

P *The Michigan* PASSENGER

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Michigan Association of
Railroad Passengers
www.marp.org

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Update on the Infrastructure Act for Rail Passengers

The *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act* (II&J Act), signed into effect on November 15, 2021 by President Biden, is a huge document of 2,700 pages. An excellent summary by David Peter Allen was provided by *Railway Age* online on November 15, 2021. His summary is the basis for the following review. The full text of this complex piece of legislation can be found at: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/3684/text>.

Provisions Related to Passenger Rail.

The II&J Act contains the *Surface Transportation Act of 2021*, which authorizes surface transportation funding for fiscal years 2022 through 2026. As shown in Table 1, most of the surface funding concerns highways, but a significant amount of funding in the form of grants and loans goes to intercity and commuter passenger rail, rail transit, and rail freight projects. This includes grants to Amtrak and FRA for consolidated rail infrastructure and safety improvements, grants to eliminate grade crossings, grants for restoration and enhancements, grants for federal-state partnerships for intercity passenger rail, and grants for Amtrak's Inspector General.

Fiscal Year	Billions of Dollars			
	Highways	Amtrak NEC	National Network	Transit
2022	52.49	1.57	2.30	13.36
2023	53.54	1.10	2.20	13.36
2024	54.61	1.20	2.40	13.99
2025	55.70	1.40	2.70	14.28
2026	56.82	1.50	3.00	14.64

Source: II&J Act, as reported in *Railway Age*, Nov. 15, 2021

Basically the national network will receive about twice as much funding as the Northeast Corridor. There are additional grants for a *State-Supported Route Committee*, the *Northeast Corridor Commission*, Interstate Rail Compacts, accessibility upgrades, and corridor development.

Amtrak Reforms

The II&J Act includes measures to redefine Amtrak's mission in order to meet the intercity passenger rail needs of the United States. New language addresses both commuter and long distance rail services and rural and urban constituencies. The Act states that "long-distance routes are valuable resources of the United State that are used by both rural and urban communities."

Amtrak is directed to:

- 1 Use its best business judgment to maximize the benefits of Federal investments.
- 2 Offer competitive fares.
- 3 Increase revenue from mail and express.
- 4 Offer food service meeting the needs of its customers. (This would appear to cancel the need for food services to be profitable, a despised dictum of former Florida Congressman John Mica.)
- 5 Improve its contacts with host railroads.
- 6 Reduce management and operating costs.
- 7 Provide economic benefits to the communities served.
- 8 Make agreements with private-sector entities.
- 9 Undertake initiatives consistent with good business judgment to increase revenues.

A stated goal to maintain established long-distance routes would seem to freeze these routes at their current level. The new legislation fails to repeal the provision of the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008 (PRIIA), which defines the "national network" as consisting only of trains whose routes were at least 750 miles long, and which were running when that legislation took effect in 2008.

Changes to the Amtrak Board and Other Provisions

These changes include:

- 1 Removing the President of Amtrak from the Amtrak Board and making the Chief Executive Officer a Board member.
- 2 Insuring that one Board member has a disability and is familiar with accessibility issues in passenger rail or commuter rail.
- 3 Insuring that the other Board members are divided among those who live along the NEC, long-distance routes, and state-supported routes.
- 4 Maintaining ticket agents at stations that were

Continued on page 3

Albion Depot to Receive Maintenance Work and Repairs

The Battle Creek Enquirer reported on October 3, that the red brick Albion Amtrak station will have various repairs and maintenance work performed to keep the historic building in good condition. The cost of the work will be paid for from a \$300,000 gift from the Crum Family, a prominent family in Albion. The building, built in 1882 by the Michigan Central Railroad, is owned by the City of Albion and serves Amtrak passengers on Michigan's Chicago-Detroit/Pontiac Amtrak route and passengers from Greyhound buses.

After Penn Central ceased passenger service in 1971, the building was boarded up and sat unused and empty for many years. It was slated for demolition until the Albion community came together in a successful effort led by Mary Crum and the Albion Community Foundation to save it and convince the City to purchase it in 1982. The building is rented for office space and currently the Mower



The historic Albion Amtrak Depot will receive maintenance and repair work paid for by a generous gift of \$300,000 from Albion's Crum family. (JHG photo)

Agency rents it for their insurance business. A small waiting room on the east end of the building, maintained by Mower, provides shelter for Amtrak and

Greyhound passengers and space for Greyhound package express. The work to be performed has not been itemized, but it will likely include work on sealing the

windows, masonry and foundation repairs, and painting of exterior wood elements. The depot is a charming Victorian reminder of years past.

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The Michigan PASSENGER

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The Michigan Passenger welcomes your comments and submissions on passenger rail issues. Comments, articles, and other materials sent for publication should be sent by email to jhguidinger1@yahoo.com. Clippings from newspapers, magazines, and electronic sources must include the publication's name and date. Photos sent by email must be in .jpg format. We reserve the right to edit all submissions.

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About MARP

The Michigan Association of Railroad Passengers, Inc., (MARP) was established in 1973 as a customer advocacy group to improve intercity passenger rail and bus service, commuter rail service, and transit, and to encourage the preservation of historic railroad stations.

MARP is not affiliated with Amtrak, the railroads, governments, or any political party. MARP is incorporated as a Michigan non-profit organization and is exempt from federal income tax under the IRS code 501(c)(3) as a charitable educational organization. Donations to MARP may be tax-deductible in accordance with IRS rules.

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MICHIGAN ASSOCIATION OF RAILROAD PASSENGERS, Inc.
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MICHIGAN SERVICES

Amtrak Train Schedules											
Effective November 1, 2021											
Chicago-Kalamazoo-Ann Arbor-Detroit-Pontiac											
Chicago-Kalamazoo-East Lansing-Port Huron											
Wolverine Service	Wolverine Service	Blue Water	Wolverine Service	Train Name				Wolverine Service	Blue Water	Wolverine Service	Wolverine Service
350	352	364	354	Train Number				351	365	353	355
Daily	Daily	Daily	Daily	Days of Operation				Daily	Daily	Daily	Daily
7:20a	1:25p	4:00p	5:50p	Dp	CHICAGO, IL, Un Sta (CT)	Ar	10:32a	11:45a	2:50p	10:40p	
7:44a					Hammond-Whiting, IN	Ar			2:05p	9:54p	
8:28a			6:53p		Michigan City, IN (CT)					9:12p	
9:39a	3:41p	6:10p	8:04p		New Buffalo, MI (ET)			11:24a		10:02p	
10:04a	4:02p	6:32p	8:24p		Niles, MI			11:04a	1:49p	9:42p	
10:15a		6:43p			Dowagiac, MI			10:52a		9:29p	
10:47a	4:36p	7:11p	8:58p		Kalamazoo, MI		9:16a	10:26a	1:16p	9:00p	
11:25a	5:11p	7:38p	9:33p		Battle Creek, MI		8:48a	10:00a	12:49p	8:33p	
		9:00p			East Lansing, MI			8:54a			
		9:37p			Durand, MI			8:08a			
		10:08p			Flint, MI			7:35a			
		10:34p			Lapeer, MI			7:08a			
		11:31p		Ar	PORT HURON, MI	Dp		6:20a			
			10:03p		Albion, MI	Ar	8:15a				
12:26p	6:06p		10:28p		Jackson, MI		7:51a		11:46a	7:37p	
1:03p	6:46p		11:08p		Ann Arbor, MI		7:14a		11:11a	7:00p	
1:34p	7:22p		11:39p		Dearborn, MI		6:44a		10:41a	6:29p	
2:04p	7:55p		12:14p		DETROIT, MI		6:26a		10:23a	6:11p	
2:26p	8:16p		12:35p		Royal Oak, MI		6:03a		10:00a	5:48p	
2:34p	8:23p		12:42p		Troy, MI		5:56a		9:52a	5:41p	
2:46p	8:40p		1:01a	Ar	PONTIAC, MI	Dp	5:43a		9:38a	5:28p	

Amtrak Train Schedule

Effective September 7, 2021
 Chicago-Grand Rapids

Pere Marquette	Train Name				Pere Marquette
370	Train Number				371
Daily	Days of Operation				Daily
6:30p	Dp	CHICAGO, IL, Un Sta (CT)	Ar	9:08a	
9:14p		St. Joe-Benton Harbor, MI (ET)	Ar	8:10a	
9:50p		Bangor, MI		7:32a	
10:33p		Holland, MI		6:49a	
11:34p	Ar	GRAND RAPIDS, MI	Dp	6:00a	

NOTE: These schedules are provided for planning purposes only and may not show recent time changes. Consult with Amtrak at AMTRAK.COM or 1-800-USA-RAIL when making reservations.

