



9. PASSENGER RAIL

9.1 Introduction

The National Railroad Passenger Corporation, Amtrak, is a for-profit corporation that operates intercity passenger rail services for 46 states. Nationally, Amtrak serves more than 500 destinations, utilizes over 21,000 miles of track, and employs over 19,000 people. Amtrak was created by Congress in the Rail Passenger Service Act of 1970, assuming the common carrier obligations of the private railroads in exchange for the right to priority access to tracks for incremental cost.⁸⁰ Based on the two concepts of “American” and “track”, Amtrak began service on May 1, 1971, and recently entered its 37th year of service. Amtrak can be found in each of the eight states in the DRA region.

9.2 Regional Intercity Passenger Rail Service

Amtrak is the only major passenger rail service provider in the DRA region. There are currently 18 Amtrak stations and over 1,000 miles of track in the DRA region used for passenger rail service. Based on 2007 ridership numbers, Amtrak provided service for over 389,000 people in the DRA region. In FY 2007, Amtrak achieved its fifth consecutive year of record ridership.

Figure 19 shows the Amtrak routes in the DRA region and surrounding states:

⁸⁰ Federal Railroad Administration



Figure 19: Amtrak Routes in the DRA Region



Source: Amtrak

The following five Amtrak routes traverse through the DRA region:

- City of New Orleans;
- Crescent;
- Sunset Limited;
- Texas Eagle; and
- Saluki - Illinois Network.

The City of New Orleans offers daily service from New Orleans to Chicago with Amtrak stations in the DRA region located in New Orleans, Hammond, McComb, Brookhaven, Hazlehurst, Jackson, Yazoo City, Greenwood, Memphis, Newbern, Fulton, and Carbondale, as shown in **Figure 20**.



Figure 20: The City of New Orleans Route



Source: Amtrak

The Crescent offers daily service from New Orleans to New York with an Amtrak station in the DRA region located in New Orleans, as shown in **Figure 21**.



Figure 21: The Crescent Route



Source: Amtrak

The Sunset Limited offers tri-weekly service from New Orleans to Los Angeles with Amtrak stations in the DRA region located in Atmore, Alabama (suspended service August 27, 2005 due to Hurricane Katrina), New Orleans, and New Iberia, Louisiana, as shown in **Figure 22**.

Figure 22: Sunset Limited Route



Source: Amtrak



The Texas Eagle offers daily service from San Antonio to Chicago with Amtrak stations in the DRA region located in Little Rock, Walnut Ridge, and Poplar Bluff, as shown in **Figure 23**.

Figure 23: Texas Eagle Route



Source: Amtrak

The Saluki Illinois Route offers daily service between Chicago and Carbondale with Amtrak stations in the DRA located in Carbondale and Du Quoin, as shown in **Figure 24**.



Figure 24: Saluki Illinois Service Route



Source: Amtrak

9.3 Light Rail Service

Little Rock, Memphis, and New Orleans offer a light rail, streetcar service in the DRA region. These public transportation rail systems provide an alternate means of transportation through the downtown areas for the local businesses, residents, and tourists.

CENTRAL ARKANSAS TRANSIT

The Central Arkansas Transit Authority (CAT) has 14 stations, 5 street cars and, as shown in **Figure 25**, 3.40 miles of track currently being used in the downtown areas of Little Rock and North Little Rock, Arkansas.



