



Chicago – Detroit / Pontiac Passenger Rail Corridor Program

# Indiana High Speed Rail Association

## Golden Spike Seminar

October 6, 2012



# Agenda

- Background on Chicago – Detroit/Pontiac Corridor
- Description of this study
- Public involvement approach
- Next steps

# Midwest connections

- Midwest Regional Rail Initiative – 1996 vision

- 3,000-mile passenger rail network
- Uses existing rail rights of way
- Modern trains at speeds up to 110 mph
- Shorter travel times
- Additional frequencies
- Improved reliability
- Multimodal connections
- Corridors radiating from Chicago to nine states



# Existing rail corridor



- Approximately 300-mile corridor
- Extends from Chicago Union Station to Pontiac, Mich.

# Rail service today

- One of the busiest freight rail routes in country
  - South of the Lake segment in Indiana has 87 daily trips
- Amtrak's Wolverine service
  - Three daily round-trips
  - 16 stations
  - Over 500,000 riders (2011)
- Other passenger routes along corridor
  - Amtrak's Blue Water and Pere Marquette
  - Amtrak's Capitol Limited and Lake Shore Limited
  - Metra (Chicago commuter rail)
  - NICTD (Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District)

# Current rail investments

- CREATE program
  - \$140 million Englewood Flyover to improve passenger rail access into Chicago
  - Grand Crossing
- Indiana Gateway Project
  - Over \$70 million to relieve congestion/improve signals
- Wolverine Service
  - Over \$400 million to purchase and upgrade Kalamazoo-Dearborn segment
  - Over \$40 million in station improvements

# Program participants



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Railroad  
Administration**

## FEDERAL RAILROAD ADMINISTRATION

Lead federal agency  
responsible for approving  
the Tier I EIS and the SDP



## MICHIGAN DEPT. OF TRANSPORTATION

Lead state agency  
overseeing the program



**Illinois Department  
of Transportation**

## INDIANA DEPT. OF TRANSPORTATION

## ILLINOIS DEPT. OF TRANSPORTATION

Partnering state agencies

# Program overview

- Vision: safe and reliable passenger rail service that offers frequent, daily round trips at speeds up to 110 mph



# Program overview

- Evaluate passenger rail improvements for the Chicago-Detroit/Pontiac corridor
- Three program components:
  - Evaluation of route and service alternatives
  - Tier 1 EIS
  - Service Development Plan

# Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement

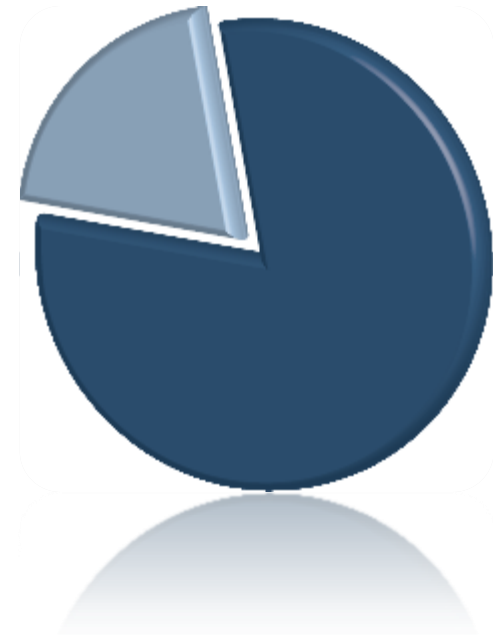
- Using a tiered approach
  - Tier 1 EIS: high-level, corridor-wide impacts
  - Tier 2 EIS: detailed, site specific impacts  
(*future work – not part of this effort*)
- Potential impacts include:
  - Noise and vibration
  - Air quality
  - Historic/archeological resources
  - Natural resources and parks/recreation areas
  - Communities, neighborhoods, Title VI, environmental justice
  - Land use and the economy

# Service Development Plan

- Comprehensive business and operating plan that outlines a phased implementation plan:
  - Service operating plans
  - Station locations
  - Ridership and revenue projections
  - Capital needs for train equipment and infrastructure
  - Economic benefits and costs
  - Financial projections
  - Phased implementation plan

# Program funding

- Total program cost - \$4 million
  - \$3.2 million federal grant (selected August 2011)
  - \$800,000 match provided by partnering state agencies



80% FRA Grant

20% Partner Match

# Purpose and Need

- What is a purpose and need statement?
  - Explains why the program is needed
  - Establishes a basis for the development and screening of reasonable alternatives
  - Assists with the selection of a recommended alternative

