



Iowa State Rail Plan Final

February
2021





U.S. Department
of Transportation

**Federal Railroad
Administration**

1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

February 4, 2017

Amanda Martin, Freight and Passenger Policy Coordinator
Iowa Department of Transportation
Office of Rail Transportation
800 Lincoln Way
Ames, IA 50010

Dear Ms. Martin,

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) has completed its review of the state of Iowa's State Rail Plan (SRP), which was submitted to FRA on October 20, 2016.

FRA's review of the SRP found that it contained the required elements in accordance with 49 U.S.C. 22705 and FRA's 2013 State Rail Plan Guidance. This letter serves as notice that FRA formally accepts the SRP.

While FRA finds that the SRP meets the minimum requirements, FRA recommends addressing the following points in future updates to the SRP:

- Chapter 2 – Section 2.1.3 should contain additional summary information on passenger rail service objectives, including service frequency, capacity, and projected ridership at the route level.
- Chapters 3 and 4 – Provide more information on the listing of projects, including the proposed year of implementation with a summary of capital needs by year. Provide more information on how projects would address service gaps.
- Chapter 5 – Provide more information on the effects of state's rail service and investment program including public and private benefits at the 4-year and 20-years phases, capacity and congestion by corridor, and environmental, economic, and employment conditions.
- Chapter 6 – Provide more information on outreach and coordination of this SRP. Also discuss coordination with the State's Long Range Transportation Plan as required by FHWA and FTA.

Section 11315(a)(1) of the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (P.L. 114-94, December 4, 2015) revised the requirement for State-approved plans to be resubmitted to FRA no less frequently than once every 4 years (previously every 5 years). As such, FRA looks forward to working with you on the next iteration of Iowa's State Rail Plan, due in 2021.

FRA looks forward to a continued partnership with the state of Iowa to build and maintain a safe, reliable, and efficient U.S. rail network.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Will Dyer". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Will Dyer
Division Chief, National Rail Planning
Office of Railroad Policy and Development

Contents

Executive Summary	
Chapter 1: Role of Rail in Statewide Transportation	
1.1 Introduction	1-2
1.2 Iowa's Goals for its Multimodal Transportation System	1-2
1.3 Rail Transportation's Role within the Iowa Transportation System	1-3
1.4 Institutional Structure of Iowa's State Rail Program	1-5
1.5 Iowa's Authority to Conduct Rail Planning and Investment	1-10
1.6 Summary of Freight and Passenger Rail Services in Iowa	1-11
Chapter 2: Iowa's Existing Rail System	
2.1 Existing Iowa Rail System: Description and Inventory	2-2
2.2 Trends and Forecasts	2-47
2.3 Rail Service Needs and Opportunities	2-74
Chapter 3: Proposed Passenger Rail Improvements and Investments	
3.1 Introduction	3-2
3.2 Improvements to Existing Intercity Services	3-3
3.3 Proposed New Intercity Services	3-4
3.4 Proposed Commuter Rail Services	3-14
3.5 Proposed Special Event Trains and Tourist Excursion Trains	3-23
3.6 iTRAM Ridership Forecasting Model	3-25
Chapter 4: Proposed Freight Rail Improvements and Investments	
4.1 Introduction	4-2
4.2 Class I Railroad Improvements	4-2
4.3 Class II and Class III Railroads Past and Planned Improvements	4-8
4.4 Other Past and Planned Improvements	4-9
4.5 Improvements to Intermodal Connections	4-10
4.6 Highway-Rail Crossing and Safety Improvements	4-10
4.7 RRLG Projects	4-11

4.8 LIFTS Projects	4-14
4.9 Concepts from Stakeholder Outreach	4-15
4.10 iTRAM Travel Demand Model Summary	4-16

Chapter 5: Iowa's Rail Service and Investment Program

5.1 Introduction	5-2
5.2 Iowa's Vision, Goals, and Objectives	5-2
5.3 Program Coordination	5-4
5.4 Rail Agencies	5-5
5.5 Intended Program Effects	5-5
5.6 Rail Project Impact and Financing Analysis	5-6
5.7 Rail Studies and Reports	5-8
5.8 Passenger and Freight Rail Capital Program	5-9
5.9 Rail Funding Shortfall	5-25

Chapter 6: Coordination and Review

6.1 Introduction	6-2
6.2 Stakeholder Engagement	6-2
6.3 Input Received from the Stakeholder Engagement Process	6-6
6.4 Consideration of Recommendations Identified During the Freight and Rail Plan Process	6-9
6.5 State Rail Planning Coordination	6-9

Appendices

Appendix A — Profile of Iowa's Railroad Network	
Appendix B — Iowa Crude Oil and Biofuels Rail Transportation Study Executive Summary	
Appendix C — Economic Impacts	
Appendix D — Commodity Movements	
Appendix E — Iowa Highway-Railroad Grade Crossing Safety Program, Surface Repair Program, and Grade Crossing Improvement Projects, 2015-2017	
Appendix F — Outreach Elements and Comments	



 **IOWA DOT**

