**New York and Chicago Railroad**

**www.NYChicagoRR.org**

**High Speed Rail Service from the Great Lakes**

**to the Northeast Corridor / East Coast**

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**Chicago should distinguish itself among cities**

**High Speed Trains are the Ticket to Development and Population Growth**

Public officials should look to developing high speed rail in the state and region, and to other parts of the country, as a means of attracting residents, and to stem the loss of population. Chicago still serves as the rail capital of the country, for both the current Amtrak system and freight transport, so the track infrastructure is essentially in place for upgrade to high speed standards. Over 400 freight trains a day currently pass through Illinois on a daily basis, and more than 50 passenger routes originate or end in Union Station in Chicago.

Good, state-of-the-art transportation would be an incentive to living in this city. Increased opportunities for convenient travel, for either business or pleasure, is important to the coming generations that places a high value on mobility. No proposals for train travel are presently a priority of any Illinois legislator in Congress, the General Assembly, or City Council. One would think Chicago would established itself at the forefront of the modern train travel, and a leader in the industry.

Chicago is in a unique position to take advantage of the positive opinion of trains as an alternative mode of travel, to the auto and airlines, that travelers say they would like to see in the US. People who go to France, Spain, Germany, China, and Japan all return with the question as to why there are no high speed trains in their country. The city needs a unique feature that would distinguish itself from all other metropolitan areas.

Rail-oriented development is well known to anyone familiar with the history of the US. Just as the building of the transcontinental railroad led to the growth of the west, the effect of transportation improvements on an economy remains a fact today.

While high speed trains are unquestionably expensive to build initially, the cost is significantly less than that for highways, for which most infrastructure funding goes. One track, it should be noted, carries 3 to 5 times more people than a highway lane. Infrastructure development is currently being considered at the federal level of government as a national priority. Chicago should be among those cities that are seeking appropriations for projects in this area.

An initiative is being advanced for a high speed line connecting Chicago and New York, and the Northeast Corridor. Travel options enroute would include service to/from Cleveland, Pittsburg, Philadelphia, with potential branch lines extending to Detroit, Indianapolis, Columbus, and Cincinnati. The population density would appear to attract passengers on a regular basis, and foster growth in the city, as well as the region as a whole. Elected official need to look at this, among other rail projects, as a feature with significant potential benefits.