# What is the purpose?

- To enhance intercity mobility by providing an improved passenger rail service that would be a competitive transportation alternative to automobile, bus and air service between Chicago-Detroit/Pontiac



# What is the need?

- Limited ability to accommodate current or anticipated travel demand in the corridor, resulting in the deterioration of transportation service quality as a result of congestion, longer trip times and decline of service reliability
- Limited intercity travel options restrict both the mobility of the resident populations and localities' potential for economic development

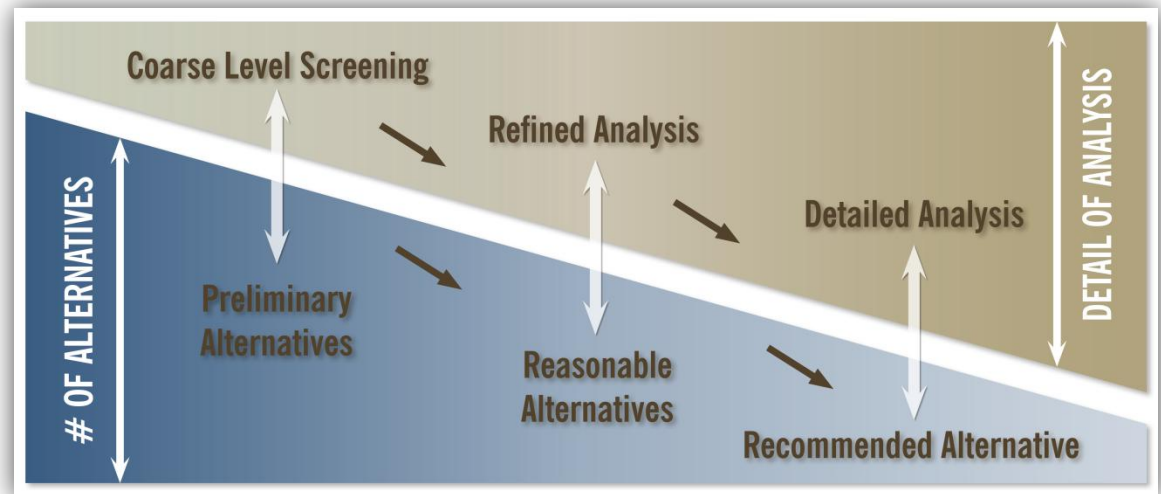
# What is the need?

- Inadequate capacity in the corridor provides uncompetitive trip times, poor reliability, and low levels of passenger comfort and convenience for travelers
- Increase the attractiveness of passenger rail travel within the corridor to capture potential passenger rail travelers who may be currently choosing other modes of transportation



# Alternative analysis

- A range of route and service alternatives will be developed, screened and refined based on:
  - Purpose and need
  - Cost
  - Infrastructure
  - Ridership
  - Environmental impacts
  - Public input