Figure 25: CAT System Routes



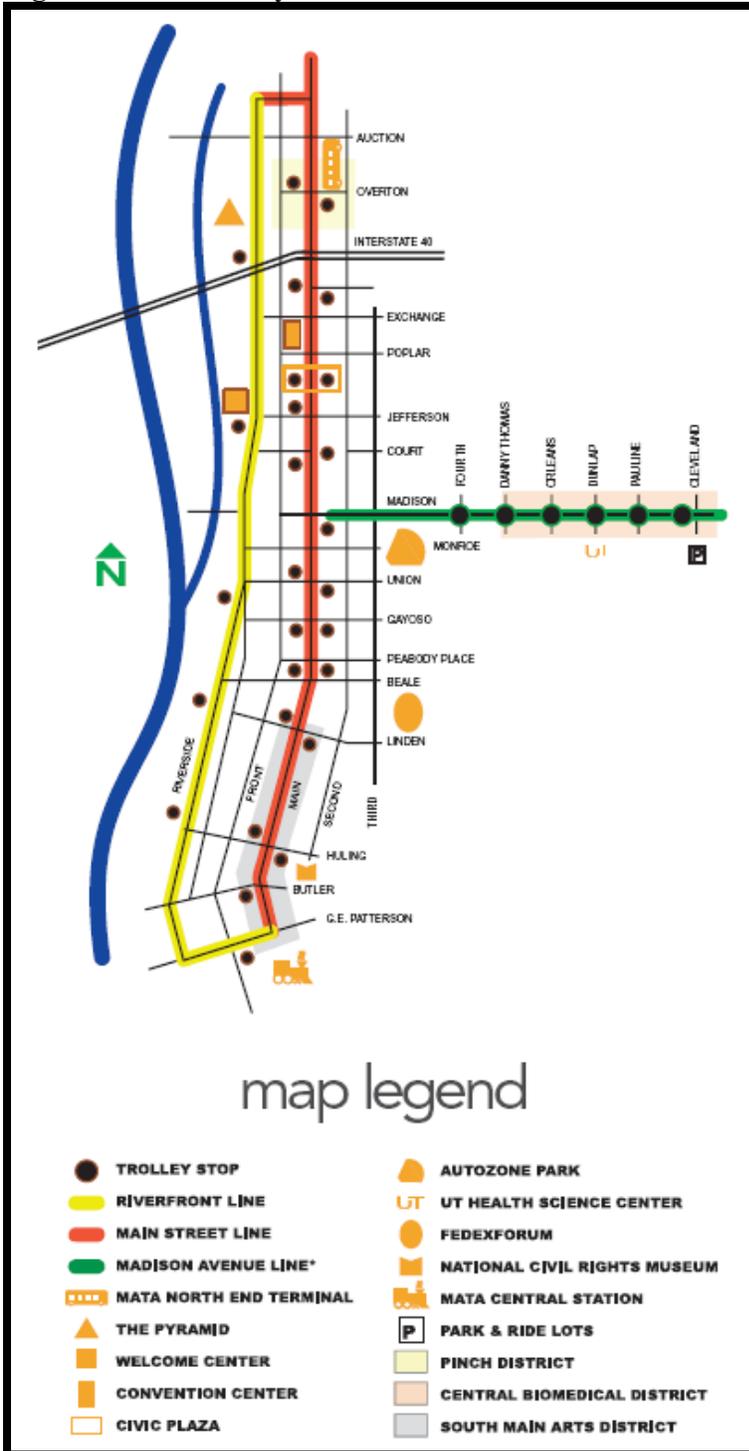
Source: Central Arkansas Transit

MEMPHIS AREA TRANSIT AUTHORITY

The Memphis Area Transit Authority (MATA) has 36 stations, 19 street cars and, as shown in **Figure 26**, more than 10 miles of track currently being used in the downtown area and along the Mississippi River in Memphis, Tennessee.



