

4 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AND AGENCY COORDINATION

This chapter summarizes the public involvement and agency coordination that occurred for the Chicago-Detroit/Pontiac Passenger Rail Program (Program). More details about the outreach efforts and a list of all public and agency comments are provided in Appendix K, which includes a Scoping Summary Report and a Level 1 Alternatives Analysis Outreach Summary Report.

4.1 Outreach Overview

A Public Involvement Plan was developed for the Program. The overall goal of the plan was to provide interested persons, tribes, agencies and organizations with an opportunity to be informed and involved throughout the Program's planning phase and development of the Tier 1 EIS. To achieve this goal, the Public Involvement Plan was based the following principles:

- Be the first and best source of information about the Program
- Establish trust and credibility with agencies, tribes, stakeholders, communities and the public
- Seek agency and public input at project milestones
- Provide a transparent decision-making process

The plan's principles help ensure that the Program follows the FRA Procedures' for citizen involvement (Section 9) and that this EIS is available to public officials and citizens before decisions are made and actions are taken as required by NEPA.

The Public Involvement Plan sought to combine traditional outreach activities such as public information meetings with Web-based applications to reach the greatest number of interested persons and agencies. Also, the plan coordinates public involvement activities and public hearings with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process.

The Public Involvement Plan has two primary functions. First, it encourages early and continuing public participation and educational opportunities to provide transparency throughout the process. This allows the public and agencies to be involved in the identification of social, economic, and environmental impacts of the Program. Secondly, it provides outreach activities to engage the general public and federal, state and local agencies, including, but not limited to public meetings and hearings held at convenient times and places.

Consistent with the Public Involvement Plan, public and agency outreach were conducted and will continue at the following NEPA milestones:

- Program scoping process (outreach phase completed)
- Level 1 route alternatives analysis (outreach phase completed)
- Release of the Tier 1 Draft EIS (current outreach phase)

- Release of the Tier 1 Final EIS (future outreach phase)
- Publication of the Record of Decision (future outreach phase)

With a corridor spanning approximately 300 miles that crosses three states and bisects numerous urban and rural communities, public issues and concerns were wide-ranging. In order to best serve these communities, public involvement staff that are familiar with issues and stakeholders in the respective communities, were assigned to each state. See Section 4.2.4 (Third Party Outreach) for more information.

In addition, the public were able to provide feedback to the Program Sponsors at all times via the following mechanisms:

- Submitting an online comment form at www.GreatLakesRail.org
- Calling the Program's toll free number at 877-351-0853
- Mailing a letter to the MDOT Public Involvement & Hearings Officer
- Contacting the MDOT project manager directly

4.2 Public Involvement Resources and Communication Tools

4.2.1 Program Identity

A Program identity was created to provide the public with an easily recognizable source for official Program information. As part of this process, a project logo and templates for public information materials, including newsletters, presentations and factsheets were developed. This identity was carried through to the Program website to make sure all elements of the Program had a consistent look.

4.2.2 Program Website

A dedicated website was set up and maintained throughout the planning phase of the Program at www.GreatLakesRail.org. The website was used to provide information about the Program and to seek feedback at key Program milestones. Key features of the website included:

- Program overview information
- Public meeting announcements
- Online comment form
- Sign up form to receive Program updates
- Depository for technical documents and public meeting materials
- Media resources page

4.2.3 Program Master Contact List

A master contact list was set up and maintained for the Program. The list was used for emailing and mailing Program updates and public meeting notifications. The list contains nearly 1,850¹²² contacts that include:

- Citizens who signed up on the website to receive Program communications
- Federal and state agencies
- Local units of governments
- State and federal elected officials
- Various advocacy and civic organizations
- Organizations that represent environmental justice and Title VI populations
- Transportation and regional planning related organizations
- Railroad, transit, airport and other transportation related organizations (private and public)
- Chambers of commerce, tourism and economic development organizations
- Tribal governments

The contact list will continue to be updated throughout the EIS process as additional interested parties are identified or sign up on the website. Additional contacts are expected to include any agency contacts or Section 106 consulting parties that are identified in the public involvement process, see Section 4.2.8 regarding Section 106.