# Preliminary area of analysis

## Chicago Union Station to Buffington Harbor, Ind.

- Optimize Norfolk Southern route investments

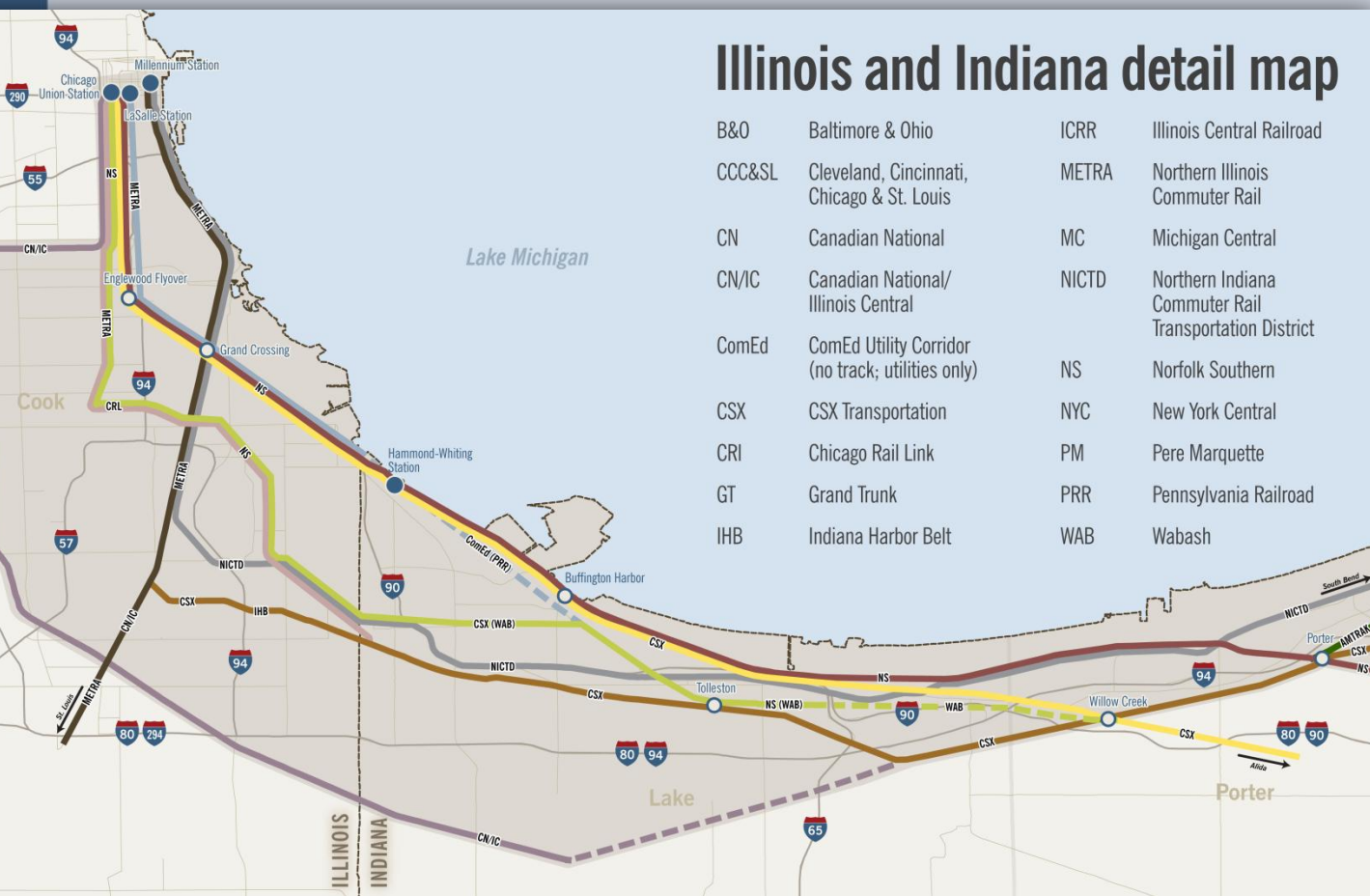


## Buffington Harbor, Ind., to Porter, Ind. (South of the Lake)

- Numerous route alternatives possible

## Porter, Ind., to Detroit/Pontiac, Mich.

- Optimize Wolverine line investments



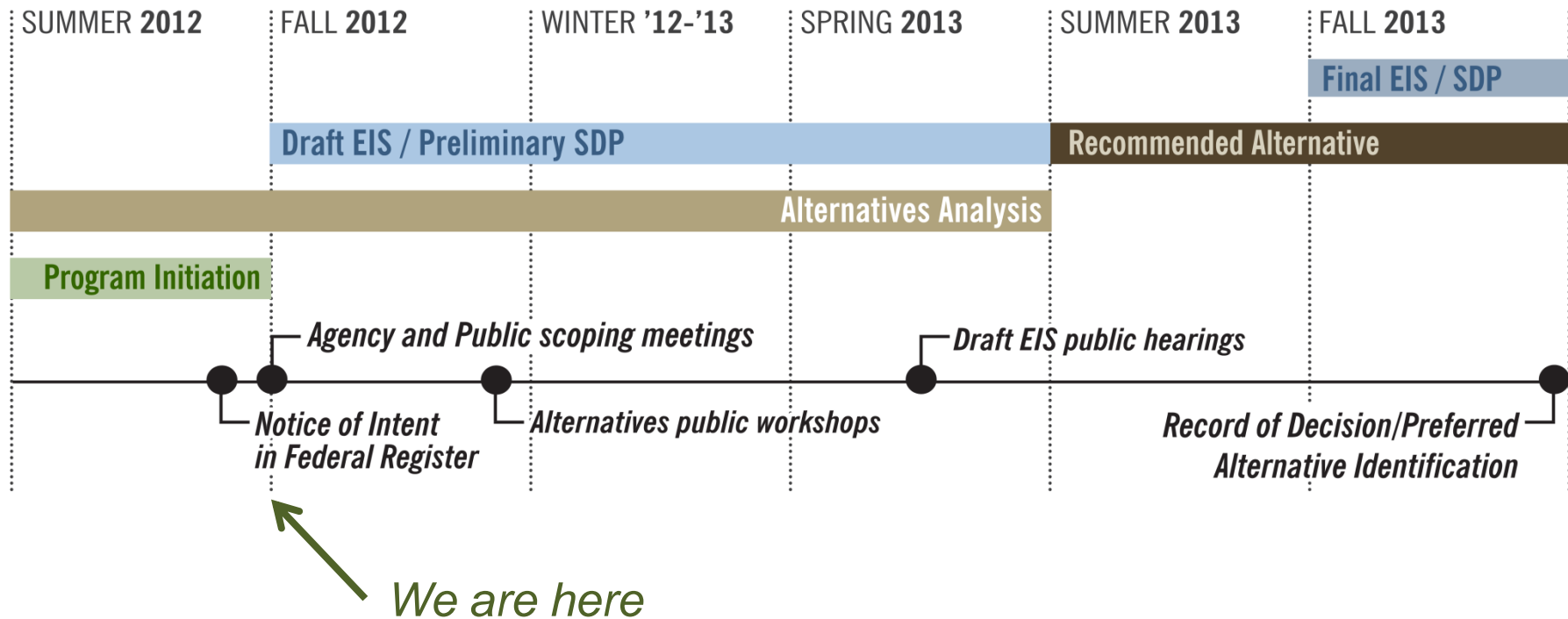
# Preliminary area of analysis



**Porter, Ind., to Detroit/Pontiac, Mich.**

- Optimize Wolverine line investments

# Schedule





# Public scoping meetings

- Just completed first round of public meetings
  - 9/12 - Chicago, IL
  - 9/13 - Michigan City, IN
  - 9/26 - Dearborn, MI
  - 9/27 - Kalamazoo, MI
- Scoping meetings to provide early coordination with the public:
  - Present preliminary range of possible route alternatives
