, and businesses closer to the international marketplace. A visitor from Hong Kong could board a train at O’Hare and, in ninety minutes, be at the General Motors assembly plant in Fort Wayne, Indiana, or the Rayovac corporate headquarters in Madison, Wisconsin, or Archer Daniels Midland’s headquarters in Decatur, Illinois.

In the long run, the Midwest would be seen as a more desirable place to live, work, and invest.

About the Author

Richard Harnish is executive director of the Midwest High Speed Rail Association, a Chicago-based member-supported non-profit organization advocating for fast, frequent and dependable trains linking the entire Midwest.

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