Connecting America: Making the Case for Intercity Rail

Commissioned by the
American Public Transportation Association (APTA)’s
Committee on Intercity Corridor Development

Prepared by Reconnecting America
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Imagine traveling quickly and conveniently between cities, avoiding congestion on the highways and at the airports. Imagine being able to fly across the country, and catch a train at the airport that takes you to your final destination, all with just one ticket. Imagine a reconnected America, with a variety of affordable and convenient transportation choices for traveling between regions. We are at a time in history when such scenarios need not be just imagined, but realized. Now is the time for America to reinvest in rail to reconnect our communities; to improve our national transportation network for efficiency, security, and safety; and to help spur economic growth.

Rail passenger service in the United States is in the midst of a renaissance at the local and regional level, yet is facing critical policy decisions at the national level. Ridership on our commuter rail, regional rail transit, and intercity rail systems continues to increase dramatically. The development of rail passenger service merits support and should continue to be the focus of attention at all levels of government.

America needs a balanced transportation system that provides alternatives for travelers. Traffic congestion on our highways and in the air costs the U.S. economy $100 billion annually. Rail transportation provides an important means to help alleviate growing highway and airport congestion. Many state and local governments already see rail passenger service as essential to assure future mobility for their citizens. But to create true transportation options, the federal government needs to work in partnership with state and local agencies to increase America’s investment in passenger services. According to a recent GAO report, from 1971 to 2000, the federal government invested $225 billion in aviation and $607 billion in highways. In contrast, the federal investment in intercity rail over the same period was $39 billion with very little of that targeted for capital investment. More funding is needed for rail passenger service to allow this industry to capture its market potential and respond to national security and emergency needs.

Congress currently is considering reforms to Amtrak intended to make intercity rail service institutionally and operationally more efficient. As these discussions occur, APTA supports continued funding for Amtrak. This document, however, is intended to take a larger view of intercity passenger rail and make the case for an improved and adequately funded intercity rail system, be it extending or improving current corridors, establishing new corridors, or investing in high speed rail by states or the federal government.

Intercity rail plays a role as integral to our nation’s economy, environment and safety, as our national highway and aviation systems. Indeed, each play important roles in our national transportation network and the preservation and enhancement of our highways, transit, aviation and rail systems are all in our national best interest. Dismissing any of these from the equation has impacts on the efficiency and operation of the entire system, and therefore on costs to households, businesses, and government.

The following recommendations should be considered by Congress in considering legislation to reauthorize or reform national passenger rail service:

- Provide adequate and predictable funding to assure continuation of our national intercity rail network, and ensure that any changes to the current system protect the integrity of the overall network, including commuter rail service.

- Investment funding for all types of rail passenger service should come from a combination of federal, state, local and private sources, other than the Highway Trust Fund which is already stretched too thin to pay for highway and transit investment. Private sector participation should be encouraged; and

- Engage the multitude of stakeholders, including freight and commuter rail operators in the development of such legislation to ensure that policies are coordinated, impacts to other modes are minimal, and improved intermodal connections are strengthened.
Millions of Americans Depend on Intercity Rail
Despite being severely underfunded, millions of Americans travel by intercity rail and over 500 communities in 47 states have rail service. Our national intercity passenger rail network includes about 23,000 route miles over which 267 trains operate every day, not counting commuter trains. Roughly 25 million passengers are carried each year.¹

The potential market for intercity rail remains largely untapped. Over 80 percent of the U.S. population live in urban areas, a higher percentage than in countries with widely used train systems, including France (75%), Italy (67%); and Japan (78%). Connecting many of these concentrated urban areas provides an ideal market for rail service. Although the U.S. has six times more land area than the four combined European nations, it also has a higher population and twice as many miles of existing rail to cover the area. In terms of the U.S. demand for or interest in rail, the U.S. should be able to at least attain a modal split for rail that is similar to the four European members of the G-7 nations; Italy, France, Germany, and the U.K, which was 6.4% in 1999. This is a valid comparison with the U.S. in terms of those countries’ level of development, individual wealth, and urban and rural populations. It may even be conservative; the Midwest High Speed Rail Plan estimates that rail could capture up to 46 percent of the rail-air market in that region. The Northeast Corridor has already captured “58 percent of the rail-air market from Washington D.C. to New York.”²