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MARP STATION REPRESENTATIVES

Chuck Merckel, Coordinator

Station	Staff	MARP Volunteer
Albion	Bus	Matthew Murawski
Ann Arbor	Amtrak	Clark Charnetski/Steve Sobel
Bangor	None	J. P. Descamp
Battle Creek	Amtrak	Shuler Harmon
Dearborn	Amtrak	Mary Jo Durivage
Detroit	Amtrak	Dwight Phillips
Dowagiac	None	Dowagiac Chbr of Commerce
Durand	Museum	Mary Stone
East Lansing	Caretkr	Steve Vagnozzi
Flint	Bus	Barb Westcott
Grand Rapids	Caretkr	Mit Renroc
Holland	None	Nathan Nietering
Jackson	Caretkr	John Guidinger
Kalamazoo	Caretkr	Warren Fritz
Lapeer	None	Jim Slater
Michigan City, IN	None	Volunteer Needed
New Buffalo	None	Lori S. Peterson
Niles	Caretkr	Jack Kessler
Pontiac	Bus	Robert Tischbein
Port Huron	None	T. J. Gaffney
Royal Oak	None	David Roberts
St Joseph	None	Todd Schultz
Toledo, OH	Amtrak	Patrick Miller
Traverse City	None	Carolyn Ulstad
Troy	None	Brad Socier

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- Advocate \$50
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Update... from page 1

- staffed as of Oct. 1, 2017 and which averaged 40 or more daily boardings and alightings during FY2017.
- 5 Providing a detailed review of any changes to long-distance routes, including a detailed description of plans to permanently change a route frequency or station stops.
 - 6 Increasing FRA's oversight of Amtrak's accounting, using newly detailed procedures to monitor spending and increase asset plan transparency.
 - 7 Establishing a *Food and Beverage Service Working Group*, that would study and report on proposed food service changes. The group would include representatives from Amtrak, the unions representing on board service workers, participating states involved in state-supported trains, and nonprofit organizations representing Amtrak passengers. (Two national organizations are mentioned; Rail Users' Network (RUN) and the Rail Passengers Association (RPA). The bill did not address Amtrak's current practice of restricting dining cars only to sleeping car passengers.
 - 8 Prohibiting "vaping" as part of its ban on smoking.
 - 9 Protecting long-distance trains by not substantially altering service on any segment of any long-distance route in any fiscal year in which Amtrak receives adequate Federal funding for such route, without giving 210 days of notice to members of Congress who represent the affected states or districts.
 - 10 Establishing a *State-Supported Route Committee*. The committee will help manage and provide information on state-supported trains. This will include establishment of methodologies for reports, methods to gain efficiencies, and the evaluation of state payments to Amtrak. Amtrak must provide monthly invoices to the committee and the sponsoring states, as well as consulting and cost-methodology requirements when establishing new state-supported routes, and updating cost methodologies.
 - 11 Enhancing cross-border services into Canada (although it has not yet been determined when or if those trains will return).
 - 12 Prohibiting the contracting work out, especially work that had been performed by a furloughed employee.

Studies of New Long Distance Trains

Studies calling for the establishment of new Long-Distance trains are addressed in detail. One study would evaluate restoring daily intercity service along routes that were discontinued or ran on non-daily schedules, as of the date of enactment of this Act. The methodology for this study is specified, as is the requirement to consult with certain nonprofit organizations representing Amtrak passengers, such as RUN and RPA.

The study, under the supervision of the Secretary of Transportation, can consider restoring service on routes that operated in April, 1971 (the last month before the advent of Amtrak on May 1, 1971), but not under Amtrak auspices since that time. Other factors to be considered include taking into consideration whether those new routes would (1) link and serve large and small communities as part of a regional rail network; (2) advance the economic and social well-being of rural areas of the United States; (3) provide enhanced connectivity for the national long-distance passenger rail system; and (4) reflect public engagement and local and regional support for restored passenger rail service.

Since the new legislation does not repeal the definition from PRIIA that freezes the existing long-distance network, this conflict would have to be addressed. The study would also have to identify Federal funding sources required to restore or enhance the service and options for public-private partnerships to assist in the funding.

Other Intercity Passenger Rail Policies

Several other provisions in the II&J Act provide for:

- 1 Completion of a Northeast Corridor Service Development Plan by March 31, 2022. It will be prepared by the *Northeast Corridor Commission*, an existing organization whose members are the transportation commissioners of the states along the NEC and NJ Transit. It will provide a 15-year plan covering projects along the corridor, and identify service objectives and capital investments required to meet them. Annual capital investment plans with a five-year planning frontier will be required.
- 2 Modification of restoration and enhancement grants to a more-generous formula than specified in the Passenger Rail Reform and Investment Act of 2015. The old formula limited grants to 80% of the projected net operating costs for the first year of service, 60% for the second year, and 40% for the third year. The new formula extends the life of the grant to six years, with new amounts of 90% for the first year, 80% for the second year, 70% for the third

year, 60% for the fourth year, 50% for the fifth year, and 30% for the sixth year.

- 3 Establishment of a railroad grade crossing elimination program,
- 4 Establishment of interstate rail compacts for the promotion of intercity passenger rail operations, with a limit of ten such grants of not more than \$1 million each year.
- 5 Encouragement of Federal-state partnerships for intercity passenger rail grants. Categories for eligible capital projects include state of good repair, performance improvements and new services.
- 6 Establishment of a new corridor identification and development program for new corridors. The Act also specifies a process whereby eligible entities can submit proposals for starting corridors, including service development and funding plans. (An "intercity passenger rail corridor" is still defined as a route less than 750 miles long.)
- 7 Guidance to the Surface Transportation Board (STB) regarding issues concerning passenger rail, notably, the effect of host railroads on Amtrak's on-time performance, and settling disputes between Amtrak and private sector railroads, including the initiative to start service between New Orleans and Mobile.
- 8 Support for rail safety covering a number of topics including safety enhancement at grade crossings, maintenance costs for positive train control (PTC), crew training, hours of service, speed limits, freight cars, and several other matters.

Provisions for Transit

The II&J Act provisions concern local transit in general using the term "fixed guideway" systems, which includes busways, as well as rail transit. "Commuter" rail, a term that appears to be heading toward obsolescence, is covered in some of the rail-related provisions described earlier.

Authorizations for transit during the next five years are shown in Table 1. The American Public Transportation Association (APTA) has historically campaigned for a 20% modal share for transit, and these annual amounts are 19 to 20 percent, which are slightly higher than the normal 18 percent.

Various provisions of II&J Act include the following new ideas and changes for transit:

- 1 Adjusting rules for membership on metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs), which engage in planning at the local level and approve grant requests (although there is no requirement for members who depend on transit or members who advocate for better transit).
- 2 Adding a number of new procedures for fixed-guideway capital projects, including the ability to bundle two or more related projects together. This provision will smooth the path for appli-

cants to ask for grants for several components of a mega-project.

