



March 31, 2010

Over the past months, Southeast Michigan Council of Governments and the Michigan Department of Transportation have been working diligently to implement passenger rail service between Ann Arbor and Detroit. This project could not have reached its current level of activity or near-term implementation without the support and tremendous participation of our partners Norfolk Southern, the Canadian National, Conrail, and Amtrak.

The focus of the project has been to provide four weekday round trips and three weekend round trips by October 2010. The partners jointly undertook an analysis of the corridor to identify needed improvements to provide this level of safe and reliable passenger service while continuing to provide and expand freight service to existing and potential future customers. There is agreement on the capital projects needed to allow passenger and freight service to safely exist in the same corridor. We are working cooperatively with local, state and federal agencies and leaders to secure the necessary funding to construct the agreed upon projects.

The lack of existing funds for the needed improvement projects have not altered the goal of providing four daily round trips of service throughout the corridor, but it has altered our time frame for establishing the initial service. We are modifying our plan to provide a series of special event trains to begin later this year. These trains will provide passenger service for thousands of our residents to some of the more popular events that take place along the corridor. A detailed list of events, times, and costs will be available in the near future. The provision of event trains will spark interest and excitement while at the same time helping the public to become familiar with the route, parking and other aspects of train travel.

Meanwhile, work continues on other part of the project. Locomotives are being acquired, rail cars are being refurbished, and station improvements are being planned.

We thank all of you for being patient as we work out all of the details to allow for future passenger rail service in the corridor.

Sincerely,

Kirk T. Steudle
Director
Michigan Department of Transportation

Paul E. Tait, CAE
Executive Director
Southeast Michigan Council of Governments