



Midwest High-Speed Rail System (Source: MIPRC)

The Midwest high-speed rail system is a proposed system containing 3,869 miles of routes in 13 segments consisting of a hub in Chicago, Illinois, connecting to major cities of the Midwest, including Detroit, Cleveland, Cincinnati, Indianapolis, St. Louis, Kansas City, Omaha, Milwaukee, and Minneapolis/St. Paul. The Midwest high-speed rail system is the largest proposed U.S. high-speed rail system by mileage and covers portions of 10 states. The status of implementing high-speed passenger rail in the Midwest varies by segment. High-speed intercity passenger rail service is currently *Operational* on a portion of the Chi-

cago to Detroit segment, with speeds reaching 110 mph as of 2012. Eleven of the 13 segments have advanced to the *Planning/Environmental* stage as a result of Tier 1 NEPA activities and the Midwest Regional Rail Initiative, while one segment remains in the *Proposed* stage. Seven of the 13 segments are part of the federally-designated Chicago Hub High-Speed Rail Corridor. The proposed system is primarily based on incremental improvements to existing freight railroad rights-of-way, with maximum train speeds projected up to 220 mph.

## SYSTEM DESCRIPTION AND HISTORY

### System Description

The Midwest high-speed rail system consists of thirteen segments, as summarized below.

#### Midwest High-Speed Rail System Segment Characteristics

Segment Description	Distance	Segment Status	Designated Corridor?	Segment Population
Chicago, IL, to Detroit/Pontiac, MI	304 Miles	Operational	Yes	14,542,637
Chicago, IL, to Grand Rapids/Holland, MI	212 Miles	Planning/Environmental	No	10,654,679
Chicago, IL, to Port Huron, MI	319 Miles	Planning/Environmental	No	10,853,289
Chicago, IL, to Cleveland, OH	354 Miles	Planning/Environmental	Yes	11,976,722
Chicago, IL, to Cincinnati, OH	310 Miles	Planning/Environmental	Yes	12,705,138
Indianapolis, IN, to Louisville, KY	114 Miles	Proposed	Yes	3,116,601
Chicago, IL, to St. Louis, MO	284 Miles	Planning/Environmental	Yes	11,145,040
Chicago, IL, to Carbondale, IL	308 Miles	Planning/Environmental	No	8,496,909
Chicago, IL, to Quincy, IL	259 Miles	Planning/Environmental	No	8,269,093
Chicago, IL, to Omaha, NE	474 Miles	Planning/Environmental	No	10,056,112
Chicago, IL, to Twin Cities, MN	434 Miles	Planning/Environmental	Yes	13,834,366
Chicago, IL, to Green Bay, WI	214 Miles	Planning/Environmental	No	10,434,637
St. Louis, MO, to Kansas City, MO	283 Miles	Planning/Environmental	Yes	5,108,055

The Midwest high-speed rail system is a hub and spoke type system, with 11 of the 13 proposed system segments radiating from a hub in Chicago, Illinois, out to major cities across the Midwest. The heaviest populated routes among these spokes include Chicago to Detroit/Pontiac, MI (population 14,542,637 in 2010); Chicago to Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN (13,834,366); Chicago to Cincinnati, OH (12,705,138); and Chicago to Cleveland, OH (11,976,722). The two segments that do not connect directly with Chicago are the Indianapolis to Louisville segment and the St. Louis to Kansas City segment. Development of high-speed intercity passenger rail service in the Midwest high-speed rail system is primarily based on incremental improvements to existing freight railroad or Amtrak-owned right-of-way. However, some initiatives have proposed construction of new, dedicated right-of-way for passenger rail, particularly in the Chicago region.

