

# Rail

Rail plays a significant role in transportation planning, especially when considering economic development, safety, freight, and intermodal connectivity. Jackson has two rail lines serving the area, including passenger and commerce services. This section addresses the existing conditions and future needs of rail in the community.

## Existing Plans

### Chicago-Detroit/Pontiac Passenger Rail Corridor Program Study

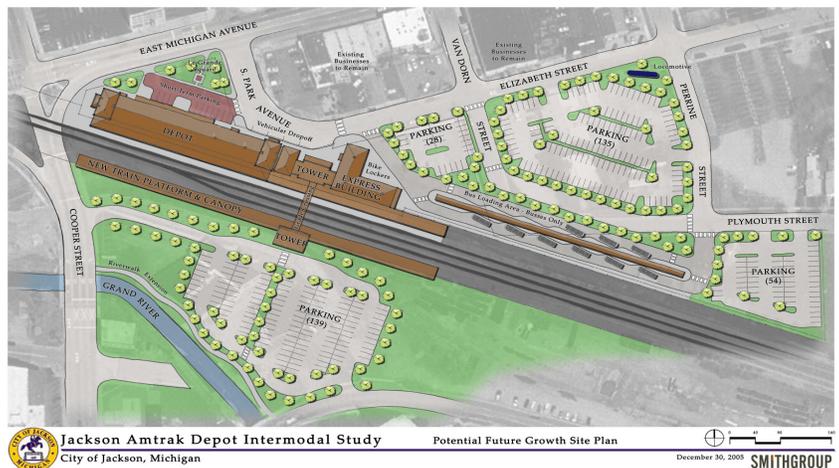
The Michigan Department of Transportation initiated a \$4 million Chicago-Detroit/Pontiac Passenger Rail Corridor Program study. The vision of the study is to provide safe and reliable passenger rail service that offers frequent, daily round trips at speeds up to 110 miles-per-hour. Passenger rail improvements will be evaluated along the corridor as well as the following three program components:

1. Evaluation of route and service alternatives;
2. Tier 1 Environmental Impact Analysis; and
3. Service Development Plan.

A Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) was completed in September, 2014. At this time, the only phase of the project that is funded is the environmental impact statement. Funding is not identified for futures phases of this project such as design, right of way acquisition or construction and there is no estimated timeframe for the funding to be identified. The final environmental impact statement and record of decision are expected to be issued by the end of calendar year 2017.

### The 2005 City of Jackson Amtrak Depot Intermodal Feasibility Study

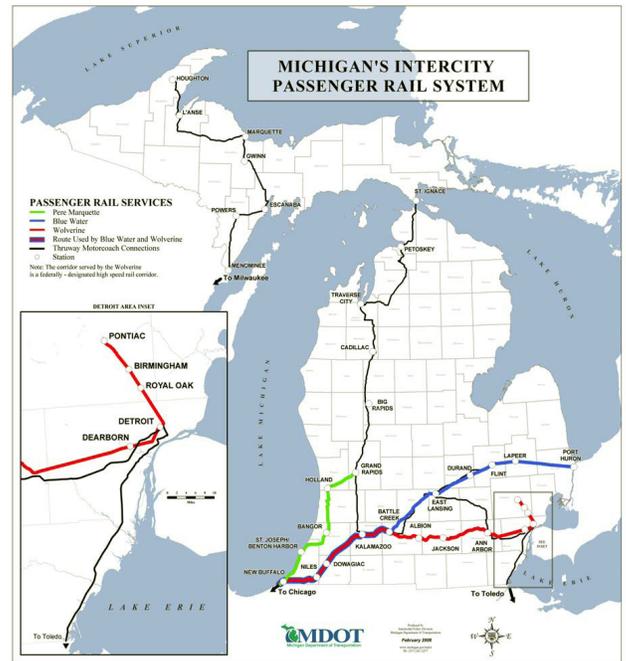
The Jackson Michigan Central Railroad Depot, now the Jackson Amtrak Station, was once a highly utilized facility. However, as modes of transportation shifted, the use of the Depot declined. In 2005 Jackson Amtrak Depot Intermodal Feasibility Study was completed for the City of Jackson to develop multi-modal center at the site. The study provided an assessment of the existing historical structures and their potential for use as an intermodal facility, identified needs, developed conceptual plans, and discussed potential costs and funding sources.



