

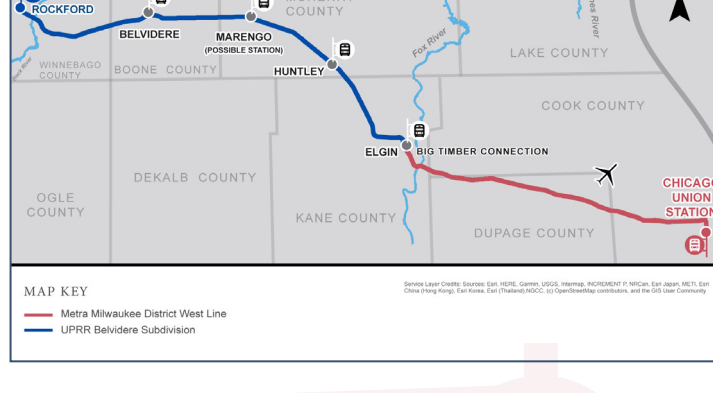
# WELCOME

## Thank you for your interest in the Chicago to Rockford Intercity Passenger Rail Program!

We look forward to keeping you informed about project updates, meetings and upcoming rail events and hope to hear your feedback as the program advances.

### PROJECT OVERVIEW

With support from Governor JB Pritzker and \$275 million in funding committed through Rebuild Illinois, the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) is leading efforts to re-establish intercity passenger rail service between **Chicago and Rockford**, with intermediate stops planned in **Elgin, Huntley and Belvidere**. This service will provide efficient, safe and reliable transportation operations, with passenger trains traveling at speeds up to 79 mph, to connect Illinois communities in Cook, Kane, McHenry, Boone and Winnebago Counties. Passenger rail service is anticipated to begin in 2027.



<<Enlarge Map>>

Initial service is expected to include two round trips per day between Chicago and Rockford, with travel times of approximately two hours. Additional details on the service, such as train schedule and fares, are being developed and will be shared with the public prior to the start of operations.

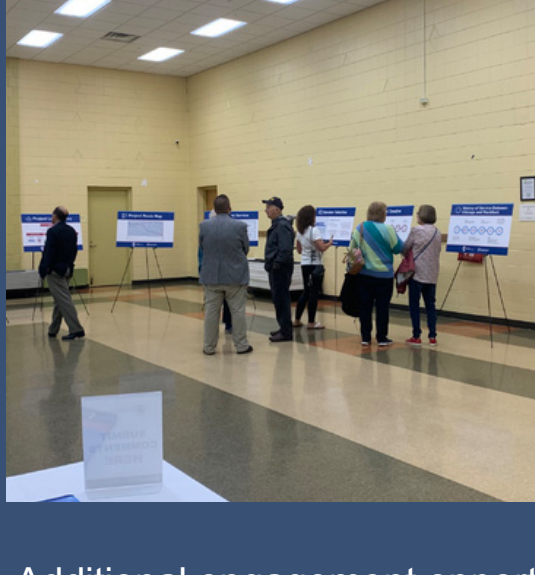
The rail improvements being made today as part of this IDOT program will support plans for future transportation growth, which may include increased service frequency and additional stations along the corridor.

### PROJECT UPDATES



#### Public Involvement Updates

Thank you to all who attended the public information meetings held during September 2023 in the communities of Belvidere, Elgin, Huntley and Rockford. More than 200 people attended and participated in meaningful conversations with IDOT staff at these meetings. Additionally, written comments showing interest in this important project have been received, through both in person and online forums.



This first series of public information meetings offered community members along the corridor an opportunity to meet the project team and learn about the Chicago to Rockford Intercity Passenger Rail Program.