4.2.4 Third Party Outreach

The Program Sponsors identified stakeholder organizations for each state that could act as third-party communicators. Third-party communicators were personally contacted by a Program Sponsor member and asked to distribute Program updates and meeting notices to their already established membership lists and networks. Third party communicators include stakeholder organizations such as:

- Chambers of commerce and other economic development organizations
- Organizations that represent environmental justice and Title VI populations
- Local governments
- Rail advocacy groups
- Farm Bureaus
- Regional planning commissions

¹²² Comment Tracker, retrieved October 14, 2013.

- Environmental advocacy organizations
- County and township associations

Third-party communicators were an effective way to disseminate Program information and direct the public to the Program website. Third party communicators posted Program information on their social media sites (Facebook and Twitter), in newsletters, on their websites and blogs, and in other electronic communications.

4.2.5 Cooperating Agency Coordination

On January 10, 2013, FRA invited 14 federal agencies to become “cooperating agencies”. According to CEQ Regulations Section 1508.5, a "cooperating agency" means any Federal agency other than the lead agency that has jurisdiction by law or special expertise with respect to any environmental impact involved in the Program, or in the Build Alternatives. States and Native American Tribes may also become cooperating agencies.

Cooperating agencies are able to help develop information and do analyses for the Tier 1 EIS concerning items under their special expertise. A cooperating agency may also adopt this Tier 1 EIS without recirculating it. For example when the Program applies to USACE for permits under their jurisdiction, USACE may use this document to meet their NEPA environmental review requirements, rather than preparing and circulating their own document.

Agencies that have agreed to become cooperating agencies for the Chicago-Detroit/Pontiac Passenger Rail Corridor Tier 1 EIS include the following:

- Federal Aviation Administration
- Federal Highways Administration
- Federal Transit Administration
- US Army Corps of Engineers
- US Environmental Protection Agency
- US Fish & Wildlife Service
- US Coast Guard
- National Park Service

4.2.6 Public Information Materials

The Program Sponsors created public information materials that communicate and explain the Program to the public. The materials were posted on the Program website and used at public meetings. Information materials included a Program overview factsheet, a newsletter and a frequently asked questions document. These materials were posted to the Program website in September 2012 during the Program’s scoping process.

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4.2.7 Title VI and Environmental Justice Outreach

Non-discriminatory outreach efforts were provided for all Title VI and environmental justice populations including:

- Minority and ethnic groups
- Low-income persons
- Elderly persons
- Persons with disabilities
- Non-English speaking individuals
- Persons with limited English proficiency

Chapter 3, Section 3.6, describes Title VI and environmental justice populations in more detail and it identifies potential impacts to these populations. The main vehicle of communication with Title VI and environmental justice populations was through third party outreach. Organizations that represent Title VI and environmental justice populations were asked to distribute information to their members.

A wider range of organizations that represent Title VI and environmental justice populations were also included in the master contact list to make sure these organizations received all meeting notices and updates. In addition, all meeting notices were translated into Spanish and Arabic, which are common non-English languages spoken in the Corridor. Translators were also available at the public meetings in Michigan. Furthermore, the Program website and all meeting notices contained the following statement: “With an advance notice of 7 days, MDOT can make accommodations for persons with disabilities and/or limited English-speaking ability, and persons needing auxiliary aids or services of interpreters, signers, readers, or large print.”

Title VI and environmental justice populations were also considered in the selection of public meeting and public hearing locations. (See Chapter 3, Section 3.6 for a discussion of impacts to low income and/or high minority populations in the Corridor.) All meeting locations were ADA accessible and most meeting sites were transit accessible. Also, meetings were held in Gary, Indiana, where large low income and minority environmental justice populations have been identified as living in close proximity to the Build Alternatives.

