

1. The federal government should develop and enduring collaboration with the states for passenger rail development and implementation similar to other modes of transportation, undergirded by dedicated funding.

Passenger rail is generally the best option for transporting people between communities who are traveling between 100 and 600 miles. It is also often the best transportation mode in certain types of weather and under emergency situations. A weak intercity passenger rail “leg” within our transportation system results in congestion, lost travel time, reduced productivity and decreased fuel-efficiency. Continual and reliable federal capital investments are keys to the success of all transportation modes – including passenger rail.

2. Passenger rail is an important component to developing a 21st-century multi-modal transportation system.

Economic development nationwide will benefit if transportation is developed as an integrated system of all modes. Integrating passenger rail into surface transportation re-authorization will bring benefits to the entire transportation system.

MIPRC thanks Congress for including a rail title for the first time in a transportation funding authorization. The FAST Act’s programs that address rail safety, capital and operations are crucial for the states, as is the State-Supported Route Advisory Committee. Full funding for these important programs should be included within FFY 2018 transportation appropriations, so our states can continue to build on their passenger rail development successes.

3. MIPRC strongly supports the build-out of the Midwest’s plans to bring faster, more frequent service to the region.

Studies show that each dollar spent on passenger rail in our region is expected to provide a social benefit of up to two dollars. Since 1996, the Midwestern states have worked together to plan and implement a 3,000-mile Chicago-hubbed high speed rail system to connect the region. When completed, about 90 percent of the Midwest’s population will be within a one hour car ride to a **Midwest Regional Rail System (MWRRS)** station and/or within 30 minutes of a feeder bus station.

The full build-out of the MWRRS will provide long-term benefits to the region. In addition to generating \$23 billion in overall benefits, the system will generate nearly 58,000 permanent new jobs and \$5.3 billion of increased earnings over the construction period.

In addition, the Midwest is currently undergoing an FRA-led planning study (the **Midwest Regional Rail Planning Study**) that will produce a 40-year framework for the Midwest intercity passenger rail network, including a prioritization of corridors and investment projects, a governance structure, and funding strategy.

Also, **CREATE** (Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency Program) is a project of national economic significance that will reduce congestion on Amtrak routes serving the entire Midwest.

4. The Midwest’s plans still need significant funding.

Between FFY 2009 and FFY 2011, for the first time, Congress awarded states significant funding (\$10 billion) for intercity passenger rail improvements and planning. Under the High Speed Intercity Passenger Rail (HSIPR) program, the Midwest was awarded \$2.5 billion. While this funding is allowing our states to strengthen and expand passenger rail service significantly in our region, to continue this valuable development, Midwestern states need continued assurance of adequate federal capital assistance.

5. There must be adequate federal financial investment in operating long-distance train service.

Amtrak continues a period of revenue and ridership growth made all the more impressive by the challenges of weather, aging equipment and on-time performance issues. Freight routes along which Amtrak's long-distance passenger rail service travels must be maintained and/or improved, with funding for additional capacity provided as needed, to allow for on-time performance by these passenger trains.

6. If passenger rail is treated equitably among all transportation modes, it will thrive as an integral part of our nation's multi-modal transportation system.

The current state of passenger rail in this country should not be used as an argument against the development of passenger rail for our region. Past public policies and lack of federal investment almost eliminated the ability of passenger rail to survive, let alone expand.

7. Rail can play a vital role in meeting energy and environmental policies and objectives.

Clean transportation solutions are an essential part of a comprehensive strategy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Additional investments in clean transportation infrastructure, including rail, would create jobs, cut transportation costs for consumers, and help meet our nation's energy and climate goals.

8. It is important that Congress sends the message that investments in infrastructure should be a priority, and that passenger rail is an integral part of this infrastructure.

We urge Congress to approve annual appropriations for the high-performance passenger rail (formerly High Speed Intercity Passenger Rail-HSIPR) and Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) programs within transportation appropriations.

Once dedicated funds are approved, the year-to-year negotiations will no longer be necessary.

9. Higher speed passenger rail service can be advanced without compromising the vital present and future role of the freight rail industry.

Freight railroads currently provide the majority of the right of way and infrastructure necessary to accommodate more than 315 Amtrak passenger trains per day over 43 routes. This movement of rail passengers takes place over the same network that nearly every sector of the economy relies on to move its products. MIPRC supports early and continued state collaboration with freight railroads on proposed passenger rail projects and efforts to maintain existing, and protect future, freight operations.

10. Operating costs for corridor service should not be considered solely a state responsibility, especially as service on new corridors develops and matures.

MIPRC applauds the inclusion in the FAST Act of the Restoration and Enhancement grant for new/expanded passenger rail service on routes under 750 miles.

We support a change in passenger rail-related legislation going forward to allow states flexibility to use federal funds to offset operating expenses on an ongoing basis.