### System History

High-speed intercity passenger rail planning for the Midwest high-speed rail system has been on-going since the mid-1970s with several state-directed feasibility studies to implement high-speed rail along major intercity corridors radiating from Chicago being completed between the mid-1970s and the mid-1990s. In 1996, the Midwest states established a multi-state intercity passenger rail planning effort known as the Midwest Regional Rail Initiative (MWRRI). Building on the results from the individual

corridor studies, the MWRRI released an initial report in 1998 examining the feasibility of a region-wide high-speed rail system. In 2002, a more detailed feasibility study was published which focused on implementing 110 mph service primarily based on incremental improvements to existing railroad right-of-way. The most recent feasibility study was completed in June 2004. The 2004 report, entitled the *Midwest Regional Rail Initiative Project Notebook*, contained ridership and revenue estimates, financial analysis, and a more detailed analysis of the impacts of the MWRRI on freight railroad operations. The 12 corridors outlined for service as part of the MWRRI comprise 12 of the 13 segments defined as the Midwest high-speed rail system in this summary.

Advocacy organizations in the region are also actively promoting high-speed rail investments in the Midwest high-speed rail system. The Midwest High-Speed Rail Association (MHSRA), a Chicago-based high-speed rail advocacy organization, has also been actively involved with planning for high-speed rail in the region and has coordinated several feasibility studies. In October 2009, the MHSRA released the *Chicago to St. Louis 220 mph High Speed Rail Alternative Corridor Study*, which proposed a 220 mph high-speed rail route between Chicago and St. Louis via Champaign and Springfield. In May 2011, the MHSRA released *The Economic Impacts of High Speed Rail: Transforming the Midwest study*. The study proposed

220 mph high-speed rail service on the Chicago–Detroit/Cleveland, Chicago–Cincinnati, Chicago–St. Louis, and Chicago–Twin Cities segments of the Midwest high-speed rail system. In September 2009, the Southeast Minnesota Rail Alliance commissioned the *Tri-State III High-Speed Rail Study: Minnesota Segment Assessment study*, which evaluated the Chicago to the Twin Cities route via Rochester instead of the “River Route,” which has been considered to date in official studies. These studies, while not the result of initiatives led by a public agency, provide additional details of proposed high-speed rail development in the Midwest high-speed rail system.

With the MWRRI efforts laying the groundwork, implementation of high-speed intercity passenger rail in the Midwest system has proceeded at the individual corridor level under the auspices of individual states and multi-state partnerships. In February 2012, Amtrak initiated 110 mph service along the portion of the Chicago–Detroit segment between Porter, Indiana, and Kalamazoo, Michigan (approximately 80 miles). The Michigan Department of Transportation is currently studying the feasibility of extending 110 mph service between Kalamazoo and Dearborn, a total of 135 additional miles of high-speed train service in the Chicago–Detroit/Pontiac segment. In 2003, the Illinois Department of Transportation completed an EIS for 110 mph passenger train service along a 76.5 mile portion the existing Chicago to St. Louis segment. Recent Federal funding awards allowed for construction to begin on this project, and 110 mph service was initiated within portions of this segment in late 2012. In 2010, Illinois was awarded additional funding for a Tier 1 EIS to identify and evaluate improvements needed to accommodate higher speed trains and additional daily round trips along the Chicago to St. Louis segment.

The Iowa Department of Transportation is currently studying high-speed rail on the Chicago to Omaha segment, with a Tier 1 Service Level EIS being developed for 110 mph service along that segment. In April 2012, the *Alternatives Analysis Report* for the Chicago to Omaha segment was released in draft form and recommended that a 474-mile alternative connecting Chicago, Moline, Iowa City, Des Moines, Council Bluffs, and Omaha be carried forward for more detailed study. The Minnesota Department of Transportation is currently conducting a Tier 1 EIS for the Chicago to Minneapolis/St. Paul segment. The *Alternatives Selection Report* for the Milwaukee to the Twin Cities portion of this segment was released in October 2011. This report identified the existing Amtrak *Empire Builder* route (Milwaukee–Portage–LaCrosse–Wi-

nona–Twin Cities) route as the reasonable and feasible rail alternative to be carried forward for more detailed study in the Tier 1 EIS analysis. In January 2010, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) awarded the State of Wisconsin a grant from the *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009* high-speed rail funding worth \$810 million to construct a new 80-mile segment of 110 mph high-speed rail service between Milwaukee and Madison. In fall 2010, the new Governor-elect of Wisconsin, Scott Walker, indicated that the Milwaukee to Madison project would not move forward under his administration. The FRA redistributed the \$810 million to high-speed intercity passenger rail projects in other states in December 2010.