4.2.8 Section 106 Consulting Party Coordination

Chapter 3, Section 3.11 discusses the “Section 106” process for reviewing and protecting historic and archaeological resources. The process requires the identification of “consulting parties.” MDOT is required to reach out to and involve these consulting parties in the Program development process. Consulting parties can include State historic preservation officers (SHPOs), Tribal historic preservation officers (THPOs), Native American Tribes, representatives of local governments, and individuals and organizations with a demonstrated interest in the Program’s effects on historic properties.

SHPOs and THPOs, Tribal governments, and local governments were all invited to the Program Scoping meetings. Coordination will continue during future cooperating agency/stakeholder meetings on the Tier 1 Draft EIS and as needed to address any identified potential historic and archaeological impacts.

Outreach to consulting parties will also be completed for each Tier 2 level environmental review when project-level plans are refined and potential impacts can be accurately identified.

4.3 Outreach for Public and Agency Scoping Process

During the scoping process, four public meetings, three agency meetings and two stakeholder meetings were held in September 2012 to launch the Tier 1 EIS for the Program. A self-guided public scoping meeting was also available throughout the scoping process on the Program's website. See Appendix K for the Scoping Summary Report.

The purpose of the outreach that occurred during the scoping process was to:

- Introduce the public, stakeholders and agencies to the Program.
- Discuss the purpose and need for the rail project.
- Present a range of possible route alternatives.
- Identify potential issues that should be considered in the EIS.

4.3.1 Public Scoping Meetings

Four public scoping meetings were held in September 2012 as shown in Table 4-1. The meetings were open to the public from 4 to 7 p.m. and a presentation was given at 4:30 p.m. and repeated at 6 p.m. as needed. In total, 277 people signed in at the public meetings.

The meeting locations were selected for their proximity to highway access and/or bus and rail routes. All facilities were ADA accessible. Spanish and Arabic interpreters were provided at the Dearborn, Michigan, meeting and a Spanish interpreter was provided at the Kalamazoo, Michigan, meeting. Interpreters were chosen for these sites based on area demographics and the need for interpreters at previous MDOT meetings in these communities.

Table 4-1: Public Scoping Meeting Locations and Dates

Date	Location	Attendance
September 12, 2012 4:00 - 7:00 p.m.	Chicago Union Station Union Gallery Room 500 West Jackson Boulevard Chicago, IL 60661	88
September 13, 2012 4:00 - 7:00 p.m.	Michigan City/City Hall 100 East Michigan Boulevard Michigan City, IN 46360	78
September 26, 2012 4:00 - 7:00 p.m.	Double Tree by Hilton Hotel 5801 Southfield Expressway Dearborn, MI 48228	67
September 27, 2012 4:00 - 7:00 p.m.	Radisson Plaza Hotel 100 West Michigan Avenue Kalamazoo, MI 49007	44
Total	All locations	277

Everyone in attendance was encouraged to sign in at the welcome table. Display boards and take-home materials were provided that summarized the Program and the EIS scoping process. Program Sponsor members were on hand to answer questions. A question and answer session followed each presentation and attendees were encouraged to share their comments and concerns at that time or through the written comment forms. Participants were informed about Program materials, additional opportunities to provide comments online or via mail, and ways to stay informed.

Various types of meeting notices were used to communicate the dates, times and locations of the public meetings. Notices included:

- **Third party communications** – The Program Sponsors coordinated with third party communicators who subsequently distributed the information to their membership via social media outlets, electronic newsletters, and postings on their websites and blogs.
- **Flyers** – Meeting flyers were distributed in three languages – English, Spanish and Arabic. The flyers were posted on the Program website, displayed at train stations, emailed to the master contact list and provided to third party communicators.
- **E-blasts** – Several notices were emailed to the program’s master contact list including: a save the date invitation (Aug. 16, 2012), an official meeting notice (Aug. 31, 2012), a meeting reminder (Sept. 11, 2012 and Sept. 24, 2012), and a comment due date reminder (Oct. 4, 2012). These e-blasts provided meeting dates and locations, a link to the online scoping meeting and information on how to submit comments.