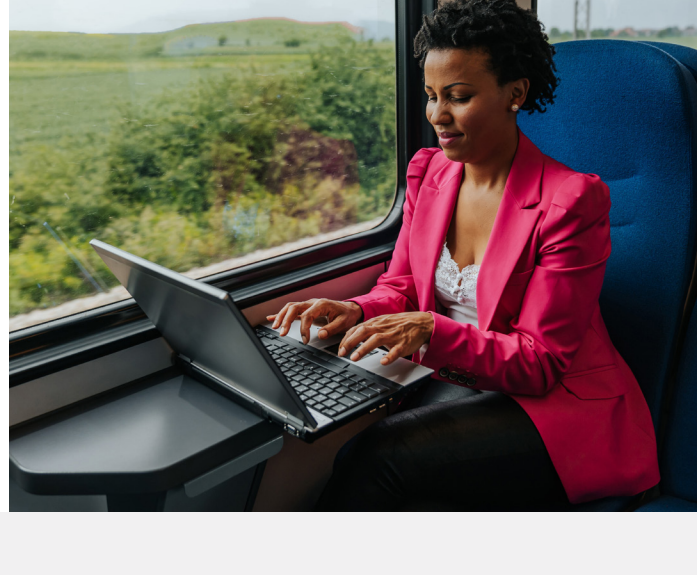
We invite you to view the meeting presentation on the project website.

<<VIEW MEETING PRESENTATION>>

Additional engagement opportunities will be planned this year. These activities will be announced through future newsletters, the project website, direct outreach, and coordination with local officials and community-based organizations who will be asked to assist in promoting public involvement activities.

### PROGRAM STATUS

IDOT is working with Metra and Union Pacific Railroad as project and host railroad partners to advance infrastructure improvement plans between Elgin and Rockford to accommodate intercity passenger rail service. These improvements include:



**New track** in Elgin connecting Metra's Milwaukee District West Line and Union Pacific's Belvidere Subdivision at Big Timber.

**New stations** in the communities of Huntley, Belvidere and Rockford.

**Track, grade crossing, structure, and railroad signal improvements** required to achieve passenger train speeds of up to 79 mph.

**Improvements to the existing Elgin (Chicago Street) Metra station** to accommodate the addition of intercity passenger rail service.

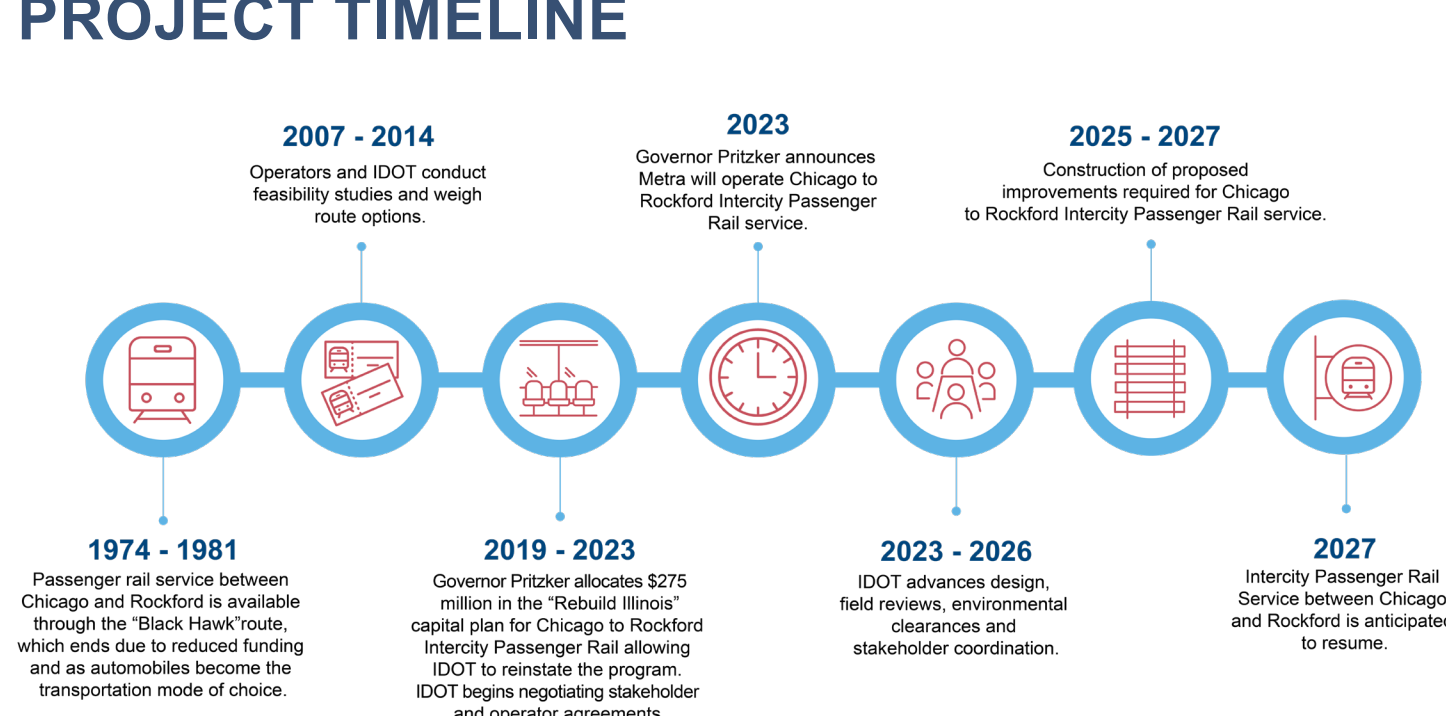
IDOT will enter into agreements with the host railroads, as well as community partners, to allow for the construction, operation, and maintenance of the program, including the new station facilities. An operating agreement between IDOT and Metra, the selected operator of the new intercity passenger rail service, is also required.

