

CHAPTER 5 NEXT STEPS

As stated in Chapter 1 and throughout this Tier 1 Service Level EA, additional NEPA documentation, studies, and design must occur so location-specific impacts can be identified and minimized before the Project can be implemented. This chapter describes how FRA, Illinois DOT, and Iowa DOT plan to complete the additional documentation and design needed to advance the Project.

5.1 PROJECT SECTIONS

As funding becomes available, the design and Tier 2 Project Level NEPA documentation will be advanced for sections of the Project. Separate Tier 2 Project Level NEPA documentation will be prepared for each of the sections identified with two round-trip trains per day. At this time, the Tier 2 Project sections are anticipated to be as follows, but may be combined or modified based upon available funding.

Tier 2 Project sections required regardless of alternative selected:

- **Illinois Track Improvements** – This Tier 2 Project Level NEPA document will include the track, tie, culvert, and bridge improvements or replacement to bring existing track to the standards needed for 79 mph passenger trains along the alignment in Illinois.
- **Iowa Track Improvements** – This Tier 2 Project Level NEPA document will include the track, tie, culvert, and bridge improvements or replacement to bring existing track to the standards needed for 79 mph passenger trains along the alignment in Iowa.
- **Geneseo, Illinois, Station** – There is currently no passenger train station in Geneseo. This Tier 2 Project Level NEPA document will include the evaluation of station location alternatives and design.
- **Iowa City, Iowa, Station** – This Tier 2 Project Level NEPA document will include the evaluation of the repurchase and remodel of the existing station in Iowa City. Should acquisition not be possible, an evaluation of station locations and design would be conducted in-lieu of the analysis of remodeling the existing station.
- **Moline, Illinois, Station** – There is currently no passenger train station in Moline. This Tier 2 Project Level NEPA document will include the evaluation of station location alternatives and design.
- **Iowa City, Iowa, Layover Facility** – There is currently no layover facility in Iowa City. This Tier 2 Project Level NEPA document will include the evaluation of station location alternatives and design. Alternatives considered may include areas outside of existing railroad ROW.
- **Colona, Illinois, Improvements** – This Tier 2 Project Level NEPA document will evaluate alternatives and design to improve the BNSF crossing in Colona.

- **Rock Island, Illinois, Yard Bypass** – This Tier 2 Project Level NEPA document will evaluate alternatives and design for a yard bypass track to allow passenger trains to avoid traveling through the Rock Island yard.
- **Silvis, Illinois, Bypass** – If the Rock Island yard bypass is not implemented, a Tier 2 Project Level NEPA document will be evaluated alternatives and design for improvements to the existing track alignments in Silvis.

Additional Tier 2 Project sections needed if the Preferred Alternative is selected:

- **Wyanet Connection** – This Tier 2 Project Level NEPA document will present alternatives and design for the connection between the BNSF and IAIS Railroads near Wyanet, Illinois. See the Wyanet Connection discussion in Section 2.3.1, Preferred Alternative (Route A – Amtrak-BNSF-IAIS) for more information on this connection.
- **Eola, Illinois, Yard Improvements** – This Tier 2 Project Level NEPA document will include the evaluation of alternatives and design to improve the flow of train traffic on the BNSF line from Chicago to Aurora. This double-track line is currently used for BNSF freight trains, Metra commuter trains, and Amtrak passenger trains.

Additional Tier 2 Project sections needed if the Route B Alternative is selected:

- **Morris, Illinois, Station** – There is currently no passenger train station in Morris. This Tier 2 Project Level NEPA document will include the evaluation of station location alternatives and design.
- **Peru-La Salle, Illinois, Station** – There is currently no passenger train station in Peru-La Salle. This Tier 2 Project Level NEPA document will include the evaluation of station location alternatives and design.

Project sections have not yet been identified for the ultimate five round-trip trains per day operational level. The uncertainties that exist for this operational level make identification of sections difficult and impractical at this time. Prior to the implementation of the five round-trip trains per day scenario, a supplemental Tier 1 Service Level NEPA document will be developed for the route from Chicago to Iowa City. This will be followed by Tier 2 Project Level NEPA documents for implementation.

5.2 ADDITIONAL STUDIES

In Tier 2 of the NEPA process, multiple documents will be developed. These documents are anticipated to be a mixture of environmental assessments for areas such as the Wyanet connection, and categorical exclusions for areas with minimal effects. The specific type of NEPA document has not yet been determined for each of the sections.

In addition to NEPA documentation for the Project sections, design will be advanced and numerous studies will be completed as part of the Tier 2 process to determine the specific nature and quantity of impacts. The design process will consider avoidance and minimization of impacts to sensitive environmental resources. Based upon the Project section, the following studies may be required:

- Wetland delineations and Section 404 permitting

- Cultural resources surveys and Section 106 consultation
- Threatened and endangered species surveys
- Engineering surveys
- Noise analysis
- Section 4(f) resource evaluation
- Phase I Environmental Site Assessments
- Air emissions analysis in non-attainment areas

In addition to the various studies, mitigation for impacts will also be developed. Anticipated types of mitigation include wetland mitigation, construction timing restrictions for threatened and endangered species, implementation of a stormwater pollution and prevention plan, implementation of best management practices, and documentation of historic railroad structures.