- **Press releases** – Press releases were sent to media outlets in Illinois, Indiana and Michigan.
- **Community calendars** – Meeting notices were posted on community calendars in towns and cities where the meetings were held.
- **Social media** – MDOT, INDOT and IDOT posted notices on their Facebook and Twitter accounts.

4.3.2 Online Scoping Meeting

The Program’s website hosted a self-guided online scoping meeting. The online meeting summarized all the information that was displayed at the public meetings. An electronic copy of the online meeting presentation was available for download and printing. At the close of the comment period, the online meeting page had been viewed 283 times. The online scoping meeting presentation can be found at the Program website under Documents and Resources.

The public was notified about the availability of the online scoping meeting from the notifications that were sent out for the public scoping meetings as discussed in Subsection 4.3.1 above.

4.3.3 Agency Scoping Meetings

Three agency scoping meetings were held in September 2012 as shown on Table 4-2. The intent of these agency meetings was to identify issues early on in the process. One meeting was held in each Program state near or at the same location as the public scoping meetings. All potential participating and cooperating agencies were invited to attend. Meeting attendees included representatives from local, regional, state and federal government agencies. In total, 17 agencies were represented at the meetings. Most agencies participated in person, while some agencies participated via teleconference.

At the meetings, a presentation was given that provided an overview of the Program; discussed the Program’s proposed purpose and need statement; showed the proposed area of analysis for the preliminary alternatives; described the proposed alternatives screening process; and discussed proposed resource analysis methodologies. After the presentation, a roundtable discussion was held to give agencies an opportunity to ask questions and identify their interests and issues of concern. Several handouts were provided at the meetings including an agency scoping document, a handout that summarized the methodology for analyzing the socioeconomic and environmental resources, as well as the Program’s summer 2012 newsletter that is available on the Program’s website.

Invitations to the agency scoping meetings were sent to potentially affected resource agencies in Michigan, Illinois, and Indiana. An initial invite was a ‘Save the Date’ email that was sent on August 15, 2012. This invitation announced the start of the Program and provided the dates of the upcoming agency scoping meetings.

A second invitation was sent on September 5, 2012. This invitation included an agency scoping document that included information about the Program, its Purpose and Need statement and maps showing the Area of Analysis that would be used to develop Preliminary Route Alternatives for the Corridor. MDOT also made follow-up phone calls to encourage agency attendance at the meetings.

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Table 4-2: Agency Scoping Meeting Locations and Dates

Date	Location	Agencies Represented
September 12, 2012 1 - 3 p.m.	HNTB Corporation (project consultant) 111 N Canal St, Suite 1250 Chicago, IL 60606	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers U.S. Coast Guard, Marine Safety Unit U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Federal Railroad Administration Federal Highway Administration Michigan Dept. of Transportation Illinois Dept. of Transportation Forest Preserve District of Cook County
September 13, 2012 10 a.m. - 12 p.m.	Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission 6100 Southport Road Portage, IN 46369	U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service U.S. National Park Service, Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore Indiana Dept. of Transportation Michigan Dept. of Transportation Indiana Dept. of Natural Resources Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission
September 26, 2012 1 - 3 p.m.	Double Tree Hotel 5801 Southfield Expressway Dearborn, MI 48228	U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Michigan Dept. of Transportation Michigan Dept. of Environmental Quality Michigan Dept. of Natural Resources Michigan State Historic Preservation Office Wayne County Airport Authority

4.3.4 Stakeholder Scoping Meetings

The Program Sponsors held two meetings with stakeholder groups during the scoping process. Stakeholders were able to attend the meetings in-person or they were able to attend via webinar. Table 4-3 lists the stakeholder meetings and the stakeholder groups that attended the meetings.

Invitations to the stakeholder meetings were sent to groups in Illinois, Indiana, and Michigan that may have an interest in or concern about the Program. The meeting notices were sent as an Outlook appointment. The invitation announced the start of the Program and provided details for participating in-person, via webinar or by telephone.

