

High-Speed Rail Proposal

Chicago to Detroit and Pontiac, MI
Presented to the O.D. Town Council
December 1, 2014

What is an EIS and Who is Involved?

- ▶ The Tier 1 Draft EIS
 - presents the proposed project's purpose and need
 - identifies reasonable route alternatives
 - describes the affected environment
 - analyzes the potential environmental impacts of the alternatives considered, including the no-build alternative.
- ▶ Must be done in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969.
- ▶ Being conducted by the Michigan Department of Transportation in partnership with INDOT and the Illinois DOT.

NEPA assesses the following:

- ▶ Impacts on all modes of transportation
- ▶ Mobility of elderly and handicapped
- ▶ Land use
- ▶ Impacts on the socio-economic environment
- ▶ Environmental Justice
- ▶ Public health
- ▶ Public safety
- ▶ Noise and vibration
- ▶ Air Quality

What's Next?

- ▶ Comments are due December 19 on this draft of the EIS.
- ▶ Their next step will be to provide a Final Tier 1 EIS that will select the preferred route.
- ▶ Since the preferred route will be selected with the next EIS, this is the time to make recommendations.
- ▶ After that, what are called “Tier 2 actions” will also be developed for each state for the selected route.

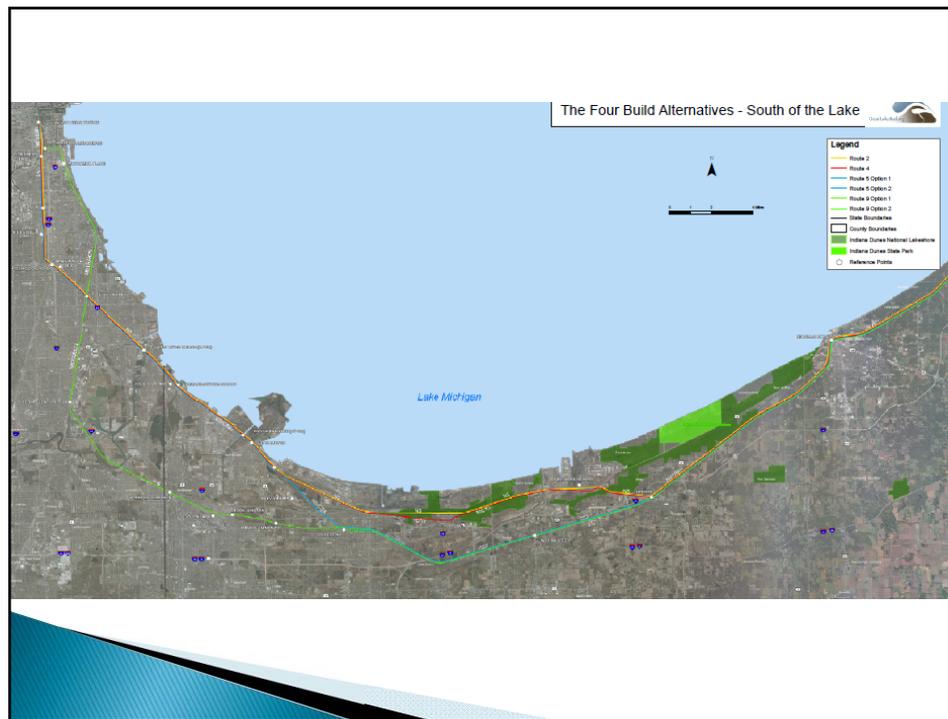
Route Analysis Area

- ▶ The area of analysis includes an approximately 300-mile corridor that begins at Chicago Union Station in Illinois and travels through northwestern Indiana south of Lake Michigan.
- ▶ The corridor crosses nine counties and numerous municipalities in southern Michigan before it reaches its destinations in Detroit and Pontiac.

The Route

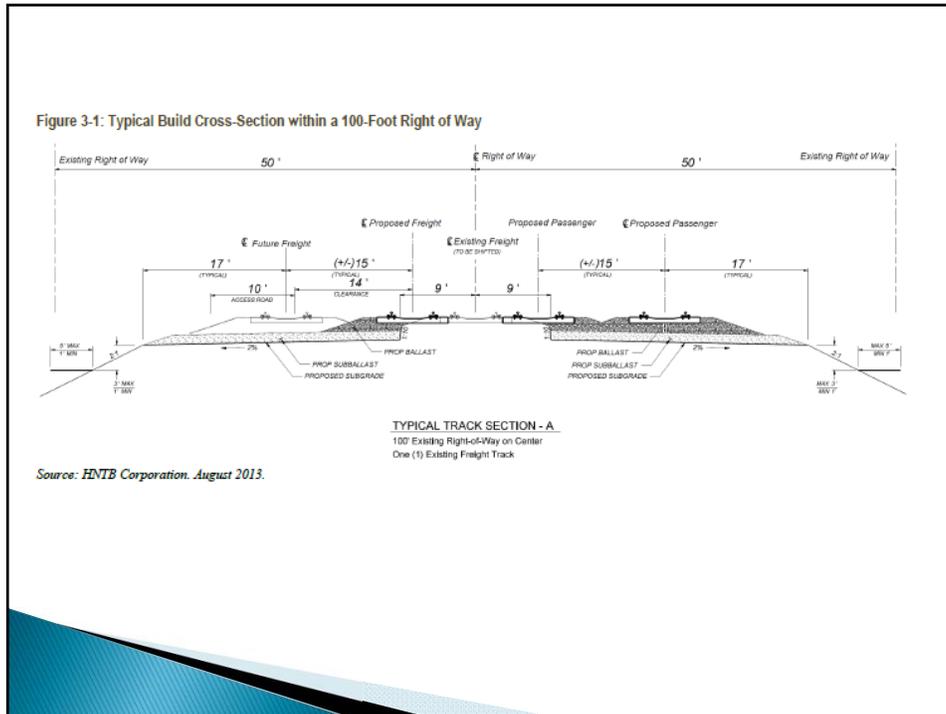
(Statements From Their Website)

