

Research Project Description Form

Project Number: 210171B

Project Title: 2009 West Virginia State High-Speed and Intercity Passenger Rail Plan

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Project Objective:

The objective of the study is to explore the feasibility of building a High-Speed Rail System in West Virginia. This project provides a comprehensive overview of past passenger rail service in West Virginia and economic and non-economic benefits of a new passenger rail option. Construction, operation, and maintenance costs are discussed for a potential High Speed Rail (HSR) network in West Virginia.

Abstract:

As interest in passenger rail has increased nationally, states have evaluated their passenger rail services both currently and potentially. This project, which serves as an update to the 1994 West Virginia State Rail Plan, evaluates passenger rail service across the state and provides recommendations for improvement and further offerings. Specific objectives include: 1) demonstration of a new vision for HSR in the United States; 2) overview of passenger rail transportation in West Virginia; 3) description of High-Speed Rail and successful HSR investment; 4) lessons from foreign countries for a successful HSR system; 5) identification of a potential HSR network in West Virginia; 6) documentation of construction, operation and maintenance costs for West Virginia HSR System; 7) discussion of potential economic and non-economic benefits of the West Virginia HSR System; and 8) discussion of investment vs. no investment decision for the HSR System in West Virginia.

Task Descriptions:

The work to be performed will consist of four tasks:

Task 1 - an overview of Intercity Passenger Rail (IPR) in West Virginia, including a discussion of challenges with existing passenger rail service and suggestions for improvement.

Task 2 - a description of the HSR system. Both direct and indirect benefits of efficient HSR and lessons learned from other countries are discussed.

Task 3 - potential HSIPR corridors in West Virginia. Three construction options (construction on existing, parallel to existing, or on new track) are discussed.

Task 4 – a summary of key findings. Steps for further research to improve IPR in West Virginia are discussed.

Milestones, Dates, Schedule:

Schedule of this project (due date) is as follows:

This project was completed in December, 2009.

Yearly and Total Budget: Total: \$50,000

Student Involvement: Yes (1 undergrad)

Relationship to Other Research Projects: N/A

Technology Transfer Activities: N/A

Potential Benefits of this Project: The results will support the West Virginia Department of Transportation (WVDOT) in its investment planning to provide efficient IPR service in West Virginia

TRB Keywords: High-Speed Rail, Intercity Passenger Rail, West Virginia