TIME FOR AMERICA TO INVEST IN HIGH SPEED RAIL
The United States is the only industrialized country without true “dedicated” High Speed Rail. Europe and Asia have a number of successful systems in place and are quickly working to build new lines. High speed rail can provide a superior service that makes rail not only competitive but faster than other modes on a number of key corridors. The Federal Railroad Administration has designated 11 proposed high speed rail corridors. High speed rail is defined in the U.S. as rail that is time competitive with air or automobile travel at distances of 100-500 miles.³ Sample trips of this distance include San Francisco to Los Angeles (380 miles), New York City to Washington, DC (232 miles), or Chicago to Minneapolis (409 miles).

Thirty-four states are participating in the development of high speed rail corridors and these states have invested more than $1 billion for local improvements for this purpose. California is actively pursuing High Speed Rail, with plans to build a 700 mile system with speeds up to 220 miles per hour. To realize these faster speeds, new investment is needed to improve track conditions, acquire and build on new rights-of-way, and invests in trains that are designed to move at very high speeds.

More Transportation Options and Less Congestion
Given significant federal investment to build the Interstate system and fund airport construction, and under investment in rail, it is not surprising that 97 percent of intercity travelers in this country choose the relative convenience of autos (90%) and airplanes (7%), and only one percent travel by rail. Other developed western nations provide travelers with more balanced options—bus and rail trips are 24.6 percent of long distance trips in Japan and 14 percent in Italy, Germany, France and Britain. The lack of intercity travel options in the U.S., where people travel nearly twice as

many miles each year as their European or Japanese counterparts yet have fewer travel options, has resulted in severe and growing congestion levels on our freeways and at our airports.

Figure 1 shows highway congestion levels across the country. This congestion has motivated a number of states to invest in intercity passenger rail service.

![Figure 1. Traffic Congestion on America’s Highways](image)

A 2000 report by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) found that many of the busiest airports were already at or above capacity and 27 major airports were seriously congested. This congestion will continue to increase as air travel reaches the projected one billion passengers by 2015, up from 731 million in 2000. The 2005 annual congestion study by the Texas Transportation Institute (TTI) estimates travelers in the largest 85 metropolitan areas would need to increase their use of transit by 5.7 million round trips per day to help manage highway congestion levels.

An analysis by Reconnecting America found that more intercity travel alternatives - particularly for trips of under 300 miles - would offer significant opportunity to manage congestion levels on highways and at airports. For the 85 metro areas studied, the analysis estimates there will be approximately 3 billion intercity city trips each year; 80 percent of which are currently taken by autos, vans and pick-up trucks. On a daily basis, this equates to more than 8 million travelers.

Passenger Rail’s Environmental and Energy Use Benefits

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4 FAA’s Airport Capacity Benchmarks Report 2001 as cited in the Subcommittee on Aviation & Subcommittee on Railroads Joint Hearing on Planes, Trains, And Intermodalism: Improving the Link Between Air and Rail.

5 Reconnecting America’s analysis to estimate future intercity travel demand used a combination of travel data from the National Household Transportation Survey and the 2003 FAA airline statistics in the 85 major markets studied by the Texas Transportation Institute. James DeBettencourt, Ph.D. Helping to Manage Congestion through Intercity Alternatives. Reconnecting America, 2005.
Increased public investment in passenger rail could help achieve our national goals of reducing dependence on foreign oil and improving air quality. Relative to other modes of transport, passenger rail emits less air pollution than automobiles or airplanes and has the capacity to carry far more passengers than any other mode. It is also less energy intensive. Our current intercity passenger rail system uses approximately twenty-five percent less energy than air planes or personal autos and light trucks.

<table>
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<th>Mode</th>
<th>Emissions Per Passenger Mile (Pounds CO₂)</th>
<th>Emissions Per Vehicle Mile (Pounds CO₂)</th>
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<td>35 per bus</td>
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<tr>
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<td>0.21</td>
<td>66.96</td>
<td>322 per train</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Speed Rail (IC-3)</td>
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<td>97 per train</td>
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<tr>
<td>Regional Airplane</td>
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The majority of intercity trips that Americans currently take could be well served by passenger rail, particularly by higher speed trains. According to the 1995 American Travel Survey, 58 percent of trips over 100 miles are also less than 500 miles, meaning that they match the high speed rail target market in terms of trip length. While this demonstrates a large potential market for high speed rail, this market is largely untapped by the current conventional rail system.

