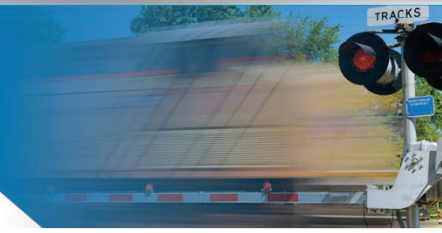




# MEETING MINUTES

Illinois High-Speed Rail Commission  
Meeting | August 26, 2024



## Location:

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IDOT Headquarters, 2300 S. Dirksen Parkway, Room 347, Springfield, IL 62764

IDOT Office of Intermodal Project Implementation, 69 W. Washington Street, Suite 2100,  
Chicago, IL 60602

Virtual Webex Webinar Meeting

## Meeting Date and Time:

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Monday, August 26, 2024

10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

## Attendance:

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### Commission Member Attendees:

*\*Asterisk indicates attendance in-person*

- Erin Aleman – Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning\*
- Tim Butler – Illinois Railroad Association\*
- Michael Paul Dunn Jr. – Region I Planning Council
- Robert Guy, III – SMART-TD\*
- Richard Harnish – High Speed Rail Alliance\*
- Jason Osborn – Illinois Department of Transportation\*
- Cassaundra Rouse – Illinois State Highway Toll Authority\*
- Brian Shanahan – Transportation Communications Union\*
- P.S. Sriraj – University of Illinois Chicago\*
- Senator Steve Stadelman – Senate
- Brian Vercruysse – Illinois Commerce Commission\*
- Bogdan Vitas Jr. – Illinois Municipal League
- James Wild – East-West Gateway Council of Governments\*

### Commission Members Not in Attendance:

- James Derwinski – Commuter Rail Board
- Senator Don DeWitte – Senate
- Karl P. Gnadl – Champaign-Urbana Mass Transit District
- Raymond Lai – McLean County Regional Planning Commission

- Representative Martin J. Moylan – House
- Bria Scudder – State of Illinois

#### **Non-Commission Member Attendees:**

- Holly Bieneman – Illinois Department of Transportation
- Amanada Lundeen– Illinois Department of Transportation
- Hannah Martin – Illinois Department of Transportation
- Elliot Ramos – Illinois Department of Transportation\*
- DeAnna Smith – Illinois Department of Transportation\*
- Michael Vanderhoof – Illinois Department of Transportation
- Janel Veile – Illinois Department of Transportation\*
- Julia Hiatt – Quandel Consultants\*
- Charles Hoppesch – Quandel Consultants\*
- Charles Quandel – Quandel Consultants\*
- Janet Henderson – Images\*
- Wendy Abrams – Morreale Communications
- Berenice Alvarez – Morreale Communications
- Diane Bustamante – Morreale Communications\*
- Mary McIlvain – Morreale Communications\*
- David Kralik – Metra\*
- Rhett Russell – WSP
- Victoria Fulbright
- Roger Huff\*
- Michael Lynch
- Alan Mammoser

## **OVERVIEW OF MEETING**

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### **I. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

Vice Chairman Tim Butler began the meeting at 10:30 a.m. The meeting proceeded with a roll call of Commission members. With nine Commission members present in person at either the Chicago or Springfield Illinois Department of Transportation offices and three present in the virtual meeting room, a quorum was not immediately confirmed but was confirmed shortly after with the addition of one more Commissioner arriving in person. The final roll call for the meeting was 10 Commissioners present in person and three present virtually.

### **II. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE SUPPORT UPDATE**

Charles Quandel from Quandel Consultants introduced Charles Hoppesch, Deputy Project Manager, who led the discussion about technical assistance support, including the project timeline, purpose and need statement, market analysis and route alternatives update, outreach and engagement and next steps.

#### Purpose & Need

The draft purpose and need will guide the study and help define the project's transportation outcomes and objectives.

Draft Needs: Transportation problems today and in the future and the underlying causes of those problems.

- Limited travel options throughout Illinois
- Existing rail service with a competitive travel time is infrequent
- Unreliable travel times for travelers on rail, air, highway
- Limited passenger access to rail

Commissioner Sriraj asked if the identified list is coming from evidence or conversations. Mr. Hoppesch stated that it would come from public input and input from the Commission.

Commissioner Harnish noted that 5 hours is not competitive for driving from Chicago to St. Louis.

#### Market Analysis Update

Rhett Russell from WSP led the discussion about the market analysis, a three-step process that includes establishing demand (city pairs, base year total demand and access growth potential).

Commissioner Harnish noted that an advantage of going via Champaign is competitive service.

Mr. Hoppesch noted that establishing the city pairs is at an early stage.

Demand by mode, purpose, and time of day will be evaluated, including various sources.

Commissioner Harnish asked if it includes cell phone data.

Mr. Russell noted that Replica is a source that will be used. It is based on information that Google collects, including cell phone data, to understand travel patterns.

