

USDOT awards MDOT \$23 million federal grant for rail improvements

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Agency: Transportation

Fast facts:

- USDOT has awarded MDOT \$23 million for improvements on state-owned track between Kalamazoo and Dearborn.**
- Improvements include track repairs and replacing two railroad bridges in Jackson.**

August 22, 2019 --The U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) announced on Aug. 21 a federal State of Good Repair Program grant award for more than \$23 million to the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT).

The federal grant will be used by MDOT to improve rail, crossties, and track surfaces between Battle Creek and Dearborn on the Michigan-owned segment of the Chicago-to-Detroit/Pontiac corridor. These improvements include replacing approximately 80,000 railroad ties east of Battle Creek and 15 track miles of rail east of Jackson. The project will help lead to improve rail safety and increased passenger train speeds for the Amtrak Midwest Wolverine Service, which carries nearly 500,000 annual passengers.

"This funding is critical to improve safety, enhance existing services, and further reduce travel times," said Tim Hoeffner, director of the MDOT Office of Rail. "Improvements to this rail line will lead to increased passenger train speeds of up to 110 mph in certain places along this important corridor."

Two deteriorating railroad bridges in Jackson over Jackson and Mechanic streets also will be replaced with new spans. The current structures rely on temporary shoring and have sub-standard vertical clearances, resulting in frequent bridge strikes by motor vehicles. The new spans will help reduce bridge strikes and expand nonmotorized paths under the structures to improve pedestrian safety.

"This grant will improve Amtrak Wolverine Service reliability and help us to continue to grow revenue and ridership on this important Amtrak Midwest corridor," said Ray Lang, Amtrak senior director, State and Local Affairs. "Michigan is respected nationally as a leader in passenger rail and MDOT is one of our best Amtrak partners in both operations and infrastructure."

The USDOT federal grant announcement is available on the USDOT website.

Michigan – Kalamazoo-Dearborn State of Good Repair Projects Up to \$23,335,165

Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT)

The proposed project, located on the Michigan-owned segment of the Chicago to Detroit/Pontiac corridor will rehabilitate rail, crossties, and track surfaces between Kalamazoo and Dearborn, MI, and replace two railroad bridges in Jackson, MI. The track rehabilitation project replaces approximately 80,000 ties east of Battle Creek and 15 track miles of rail east of Jackson. The project will also maintain a state of good repair and preserve passenger train speeds up to 110 mph and improve rail safety for Amtrak's Wolverine service, which carries nearly 500,000 annual passengers. The bridge replacements at Jackson St. and Mechanic St. in the City of Jackson will replace the deteriorated existing structures with new spans. The current structures rely on temporary shoring and have sub-standard vertical clearances, resulting in frequent bridge strikes by highway vehicles. The new spans will reduce or eliminate bridge strikes and reconfigure and expand sidewalks under the structures to improve pedestrian safety.