Table 4-3: Stakeholder Group Meetings

Date	Location	Stakeholders Represented
August 29, 2012 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.	MDOT – Van Wagoner Bldg., 3rd Floor 425 W. Ottawa St. Lansing, MI 48909 or Webinar/Conference call	Host railroads: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adrian-Blissfield • CSX • Norfolk Southern • South Shore Freight
September 6, 2012 11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.	MDOT – Horatio S. Earle Learning Center Lake Michigan Meeting Room 7575 Crowner Dr. Dimondale, MI 48821	Railroad advocacy groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Albion Economic Development Corp. • Battle Creek Unlimited • City of Battle Creek • Environmental Law and Policy Center • Metropolitan Planning Council • Michigan Environmental Council • Michigan Assoc. of Railroad Passengers • MI Washtenaw Area Transportation Study • Midwest High Speed Rail Assoc. • Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Commission • National Assoc. of Railroad Passengers • Northwest Indiana Passenger Rail Assoc. • Transportation Riders United

4.3.5 Scoping Comment Summary

This section summarizes the public comments that were received by the October 15, 2012 closing of the scoping comment period. A total of 705 comments were received. See the Scoping Summary Report in Appendix K for a listing of public and agency comments.

Table 4-4 shows the source of the 705 comments that were submitted. The Program’s online comment form generated 96 of the comments. Eighteen individuals submitted a hand-written comment form at the public meetings. Many of the participants who attended the public scoping meetings also asked questions after the presentation or spoke with Program Sponsor members directly at the meetings. Sixteen individuals commented by letter sent via U.S. mail or emailed directly to MDOT.

Table 4-4: Number of Comments by Source

Comment Source	Number
Online comment form	96
Meeting comment form	18
Letter by mail or email	16
Midwest High Speed Rail Assoc. members	575
Total	705

The Midwest High Speed Rail Association collected comments from their membership and then forwarded the comments to the Program Sponsors. They generated 575 of the 705 comments. The vast majority of the comments utilized a standard comment that was suggested by the association.

MDOT assembled comments into a database to document and analyze all public, stakeholder and agency feedback. (See the Scoping Summary Report in Appendix K for a more detailed summary and listing of comments.) Almost all of the comments were supportive of the Program and the possibility of improved intercity passenger rail along the Corridor. Many of the public comments focused on the need for improved passenger rail service and the types of benefits that it would bring. A large number of comments expressed a desire for the Program to consider plans for future 220 mph service, especially within the SOTL (Chicago-Porter, Indiana) section. The agencies focused on NEPA requirements and potential environmental effects of the Program. Only two comments did not support the Program.

4.4 Outreach for Level 1 Alternatives Analysis

Public involvement during the Level 1 alternatives analysis phase focused in on the Chicago to Porter, Indiana, segment of the Corridor, including the area known as the South of the Lake (SOTL). The purpose of this outreach phase was to gather input that would help to narrow the range of alternatives in the SOTL area and to identify the alternatives that would be evaluated in the Tier 1 EIS. See Chapter 2 (Alternatives) for detailed information about the Program’s various alternatives and the alternatives analysis process.

Outreach efforts during the Level 1 alternatives analysis phase included an online self-guided presentation to present the results of the Level 1A screening analysis (April 2013) and a second round of public meetings to present the results of the Level 1B screening analysis (September 2013). Public involvement activities for both efforts are described in the following subsections. See Appendix K for the Level 1 Alternatives Analysis Outreach Summary Report.

4.4.1 Level 1A Outreach

This section summarizes the outreach that was conducted for the Level 1A analysis. The Level 1A analysis included identifying current and former railroad routes used by passenger and freight trains to

assemble a “SOTL project area network” and dividing the network into 68 subsections that were screened by the Program’s criteria. (See Chapter 2 of the EIS for more information about Level 1A alternatives.) An online self-guided presentation and a stakeholder meeting were utilized to present information and receive feedback.

