

Memorandum



DATE: November 4, 2016
TO: Mayor and Board of Trustees
FROM: Kent Street, Village Manager
SUBJECT: **Amtrak Hiawatha Proposal**

At Metra's request, yesterday staff hosted a meeting with Northbrook, Glenview, Bannockburn, and Lake Forest staff to discuss a proposed increase in *Hiawatha* Amtrak service from 7 to 10 round trips daily. The *Hiawatha* is an Amtrak service that runs from Milwaukee to Chicago. This program is being proposed by the U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Railroad Administration, Wisconsin Department of Transportation and Illinois Department of Transportation.

An Environmental Assessment (EA) process is underway to evaluate the basic impacts of this proposal and the public comment period on the draft EA ends November 15, 2016. Glenview has officially opposed portions of the proposal due to the construction of new track configurations (i.e. universal crossover) and additional facilities adjacent to residential neighborhoods (i.e. freight holding track).

The proposal also includes an additional holding track in or near Deerfield that would allow Metra to short turn trains off the main tracks. The EA report states, "Metra currently short turns between 6 and 8 trains per day on the mainline at Deerfield Road, which means that the mainline is blocked while Metra crews change ends, which can take approximately 15 minutes every time. When Metra short turns their trains off the mainline, capacity for through-trains would increase, which would allow for increased schedule flexibility."¹ Additionally, "One crossover, one turnout, and signal improvements are proposed as part of the Deerfield Holding Track project. Construction of the crossover and turnout would require a maximum of 2 feet of soil excavation."²

Metra along with the 5 communities expressed interest in having a more complete analysis (i.e. Environmental Impact Study) of the proposal including possible impacts on the Metra service. Staff is recommended that we continue to monitor developments and work in a coordinated fashion with our neighboring communities and Metra. Staff would like the Board to confirm our interest by directing staff and the Mayor to continue to further evaluate and make recommendations related to the project.

¹ Quandel Consultants LLC, Chicago-Milwaukee Intercity Passenger Rail Corridor, Draft Environmental Assessment (October, 2016), 3-31, 71

² Quandel Consultants LLC, Chicago-Milwaukee Intercity Passenger Rail Corridor, Draft Environmental Assessment (October, 2016), 3-54, 94