- 3 Creating a Public Transportation Innovation section, although much of this appears to be directed to electric vehicles, especially buses.

There are other topics in the transit provisions, including transit in rural areas, bus testing facilities, transit-oriented development (TOD), safety issues, state-of-good-repair grants, and provisions relating specifically to the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA).

Overview and Response

Since the II&J Act was signed into effect, many comments have been made about the effect of this sweeping legislation on rail services. We understand that the FRA is staffing up to manage the program and that states are preparing grant requests for the federal funding. David Peter Allen in *Railway Age* quotes comments from others that a key to all this revolves around the importance of Congress enacting a FY 2022 Federal Appropriations bill. If Congress is unable to resolve their considerable differences, we could end up with Continuing Resolutions that extend through the end of the fiscal year. If this is the case, then the additional funding envisioned in this infrastructure bill could be at risk.

Meanwhile Governors in many states are moving ahead to make plans. *Railway Age* reports that the five members of the National Governors Association met in December with federal officials and private sector partners at a three-day infrastructure summit to explore the best ways to implement the new infrastructure initiatives. *Trains Magazine* reports that freight railroads will also benefit through the expanded Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvement Grant Program (CRISI). The II&J Act provides a billion dollars a year through 2026 for CRISI compared to 362 million for 2021.

The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) speculates that the massive American spending will bring new railway service to Canadians on a Toronto-Detroit-Chicago route and improved service on the existing Amtrak trains serving Vancouver, Toronto, and Montreal.

Amtrak has several long delayed projects ready to go. On the northeast corridor these include building the new Hudson River Tunnel, replacement of Baltimore's 1873 B&P Tunnel, replacement of many massive old bridges, bringing stations nationwide into ADA compliance, and buying new rolling stock.

Amtrak and transit supporters probably could have written a better plan that would have served Amtrak and transit riders better. But there is wide spread opposition in Congress to rail passenger and transit service from rural areas of the United States and the existing language tries to accommodate this opposition. How much the actually enacted provisions will actually improve mobility, especially for persons who depend on transit is yet to be seen.

Tim Hoeffner honored



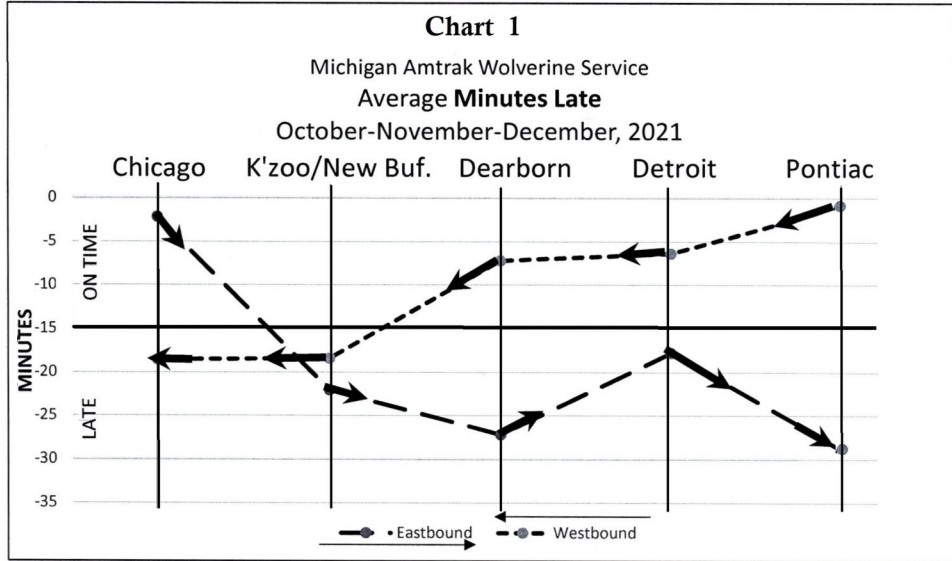
Timothy H. Hoeffner, who headed up the newly created Office of Rail at MDOT from 2012 until his retirement in 2020, was honored by MDOT when his name was applied to the new Chelsea Rest Area. The rest area is on the eastbound lanes of Interstate Highway 94, about a mile east of the Chelsea exit. Tim worked for MDOT for 41 years starting in 1980. MARP congratulates Tim. (JHG photo)

Wolverine Service Reliability Report

By Larry Krieg

In the last edition of The Michigan Passenger, we explored the many reasons why trains are often late. This time, let's see how they've been doing lately.

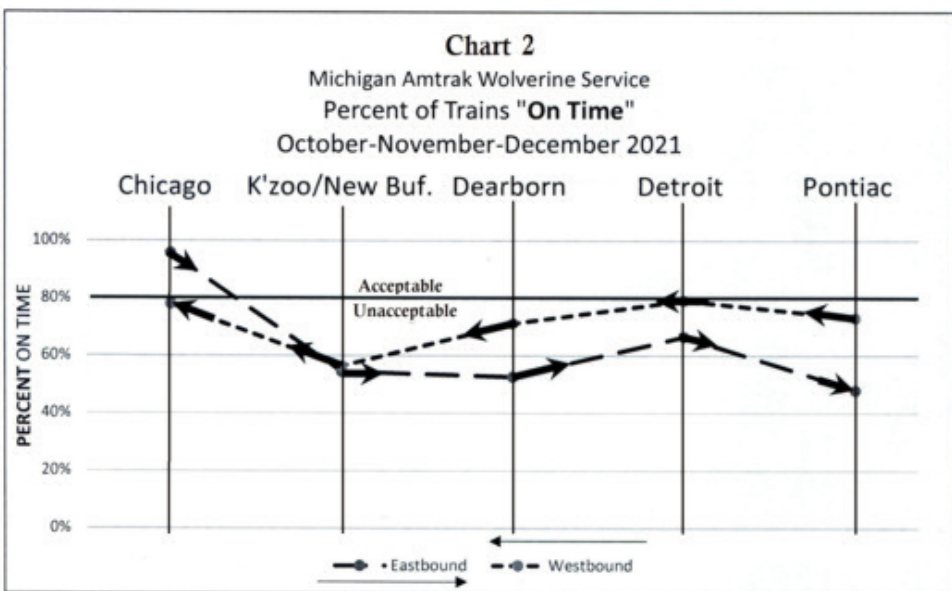
MARP has been carefully recording the arrival times of Wolverine trains at key stations between Pontiac and Chicago as reported by Amtrak's train Status Website. We used the metrics set by the Surface Transportation Board (STB) to determine how many trains were late during October, November, and December of 2021, and how late they were. We analyzed performance separately for trains traveling to Pontiac (eastbound) and those going to Chicago (westbound) to help clarify where the consistent delays occur.



Westbound to Chicago, the Wolverine trains averaged 10 minutes behind schedule at each station checked. Eastbound to Pontiac, the trains averaged 20 minutes behind schedule at each station checked.

According to the STB ruling, a train that arrives or departs within 15 minutes of its scheduled time is considered "on time". So for an average of 10 minutes behind schedule, the westbound trains arrived at these stations "on time". Eastbound, the average arrival or departure was 20 minutes behind schedule, making the trains to Pontiac "late" on average at each station studied. In both directions, however, the average doesn't tell the full story. There was tremendous variability, and we'll discuss that below.

Westbound to Chicago, an average of 79.6% of trains arrived "on time" at each station studied. Eastbound to Pontiac, an average of 63% of trains arrived "on time" at each station studied.