4.4.1.1 Self-Guided Presentation

An online self-guided presentation was created and posted on the Program website for the Level 1A screening analysis. The purpose of the presentation was to keep the public informed about the progress of the alternatives analysis and to present the results of the Level 1A screening analysis.

The public was originally notified about the presentation’s availability on the Program website on April 24, 2013. The public comment period ran through May 29, 2013 and was extended to June 12, 2013.

The following forms of communication were used to advertise the availability of the self-guided presentation to the public, stakeholders and government agencies:

- **Third party outreach** – Third party communicators were sent an Advance Notice of the self-guided presentation (4/30/13) and asked to send the notice to their contact lists informing them about the self-guided presentation and the comment due date.
- **Flyer** – A flyer was created with information about how to access the presentation and how to submit comments. It was posted on the Program website and provided to third party communicators.
- **E-blasts** – Two e-blast notices were sent to the Program’s master contact list including the original notification (4/11/2013) and a comment due date reminder (4/30/2013). Each e-blast contained a link to the self-guided presentation and had information for how to comment.

4.4.1.2 Group Stakeholder Meeting

A group stakeholder meeting was conducted on April 29, 2013 as shown in Table 4-5. The purpose of the meeting was to present the results of the Level 1A analysis and seek feedback from key stakeholders such as railroad companies and rail advocacy groups.

Participants at the stakeholder meeting were able to attend in-person or via webinar. In total, 35 people participated in the meeting. At the meeting, the Program Sponsors presented the self-guided presentation and provided an opportunity for participant questions. Invitations to the meeting were sent as an outlook appointment by the Michigan Department of Transportation.

Table 4-5: Level 1A Stakeholder Meeting

Date/Time	Location	Stakeholders Represented
April 29, 2013 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.		Battle Creek Unlimited – Battle Creek, Michigan
		Council of State Governments Midwest
	MDOT – Horatio S. Earle Learning Center	CSX Railroad
	Lake Michigan Meeting Room	Amtrak Representatives
	7575 Crowner Dr.	Environmental Law and Policy Center –Chicago
	Dimondale, MI 48821	Michigan Environmental Council
		Michigan Assoc. of Railroad Passengers
	Or	Midwest High Speed Rail Association – Chicago
		National Association of Railroad Passengers
	Webinar	Norfolk Southern Railway
		Right Place – Grand Rapids, Michigan

4.4.2 Level 1B Outreach

This section summarizes the outreach that was conducted for the Level 1B analysis. The Level 1B analysis identified complete SOTL route segments between Chicago and Porter, Indiana, and screened the routes with Program criteria. (See Chapter 2 of the EIS for more information about alternatives.) Four public meetings and a series of stakeholder meetings were utilized to present information and receive feedback.

4.4.2.1 Alternatives Public Meetings

Four public meetings were held for the Level 1B analysis as shown in Table 4-6. The meetings were open to the public from 4 to 7 p.m. A presentation was given at 4:30 p.m. In total, 164 people signed in at the public meetings.

The meeting locations were selected for their proximity to the proposed route alternatives being evaluated. All facilities were ADA accessible. Spanish and Arabic interpreters were provided at the Dearborn, Michigan, meeting. Interpreters were chosen based on area demographics and the need for interpreters at previous MDOT meetings in this community.

Everyone in attendance was encouraged to sign in at the welcome table. Display boards summarized the program and the results of the Level 1A and Level 1B alternatives analysis process. Participants were able to view the route alternatives overlaid on a large aerial image and leave comments by applying post-it notes. A take home handout was provided to participants that explained the purpose of the meeting and how to provide comments.

Program staff was on hand to answer questions. A question and answer session followed the presentation and attendees were encouraged to share their comments and concerns at that time or through the written comment forms. Participants were informed about program materials, additional opportunities to provide comments online or via mail, and other ways to stay informed. The public comment period ran from the start of the original meeting notice that was sent on September 4, 2013 through October 28, 2013.