The growth potential will then be assessed to understand what exists today and what could exist in the future.

David Kralik from Metra asked if the FRA model would be used or if a new one would be developed.

Mr. Russell confirmed that a new model will be developed.

Commissioner Harnish emphasized that this should be the first segment of a multi-state high-speed network.

Mr. Russell noted that the FRA tool could be utilized and expanded upon through other data sets.

Commissioner Sriraj asked if accessibility numbers would be estimated. Mr. Russell confirmed it would.

#### Route Alternatives Update

Mr. Hoppesch noted route alternatives categories, including railroad rights-of-way, highway rights-of-way and Greenfield alignments. The route spine will determine intermediate stations, contain speed-limiting factors and be the building block of the future network.

## Outreach & Engagement

Janet Henderson from Images presented three options for potential names for the feasibility study to the Commission. The name will also be used to brand the feasibility study.

The Commission discussed the FRA language regarding the word "Express" and the language of "High-Speed Rail."

Elliot Ramos from the Illinois Department of Transportation noted that the FRA is calling the existing Corridor ID for Chicago to St. Louis the "Higher Speed Rail," and the name "High Speed Rail" may be available.

The Commission voted among the three potential names.

A. Mission Express

*Illinois High-Speed Rail Feasibility Study* (17% voted for option A)

B. Transportation for Tomorrow

*Illinois Express Rail Feasibility Study* (17% voted for option B)

C. Illinois Express Rail Feasibility Study

*Strengthening our State. Connecting the Region.* (67% voted for option C).

The Commission workshopped option C to read:

Illinois High Speed Rail Feasibility Study

*Strengthening our State. Connecting the Region.*

In addition, a website wireframe for the feasibility study will be developed to house information, including resources, news and events. A stakeholder engagement plan will be created with the study overview, goals, communication protocols, committees and stakeholder activities. The stakeholder identification, including federal/state/local elected officials, community and interest groups, transportation agencies and organizations, is underway.

## Next Steps

- Continue developing purpose and need
- Begin market analysis and development of evaluation criteria
- Continue route alternatives identification and analysis, stakeholder engagement plan, website and branding development

Commissioner Harnish asked if ideas to get into Chicago were identified.

Mr. Hoppesch noted that the route identification and evaluation process will be long, and the spines will be examined first.

Commissioner Harnish emphasized the need to get to O'Hare.

Mr. Quandel emphasized the importance of service time.

Commissioner Harnish noted that the legislation will influence the purpose and need, and an agreement on feeder networks is needed. He asked that this be discussed at the next meeting.

### **III. MINUTES APPROVAL**

The May 30, 2024, and July 25, 2024, Commission meeting minutes were supplied with the agenda prior to the meeting. Vice Chairman Butler asked the Commission if there were any requested changes to the minutes. With no requested changes, there was a motion to approve the minutes from the previous meetings. The minutes were approved and passed with no objections.

### **IV. DISCUSSION OF COMMISSION BY-LAWS**

Vice Chairman Butler led the discussion regarding Commission alternates and remote participation regarding quorum. Commission members are appointed and, therefore, can only be voting members. If a Commissioner cannot attend the meeting, it's encouraged that they send an alternate to attend, but the alternate cannot act as a voting proxy on official decisions.

It was also discussed that the Commission is an exempt advisory body that could allow for remote participation because the Commission is not making binding decisions. Vice Chairman Butler emphasized the importance of in-person participation in fostering further discussions.

Vice Chairman Butler asked the Commission if there were any thoughts or questions about alternates and remote participation.

Commissioner Rouse seconded allowing remote participation. As the By-Laws are amended, they should state a maximum number of remote participants to ensure in-person participation.

The Commission discussed the maximum number of remote participants. The Commission agreed on up to four remote participants.

Amanda Lundeen from the Illinois Department of Transportation noted that the Commission's quorum to make official decisions is ten, and four remote participants would require six participants to be in person, which would be a majority of a quorum.

A question was asked about how the four participants would be determined.

With assistance from the Illinois Department of Transportation, the Commission discussed proposed changes to Article III, Meetings, of the By-Laws to allow remote participation to count toward a quorum.

Vice Chairman Butler noted that amendments to the Commission By-Laws shall be presented at the Commission meeting and voted on during the next subsequent meeting. The proposed by-law changes will be circulated for review by the Commission and included in the agenda for the next meeting.

### **V. PUBLIC COMMENT**

The meeting was open to public comment.

Mr. Roger Huff provided two comments.

- Regarding the proposed changes to the By-Laws, Mr. Huff would appreciate it if they were posted to the High-Speed Rail Commission website so they could be reviewed.

- Mr. Huff shared a resource from the CREATE website, High-Speed/Intercity Rail Benefits, with the Commission. This document lists CREATE projects that benefit to high-speed/intercity rail.

## **VI. ADJOURN**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:50 a.m.

## **VII. ACTION ITEMS**

The proposed by-law changes will be circulated for review.