Figure 26: MATA System Routes



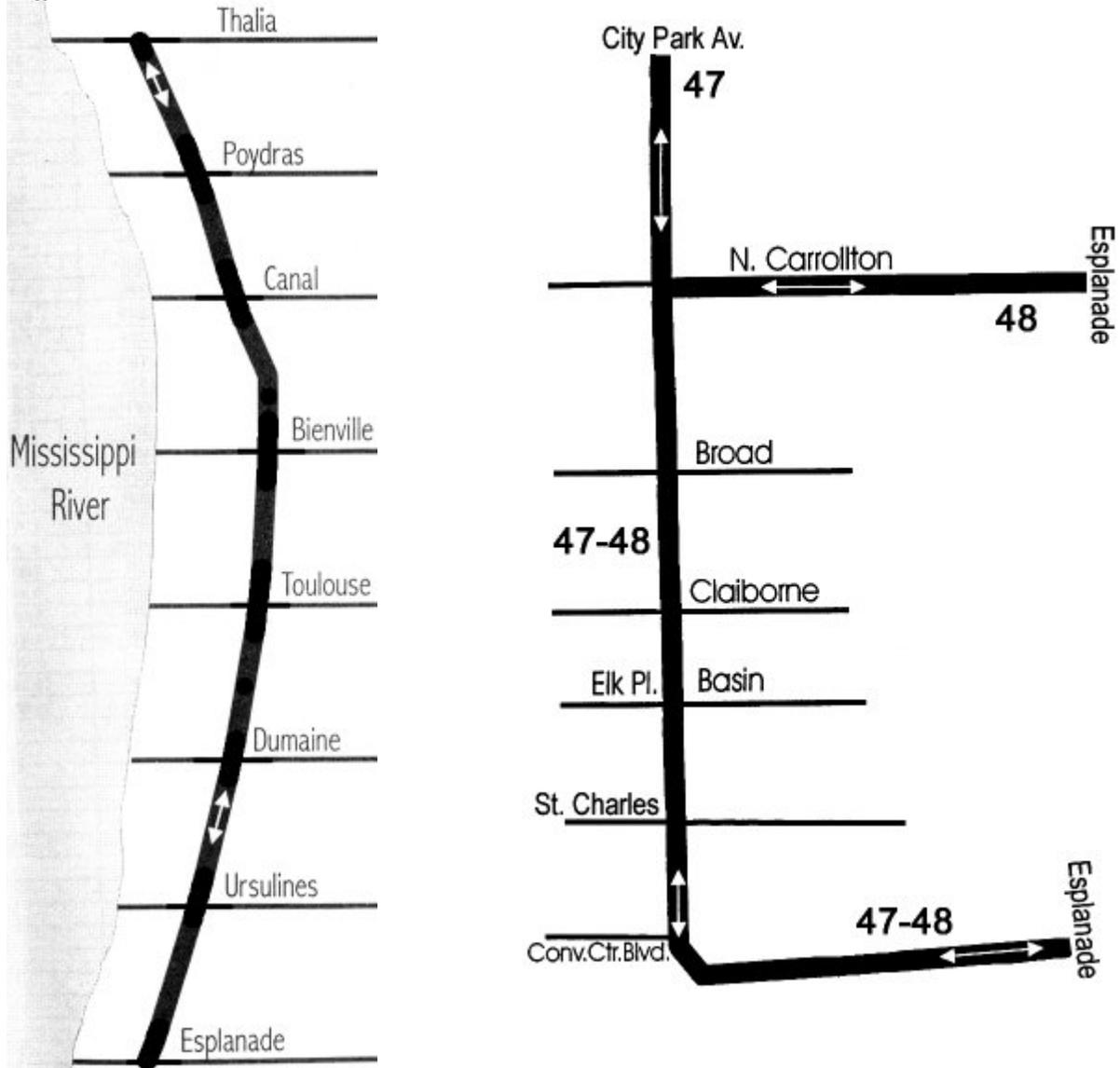
Source: Memphis Area Transit Authority



NEW ORLEANS REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY

The New Orleans Regional Transit Authority (NORTA) has 9 stations, 66 street cars, more than 26 miles of track currently being used in the downtown area, along the Mississippi River, and along St. Charles Avenue in New Orleans, Louisiana. Examples of some of the NORTA street car routes are shown in **Figure 27**.

Figure 27: NORTA Streetcar Routes



Source: New Orleans Regional Transit Authority



9.4 Passenger Rail Needs

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) actively supports the development of the nation's intercity rail passenger system. FRA develops and implements Administration policy regarding the nation's existing intercity passenger rail systems and sponsors passenger rail improvements and services.⁸¹

Passenger rail is an important transportation mode in the DRA region. It serves all eight states and provides a reliable option for local residents. The *Tennessee State Rail Plan* noted that passenger rail can assist in the following ways:

- Reduce the need to expand existing highway facilities;
- Improve air quality and the environment;
- Provide an alternate means of transportation;
- Facilitate linkages with local public transportation systems;
- Enhance economic development;
- Minimize impacts to freight operations;
- Partner with neighbor states to advance regional passenger rail projects;
- Reduce societal costs by cutting automobile travel delays;
- Establish corridors to carry the greatest number of riders at an affordable cost; and
- Provide adequate service to intermediate stations along the corridors.