A recent analysis of the 11 federally-designated proposed high speed rail corridors found that investing in these systems could yield significant air quality benefits. If all 11 high speed rail systems were built, there would be a total emissions savings of 6 billion pounds of carbon dioxide per year (2.7 MMTCO₂). Overall, high speed rail is estimated to generate approximately half of the emissions it saves by enabling passengers to switch from other modes. Savings from avoided automobile and airplane trips are the primary sources of the emissions savings; together these two modes make up 80 percent of the estimated emissions savings from all modes.

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7 Assumes 70 percent occupancy for all modes except auto. Changes in occupancy rates will change emissions per passenger mile.

8 One million metric tons CO₂ (MMTCO₂) = 2,205 million pounds CO₂

The rising cost of oil should also be factored into the value equation in favor of rail service. America must find ways to reduce its dependence on oil both to remain economically competitive, and to help households reduce their cost of living. An average commuter who switches from driving alone 40 miles per day to commuting via rail could save more than 6,000 pounds of CO$_2$ per year and an estimated 520 gallons of gasoline.  

Increasing travel options and providing better connections between transportation modes not only provides people with more choice, but it can also lead to improved energy efficiency. Today 56 percent of airline take-offs are for trips under 500 miles. An interconnected system would allow bus and rail to be a competitive energy-reducing alternative. By shifting a significant percentage of the intercity trips that are currently on the least efficient modes—auto and air—to the more efficient modes—bus and rail—the U.S. would save billions of barrels of oil each year and the problems that accompany its use. Improving passenger rail would also improve the system for freight rail, which is also more efficient for goods movement. On average, railroads are at least three times more fuel efficient than trucks. Additionally, rail is the only transport mode which can be easily diversified in its energy sources, as it can run on an electric infrastructure, as in the Northeast Corridor, and therefore on any alternative power source feeding the power grid, including wind and solar.

**Economic Growth and Competitiveness**

The rail industry makes an important contribution to the U.S. economy. Improved rail connections between our metropolitan areas can help to manage regional growth pressures and improve economic competitiveness. Building a stronger intercity passenger rail system would create additional jobs, would be a catalyst for local economic development near rail stations, and could help to recreate a once thriving domestic rail manufacturing industry. Meridian, Mississippi has seen tremendous development around its Union Station, one of the highest ridership locations along Amtrak’s Crescent line. Since it was constructed, the private sector has invested more than $90 million in what once was a dilapidated and underutilized area of the downtown core.

Currently, the U.S. rail manufacturing and supply industry has sales worth $7 billion annually to passenger railroads. Additional investments in passenger rail will increase these sales, and therefore manufacturing jobs, as well as other ancillary and directly related jobs. Studies show every billion dollars invested in transportation infrastructure projects, creates approximately 42,000 jobs. For rail investments, the Midwest Regional Rail Initiative estimates the plan would create 2,000 new permanent rail service jobs, and several thousand temporary construction and service jobs. In the southeast, studies of their rail initiative found every $1.00 invested will return $1.39 to the region. These studies of projected jobs are credible when compared to studies on existing jobs from rail. A Minnesota Department of Transportation study found the Amtrak Empire Builder service contributes $14 million annually to the state’s economy.

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10 Based on the following assumptions: Auto emissions per year = .85 lbs co2 per vehicle mile in 2025 x 40 miles per day x 5 days per week x 52 weeks per year = 8840; HSR Emissions per year = .26 lbs co2 per passenger mile (from danish IC3 train) x 40 miles per day x 5 days per week x 52 weeks per year = 2703; Difference = 6137 lbs co2 per year


Providing Mobility and Enhancing Safety

Passenger rail is one of the safest modes of intercity transport. In 2002, the U.S. fatalities on passenger trains were just .02 percent of all Transportation Fatalities, or 7 passengers, in comparison to autos which were 83 percent or 37,187.\(^{14}\)

We have also seen the important role that intercity rail can provide during times of crisis to help evacuate citizens and keep the economy moving. In the wake of September 11\(^{th}\), 2001, ridership on the Northeast Corridor jumped 60 percent for a 2-week period and rail provided mobility during a time when the airlines were shut down and public anxiety was high. Conversely, we saw the impact from a lack of mobility options during Hurricanes Katrina and Rita when Gulf Coast residents had either no means for personal evacuation or were forced to endure day-long traffic jams in their attempt to evacuate. Providing people with travel options enhances mobility and can save lives. Whether helping to shuttle people out of New York City during a terrorist attack, or providing the only means for people to get in and out of Minot, North Dakota during a snow storm as was recently reported by Amtrak, intercity rail transportation is a key part of our essential transportation system for communities large and small.

