



January 2013

Ann Arbor – Detroit Regional Rail Project Update

1. Key Partners

- Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) and Michigan Dept. of Transportation (MDOT) continue to work with each other and the host railroads, host communities (Detroit, Dearborn, Westland/Wayne County, Ypsilanti, and Ann Arbor), Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), Federal Transit Administration (FTA), Amtrak, and our consultant team toward completing many of the important steps that lead to commuter rail service.

2. Cab Cars & Coaches

- Refurbishment: The Great Lakes Central (GLC) Railroad has completed the refurbishment of all nine passenger cars needed for the proposed Ann Arbor-Detroit commuter rail service.
- Stationary Inspections: The cars successfully completed stationary inspections of things like brake systems, door function and safety, wheel-sets, and a host of other structural and operational items.
- Mechanical & Safety Test: The cars cleared initial testing up to 40mph this past summer. The last step, prior to being cleared for use in service, required hooking the cars to an Amtrak locomotive and undergoing another set of mechanical and safety tests up to 79mph in the corridor itself. This work was completed November 13 and 14, 2012 and all six refurbished commuter rail cars passed the tests with flying colors. For more information about these test see: Test Summary Statement below.

3. Seats

- Manufacturing: Grand Rapids, Michigan-based American Seating has completed production of seats for all nine cars.
- Delivery & Installation: The seats have all been delivered and are installed in the completed cars.
- Crash Worthiness: The crash-worthiness of the seats in the passenger cars was a significant hurdle to overcome. The seats passed a rigorous set of Federal Railroad Administration crash tests and can now be produced for other systems by American Seating.

4. West Detroit Connection Track Project

- This rail infrastructure project will shave ten minutes off the travel time for the Ann Arbor-Detroit commuter rail service. Agreements with the host railroads have either been executed or are in final negotiations. Construction of the West Detroit Connection Track is expected to begin in early 2013.

SEMCOG is the only organization in Southeast Michigan that brings together all governments to solve regional challenges and enhance the quality of life for the seven-county region's 4.7 million people.

5. Environmental Clearance

- Federal Lead Agency: In the summer of 2011, the federal lead agency responsibility for the Ann Arbor-Detroit Regional Rail Project was transferred from Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to Federal Transit Administration (FTA).
- Environmental Review: FTA has determined that an Environmental Assessment (EA) will be required to clear the project for construction. This is very good news as the more rigorous analysis required under a full Environmental Impact Statement could have caused significant delay. FTA has indicated that this will be an expedited EA, with priority for their staff. This will streamline their processing and result in a complete EA in the shortest time possible. However, prior to beginning this EA process, an additional capacity analysis that considers the Canadian National portion of the corridor as well as implications of the recent high speed rail funds that have been awarded to Michigan. Capital investment must be staged appropriately.
- Timeline: Once this process is completed, additional investments (e.g., track improvements and new stations in Ypsilanti and at Metro Airport) can be made in the project. This work is underway and a timeline is expected later this month.

6. Ann Arbor & Detroit Layover Tracks and Facilities

- Design: Work on the design of layover tracks and facilities is limited pending completion of the capacity analysis and environmental assessment.
- Stakeholders: The host railroads and host communities are a crucial part of the design.

7. Other Rail Infrastructure Improvements

- A capacity analysis has been completed for most of the corridor, including the identification of infrastructure improvements needed to initiate the Ann Arbor-Detroit commuter rail service. The analysis revealed the need for improvements such as new sidings, switches, and crossovers. Some additional capacity analysis is needed plus an environmental assessment. Work on these improvements can begin once environmental clearance has been granted. Due to the recent influx of high speed rail funds, additional capacity analysis must be conducted that takes into account the high speed trains being planned in combination with the commuter trains. This analysis is underway and is being headed by MDOT.

8. Stations

- Station Locations: Two new stations (Ypsilanti and Airport) together with three existing Amtrak stations (Ann Arbor, Dearborn, Detroit New Center) are proposed for the commuter rail service.
- Station Design: SEMCOG and MDOT have been working closely with host communities in the design of these stations. Preliminary design is complete and funding has been identified. Work can begin at these stations once environmental clearance has been obtained.

9. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Compliance

- Meetings: SEMCOG, MDOT, and GLC met on two occasions with an Ann Arbor-based ADA group to review improvements to the cars and the portable platform lifts. A number of changes have been made to the cars and lifts to make them more user friendly. The United States Access Board, and Amtrak have also tested and provided feedback regarding the portable platform lifts and cars.
- ADA Design Considerations: GLC has made car modifications. A second generation of portable platform lifts have been obtained for the five stations to be used by the Ann Arbor-Detroit commuter rail service. All train sets will be ADA compliant

10. Static displays

- The project team is working on scheduling static displays of completed cars at venues such as the Henry Ford. Visitors will be able to view and board the train cars first-hand. Look for more in this in the coming months.

11. Special trains

- The project team is working on providing service to special events along the Ann Arbor-Detroit Corridor beginning in 2013.

Ann Arbor to Detroit Commuter rail

Corridor Test Results Summary

The primary goals in performing the tests of the six refurbished commuter rail cars the evening of November 13 and early morning of November 14, 2012 between Pontiac and Jackson were as follows:

- Meet the requirements of 49 CFR 238.111(a) Pre-revenue service acceptance plan.
- Permit Amtrak crews to gain an operational familiarization with the equipment
- Validate compatibility between the refurbished GLCRR equipment and Amtrak's locomotive
- Run the equipment at maximum authorized speeds up to 79 mph
- Validate full functionality of the GLCRR equipment and all sub-systems
- Simulate potential Amtrak special train operations

All six refurbished commuter rail cars passed the tests with flying colors. The only malfunction was the exterior door lights on two cars which did not go off when the exterior doors were closed. To resolve this, somewhat less sensitive switches are being installed which will turn off the exterior door lights when the exterior doors are closed.

Additional inspections and tests continue to be performed at the Great Lakes Central Railroad facilities in Owosso. By the end of April 2013, all 23 cars being refurbished by GLCRR will be fully tested.

The initial intended use is to provide an Amtrak special train to select major events on the Ann Arbor-Detroit Corridor in 2013.