SAFETY

The FRA Office of Research and Development conducts research, development, test, and evaluation projects to support its safety mission and to enhance the railroad system as a national transportation resource. The FRA contributes vital benefits to the safety regulatory processes, to railroad suppliers, to railroads involved in the transportation of freight, to inter-city and commuter passengers, to railroad employees, and to labor organizations.⁸²

Each state DOT also conducts safety inspections at at-grade railroad crossings. There are thousands of at-grade crossings in the DRA region and some of these crossings need to be improved. Most state DOTs regulate freight and passenger railroads in the areas of crossing improvements, railroad operating practices, track and signal safety, and light rail safety oversight. Each state was asked to provide safety needs in the DRA region. Missouri DOT provided the following:

⁸¹ Federal Railroad Administration

⁸² Federal Railroad Administration



- Vine Street Crossing Upgrade: The City of Poplar Bluff has been working with MoDOT to address an ADA compliance at the Vine Street crossing. The crossing contains three sets of tracks and does not have an adequate pedestrian walkway. MoDOT recently conducted a diagnostic review of the crossing with UP Railroad and city officials. Recommended improvements include replacing all three crossing surfaces, upgrading current signalization to warning lights and protective gates, and installation of a pedestrian walkway with protection controls.
- Second Street Crossing Upgrade: Crossing upgrades are recommended at Second Street due to increasing rail traffic volume on the Hoxie rail subdivision, which is the main corridor for rail chemical transportation from Houston to Chicago. Specific recommended improvements include installation of signal lights and protective gates with constant warning circuitry.
- Increase Road Clearance at E Street Railroad Bridge: The City has approached Union Pacific and MoDOT to consider increasing the road height clearance for the railroad bridge at E Street. Currently, the height separation is too low for emergency vehicles to gain access to the approximately 200 residents that live on the southwest side of the tracks. This situation becomes more serious if crossings are blocked at either B Street or C Street by a train. A feasibility study has not been completed at this time to determine the best approach to this project.

AMTRAK STATION NEEDS

During the Regional Coordination meetings, it was noted that Marks, Mississippi needs Amtrak passenger rail service. There are currently no Amtrak stations between Memphis and Greenwood, Mississippi and providing Amtrak service in Marks to the City of New Orleans Route would serve citizens in northern Mississippi more conveniently.

The Office of Railroad Development works with and assists the Office of the Secretary of Transportation and the U.S. Access Board in preparing and implementing regulations required under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as it relates to the movement of passengers by rail in the U.S.⁸³ Two of the main concerns stated in the ADA Guidance is for full-length, level boarding platforms and the use of segways on transportation vehicles when used as a mobility device by people with disabilities. Amtrak also has goals of upgrading its stations to meet the design guidelines listed in Amtrak's Station Program and Planning – Standards and Guidelines, Version 2.1, which are as follows:

- Verify zoning and permitting requirements;
- Verify historical approvals as required by Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA);

⁸³ Federal Railroad Administration.



- Comply with national and state environmental review requirements;
- Accommodate and encourage intermodality;
- Define station activity levels, ridership projections, services offered and the frequency of trains;
- Provide design to accommodate projected volume for 15 years;
- Consider the physical environment and context;
- Consider zoning and planning and business development proposals related to the station in the larger surrounding area;
- Design for both vehicular and pedestrian circulation patterns, including ADA requirements;
- Design station circulation and flow to be simple, convenient and efficient;
- Utilize materials and systems that are durable, energy efficient and easy to maintain;
- Develop value engineering options that can reduce operating or maintenance costs, without sacrificing the overall design intent;
- Include telecom and data requirements early in the design process. Many IT infrastructure issues can be effectively handled in coordination with electrical design and installation;
- Design public spaces with ADA, safety and security in mind;
- Meet requirements for emergency egress identified in NFPA 130;
- Arrange construction phasing plans to accommodate operations;
- Consider options for adaptability for future growth; and
- Consider impacts on ventilation that over-the track configurations may require.

CONGESTION RELIEF

Today, Amtrak and the three light rail providers in the DRA region provide a viable transportation option to many residents. Maintaining and expanding the current system to serve growing population areas can assist in relieving congestion on DRA roadways. The following provides a list of initiatives that are currently being discussed in the DRA region to expand passenger rail service and in turn improve congestion and transportation choices for DRA residents.