Passenger rail can also fill the void being left by declining air and intercity bus service. The U.S. airline industry is undergoing a substantial restructuring. While much is made of Amtrak’s inability to make a profit, the airline industry has not been profitable in its entire 100 year history. Over twenty airlines have filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy since 2000, representing approximately half of total U.S. seat capacity, and a number of communities have lost air service entirely. A recent study by Reconnecting America found that for the system as a whole, flight levels are 5.6 percent lower than in 2001, and available seats are 9.8 percent fewer. Major hub airports such as Los Angeles, Boston, and Newark have lost from 15 percent to nearly 25 percent of their flight service since 2001. Regional jets, which typically serve shorter distance intercity routes, and have substantially fewer seats, have grown as a percentage of weekly flights from 7.6 percent in 2001 to 17.2 percent in 2004.\(^{15}\) Greyhound and other intercity motor coach providers have recently cut service to a number of communities, including service cuts to over 250 communities nationwide between February and October, 2005.\(^{16}\) Amtrak is currently continuing to provide basic services in many of these cities through its motor coach partners or rail services, but often with less frequency, and in many cases the stations are up to 100 miles from the town. The lack of mobility options has important consequences on citizens and communities.

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\(^{14}\) Distribution of Transportation Fatalities by Mode, Table 2-4 in 2002, Bureau of Transportation Statistics, 2005.


\(^{16}\) Estimate derived from analysis of service cancellation reports to the Surface Transportation Board during February, April and October 2005.
A number of states see the benefit to investing more in passenger rail. In response to crippling congestion on its roadways and airports, and a population expected to grow significantly in the next 25 years, California has made a commitment to funding intercity rail. The State’s California High Speed Rail Authority, created in 1996, has been working with state and federal partners to design and fund a system that will connect San Diego to Los Angeles, San Francisco and Sacramento and that will be competitive in speed and service with airline travel. The proposed 700 mile intercity high speed rail system is estimated to cost the state half as much as building other transportation options, such as new highways and airports, and will not require any operating subsidy.

California’s plan is focused on providing service at speeds up to 220 miles per hour, resulting in travel times that are highly competitive with other travel modes. Californians currently make over 154 million annual trips between the major metropolitan regions of Northern and Southern California, and the regions in between. Over 42 million of these trips are for journeys at least 150 miles long, and the automobile is the dominate form of travel between cities. To accommodate the projected growing demand, the state would need to build two new international airports and at almost 3,000 additional lane-miles on intercity highways statewide.17

Economic studies in California show that high-speed trains would bring economic benefits worth twice the cost of construction and would directly result in creating 45,000 new permanent jobs in the state. Through the year 2050, it is estimated that California will accrue over $45 billion in directly measured benefits from this investment in terms of economic growth and reduced air pollution, traffic delay and fatalities. Additional benefits from development near new stations could also be significant, and provide additional operating revenue of roughly $730,000 to $1.8 million per station site. With the environmental analysis complete, the state will move now move forward to finalize alignment and engineering, and to approve public funding to take this project from vision to reality.18

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Seizing Opportunities for Passenger Rail to Thrive
Critics of intercity rail frequently ask: Given low ridership numbers why do we need to continue federal funding? A better question might be: What kind of ridership growth is possible if we adequately funded a national intercity rail system?

Figure 3 shows the changing nature of our national passenger rail network. The upper left map shows the system in 1962 when the nation still had extensive and more frequent train service. Yet, even this level of service was a reduction from the first half of the century. In the 1950s the federal government began to invest heavily in building the national Interstate system. Capital investment in rail came to a standstill, and would remain inadequate for the next five decades. Private rail providers stopped service routes and cut back service. As a result, our national passenger rail network shrunk substantially, to what it is today (map on the lower left).

