



State of Illinois
Bruce Rauner, Governor



Illinois Department of Transportation
Randall S. Blankenhorn, Secretary

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IDOT: Feedback prompts extended look at Hiawatha study

SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois Department of Transportation announced today that it will not allow a federal decision on the proposed expansion of Amtrak’s Hiawatha Service to proceed until community concerns have been adequately considered and addressed. In a letter to the mayor of Lake Forest and the president of Glenview, IDOT also pledged to weigh freight and passenger rail needs and impacts as part of an overall resolution that looks at regional congestion and conflicts between railroads and regular vehicular and pedestrian traffic.

“We have heard loud and clear the concerns expressed by Glenview and Lake Forest,” Gov. Bruce Rauner said. “We listened to you. Clearly, a timeout on this project is needed so you can get the answers you deserve. This project will not proceed until that happens.”

The study into what improvements are needed to increase service between Milwaukee and Chicago is being led by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, with the participation of IDOT, the Canadian Pacific Railroad, Metra, Amtrak and the Federal Railroad Administration.

“Based on the feedback we received, it’s apparent more analysis and outreach are required before this project moves forward,” Illinois Transportation Secretary Randy Blankenhorn said. “We will be asking our project team to perform that analysis and do the necessary outreach so the impacted communities are more involved in the decision-making process.”

To avoid duplicating the work that’s gone into the study thus far, IDOT is committed to providing analysis that addresses the questions and concerns that have been raised by residents and officials within the ongoing Environmental Assessment that is required to meet federal environmental regulations.

“Lake Forest supports rail improvements and efficiencies in our area,” Mayor Rob Lansing said. “Be assured that the City of Lake Forest will continue to be engaged in monitoring the service and safety of regional rail transportation.”

“After spending time studying this rail corridor, we believe there are better alternatives that would provide congestion mitigation without creating significant freight train impacts on our communities,” President Jim Patterson said. “We are grateful to the administration for listening to our concerns and directing their team to study these alternatives.”

As part of its overall mission, IDOT remains committed to providing safe and efficient transportation options, while remaining sensitive to the concerns of the communities most affected by any improvements.