- ▶ “The existing track alignment used for Amtrak’s Wolverine service will likely be used for most of the corridor.”
- ▶ “This is one of the busiest freight railroad routes in the country and it currently does not have capacity for additional passenger train trips. The area also has several environmental concerns given its proximity to lakefront resources.” (The route past O.D.)



Issues Relevant to OD

- ▶ 100' impacts on each side during planned build out.
- ▶ 100' Right-of-Way planned to accommodate all tracks.
- ▶ 3 new sets of tracks proposed, making our total set of tracks 7 to cross (with potentially even a 4th for future freight expansion)!
- ▶ Potential for complete loss of our front access.
- ▶ One of the new tracks would be just for freight.
- ▶ Loss of existing emergency access road, which is owned by NFS.
- ▶ Increased potential for noise and vibration due to both HSR and increased freight traffic.
- ▶ Potential movement of SSRR station to the east.



Issues Relevant to Indiana

- ▶ Several of the routes may displace persons and homes, i.e., in Hammond, Portage and Gary–Miller (along Miller Ave.), depending on the route selected.
- ▶ Flyovers would have to be built over many railroads, and there are hundreds of on–street crossings that would be impacted \$\$\$\$\$\$.
- ▶ There is a lot of missing information in the Tier 1 analysis to select a preferred route, i.e., hundreds of acres of wetlands in Indiana have not been accounted for, according to IDNR.
- ▶ More than 1,000 acres of wetlands will be impacted in all three states, according to Army Corp. All wetland impacts have to be mitigated \$\$\$\$\$\$.
- ▶ The Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore would be impacted, including hundreds of acres of rare black oak savanna and Karner blue butterfly (endangered species) habitat would be affected.
 - That is YOUR land!!!!!!
- ▶ State–dedicated nature preserves in Lake County would be impacted. In some areas there are many rare and endangered species.

What Should the TC Do?

Pass a resolution supporting the “no build alternative.”

The Town Council of Ogden Dunes, Indiana on this day of December 1, 2014 passes a resolution stating that we support the “No Build Alternative” proposed in the *Tier 1 DRAFT Environmental Impact Statement* as part of the Chicago to Detroit/Pontiac High-Speed Rail Proposal developed by Great Lakes Rail. It is our belief that impacts to our town not yet revealed through the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process with respect to land use, the built and natural environment, public health, public safety, noise and vibration and even environmental justice, may far outweigh any benefits that could be accrued for our town. Furthermore, it is our understanding that all of the routes proposed could have far-reaching impacts on residents in neighboring communities, such as Portage, Hammond, and Gary, as well as on the world-renowned natural resources that reside within the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, coastal wetlands and nature preserves in Indiana. The “No Build Alternative” is the alternative that will best serve the residents of Ogden Dunes, the state of Indiana and the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore.

Let’s Go Over the Resolution:

- ▶ “No Build Alternative” is presented in the EIS, so it is being considered.
- ▶ ... impacts to our town not yet revealed through the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)...
 - The impacts were not addressed in the Tier 1 EIS so how can they select any alternative?
 - They haven’t really finished the NEPA process.
 - Now is the time to address impacts to our town, not later.
- ▶ ...could have far-reaching impacts on residents in neighboring communities, such as Portage, Hammond, and Gary, as well as on the world-renowned natural resources...
 - We need to make sure impacts to other communities and the natural resources are pointed out as to not be called NIMBY’s.
 - It would be immoral to recommend another preferred route, i.e., 9, that takes the trains away from O.D. but would cause impacts to others.
- ▶ The resolution will become part of our final comments.

What Should You Do?

- ▶ Send in your comments as well.

Comments can be submitted in multiple ways through December 19, 2014.



ONLINE COMMENT FORM
www.GreatLakesRail.org



CALL TOLL-FREE
877-351-0853



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WRITE A LETTER

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