By 1970, the year Amtrak was authorized, the number of intercity passenger miles traveled by rail had plummeted to 6.2 billion from a high of 67 billion during World War II. Among the many reasons for this decline was the absence of public investment in passenger rail. Today, very little of track that our national passenger rail system operates on is publicly owned, but instead is leased from freight railroads. The result is limited opportunity for making capital improvements and service enhancements that would benefit travel times and reliability. The notable exception is the Northeast Corridor, which is owned by Amtrak. Here, where service is more frequent, reliable, and competitive with automobile or air travel, as many people ride passenger rail between New York and Washington, D.C. as on all of the airlines combined.

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We have seen in the transit industry, the profound impact that reliable, frequent and convenient service can have on increasing ridership. Total transit ridership has increased 15% since 1991, while public investment in regional transit more than doubled during the same period. Light rail transit, which saw significant investment in new lines and extensions, increased 84% between 1991 and 2003. Similar ridership increases are likely for intercity passenger rail if provided with increased and adequate public investment.

Already, we have a number of examples from the states where increased investment in passenger rail has resulted in more market demand. In California, increasing rail service and intercity bus links with rail on the Capitol Corridor rail line – to nine trips each day between Sacramento and Oakland, CA – increased ridership 40 percent between 2000 and 2001 and freed up both air and highway capacity. The introduction of the sleek Talgo trains in the Pacific Northwest in 1999 boosted ridership between Seattle and Portland and reduced travel time by more than a half-hour. A partnership between Oregon, Washington, Amtrak and BNSF Railroad is planning steady improvements to track and terminals to increase speed and frequency with the goal of carrying four times more passengers by 2016 than the 2001 level of 565,000 annually.

**Figure 3. Intercity Rail: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow**

Chicago is at the hub of the nation’s rail network, and has one of the most extensive transit systems and freight rail systems in the nation. It is also home to one of the world’s busiest airports.
international airports that is often congested and has little room for expansion. However, the existing intercity rail and bus service is not well connected or integrated with the airport. Yet, a significant rail and bus travel market exists in the region--the Chicago area is surrounded by several medium size cities within 200-400 miles, and there is considerable intercity travel within this travel shed by both auto and air. The map in Figure 4 shows these markets, home to over 5.3 million people, and the number of annual flights that serve them directly from O'Hare.

While much of O'Hare’s 1 million annual landings and take-offs\(^{22}\) is for longer distance travel, there are a substantial number of direct and connecting flights within the 200-400 mile region of O'Hare that could be replaced by bus or rail. There are also customers that drive to O'Hare from within this distance that could instead access the airport by rail.

\(^{22}\) Based on Airports Council International survey. Total passengers enplaned and deplaned – passengers in transit counted once. Total movements based on total aircraft landing and take off.
Both in terms of coverage and frequency of service integrating intercity bus, rail and airports could greatly enhance intercity travel options. These increased travel choices would go a long way to launching O’Hare as an intermodal travel port.

A national transportation system that includes high speed rail would look very different from today’s intercity travel network. In the early twentieth century, significant investment in passenger resulted in an extensive rail network with frequent and convenient service. With the introduction of the automobile, and the investment of billions of dollars in public infrastructure money to build airports and the interstate system, passenger rail declined. By 1970, when Congress created Amtrak, the number of service routes had been greatly reduced and the passenger rail industry was no longer profitable. Current interest by states and private investors to recreate previously served corridors and to create new high speed rail systems could result in an expanded passenger rail system. Increased capital investment in highly-traveled corridors could improve travel times between places like Chicago and St. Louis, or Portland and Seattle. New high-speed rail investment could create new corridors and increased market demand in places like California, or between Florida and Texas.

Uncovering the Market for Intercity Passenger Rail

Reconnecting America’s analysis of this network finds that passengers would take 112 million trips on high speed rail in the U.S. in 2025, traveling more than 25 billion passenger miles. Several demographic shifts will make the rail system even more important. The U.S. continues to grow in population and therefore the land area of metropolitan areas is also growing. In many cases, separate metropolitan areas are expanding into adjacent larger areas. This increases the need to travel between these areas for business and leisure. This makes the distances too short for air and ideal for rail, but highway is currently the only time sensitive option in most markets. The baby boomer population is also an important consideration for intercity travel. As this age
group ages, there will be an even greater demand for safe, convenient, accessible, and affordable options for travel.