- The Midwest High Speed Rail Association, a membership based non-profit organization advocating the development of fast, frequent and dependable passenger trains linking the entire Midwest, supports a new high speed rail corridor along the Illinois Central railroad between Carbondale and Chicago, Illinois.
- The *Tennessee Rail System Plan* describes a potential intercity passenger rail corridor as the East-West Corridor Study, which examines the feasibility of train enhancements to



support freight movements and passenger rail service in the Memphis-to-Knoxville Corridor. The rail line that directly connects Memphis to Nashville is an active freight line owned by CSX Transportation. The 237-mile long rail-line carries 10 to 12 trains per day and the implementation of a passenger rail service on this route is not expected to significantly impact freight operations. Also, this corridor would connect the two largest population centers in Tennessee in Memphis and Nashville.

- Amtrak is pursuing plans to establish a new rail link, the Crescent Star, between Meridian, Mississippi and Fort Worth, Texas. The service would involve splitting the Crescent at Meridian, and operating a segment of the train from Meridian to Dallas/Fort Worth via Jackson and Shreveport. The remainder of the Crescent would continue to New Orleans, as at present. Introducing the Crescent Star is dependant upon additional siding capacity on the Kansas City Southern (KCS) trackage. KCS is seeking a Rehabilitation and Improvement Financing Program loan of \$44 million from the FRA to finance the necessary track and signal improvements, and is asking the three states involved (Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas) to provide \$1.5 million each for a loan guarantee insurance. KCS indicated the service could start when the loan is assured, even though the improvements will not be completed for some time.⁸⁴
- Amtrak and the FRA have goals of developing high speed rail corridors through portions of the DRA region. As of January 2002, the FRA has designated 10 high-speed corridors under section 1010 of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Act of 1991 (ISTEA) and Section 1103(c) of the Transportation Efficiency Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21).⁸⁵ Designation allows a corridor to receive specially targeted funding for highway-rail grade crossing safety improvements, and recognizes the corridor as a potential center of high speed rail activity.⁸⁶ The designated corridors are shown in **Figure 28**:

⁸⁴ *Louisiana State Transportation Plan*. Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development.

⁸⁵ Federal Railroad Administration

⁸⁶ Federal Railroad Administration.



Figure 28: National Map of High Speed Rail Corridor Designations



Source: Federal Railroad Administration

Of these designated high speed rail corridors, there are three corridors that will affect the DRA region.

1. Gulf Coast High-Speed Rail Corridor, which would extend from Mobile and New Orleans to Houston with connections to Meridian and Birmingham, as shown in **Figure 29**.

Figure 29: Gulf Coast High-Speed Rail Corridor



Source: Federal Railroad Administration



9.5 Passenger Rail Needs for New Orleans

The transit system in the New Orleans urbanized area was devastated by Hurricane Katrina. Not only were hundreds of millions of dollars in physical assets lost, but a large segment of the transit-riding population was left homeless by the storm and relocated to areas outside of the New Orleans area and throughout the U.S. As a result, all transit grantees in the area have suffered extreme losses in ridership and tax revenues that subsidized the operation. All area transit operators have found it necessary to scale back operations, in some cases severely. The Regional Planning Commission (RPC) is working closely with the transit operators to assist in the development of a recovery plan for the sustainable operation of the transit system over the next four years. The RPC also continues to work with LA DOTD concerning the light rail connection between the New Orleans International Airport and Union Passenger Terminal Station in the Central Business District, as well as a more ambitious inter-city rail concept between Baton Rouge and New Orleans.⁸⁷

A renovation plan for the New Orleans Union Passenger Terminal has been developed by the City, in conjunction with Amtrak and the former railroad owners of the station. The plan will convert the station, now 48-years old, into a contemporary transportation center serving trains, buses, and local transportation. The plan includes upgrading the facility with new mechanical systems and passenger conveniences, and environmental containment removal. The \$6.5 million rehabilitation will be funded by Amtrak and freight carriers. A new control center will be provided to control RTA, Amtrak, and Greyhound movements as well as the city's traffic signals.⁸⁸

The total passenger rail needs total \$3.1 billion, which includes high speed rail improvements in the DRA region.⁸⁹

9.6 Modal Recommendations

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Upgrade Amtrak stations to meet the requirements outlined in Amtrak's Station Manual, *Station Program and Planning: Standards and Guidelines, Draft Version 2.1*, as shown in **Table 15**.