Table 4-6: Level 1B Public Information Meeting Locations and Dates

Date	Location	Attendance
September 17, 2013 4:00 - 7:00 p.m.	Chicago Union Station Union Gallery Room 500 West Jackson Boulevard Chicago, IL 60661	92
September 18, 2013 4:00 - 7:00 p.m.	Genesis Convention Center 1 Genesis Center Plaza Gary, IN 46402	19
September 19, 2013 4:00 - 7:00 p.m.	Porter Town Hall 303 Franklin St. Porter, IN 46304	23
September 24, 2013 4:00 - 7:00 p.m.	Double Tree by Hilton Hotel 5801 Southfield Expressway Dearborn, MI 48228	30
Total	All locations	164

The Program website was utilized to post public meeting materials online. This allowed meeting participants to review materials after the meetings and it allowed those who were unable to attend a meeting to participate in the process. All the exhibits that were on display at the meetings were posted to the Program website along with the PowerPoint presentation and meeting summaries. Also, a voice-recorded presentation was posted to the website to assist visually impaired individuals and to allow individuals who were not able to attend the meeting to learn about the alternatives analysis process.

Various types of meeting notices were used to communicate the dates, times and locations of the public meetings. Notices included:

- **Third party outreach** – Third party communicators were contacted and asked to send a notice to their contact lists informing them about the public meetings and the comment period.
- **Flyers** – A meeting flyer was prepared and posted on the Program website and utilized for third party outreach.

- **E-blasts** - Three separate e-blast notices were sent to the program’s master contact list including: an original meeting notice (9/4/2013), a meeting reminder (9/16/2013) and a comment due date reminder (10/17/2013).
- **Press releases** - Media sources in Illinois, Indiana and Michigan were notified of the meetings. Press releases were provided in three languages - English, Spanish and Arabic.
- **Social media** – MDOT, INDOT and IDOT posted notices on their Facebook and Twitter accounts.

4.4.2.2 Stakeholder Meetings

Three stakeholder meetings were conducted as part of the Level 1B public outreach efforts as shown in Table 4-7.

The first stakeholder meeting was held on September 19, 2013 with attendance from railroads and rail advocacy groups. Participants were able to attend the meeting in-person or via webinar. At the meeting, the Program Sponsors made a presentation and provided an opportunity for participant questions. Invitations for the railroad advocacy meeting were sent by the Michigan Department of Transportation.

Table 4-7: Level 1B Alternatives Analysis Stakeholder Meetings

Date/Time	Location	Stakeholders Represented
September 19, 2013	Porter, IN and webinar	CSX Railroad Environmental Law and Policy Center – Chicago Midwest High Speed Rail Association – Chicago
November 8, 2013 9:00 – 10:30 a.m.	City of Gary 401 Broadway, Suite 203 Gary, IN, 46402	Karen Freeman-Wilson, Mayor of Gary, Indiana
November 8, 2013 10:45 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.	City of Gary 401 Broadway, Suite 203 Gary, IN 46402	City of Gary neighborhood/civic leaders

On November 8, 2013 the Program Sponsors conducted two stakeholder meetings with the City of Gary, Indiana. The first meeting was held with the Honorable Karen Freeman-Wilson, Mayor of Gary. The purpose of the meeting was to increase understanding within the City of Gary leadership of the Program’s activities and to understand more about the City of Gary and how economic development opportunities planned for the Gary area could be recognized and potentially incorporated into future decision making.

After the meeting with the mayor, the Program Sponsors met with neighborhood and civic leaders from Gary to develop a grass roots foundation for outreach to the larger Gary community. The discussion helped to build an understanding of the Program’s purpose and development to date and allowed the Program Sponsors to obtain input regarding priorities and considerations of importance to Gary neighborhoods. Participants took a bus tour of the local area to get a better understanding of the economic development projects currently underway in Gary.

Both meetings in the City of Gary were arranged through phone calls and emails sent by a Program Sponsor member.