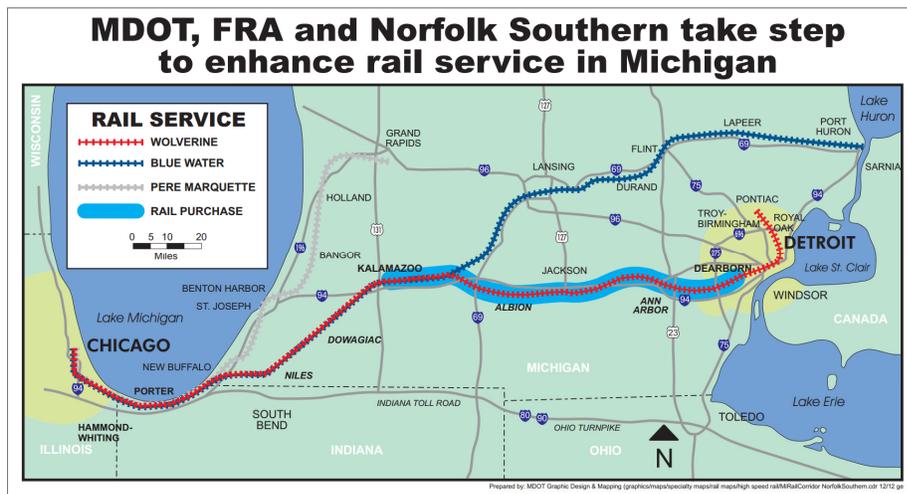
# Existing Rail Service

## Passenger Service

Jackson is located on the Detroit-Chicago intercity rail passenger corridor. AMTRAK operates the *Wolverine Line* which consists of three daily passenger trains between downtown Detroit and Chicago over the Norfolk-Southern tracks paralleling I-94. Passenger use of the Detroit – Chicago rail corridor has fluctuated slightly with more than 888,638 passengers in 2006 to 782,652 passengers in 2012 and back up to 803,170 in 2016. At the Jackson AMTRAK Station, ridership continued to increase from 26,708 in 2006 to 29,987 in 2012, an increase of 10%. However, Jackson AMTRAK Station ridership decreased by 32% to 21,582 in 2016. Additionally, revenues across the Detroit-Chicago corridor have decreased from \$18,366,072 in 2012 to \$17,358,660 in 2016.