Beyond new investment in passenger rail, improved coordination between intercity travel modes could also go far to spurring greater market demand. Despite proximity to nearby rail service, very few airports have air-rail connections, with Newark International airport in New Jersey and Baltimore Washington International airport in Maryland being two examples. Additionally, only 30 airports allow for motor coach pick-up at curbside. There is no federal law prohibiting such intermodal connections also known as travel ports, but to date funding for these kinds of projects has been difficult to obtain and local airport authorities often object to using airport financing to pay for these infrastructure investments and connections.

There is an inherent market for a national travel port system. If the large hub airports in the U.S. were to adopt this strategy, 99 percent of the U.S. population would be within 500 miles of an intermodal travel port and 84 percent of the U.S. population would be within 200 miles.

The idea of a travel port system is not unrealistic considering the relationship between the large airline hubs, the Interstate and national passenger rail systems (Figure 5). The map shows the strong transportation infrastructure already available in the U.S. Interstates or highways invariably connect to airports, offering the opportunity for increased intercity bus. Amtrak already serves cities with large hub airports; but is rarely provided direct access to the airport itself. Improving coordination and funding flexibility between modes could allow cities and states to connect our transportation systems and provide more seamless travel.
Working Towards an Enhanced Intercity Rail System

For our nation to remain economically competitive with other industrialized countries we need to invest similarly in our national rail system. Europe is investing heavily to stretch the total length of its high speed lines to nearly 7,500 miles by 2010, double the length in 2000. To date, the United States has only a single semi-high speed rail line in operation. Instead, we are struggling with how to manage congestion on our roads that is crippling freight traffic, adding billions of dollars in delays to the economy, and robbing commuters of almost 2 weeks worth of personal hours stuck in traffic. There is a better way.

Traffic and population growth are projected to continue escalating into the future. The challenges, and opportunities, are beyond the scope of one community or one state to address. There is a federal role to play in intercity policy just as there is on our interstate highways, transit, and aviation systems. In fact, the overall efficiency of our entire transportation network depends on an improved ability to interconnect these investments. Public investment is critical to the success of all modes. Federal investment in the Interstate system ushered in a new era of economic growth and connectivity. It is time for a second interstate era, one that invests in rail connections.

Elected officials at all levels of government should seize this opportunity to develop legislation that expands and strengthens our intercity rail network. Towards this goal, we need to invest in policies that:

1. Provide adequate and predictable funding to assure vital continuation of our national intercity rail network, and provide new funding to help grow the rail passenger industry;

2. Engage the multitude of stakeholders, including freight and commuter rail operators in the development of such legislation to ensure that our policies are coordinated, impacts to other modes are minimal, and to develop new financing sources; and

3. Enact policy and planning provisions to support intermodal coordination, and remove barriers to intermodal action by states and regions in current law.
Acknowledgements
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The American Public Transportation Association (APTA) is the nation’s premiere public transportation organization, representing transit agencies from across the country for over 100 years. APTA’s 1500 members include bus, rapid transit and commuter rail systems, state departments of transportation, metropolitan planning organizations and the organizations responsible for planning, designing, constructing, financing and operating transit systems. APTA’s Intercity Corridor Development Committee promotes the development of conventional and high speed intercity ground transportation systems; addresses issues common to intercity and commuter rail services; works to insure that proper consideration is given to the integration of urban and intercity modes, and that there is effective and prompt exchange of data and information that can enhance passenger access to all systems.

Reconnecting America is a national non-profit organization working to integrate transportation systems and the communities they serve, with the goals of generating lasting public and private returns, improving economic and environmental efficiency, and giving consumers greater choice. Reconnecting America’s Transportation Networks project (RATN) is a multi-year research effort by Reconnecting America and the Center for Neighborhood Technology to analyze inter-city travel demand trends, identify opportunities for and barriers to intermodal service, and track state and regional efforts to expand rail, bus and transit service to airports and between urban markets. RATN developed an extensive GIS database to analyze corridor travel patterns in each region of the country and identify untapped markets. RATN has also worked with regional entities to evaluate the market, financial and service feasibility of specific transportation routes and build consensus for intermodal, intercity networks.

For more information, go to http://www.reconnectingamerica.org or http://apta.com/