⁸⁷ *Transportation Improvement Program, New Orleans Urbanized Area, FY 2008-2011, New Orleans RPC, 2008*

⁸⁸ *Louisiana State Transportation Plan*. Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development.

⁸⁹ Needs calculated by consulting with Amtrak, CAT, MAT and NORTA.



Table 15: Station Standard Matrix

	Ridership Revenue	Large 400,000 and \$35M	Medium 50,000 and/ or \$500K	Small 10,000 and/ or \$50K	Basic < 10,000 <\$50K	Bus
1	ADA / FDA requirements	●	●	●	●	●
2	Trailblazing – highway signs	●	●	●	●	○
3	Paved parking	●	●	●	●	○
4	Auto / Taxi Pick-up / drop-off lanes	●	●	●	○	
5	Bicycle racks	●	●	●	○	○
6	Exterior signage / lighting	●	●	●	●	●
7	Amtrak standard signage	●	●	●	●	
8	Paved platform w/ canopy	●	●	●	●	
9	Platform lighting	●	●	●	●	
10	Trash receptacles	●	●	●	●	○
11	Trash pick-up / snow removal	●	●	●	●	○
12	Janitorial services	●	●	●	●	
13	Janitorial service / dedicated cleaning staff	●	●	●	●	
14	Caretaker w/ occasional janitor	●	●	●	●	
15	Waiting Room	●	●	●	●	
16	Restrooms	●	●	●	●	
17	Shelter / waiting area	●	●	●	●	○
18	Quik-Trak	●	●	○	○	
19	Ticket Office	●	●	●	●	
20	Customer Service office	●	●	●	●	
21	Staffed information counter	●	●	●	●	
22	ClubAcela or Metropolitan Lounge	○	○	○	○	
23	Passenger boarding assistance	●	●	●	●	
24	Passenger assistance (Red Cap)	●	○	○	○	
25	Checked baggage	●	○	○	○	
26	Baggage storage	●	○	○	○	
27	Amtrak Express	○	○	○	○	
28	Information kiosk	●	●	●	●	○
29	Passenger Information Display System (PIDS)	●	●	●	●	
30	Train schedule board or poster	●	●	●	●	
31	Public Address system w/ PIDS	●	●	●	●	
32	Remote P/A w/ platform LED	●	●	●	●	
33	Pay telephones	●	●	●	●	
34	Security on site	●	●	●	●	
35	Security on call / Systems	●	●	●	●	
36	Security on call / Systems / call box	●	●	●	●	
37	Local Police surveillance / call box	●	●	●	●	○
38	Mailbox / Overnight service	●	●	●	●	
39	Mailbox nearby	●	●	●	●	
40	Restaurant / Food service	●	○	○	○	
41	Vending machines	●	●	○	○	
42	Shops (news, books, etc.)	●	●	○	○	
43	Newsstand or news racks	●	●	○	○	
44	Rental cars on call	●	○	○	○	
45	Rental cars on property	○	○	○	○	

○ = Should be evaluated for inclusion, based upon business analysis for need, availability and cost

Source: Amtrak

- Re-establish Amtrak service between New Orleans along the I-10 corridor and the Mississippi and Alabama Gulf Coast region.
- Provide Amtrak service between Baton Rouge and New Orleans.



- Construct an Amtrak rail station in Marks, Mississippi to connect with the City of New Orleans Route.
- Expand Regional public transportation rail systems in Memphis to improve mobility, connect the downtown area to the airport, major job centers, and eventually the growing gaming industry in north Mississippi.
- Expand Regional public transportation rail systems in New Orleans to improve mobility in the downtown business district.
- Expand Regional public transportation rail systems in Little Rock to improve mobility in the downtown business district.
- Renovate Amtrak and transit authority rail stations to better serve the public, offering modern conveniences of public parking, ticket offices, food service, public rest rooms, information kiosks, baggage services, rental cars, security, etc.
- Expand light rail systems into a regional rail system in Little Rock, Memphis and New Orleans. Use and build upon this regional light rail system to revitalize and provide economic growth in each city.