Additional communities, such as Marengo, have expressed interest in a potential station location. The IDOT team will determine the feasibility of additional stops in the corridor and, if appropriate, evaluate those potential station locations.

Safety improvements at each of the at-grade crossings are essential to the success of the program. The IDOT engineering team is working with local officials to schedule on-site crossing diagnostics to review existing conditions and proposed improvements for the public grade crossings between Elgin and Rockford. As part of this effort, IDOT has hosted virtual pre-diagnostic meetings with several communities to prepare for these on-site reviews. The virtual meetings will be concluded early in 2024 and will be followed by in-person meetings at the crossings.

As designs are advancing for these project elements, IDOT is coordinating with local officials throughout the corridor to discuss the scope of work planned. Residents in the area can expect to see the project team in their neighborhoods in the upcoming months as existing conditions at grade crossings and proposed station locations are reviewed.

### PROJECT TIMELINE



<<Enlarge Timeline>>

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

#### What is intercity passenger rail?

Intercity passenger rail service travels between cities and has fewer stops than traditional commuter service. The Illinois Department of Transportation supports existing service for four intercity passenger rail corridors within Illinois and continues to pursue opportunities to further improve the existing corridors as well as develop new corridors.

#### What is a passenger rail service operator?

Passenger rail service operators in Illinois are under contract with IDOT to provide safe and reliable transport. Metra's long history of operations in northeastern Illinois make them the right choice for Chicago to Rockford passenger rail service.

#### Is this route considered a new Metra commuter route?

No. The passenger service connecting Chicago, Elgin, Huntley, Belvidere and Rockford will be intercity passenger rail service sponsored by IDOT and managed similarly to the other intercity passenger rail corridors in Illinois.

### WAYS TO STAY INFORMED



Visit [chicagotorockfordrail.org](http://chicagotorockfordrail.org) to stay up to date about project happenings and to learn more about public involvement opportunities.

To submit a question or comment to the IDOT team via email, please contact: [info@chicagotorockfordrail.com](mailto:info@chicagotorockfordrail.com)

Share this newsletter with neighbors and friends in your community and encourage them to subscribe to the project newsletter so they too can receive updates.