**Amtrak Service Operates at 110 MPH between Chicago and Detroit (Source: Michigan DOT)**

### Federally-Designated Corridors

Seven of the 13 segments in the Midwest high-speed rail system are a part of the federally-designated Chicago Hub High-Speed Rail Corridor. The Chicago Hub High-Speed Rail Corridor was one of five federally-designated corridors authorized by the *Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991* (ISTEA) in December 1991. The designation was made official in October 1992, with the initial designation encompassing the segments from Chicago to Detroit, St. Louis, and Milwaukee. Extensions of the Chicago Hub High-Speed Rail Corridor were authorized in December 1998 (Milwaukee to Minneapolis/St. Paul); January 1999 (Chicago to Indianapolis and Cincinnati); October 2000 (Indianapolis to Louisville, Chicago to Toledo and Cleveland); and January 2001 (St. Louis to Kansas City).

### Existing Intercity Passenger Rail Service

Existing intercity passenger rail service in the Midwest high-speed rail system includes many Amtrak state-supported and other short-distance corridors, as well as long-distance service. Midwest states providing financial support for Amtrak train operations include Illinois, Michigan, Missouri, and Wisconsin. Some form of Amtrak intercity passenger rail service currently operates over all segments of the Midwest high-speed rail system except the Indianapolis, IN, to Louisville, KY, segment, which last had Amtrak service in 2003.

*Source: 2010 U.S. Census, High-Speed Rail Projects in the United States: Identifying the Elements of Success Part 2, Midwest Regional Rail Initiative Project Notebook, Chicago to St. Louis 220 mph High Speed Rail Alternative Corridor Study, The Economic Impacts of High Speed Rail: Transforming the Midwest, Tri-State III High-Speed Rail Study: Minnesota Segment Assessment, Michigan Department of Transportation Rail and Public Transit Website, Illinois Department of Transportation High-Speed Rail Project Web-*

*site, Draft Alternatives Analysis Report: Chicago to Omaha Regional Passenger Rail System Planning Study, Draft Final Alternatives Analysis Selection Report: Milwaukee-Twin Cities High-Speed Rail Corridor Program, Federal Railroad Administration, Amtrak System Timetable Fall 2011/Winter 2012*

## ESTIMATED SYSTEM COSTS AND FUNDING SOURCES

### Estimated System Costs

Documentation for the Midwest Regional Rail Initiative and other feasibility studies provided capital cost estimates for the Midwest high-speed rail system. The estimated capital costs from these studies on a per-mile basis are shown below. Because the Midwest high-speed rail system is a true hub and spoke network, estimated costs associated with developing stations and track infrastructure in Chicago are not included below because those investments benefit nearly all proposed segments in the system. Chicago-area terminal costs have been estimated to be \$60 million (June 2004) or between \$450 and \$475 million (May 2011).

### Midwest High-Speed Rail System Capital Cost Estimates

Study Name/Year/Segment Description	Maximum Speed/ Scenario	Estimated Capital Cost per Mile (\$ Millions)
<b>Midwest Regional Rail Initiative Project Notebook (2004)</b>		
• Chicago, IL, to Detroit (All MI Routes)	110 mph Non-Electric	\$1.6
• Chicago, IL, to Cleveland, OH	110 mph Non-Electric	\$3.4
• Chicago, IL, to Cincinnati, OH	110 mph Non-Electric	\$2.0
• Chicago, IL, to St. Louis, MO	110 mph Non-Electric	\$1.6
• Chicago, IL, to Twin Cities/Green Bay	110 mph Non-Electric	\$2.9
• Chicago, IL, to Carbondale	110 mph Non-Electric	\$0.8
• Chicago, IL, to Omaha/Quincy	110 mph Non-Electric	\$1.0
• St. Louis to Kansas City	110 mph Non-Electric	\$3.2
<b>Economic Impacts of High Speed Rail: Transforming the Midwest (2011)</b>		
• Chicago, IL, to Detroit/Cleveland	150 mph Electric	\$56.7
• Chicago, IL, to Detroit/Cleveland	220 mph Electric	\$63.1
• Chicago, IL, to Cincinnati, OH	150 mph Electric	\$44.4
• Chicago, IL, to Cincinnati, OH	220 mph Electric	\$49.9
• Chicago, IL, to St. Louis, MO	150 mph Electric	\$45.3
• Chicago, IL, to St. Louis, MO	220 mph Electric	\$51.0
• Chicago, IL, to Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN	150 mph Electric	\$56.5
• Chicago, IL, to Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN	220 mph Electric	\$63.0
<b>Additional Midwest High-Speed Rail System Individual Corridor Studies</b>		
• MHSRA Chicago to St. Louis Study (2009)	220 mph Electric	\$39.1
• Milwaukee-Twin Cities Tier 1 EIS (2011)	110 mph Non-Electric	\$15.7

