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Passenger Rail Service Development Plan Released

The Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) has released the Passenger Rail Service Development Plan (SDP), which is the next step necessary in exploring the feasibility of expanding passenger rail service in Kansas.

The development of the SDP follows an earlier feasibility study completed by Amtrak in March 2010. The results of that feasibility study provided preliminary cost and revenue estimates plus potential schedules for expanded passenger rail service between Kansas City, Oklahoma City and Fort Worth.

The just-completed SDP is a comprehensive business and operating plan that looks at things such as route schedule and projected ridership, capital investments to infrastructure, operating subsidies and implementation. Completion of the SDP is required in order to be eligible to apply for potential future federal capital funding for state supported passenger rail service programs.

The SDP explored two options for expanded passenger rail. One is a nighttime service between Newton and Fort Worth. The other option is a daytime service between Kansas City and Fort Worth. In addition, the SDP explored a scenario in which the nighttime service would first be implemented and then later the daytime service would be added.

Any expansion of state supported passenger rail service would require further refinement and much more detailed environmental and engineering work, along with an investment in infrastructure as well as annual operating subsidies. The SDP estimates the cost of the infrastructure improvements for the nighttime service to be \$87.5 million and the daytime service to be \$245.5 million. The annual operating subsidy to be shared by participating states for the nighttime service is estimated at \$4.4 million and the daytime service is \$10 million.

KDOT's next step regarding passenger rail service is to present the SDP's findings to the Kansas Legislature during the upcoming 2012 session.

A copy of the SDP, more information about the service alternatives, the complete Amtrak feasibility study, the public meetings summary, citizen comments and survey results are all available at www.ksdot.org/passrail.

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