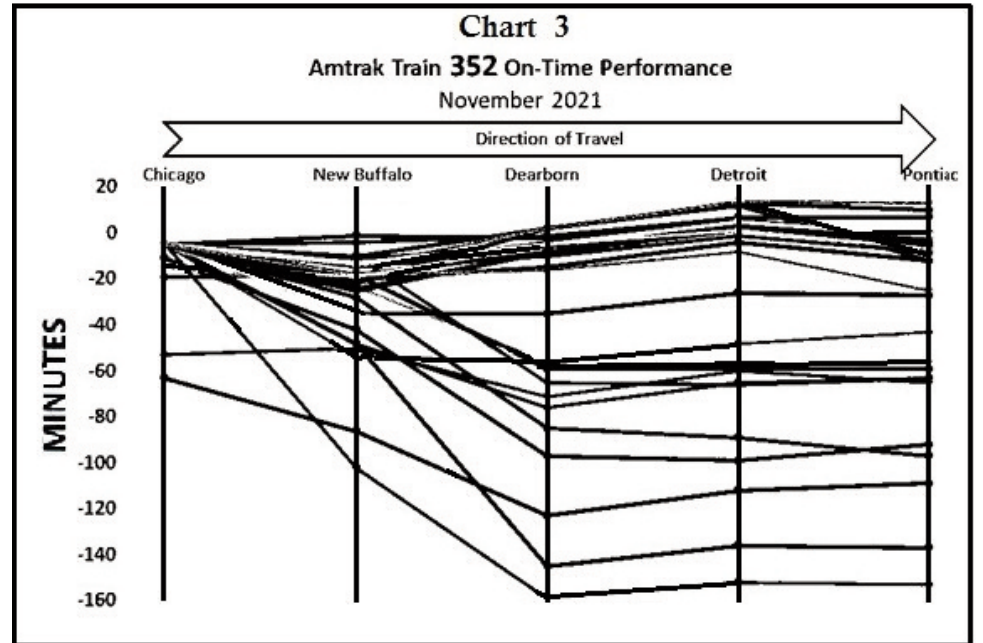


The STB ruling states that if 80% of trains arrive within the 15 minute "on time" window, performance is acceptable. If arrivals are below the 80% threshold for two consecutive quarters, a legal complaint can be made to the STB, resulting in proceedings to penalize the railroad that was at fault for the delays. But the data MARP has gathered does not have evidence of who was at fault. That information is gathered and reported by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) in quarterly reports. We'll discuss these reports in the next Michigan Passenger.

The average arrival times don't look great, but the real problem is the unreliability. You simply can't depend on a Wolverine train to be anywhere near "on time".

During the last three months of 2021, the earliest a train arrived at its final destination was on October 17, when Train 353 arrived in Chicago 34 minutes early. Early arrival usually indicates that the schedule has generous "recovery time" (padding) because the schedulers know the train will often be delayed. Perhaps if trains could run unhindered by conflicting traffic between Kalamazoo and Chicago, 30 minutes could be shaved off the schedule.

On the other hand, bad days can cause very long delays. December 14 was a very bad day: a tragedy caused Train 352 to arrive in Pontiac 331 minutes (5 hrs. 31 min.) late, and Train 355 arrived in Chicago 343 minutes (5 hrs. 43 min.) behind schedule. Tragedies can't be completely avoided, but day-by-day delays can and should be fixed. An example of day-by-day performance is shown in Chart 3.



Times for each run of Train 352 from November 1 to November 30 are graphed in Chart 3 as an example of the wide variability in performance. Starting at the left, most trains (23 of the 30) left Chicago exactly on time. Seven actually arrived in Pontiac early – on Nov. 26, 352 arrived 18 minutes ahead of schedule. Despite schedule padding, 352 arrived in Pontiac more than 15 minutes behind schedule on half the days of November. The greatest delay was 152 minutes – two and a half hours – ironically, the day after 352 had arrived 18 minutes early.

MARP offers these performance facts to help everyone involved work toward reliable passenger rail transportation. It is not our goal to shame or embarrass anyone, but simply offer information on which to build improvement. More complete data and graphs will be offered on <http://www.marp.org/>, and we expect to continue tracking performance in future issues of The Michigan Passenger.

It would have been impractical to record data for all stations on the Wolverine line. Key stations were chosen so as to separate as much as possible tracks owned by different railroads. Chicago and Pontiac are the end-points, with Amtrak being responsible for on-time departure. Kalamazoo is the last station before Chicago at which all westbound Wolverine trains stop, but New Buffalo is the first station in Michigan for all the eastbound Wolverines. Dearborn is the eastern end of the track owned by MDOT, while Detroit's station lies between various dispatch-zones.

The 2,760 raw data points were gathered daily by Chuck Merckel from Amtrak's train status web site. This was given preliminary analysis by Jeanie Merckel, with final analysis and graphs by Larry Krieg.

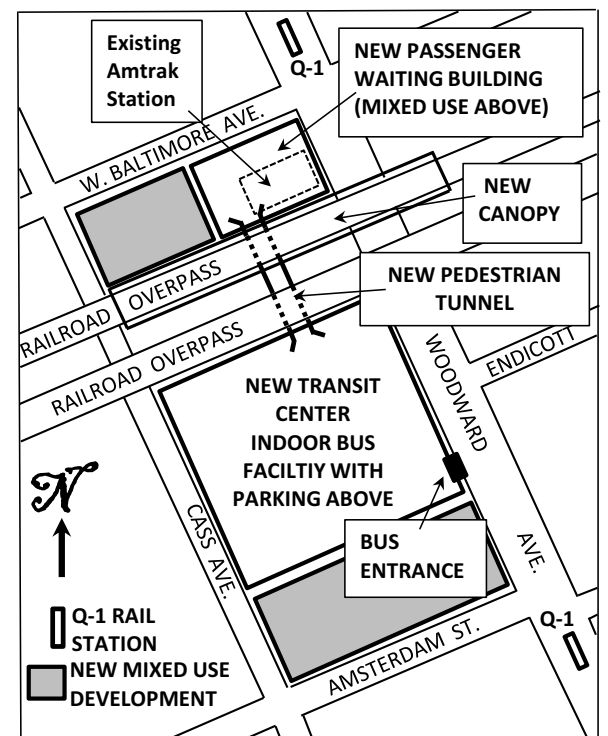
Gift card available

Amtrak gift cards were among the hundreds of various cards displayed for sale at Meijer's Store in Jackson at Christmas time in 2021. It is assumed that the cards can be used for online purchase of train tickets.



Proposed Detroit Intermodal Station Receives a \$10 Million Grant

US Senators Debbie Stabenow and Gary Peters and US Representative Rashida Tlaib announced on November 19, 2021, that the proposed Detroit Intermodal station had been awarded a US DOT grant for \$10 million. The Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant will assist in funding the long planned \$57 million intermodal station on Woodward Avenue in Detroit's New Center area. The intermodal station will be served by Amtrak trains, city and intercity buses, the Woodward Avenue Q-Line trolley, and taxis. A new larger Amtrak station would replace the current station on the north side of the tracks and the bus facilities and parking would be on the south side of the tracks, with a connecting pedestrian tunnel below the elevated tracks. The project includes the construction of a multi-story parking garage with a first floor indoor bus loading facility, a covered platform for rail passengers, as well as neighborhood mixed use developments to provide income to help cover the costs of the facility. The bus station would be a major central station for all Detroit area buses. (See the site sketch.)



PROPOSED DETROIT NEW CENTER INTERMODAL FACILITY
MDOT/Quandel Consultants
Michigan Association of Railroad Passengers, 2022

Amit Bose Confirmed as New Administrator of FRA



Amit Bose, new FRA Administrator. (FRA Photo)

On January 12, 2022, the US Senate confirmed Amit Bose as the new Administrator of the Federal Railroad

Administration, succeeding Ronald Batory, a former railroad executive. Mr. Bose, an attorney, was an official in the FRA during the Obama Administration who helped implement Positive Train Control. He also provided oversight on Obama's \$10 billion intercity passenger rail program and guided alcohol and drug testing programs. Mr. Bose's previous Federal positions have included US Department of Transportation Assistant Secretary for Governmental Affairs and US DOT Associate General

Counsel. Previously he was with the transportation consulting company HNTB, and was Board Chair of the Northeast Corridor Commission. He also worked for New Jersey Transit, the New Jersey DOT, and as a congressional staffer dealing with transportation.