COORDINATION RECOMMENDATIONS

Develop a DRA Passenger Rail Working Group, which would have representatives from federal, state and local transportation agencies in the DRA region and would meet twice a year.

COORDINATION BETWEEN AMTRAK AND THE STATES

Illinois and Missouri are the only two DRA states that have a state contract with Amtrak for the operation of supplemental trains. These routes supplement the national Amtrak network by extending the rail service and providing additional frequencies on Amtrak routes. State and regional agencies pay most of the cost of these services, reimbursing Amtrak for direct expenses. The routes in Illinois are the Hiawatha Service (Chicago-Milwaukee), Lincoln Service (Chicago-St. Louis), Illini & Saluki (Chicago-Carbondale) and Illinois Zephyr & Carl Sandburg (Chicago-Quincy), and in Missouri are the Missouri Mules and Ann Rutledge (Kansas City-St. Louis).

COORDINATION BETWEEN AMTRAK AND THE CLASS I RAIL PROVIDERS

Approximately 70 percent of the miles traveled by Amtrak trains are on tracks owned by other railroads, which are known as "host railroads". Amtrak pays host railroads for use of the track and other resources required to operate Amtrak trains, with incentives for on-time dispatching. Those payments were for more than 26 million train miles (one train mile = a mile of track usage by each train) in FY 2007 and totaled more than \$92 million.⁹⁰

⁹⁰ Amtrak



The six largest host railroads for Amtrak trains are:

- BNSF Railway, 6.7 million train miles;
- Union Pacific Railroad, 6.16 million train miles;
- CSX Transportation, 5.7 million train miles;
- Norfolk Southern Railway, 2.36 million train miles;
- Canadian National Railway, 1.45 million train miles; and
- Metro North Railroad, 1.31 million train miles.

The National Association of Railroad Passengers completed an analysis on Amtrak route segments that are at risk due to severe freight train congestion. Based on this evaluation, the Texas Eagle, south of Poplar Bluff, and the Sunset Limited, east of New Orleans are at risk. Coordination between Amtrak and the Class I rail provider are crucial to ensure passenger rail service in the DRA region remain a stable and efficient mode of transportation.

FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS

Amtrak provides a valuable transportation option to the residents in the DRA region. This fact is proven in the 2007 ridership numbers, which exceeded 389,000 passengers in the DRA region. Over the years, Amtrak has had financial struggles and relies on an annual federal appropriation, which in FY 2007 totaled \$1.294 billion. While Amtrak relies on federal appropriations to support operating and capital needs, the federal government's investment in Amtrak is less than 2 percent of the entire federal transportation budget for FY 2007.⁹¹

The Office of Railroad Development provides financial assistance, sponsors research and development, and provides technical assistance. These program activities include: the Railroad Rehabilitation and Improvement Financing Program (RRIF), environmental research and project reviews, and research and development to further safety and efficiency of the nation's railroad system.⁹²

The enactment on December 26, 2007 of the Department of State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2008, as Public Law H.R. 2764 authorizes the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Transportation to make quarterly grants to Amtrak from a total appropriation of \$1.325 billion. The 2008 Act gives the Secretary oversight of the fiscal spending of Amtrak and enables the Secretary to make grants to Amtrak, to remain available until expended, providing a maximum of \$475 million for operating subsidy grants and \$850 million for capital subsidy grants. Of the \$850 million capital subsidy grants, not more than \$285 million shall be for debt service obligations and \$35 million will be available only if Amtrak

⁹¹ *Amtrak Annual Report, 2007*

⁹² Federal Railroad Administration.



demonstrates to the Secretary's satisfaction that Amtrak has achieved operational savings and met ridership and revenue targets as defined in its business plan.