The September 2009 *Tri-State III High-Speed Rail Study: Minnesota Segment Assessment* estimated that the total capital costs for the Chicago to the Twin Cities via Rochester route were \$3.193 billion for 110 mph diesel service and \$6.597 billion for 220 mph electric service. These costs are not included in the above table because the exact mileage of the proposed route between Milwaukee and La Crosse, WI, could not be determined from the study document. The May 2011 report *The Economic Impacts of High Speed Rail: Transforming the Midwest Technical Report* noted that the capital costs of constructing a 220 mph network were 11.9 percent higher than the capital costs for constructing a 150 mph network; however, those costs would be offset by additional ridership (24.5 percent higher) and annual revenues (29.3 percent higher) provided by the 220 mph network.

### Projected Funding Sources

The June 2004 *Midwest Regional Rail Initiative Project Notebook* evaluated the potential for express parcel shipping on high-speed passenger trains as a revenue source for the proposed MWRRI. The analysis showed that express parcel service was able to contribute significant ancillary revenues to the proposed system while also providing a comfortable profit margin to the third-party franchise operator of the parcel service. Revenue from express parcel service was estimated to contribute \$40 million (\$2002) of revenue to the system by the year 2025. However, the detailed financial analysis for the MWRRI did not include potential revenue from the express parcel service in order to provide more conservative results and officials no longer consider express parcel revenue to be a viable option.

### Recent Funding Awards

- Illinois: \$1,142,324,000 from the *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009* funds for improvements to track, signals, stations, and rolling stock to enable 110 mph passenger train operations between Alton and Dwight, Illinois, along the Chicago to St. Louis corridor.
- Illinois: \$268,201,084 from the *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009* funds for the purchase of 48 new passenger rail cars and 7 locomotives to be used on Amtrak routes in the Midwest. Illinois is coordinating this grant award on behalf of Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, and Missouri.
- Illinois: \$3,711,576 from FY 2009 high-speed rail appropriations for the replacement of two existing bridges in Wadsworth, Illinois, along the Chicago to Milwaukee corridor.
- Illinois: \$186,380,000 from FY 2010 high-speed rail

appropriations for travel time and capacity improvements between Joliet and Dwight along the Chicago to St. Louis corridor.

- Indiana: \$71,364,980 from the *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009* funds for various improvement projects on the Indiana Gateway Corridor to improve passenger rail operations between Porter, Indiana, and the Illinois/Indiana state line.
- Iowa: \$230,000,000 from FY 2010 high-speed rail appropriations to establish new intercity passenger rail service between Chicago and Iowa City via the Quad Cities.
- Iowa: \$1,000,000 from FY 2009 high-speed rail appropriations for an alternatives analysis study and service-level NEPA documentation for the Chicago to Omaha passenger rail corridor.
- Michigan: \$196,503,208 from the *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009* funds for various rail capacity and infrastructure improvements that will allow for passenger trains to travel at 110 mph between Kalamazoo and Dearborn along the Chicago to Detroit/Pontiac corridor.
- Michigan: \$150,000,000 from FY 2010 high-speed rail appropriations for the proposed purchase and incremental restoration of 135 miles of rail line between Kalamazoo and Dearborn along the Chicago to Detroit/Pontiac corridor. The line is currently owned by Norfolk Southern.
- Michigan: \$43,116,614 from the *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009* funds for the design and construction of four new passenger rail stations along the Chicago to Detroit corridor.
- Missouri: \$46,491,600 from the *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009* funds for 10 separate projects to improve travel time, reliability, and rail capacity in the St. Louis to Kansas City corridor.