  - Identify potential issues that should be considered in the Tier 1 EIS
- Public Scoping comment period open through October 15, 2012



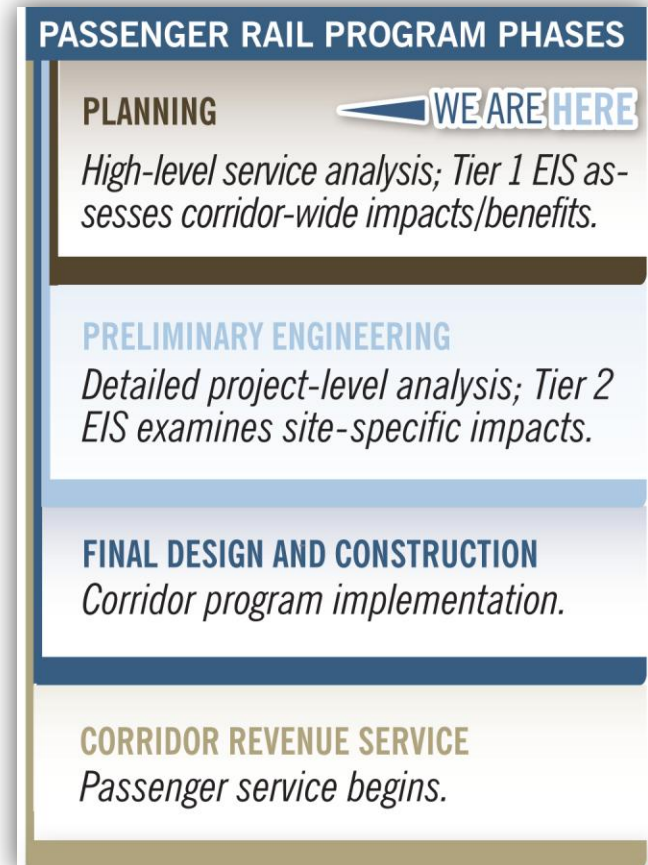
# Involving the public

- How to stay involved
  - Visit our website at [www.GreatLakesRail.org](http://www.GreatLakesRail.org)
  - Submit an online comment or question
  - Attend a public meeting
  - Participate in a self guided online meeting
  - Sign up on the website for email communications
  - Call us toll free at 877-351-0853
  - Send us a letter by mail (Bob Parsons, MDOT, Van Wagoner Building, P.O. Box 30050, Lansing, Michigan 48909)



# Life of a passenger rail project

- Passenger rail programs are complex
- Takes several years to implement service
- Phased improvements over time







GreatLakesRail.org

**Chicago – Detroit / Pontiac Passenger Rail Corridor Program**

# Thank you!