Amtrak has received \$258.6 million of the FY 2008 appropriation under continuing resolutions through January 29, 2008. Amtrak believes that it can achieve its planned results and that it will receive the full amount appropriated under the 2008 Act. To the extent that less than the full appropriation is received from the Secretary or Amtrak's funding needs are greater than \$1.325 billion plus \$233.9 million combined of cash on hand and short-term investments, due to operating results or the unfavorable resolution of contingencies or other matters, Amtrak may not have sufficient funds to operate through the end of FY 2008.⁹³

There can be no assurances that Amtrak will receive adequate funding to continue operations in its current form in FY 2009 and beyond. To the extent that sufficient appropriations are not received, Amtrak may be required to make certain operational changes, which could result in impairments that could jeopardize passenger rail service in the DRA region.⁹⁴

While the future of Amtrak is uncertain, national leaders are introducing legislation to assist Amtrak. Currently there are several Bills involved the legislative process that will provide financing for Amtrak and high speed passenger rail services. The following is a list of these Bills:

- The Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008 (H.R. 6003). If this bill is enacted into law, it would authorize the appropriation of an estimated \$14.9 billion over the 2009-2013 periods for rail programs administered by Amtrak, states, and the Department of Transportation (DOT). That amount includes \$9.9 billion for grants to Amtrak to cover its operating expenses, capital projects, and debt repayment; \$4.3 billion in grants to states for rail projects, including high-speed rail; and \$520 million for grants to states and Amtrak to reduce rail congestion. Assuming appropriation of the amounts specified and estimated to be necessary, Congressional Budget Office estimates that enacting the legislation would cost \$12.4 billion over the 2009-2013 period.⁹⁵ This funding would also include money for Americans with Disabilities Act Compliance throughout Amtrak.
- The Rail Infrastructure Development and Expansion Act for the 21st Century, RIDE-21, was introduced on May 8, 2008. H.R. 6004 would provide financing for high-speed rail infrastructure and this bill is in the first step in the legislative process. The following is a list of the major provisions:⁹⁶
 - Bonds to be issued by a state, group of states or interstate compact.

⁹³ *Amtrak Annual Report, 2007*

⁹⁴ *Amtrak Annual Report, 2007*

⁹⁵ Congressional Budget Office.

⁹⁶ National Association of Railroad Passengers.



- For each year from FY2009 to FY2018, \$1.2 billion in Tax Exempt Bonds and \$1.2 billion in Tax Credit Bonds.
- Bond proceeds may be used for high speed rail (including Maglev) or by Alaska Railroad.
- Proceeds may be used for equipment, infrastructure, Stations and Facilities, and grade crossing eliminations.
- Only projects that completed preliminary engineering and full environmental process are eligible.
- Operator of the high speed service is subject to Railroad Retiree, Railroad Labor and Railroad Unemployment.
- Construction must be at least to the same standards that Amtrak is held to.
- Any displaced employees must be protected.
- The American Investment in Safe, Reliable High-Speed Rail Act (H.R. 4122) would support the development of high-speed rail in the United States. It amends federal transportation law to authorize the Secretary of Transportation to make grants to a state, an Interstate Compact, a public agency, or a public-private entity to finance high-speed capital projects that improve intercity passenger rail transportation service. It prohibits Secretary approval of a grant project without a state rail plan and a project management plan. Requires each state to prepare for Secretary approval a state rail plan that includes a long-range rail investment program.⁹⁷
- The High-Speed Rail Authority Development and Formation Act (H.R. 4123) would provide for the creation of a National High-Speed Rail Authority.⁹⁸
- To provide for competitive development and operation of high-speed rail corridor projects (H.R. 5644) would provide for competitive development and operation of high-speed rail corridor projects.⁹⁹

PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Develop and fund a Passenger Rail Station categorical grant program to assist in the development and construction of passenger rail infrastructure in the DRA region.
- Develop a DRA Passenger Rail Working Group.
- Upgrade existing Amtrak stations to be compliant with ADA and FDA requirements. This means that all stations must be compliant with federal, state, and local laws, regulations and codes, including the Americans with Disabilities Act and its implementing regulations included in the architectural guidelines in the ADA Accessibility Guidelines.

⁹⁷ www.opencongress.com

⁹⁸ www.washingtonwatch.com

⁹⁹ www.washingtonwatch.com



- Ensure adequate funding is available to maintain the DRA passenger rail systems at both the local and regional level.
- Improve at-grade rail crossing throughout the DRA region.
- Upgrade New Orleans Union Passenger Terminal.