Chicago Union Station, Chicago, Illinois

- Missouri: \$3,068,700 from FY 2010 high-speed rail appropriations for the construction of a third main track in the St. Louis terminal area to improve access to the Gateway Intermodal Center station.
- Wisconsin: \$34,055,437 from the *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009* funds for improvements to stations and projects to increase rail capacity between Chicago and Milwaukee.

Source: *Midwest Regional Rail Initiative Project Notebook, The Economic Impacts of High Speed Rail: Transforming the Midwest, Chicago to St. Louis 220 mph High Speed Rail Alternative Corridor Study, Draft Final Alternatives Analysis Selection Report: Milwaukee-Twin Cities High-Speed Rail Corridor Program, Tri-State III High-Speed Rail Study: Minnesota Segment Assessment, Federal Railroad Administration*

**Regional coordination of intercity passenger rail planning in the Midwest high-speed rail system is achieved through an innovative multi-state partnership called the Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Commission**

## TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM IMPACTS

### Ridership Estimates

Ridership estimates for 12 of the 13 segments of the Midwest high-speed rail system were developed as part of the June 2004 *Midwest Regional Rail Initiative Project Notebook*. The MWRRI estimates were for the year 2025 and assumed a maximum train speed of 110 mph with daily

train frequencies between 2 and 17 round-trips, depending upon the corridor. Ridership estimates for selected corridors (three Michigan corridors, Omaha/Quincy, and Twin Cities/Green Bay) were reported as combined routes. Ridership estimates for four segments were developed as part of the May 2011 *The Economic Impacts of High Speed Rail: Transforming the Midwest Technical Report* feasibility study. This study combined the Chicago to Detroit and Chicago to Cleveland segments into a single corridor. These estimates were for the year 2030 with two speed scenarios (150 mph and 220 mph) and 25 daily round-trips along each corridor.

Ridership forecasts for the Chicago–St. Louis 220 mph route were also prepared as part of the January 2010 *Chicago to St. Louis 220 mph High Speed Rail Alternative Corridor Study*. This study estimated that the proposed high-speed rail line would generate annual ridership between 1,493,834 and 2,978,780 approximately two to three years after the opening of the line. Extending the proposed line from downtown Chicago to Chicago O’Hare airport would generate additional ridership estimated between 463,621 and 682,075 annually. Sketch-level ridership forecasts from the April 2012 *Alternatives Analysis Report* for 110 mph service on the Chicago to Omaha segment estimated annual ridership between 680,000 and 935,000 for the recommended alternative, with a forecast year of 2020 and five daily round-trips assumed. The September 2009 *Tri-State III High-Speed Rail Study: Minnesota Segment Assessment* provided ridership forecasts for the Chicago to the Twin Cities via Rochester route. This study estimated that a 110 mph option would generate 4,690,000 annual passengers while the 220 mph option would generate 7,729,000 annual passengers (forecast year 2020). The study noted that including Rochester along the Chicago to the Twin Cities route would increase ridership by approximately 9 percent over the “River Route” alternative.

### Midwest High-Speed Rail System Ridership Estimates

Segment Description	Estimated 2025 Ridership (110 mph)	Estimated 2030 Ridership (150 mph)	Estimated 2030 Ridership (220 mph)
Chicago to Detroit (All MI Routes)	3,674,940	10,661,000	12,650,000
Chicago to Cleveland, OH	1,120,108		
Chicago to Cincinnati, OH	894,669	5,877,000	7,226,000
Chicago to St. Louis, MO	1,757,123	5,999,000	7,904,000
Chicago to Twin Cities/Green Bay	4,362,404	12,537,000	15,884,000
Chicago to Carbondale	769,911	N/A	N/A
Chicago to Omaha/Quincy	1,440,132	N/A	N/A
St. Louis to Kansas City	804,498	N/A	N/A
Total Midwest System	14,823,785	35,074,000	43,664,000
Ridership Source	MWRRI 2004 Study		MHSRA 2011 Study