4.4.3 Level 1 Comment Summary

See Appendix K for a summary and listing of public and agency comments that is included in the Level 1 Alternatives analysis Outreach Summary Report. As shown in Table 4-8 a total of 1,357 comments were received. The public submitted 109 comments through the online comment form, 7 comments were received at public meetings and 22 letters and emails were sent directly to the Program Sponsors. The Midwest High Speed Rail Association collected comments from their membership and then forwarded the comments to the Program Sponsors. They generated 600 comments during the Level 1A comment period and they generated 612 comments during the Level 1B comment period for a total of 1,212 comments. The vast majority of the comments utilized a standard comment that was suggested by the association. See Appendix K for a summary and listing of public and agency comments that is included in the Level 1 Alternatives Analysis Outreach Summary Report.

Table 4-8: Level 1 – Number of Comments by Source

Source	Level 1A Comments	Level 1B Comments	Total
Online comment form	49	60	109
Public meeting comment form	N/A	7	7
1-800 phone line	3	4	7
Letter or email	14	8	22
Midwest High Speed Rail Association	600	612	1,212
Total	666	691	1,357

4.5 Outreach for the Release of the Tier 1 Draft EIS

4.5.1 Public Hearing Overview

FRA Procedures require the Tier 1 Draft EIS to be circulated to interested parties and to depositories, such as public libraries, along with an invitation to comment on the Tier 1 Draft EIS. The availability of the Tier 1 Draft EIS will be publicized by press release, on the Program website (www.GreatLakesRail.org) and through distribution of electronic and hard copies as required.

Public hearings will be held in Illinois, Indiana and Michigan to present the findings of the Tier 1 Draft EIS at locations within the Area of Analysis. As required, the Tier 1 Draft EIS will be available for at least 30 days prior to the scheduled hearings. The EIS will be available to the public for a 45-day review and comment period. Comments from the public will be accepted on this document as directed on the cover page of this Tier 1 Draft EIS. FRA will respond to all responsible comments in the Tier 1 Final EIS in accordance with FRA Procedures Section 13(c)(11).

4.5.2 Agency Meetings

To help streamline the agency commenting process, FRA and the partnering states seek to efficiently communicate and collaborate with federal, state, and local agencies. To this end, early in the review period for the Tier 1 Draft EIS, a special agency meeting will be held. This meeting will give agencies the opportunity to ask specific questions they may have in regards to resources under their jurisdiction. In this way agencies will be able to learn more about the Program, its effects, and proposed avoidance or mitigation measures, in advance of submitting their formal Tier 1 Draft EIS review comments.

4.6 Outreach for the Release of the Tier 1 Final EIS

The FRA will consider all comments received on the Tier 1 Draft EIS, whether in writing or made at a public hearing, and new information, and will revise the text into a Tier 1 Final EIS accordingly (pursuant to CEQ 1503.4). See Appendix K for a list of comments and responses that were received during the development of the Tier 1 Draft EIS. Appendix K in the FEIS will contain the review comments and responses on the Draft EIS. The formal review and comment period on the Draft EIS will start on the date the Draft EIS is issued.

The Tier 1 Final EIS will identify a Preferred Alternative as described in Chapter 2. This Preferred Alternative will be communicated to stakeholders and the public using various methods such as third party communicators, stakeholder meetings, e-blast messages to the master contact list, and media outreach. Mitigation measures developed in the EIS will be monitored by FRA who will enforce the implementation of such measures. The Tier 1 Final EIS will be distributed as required by NEPA and a notice will be placed in the Federal Register.

4.7 Outreach for the Publication of the Record of Decision

The Record of Decision (ROD) is the final step in the EIS process. The ROD will state what the federal decision on the Program is, considers the alternatives, identifies the Selected Program Alternative and discusses mitigation plans, including any enforcement and monitoring commitments. The ROD will be presented by FRA staff and signed by the FRA Administrator. It will be a publicly available document that will be published on www.fra.dot.gov, and the on the project website, www.GreatLakesRail.org. The Program Sponsors also intend to send out an e-blast notice to the Program's master contact list.