US DOT Secretary Pete Buttigieg said in a January 12 press release that "Amit's experience will be invaluable as we work to implement the..... largest investment in passenger rail since the creation of Amtrak."

Canadian Pacific Agrees To Passenger Service Through The Detroit River Tunnel

By Hugh Gurney

The Canadian Pacific Railway has agreed to passenger service through its Detroit River Tunnel, thereby facilitating Amtrak's vision of a through Chicago-Detroit-Toronto train, *Progressive Railroading* reported on January 6, 2022. The agreement is part of an overall accord between Amtrak and CP in which Amtrak agreed to support CP's acquisition of the Kansas City Southern Railroad (KCS) and CP agreed to cooperate with Amtrak on implementation of its long term vision for expanded intercity rail service.

CP acquired 100% ownership of the Detroit River Tunnel connecting Detroit with Windsor, Ontario in December, 2020, paying OMERS, the pension plan for Ontario government employees \$312 million for its 83.5% share. Previously, the railroad had just a 16.5% stake in the tunnel.

"We welcome CP's commitment to our efforts with states and others to expand Amtrak service and are pleased to have reached agreement formalizing CP's support of Amtrak expansion in the Midwest and the South," noted Amtrak President Stephen Gardner.

"CP is pleased to continue to support Amtrak and its infrastructure projects to provide capacity needed to accommodate additional service," CP President and CEO Keith Kreeel said.

In addition to the use of the Detroit River Tunnel, CP specifically agreed to:

Increased Hiawatha service between Chicago and Milwaukee

A second round trip on the Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago corridor

Amtrak service between New Orleans and Baton Rouge,

Study of Amtrak service between Meridian, Mississippi and Dallas, Texas.

New Amtrak Ticket Kiosk at East Landing

The latest version of the Amtrak self-ticketing kiosk appeared in the East Lansing Amtrak station in December as part of a nation-wide rollout of new ticketing machines. According to Amtrak, starting in October 2021 new machines will be introduced to 150 stations across the country. The new machines allow passengers to conduct the most common in-station transactions using touch, card swipe, barcode scan, or by inserting a connection for a head set, which will activate audio instruction for sight impaired passengers. The machine will make reservations, select seats on reserved trains, and issue printed tickets. Future enhancements will include the ability to accept contactless payments and send tickets to a customer's email address. The existing 20-year old Quik Trac machine will be retired. (Steve Vagnozzi Photo)