## Chicago, Illinois

### Mode Choice

The June 2004 *Midwest Regional Rail Initiative Project Notebook* estimated that the fully-developed Midwest Regional Rail System would capture approximately 2.2 percent of all passenger trips in the MWRRS corridors by the year 2025. The January 2010 *Chicago to St. Louis 220 mph High Speed Rail Alternative Corridor Study* estimated that a 220 mph high-speed rail line between Chicago O'Hare airport and St. Louis would attract approximately 75 percent of its ridership from other corridor modes, with the balance being new induced trips or airport connection trips. The shift of passenger trips from other corridor modes to high-speed rail was estimated to result in a net reduction of 187.4 million pounds of CO2 emissions annually. The May 2011 *The Economic Impacts of High Speed Rail: Transforming the Midwest Technical Report* estimated that a fully-developed 220 mph system connecting Chicago to Detroit/Cleveland, Cincinnati, St. Louis, and the Twin Cities would derive approximately 83 percent of its ridership from automobile, 5 percent from existing Amtrak service, and 3 percent from air, while 9 percent of passengers would be new induced trips.

### Connectivity with Other High-Speed Rail Systems

The 13 segments of the Midwest high-speed rail system connect to two other U.S. high-speed rail systems in four separate locations. Connectivity between the Midwest high speed rail system and the Ohio Hub high-speed rail system is provided in Cincinnati, OH; Cleveland, OH; and Detroit, MI. Connectivity is also provided with the Minnesota high-speed rail system via Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN. *Source: Midwest Regional Rail Initiative Project Notebook, The Economic Impacts of High Speed Rail: Transforming the*

*Midwest, Chicago to St. Louis 220 mph High Speed Rail Alternative Corridor Study, Draft Final Alternatives Analysis Selection Report; Milwaukee-Twin Cities High-Speed Rail Corridor Program, Tri-State III High-Speed Rail Study: Minnesota Segment Assessment*

### GOVERNANCE

Intercity passenger rail planning and implementation activities in the Midwest high-speed rail system are coordinated by the individual state Departments of Transportation in the region. Regional coordination of intercity passenger rail planning in the Midwest high-speed rail system is achieved through an innovative multi-state partnership called the Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Commission (MIPRC). Formed by compact agreement in 2000, the MIPRC brings together state leaders from across the Midwest to advocate for intercity passenger rail improvements. Current members are Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, and Wisconsin. Major activities of the Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Commission include passenger rail promotion and advocacy at the federal and state levels, as well as advancing the Midwest Regional Rail Initiative vision. The MIPRC is governed by a commission which includes four members from each member state, one appointed by the Governor, one from each chamber of the state legislature, and one private citizen. The scope of the MIPRC also includes the proposed "Ohio Hub" high-speed rail network, which is covered under the Ohio Hub high-speed rail system summary.

*Source: Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Commission Website*

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**Illinois DOT Chicago to St. Louis High-Speed Rail Project Website** – URL: <http://www.idothsr.org/>

**Missouri Department of Transportation HSIPR Website**

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**Iowa DOT Chicago to Omaha Regional Passenger Rail System Planning Study Website**

URL: <http://www.iowadot.gov/chicagotoomaha/index.html>

**Minnesota DOT Chicago to Minneapolis/St. Paul High-Speed Rail Corridor Website**

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**Midwest High-Speed Rail Association Website** – URL: <http://www.midwesthsr.org/>

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Prepared by the Iowa Department of Transportation, April 2012

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Prepared for the Minnesota Department of Transportation and the Wisconsin Department of Transportation by Quandt Consultants, LLC, October 2011

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Note: Pages 17 – 51 of this report reviews a history of the various proposals for high-speed rail in the Midwest high-speed rail system, including the Chicago Hub High-Speed Rail Corridor and the Midwest Regional Rail Initiative.