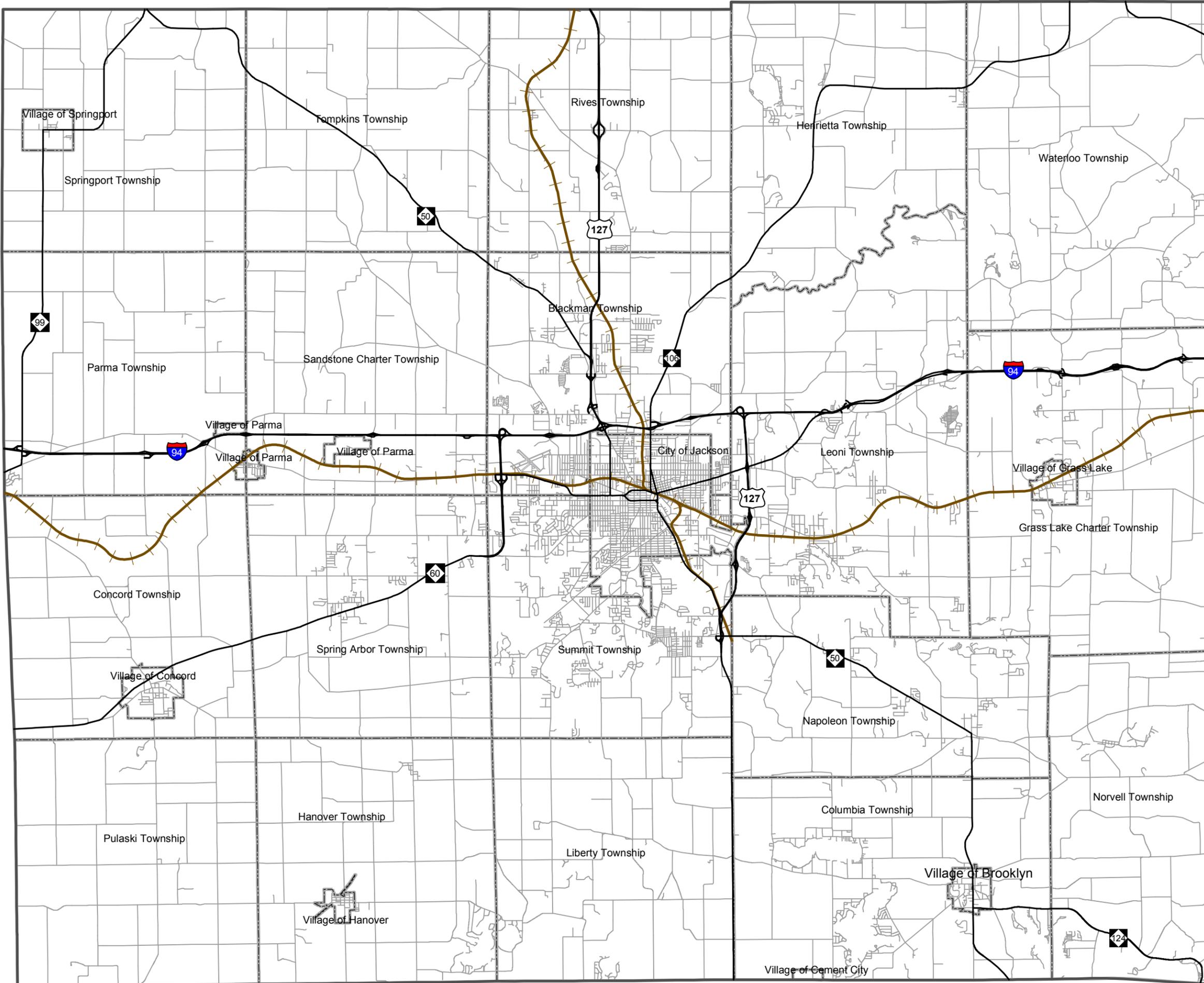
The partnership of AMTRAK, Norfolk-Southern, and MDOT continues to make significant operational and marketing improvements to this passenger rail corridor. In summer 2011, the State of Michigan and Norfolk Southern (NS) came to an agreement on the terms for the sale of the Dearborn-Kalamazoo portion of the *Wolverine* corridor. The state of Michigan purchased the corridor from AMTRAK partially with \$150 million from the federal High Speed Intercity Passenger Rail Program. This track segment joins directly on the west with the AMTRAK-owned Kalamazoo-Porter segment of the same corridor. The sale was completed in 2012 and full transfer of ownership was completed in 2013.



# The Railroad Network

—+— Railroad

0 2 4 Miles



## **High-speed rail**

The State received \$196.5 million to upgrade and engineer Dearborn-Kalamazoo improvements to bring track speeds to 110 mph, improving safety, comfort, and travel times for passengers along the *Wolverine* corridor. With improvements on the AMTRAK-owned segment, over 200 miles of the corridor will be under the control of AMTRAK and MDOT, with the aim of reducing travel times between Chicago and Detroit from 5 hours, 15 minutes to less than 4 hours. AMTRAK, under contract to MDOT, took over maintenance functions of the Dearborn-Kalamazoo segment from Norfolk Southern in February 2013. Construction on infrastructure improvements to increase track speeds began in September 2013. Planned upgrades include replacement of ties, rails, and switches, improvements to grade crossings, and extension of an advanced signal system.

AMTRAK through an ongoing partnership with the Federal Railroad Administration and the State of Michigan, developed a radio-based train communication system, the Incremental Train Control 4 System (ITCS). It is currently in high-speed revenue service on 80 miles of AMTRAK-owned track in Michigan and works to prevent train-to-train collisions, train over-speed conditions, and protect track workers. ITCS is a form of Positive Train Control (PTC), an advanced signal system required by 2018 on most routes with passenger train service.

The development of high-speed rail would spur business productivity along the rail corridor and in Jackson by strengthening the local region's connection to economically vital megaregions such as Chicago and Detroit. Faster service and increased transfer points will expand options for citizens in rural and small urban communities. High-speed rail could also alleviate congestion on the Region's roadway network.

## **FUTURE FORECASTS AND NEEDS**

Freight and passenger rail transportation will continue to be available to the residents of Jackson County, with any future investment decisions determined by the private sector. The continuing efforts to develop high-speed passenger service along the Chicago-Detroit corridor is encouraged for the successful advancement of rail service as an alternate mode of transportation. The City should also continue to revisit and explore the recommendations of the 2005 Jackson Amtrak Depot Intermodal Feasibility Study.