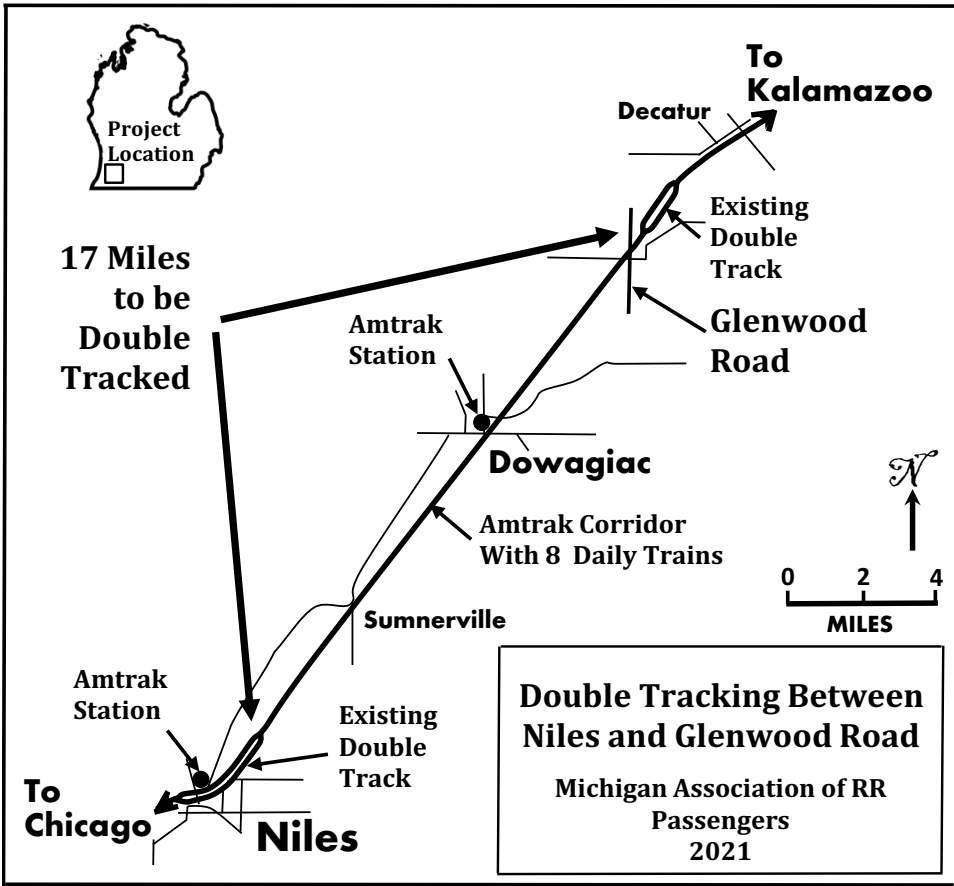
SHORT LINES

Eight new high-speed railway passenger lines were set to open in China in December 2021 according to a report in the December 2nd issue of *Railway Age*. The lines range in length from 113 km (70 miles) to 436 km (271 miles) and operate at speeds up to 350 km/h (217 mph). Among these is a 160 km (99-mile) segment which will complete an international line to Vientiane, Laos. Many of these new lines replace slower existing railroads and provide exceptional high speed passenger services..... **California's High Speed Rail Project won another court challenge** against the project. According to *Railway Age*, opponents had challenged the project saying that recent changes in the state constitution now limited the bond money approved by the voters to be used only on useable segments of the route and not on segments that would be someday useable. The California 9th District Court of Appeal ruled that the high speed railroad project was a very complex public works project and changes in the constitution did not "divert funds from, interfere with, or destroy the single object of the work...distinctly specified in the bond act" that is, the installation of a new high speed railroad.....**The critical Hudson River Tunnel Project is finally ready** for construction, awaiting only money. On December 1, the Army Corps of Engineers issued a permit to construct the \$12.3 billion project, which includes two new 2.8-mile rail tunnels under the Hudson River from New Jersey to Manhattan Island and the rehabilitation of the two existing tunnels built by the Pennsylvania Railroad in 1910. *Railway Age* says that funding could be available by the end of 2022 and that construction could be completed in 2035.....**The Ann Arbor Mayor and City Council members were sent letters from MARP** on December 2nd asking for their support in getting the Federal Railroad Administration to restart the environmental process that would be needed to get a replacement station built in Ann Arbor.....**Starbucks Coffee is now being served on Amtrak**. After 50 years Amtrak has begun serving Starbucks Coffee in their dining cars and cafe cars. (Thanks guys!)..... **The Nevada Northern Railway Museum received a \$10 million grant** from the USDOT to rebuild 16 miles of track to extend the passenger tourist railroad from East Ely to McGill, Nevada, and build a turntable there. The extension will provide rail passengers with a real destination and will spark tourist business in the town of McGill, whose handsome masonry depot has already been meticulously restored by the railroad. The Nevada Northern Railroad was completed in 1906 with 140 miles of track between connections with the Southern Pacific at Cobre and the Western Pacific at Shafter to the mines at Ruth, near Ely. The closure of the Anaconda Copper smelter at McGill in 1983 caused the railroad to shut down, although Anaconda graciously assisted in the preservation of the railroad in the Ely area.**One Missouri River Runner to stop running**. The *Fulton Sun* on December 30th reported that the Missouri legislature did not appropriate enough money to run both daily trains between St. Louis and Kansas City. Therefore one train stopped running as of Monday January 3, 2022. Missouri now has only a morning train from Kansas City to St. Louis and an afternoon train from St. Louis to Kansas City. Tammy Bruckerhoff, a member of an advisory group supporting the trains, said she thought the second train could start running again by March.**Amtrak Cascades trains began using the Point Defiance by-pass** on November 18, 2021 according to a November 10 report by *The Seattle Times*. After a 2017 derailment by the first train to use the new by-pass killed three people and injured 65, trains immediately returned to the longer and more congested BNSF shoreline route. During the ensuing years, positive train control and safety measures recommended by the National Transportation Safety Board as well as safety measures devised by Amtrak were incorporated to allow safe operations on the by-pass. The 14.5 mile inland by-pass route is owned by Sound Transit and is located between Tacoma and Centennial on the Seattle-Portland/Eugene Cascades Amtrak route. The curve where the derailment occurred, as shown in news photographs, appears very sharp, and requires an abrupt drop in speed from 80 to 30 MPH. According to a *Wall Street Journal* report of December 22, 2021, realigning the tracks to soften the sharpness of the curve was considered but deemed to be too costly. The accident resulted in the souring of opinion on the use of the light-weight Spanish Talgo equipment (used in the US only on this route) and the decision to eventually retire all of this equipment in favor of normal locomotives and coaches..... **GO commuter service out of Toronto was extended about 70 miles from Kitchener to London, Ontario** on October 18, 2021, according to Transport Action Ontario (TAO). The initial service will consist of a single train departing London in the early morning and a single train departing Toronto in the late afternoon. The extension will result in a commuter line about 140 miles long. TAO (as well as MARP) was surprised at the speed that the extension was implemented, without the lengthy planning and other studies. West of Kitchener, the Canadian National track (shared with Genesee and Wyoming and VIA) is in very poor condition, limiting trains in some places to 10 to 30 mph. There is considerable local interest in seeing this extension succeed and requests for new stops at Thorndale, Shakespeare, and Baden have been made.**Amtrak announced temporary service reductions to long distance trains** apparently due to a lack of employees caused by the surge in the Omicron variety of the COVID virus. Although there will be no service reductions in Michigan, the Capitol Limited will be cut to 5 days a week, with no end-point departures on Fridays and Saturdays. The Lake Shore Limited will also go to 5 days a week with no end point departures on Tuesday and Wednesday. It is hoped that these reductions will be temporary.**An Ontario Northland passenger train ran a four hour test run between North Bay and Toronto** in November in anticipation of service returning to these rails soon. The service was discontinued nine years ago. The test run carried many Provincial officials and local mayors. Transport Action Ontario reports that the test run was the result of advocacy action by TAO with Corina Moore, President of Ontario Northland Railway, and with local mayors of municipalities along the route.

Double Tracking and New Connector Proposed

Amtrak is proposing two projects in west Michigan for Federal funding on the section of the former Michigan Central mainline that Amtrak owns. The first project involves restoring the double track on 17 miles of line between Niles and a point at Glenwood Road, primarily in Cass County. This is a long straight section of track. Double tracking would connect two short existing double track sections that function as passing sidings. One is at the Niles station and the other is 17 miles east at Glenwood Road (just west of Decatur). Double tracking will allow much greater operational flexibility and avoid having to have one train to stop and wait for another to pass. The location of this project is shown in Figure 1.

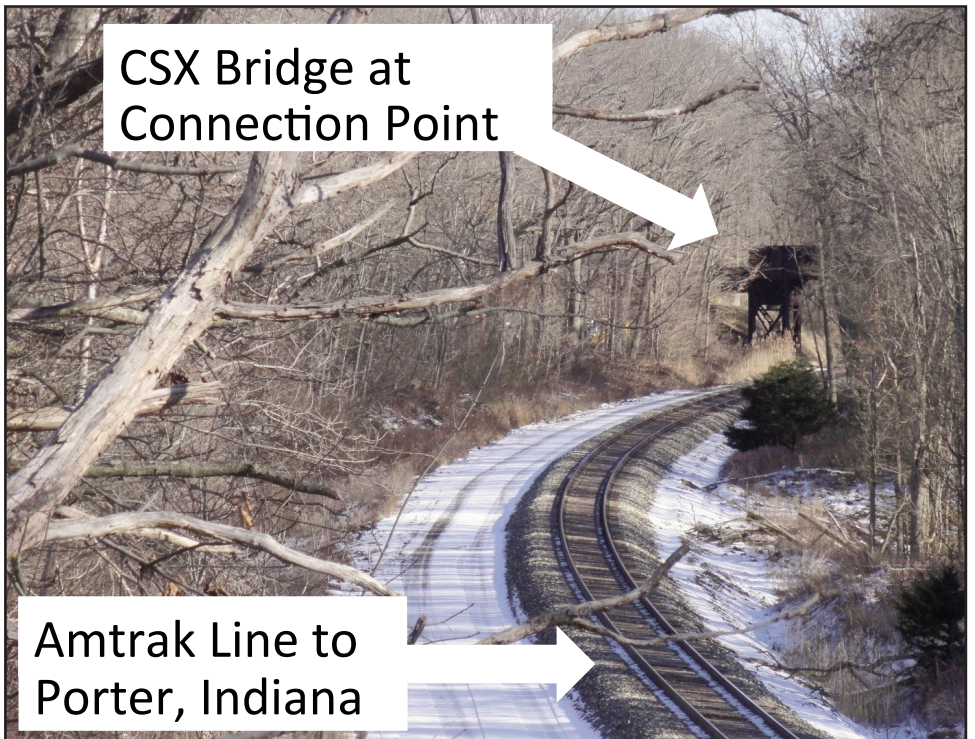
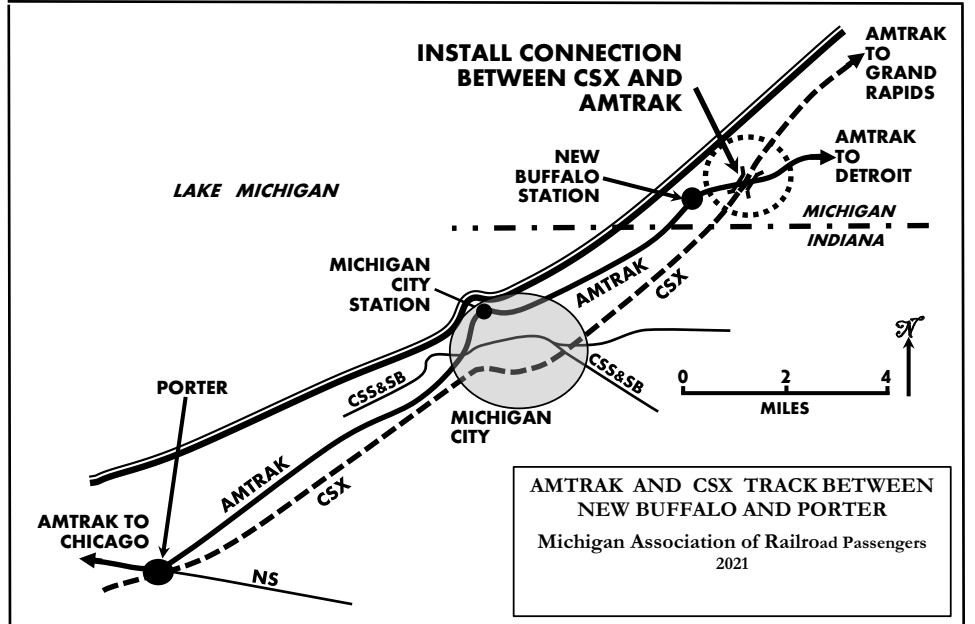
Figure 1



Looking east from White Street (east of Niles) showing the existing right-of-way with space on the north (left) side for a second track. This was previously a double-track railroad. (Jack Kessler Photo)

The second project is the long awaited connector between CSX in Berrien County, about a mile east of the New Buffalo Station. This would allow the Pere Marquette to move off the CSX freight line and onto the high-speed Amtrak passenger line for about 20 miles between the connection point and the junction with the Norfolk Southern Railroad at Porter, Indiana. It would also allow the Pere Marquette to serve the very popular stop at New Buffalo, Michigan, and the station at Michigan City, Indiana.

Figure 2



Looking east, showing the CSX Bridge over the Amtrak line at the location of the proposed connection, one mile east of the New Buffalo Station, in Berrien County, Michigan. (Jack Kessler Photo)

Kansas Prepares For Heartland Flyer Extension

By Hugh Gurney

At a February 10, 2021 meeting of the Passenger Rail Forum, Amtrak pledged to cover 100% of the capital costs for the long desired northward extension of the Heartland Flyer. This would extend the route of the train 190 miles north from its current terminus at Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, to Newton, Kansas, where it would connect with the Southwest Chief in both directions. Amtrak would also cover operational costs for the extension for 3-5 years. All of this is dependent on anticipated federal funding for this specific route.

As a result, on March 11, 2021, the Kansas State Senate passed a resolution supporting the extension of the Heartland Flyer between Oklahoma City and Newton, with all 40 senators voting in the affirmative. In addition to the extension, the Kansas Senate asked the Kansas Congressional delegation to support a

Continued on page 8



Amtrak's Heartland Flyer at Fort Worth, Texas. (Amtrak Photo)

MARP Proposes Expansion of Kalamazoo-Detroit/Pontiac Service

MARP is proposing additional trains on the Michigan Corridor between Kalamazoo and Detroit and Pontiac. The schedule proposed by MARP shows two new round trips between Kalamazoo and Detroit and on to Pontiac. These trains are shown in the schedule at right as New Trains A and B eastbound, and Trains C and D westbound.

The goal is to provide useable service to Detroit. Currently the schedules of all Michigan trains are skewed to going in and out Chicago, a noble goal, but Detroit with an urban area with 5 million souls also needs trains. Under the current schedule, the earliest a passenger can arrive in Detroit is 2:04 pm (usually a half-hour or more later due to delays). The last train currently leaves Detroit at 5:48 pm. This is a schedule that allows only about 3 hours in Detroit.

The goal is to get the passenger into Detroit around 11 am and allow the passenger to be there all day, with the last return train leaving after 8 pm. This would provide about 9 hours in Detroit for a full day of business or shopping. For the first time since the 1960s the trains could be used to go to sporting events such as Lions Games, Sunday Detroit Tiger games; to visit the Detroit Art Museum or the Detroit Public Library; to go shopping; or do something as simple as to have a nice lunch with friends in Detroit.

In addition to serving Detroit better, the proposed schedule would open up many new opportunities for travel between intermediate stations such as between Kalamazoo and Battle Creek and Ann Arbor. A passenger could go to a Michigan Football game or to a concert and dinner in Ann Arbor.

The schedule shown here could also be the start of commuter service between Detroit and Pontiac and Detroit and Ann Arbor. It would connect better with the Via Rail Canada trains at Windsor. It would restore service to Chelsea and Ypsilanti, where Amtrak service ended in the 1980s, and where there are great restaurants and shops within a few feet of the depots.

This opportunity represents easy to start "low hanging fruit" in the sense that the trains would run on the existing passenger corridor, most of which is state owned. The congestion between Chicago and Porter, Indiana, on Norfolk Southern, would be avoided. Servicing facilities exist in Pontiac and could be installed at Kalamazoo. The new trains could also originate from Niles where Amtrak already has yard facilities (or perhaps from Grand Rapids if arrangements could be made with the Grand Elk Railroad.)

This is something that needs to happen! We must improve service on the Michigan Corridor, on which hundreds of millions of dollars have been spent, from just token service to a much more usable service. With Federal money available for rail corridor expansion this is the time to get this going!

Michigan Corridor Proposed Kalamazoo-Detroit/Pontiac Service

Eastbound

	Miles	NEW TRAIN A	Existing Train 350	NEW TRAIN B	Existing Train 352	Existing Train 364	Existing Train 354
Chicago, IL (CT)	0		720a		125p	400p	550p
Hammond-Whiting, IN	16		744a				↓
Michigan City, IN (CT)	52		828a		↓	↓	653p
New Buffalo (ET)	62		939a		341p	610p	804p
Niles	89		1004a		402p	632p	824p
Dowagiac	102		1015a		↓	643p	↓
Kalamazoo	138	745a	1047a	1230p	426p	711p	858p
Battle Creek	160	817a	1125a	102p	511p	738p	933p
Albion	184	845a	↓	130p	↓		1003p
Jackson	208	910a	1226p	155p	606p	From Huron	1028p
Chelsea	229	935a	↓	220p	↓	↓	↓
Ann Arbor	243	959a	103p	244p	645p	↓	1108p
Ypsilanti	253	1008a	↓	253p	↓	To Port Huron	↓
Dearborn	271	1031a	134p	316p	722p		1139p
DETROIT	281	1100a	204p	345p	755p		1214a
Royal Oak	292	1124a	226p	409p	816p		1235a
Troy	296	1131a	234p	416p	823p		1242a
Pontiac (ET)	304	1159a	246p	444p	840p		101a

Westbound

	Existing Train 351	Existing Train 365	Existing Train 353	NEW TRAIN C	Existing Train 355	NEW TRAIN D
Pontiac (ET)	543a		938a	200p	528p	735p
Troy	556a		952a	214p	541p	749p
Royal Oak	603a		1000a	222p	548p	757p
DETROIT	626a	From Port Huron	1023a	245p	611p	820p
Dearborn	644a		1041a	310p	629p	845p
Ypsilanti	↓		↓	338p	↓	913p
Ann Arbor	714a		1111a	347p	700p	922p
Chelsea	↓		↓	411p	↓	946p
Jackson	751a		1146a	435p	737p	1010p
Albion	815a		↓	459p	↓	1033p
Battle Creek	848a	1000a	1249p	532p	833p	1106p
Kalamazoo	916a	1026a	116p	603p	900p	1137p
Dowagiac		1052a	↓		929p	
Niles		1104a	149p		942p	
New Buffalo (ET)		1124a	209p		1002p	
Michigan City, IN (CT)		↓	↓		912p	
Hammond-Whiting, IN		↓	205p		954p	
Chicago, IL (CT)	1032a	1145a	250p		1040p	

Notes: The scheduled times for the new trains are based on the Amtrak schedule in effect as of Nov 1, 2021. Source: MARP, 2022

First Truss Installed On Merchants Bridge at St. Louis

By Hugh Gurney

A milestone was reached on September 17, 2021, when according to *Progressive Railroading* on September 21, the first of three new trusses was put in place on the historic Merchants Bridge over the Mississippi River at St. Louis. The massive structure, opened in May of 1889, serves six Class I railroads and Amtrak and has been a major bottleneck in rail traffic for years. The bridge is owned by the Terminal Railroad Association of St. Louis (TRRA) and requires a major reconstruction to remove speed, clearance, and load restrictions. The bridge is 4,340 feet in length, with the longest span 518 feet long, and a clearance over the river of 82 feet.

Work got underway in 2018. The total project calls for the replacement of all three spans, strengthening the supporting piers, and upgrading the eastern approach. The replacement spans are being constructed in Wisconsin and shipped to the Missouri side of the river for final assembly. When ready, each

span will be floated into position and hoisted up after the old span is lowered and floated out. Replacement of each span requires a ten day rail closure as well as disruption of river traffic.

Total cost of the project is estimated at \$222 million, and will be funded in part by a \$22.45 million Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) grant. The Terminal Railroad Association of St. Louis (TRRA) plans to cover the remaining cost.

When completed in 2023, St. Louis and the nation will have a new double track bridge moving rail traffic, including Amtrak's Texas Eagle and Lincoln Service trains faster and more reliably. Each such improvement adds to Amtrak's efficiency and on time performance. St. Louis hopes the reconstructed bridge will help make St. Louis an alternative to more congested rail hubs such as Chicago. St. Louis is the nation's second largest rail hub by number of cars interchanged, and the third largest by gross tonnage.



The massive Merchant Bridge at St Louis was opened in May of 1889. It carries dozens of freight and Amtrak trains each day over the Mississippi River and is being rebuilt with new spans to remove load, speed, and clearance restrictions. (Wikipedia Commons)

MARP Relationship with Indian Trails Remains Strong

By Hugh Gurney

A Zoom meeting on November 11, 2021, between Indian Trails and MARP affirmed the long standing relationship between the two organizations despite the COVID 19 pandemic. Indian Trails, Inc. is an intercity bus company based in Owosso Michigan, with offices in Romulus and Kalamazoo. Participating on behalf of Indian Trails were Chad Cushman, President, Brenda Cheney, Interline Director, and Jeff Hutchinson, Vice President, Operations. Representing MARP were Jim Wallington, Hugh Gurney, Clark Charnetski, Chuck Merckel, and Larry Krieg, This was our first meeting with Indian Trails since November, 2019.



Modern Indian Trails motorcoaches used on Amtrak Thruway connections and on other Michigan intercity routes.

Like Amtrak and other common carriers, ridership on Indian Trails dropped about 95 percent at the onset of the pandemic. Approximately 75 percent of the employees had to be laid off. Fortunately, federal programs such as the Paycheck Protection Program permitted the privately owned company to continue operations. As of November 2021, ridership and revenues on scheduled services now stand at about 55 percent of pre-pandemic levels. Indian Trails currently operates its traditional routes in Northern Michigan under contract with the Michigan Department of Transportation. Services on non-subsidized routes in the southern part of the state are operating, but with fewer frequencies.

Indian Trails is no longer running into Chicago. Passengers to and from Chicago and beyond now transfer to Greyhound at Kalamazoo or Benton Harbor. Indian Trails also connects with Miller Transportation at Kalamazoo.

Lack of drivers remains the major concern for Indian Trails and its subsidiary, Michigan Flyer. Overall the company is short 30 to 35 drivers, while many working drivers are taking time off due to the effects of COVID. A 30-year employee of the company recently passed away from the virus. Mr. Cushman estimates that with sufficient drivers, Indian Trails could at present recover at least 80 percent of its pre-pandemic business.



Michigan Flyer airport service on an East Lansing-Brighton-Ann Arbor-Detroit Metro Airport route.

Michigan Flyer resumed operation of its East Lansing – Brighton – Ann Arbor – Detroit Metro Airport route in April, 2021. Because of a lack of drivers, Michigan Flyer is operating just eight runs a day compared to the fourteen it offered prior to the pandemic. Michigan Flyer has regained approximately 35 percent of its pre-pandemic ridership. Fourteen daily runs are needed to accommodate the current demand.

With support from the Regional Transit Authority of Southeast Michigan and the Ann Arbor Area Transportation Authority, Michigan Flyer resumed operation of the Detroit –Ann Arbor D2A2 express bus service with 16 round trips on weekdays and four round trips on weekends. As a new service, ridership has been low so far as many prospective riders are still working from home. The Regional Transit Authority has allotted \$150,000 for promotion.

Clark Charnetski asked Mr. Cushman how he thought the recent purchase of Greyhound by the German firm, FlixBus, would affect Greyhound, since Indian Trails depends on Greyhound for connections to points beyond Michigan. Mr. Cushman responded that traditionally FlixBus has followed the Megabus strategy of point to point service between major cities and that Megabus is no longer expanding. As it was with Megabus, FlixBus



Detroit Ann Arbor "D2A2" RTA bus on a route between Detroit and Ann Arbor

could be more competition to the airlines and Amtrak than to Indian Trails.

Mr. Cushman added that Greyhound had been struggling prior to the pandemic as had other intercity bus companies including Indian Trails. As an integral part of the public transportation network, intercity bus operators need to be subsidized as the air, transit, and rail modes are subsidized. He pointed to Europe where all modes of transportation are considered essential.

With the reduction of Amtrak service in Michigan at the onset of the pandemic, all Amtrak Thruway bus connections in Michigan were severed. The Thruway connection at Milwaukee was not affected and Amtrak passengers can still purchase a Thruway ticket from any point on Amtrak to Michigan's Upper Peninsula communities such as Menominee, Escanaba, Marquette, and Houghton. Interline Director Cheney reported that she is currently in contact with the Amtrak Thruway office about reconnections to other Michigan points. Lack of drivers is a problem, but Kalamazoo to Grand Rapids may be the first reconnection.

Responding to a question from Hugh Gurney, Mr. Cushman reported that MDOT did not renew its two year contract with Hoosier Ride for service between Port Huron and Detroit and does not plan to offer a contract for this route to any other carrier. Mr. Cushman confirmed that Indian Trails was staffing the Pontiac Amtrak station seven days a week.

Mr. Cushman reported that Michigan Flyer is currently working on a seamless first mile-last mile plan including ticket integration at Brighton, thanks to a \$65,000 grant from MDOT. If successful, this could be a model for all public carriers, including Amtrak. Bus tracker electronic displays are planned for the Brighton and Ann Arbor stops.

It was agreed that MARP and Indian Trails would meet again in November, 2022.

Heartland flyer extension... from page 6

second train on a Kansas City, Missouri, to Fort Worth, Texas, route, another long time desire of residents of Kansas and other states. (This route contains a segment of Santa Fe's popular Texas Chief route between Chicago and Houston, which was discontinued at Amtrak's inception in 1971.)

On May 5, 2021, the Kansas State House of Representatives passed a similar resolution. Both resolutions specify that the extension and second train are included in the Kansas Passenger Rail Service Development Plan of 2010 and stressed that the Kansas City-Fort Worth train must be a daylight operation. For Kansans, this is an important point, as the only current service, the Southwest Chief, passes through the state in both directions in the middle of the night.

The extension of the Heartland Flyer to Newton, Kansas, was included in Amtrak's 2020 General and Legislative Report. At Newton, it would provide travelers from places like Fort Worth, Norman, Oklahoma City, and Wichita with daily rail access east to Kansas City, and Chicago and west to Albuquerque, Flagstaff, and Los Angeles.

To date, Amtrak is following through on its February pledge. Page 43 of "Amtrak Connects US" states: "Extend 1 Fort Worth-Oklahoma City round trip to Wichita and Newton, KSfor a connection with Amtrak's Southwest Chief to Los Angeles, Albuquerque, Kansas City and Chicago." Also mentioned in the same section is: "Expand from 1 to 3 round trips between Oklahoma City (OKC) and Fort Worth (FTW), connecting with Texas Triangle service to Dallas, Houston, Austin and San Antonio, and the Texas Eagle to Los Angeles, Tucson, St. Louis and Chicago."

The current edition of "Amtrak Connects US" does not mention a Kansas City-Fort Worth train. However, on page 5 of that document, it states.... "if a corridor is not mentioned in this vision, that does not mean that Amtrak opposes it..." At least the Kansas section of a Kansas City-Fort Worth frequency could be covered in the Kansas Eisenhower Legacy Transportation Plan, passed by the Kansas legislature in 2010 which boosts spending for transportation projects by \$1 billion annually for the next ten years. It is funded by designating 16.1% of sales tax revenue to the Kansas Department of Transportation.