Chicago – St. Louis HSR

Grade Crossing Closure Process

February 2019
Corridor Highlights

- Joint use freight/passenger
- Primarily single track
- Goals:
  - Passenger speeds up to 110mph
  - Reliable freight and passenger service

FRA – HSR Project 2A
- New 2 ML
- Siding Re-Const.
- State Funded
- New 2 ML
Crossing Closures

» 256 grade crossings existed along the HSR Corridor

» One of the HSR program’s goals was to close crossings

» Reasons for closing crossings include:
  o Increased safety
  o Reduced operation and maintenance costs

» A grade crossing closure committee was established
Crossing Closure Overview

» In total, HSR program closed 39 crossings (15.23%)

» All crossings were closed on a voluntary basis

» Field reviews / diagnostics were conducted at all grade crossings with stakeholders including:
  - IDOT and Union Pacific Railroad
  - Local agency / municipality
  - Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC)

» Crossings were designated as public or private
How Crossings Were Identified for Closure

» Stakeholders jointly determined which crossings were recommended for closure

» Conditions considered by team in recommending crossing closure:
  o Crossing usage and risks
  o Whether an alternate crossing or land access existed;
  o Did a municipality previously designate the crossing for closure;
  o Whether the crossing holder offers to sell his right

» If a crossing on the diagnostic report met any of the above criteria, it was recommended for closure
Closure Process

- Initial offer was based on appraised fair market value
- Negotiations / settlements considered balance of:
  - Cost of keeping the crossing open versus
  - Cost and NEPA impacts of closing the crossing
- Closure cost cannot exceed the cost of installing necessary signals and other crossing improvements
- Settlements amounts were typically up to 50% of construction cost
  - Maintenance costs were not considered in this evaluation
Questions?
Private Crossing Closure Process

» Crossing closure committee composed of IDOT, UPRR and IDOT’s program manager

» Appraisal and review appraisals are obtained; this fair market value is offered to crossing right holder

» If crossing holder doesn’t want to sell his right, the crossing won’t be closed. If the crossing holder wants to sell but doesn’t accept the initial dollar offer, negotiations ensue

» If successful negotiations, closure committee determines if settlement is reasonable balancing the cost of keeping the crossing open versus the cost and NEPA impacts of closing the crossing. Upper dollar limit is the cost of construction

» If committee agrees, an established settlement process is then followed. If committee doesn’t agree, the crossing isn’t closed

» FRA prior approval of the cost of acquiring a private crossing isn’t needed
Public Crossing Closure Process

- Same crossing closure committee is used
- Determine if property adjacent to public crossing proposed for closure needs to be acquired.
- Contact local agency to determine its interest in selling its crossing right. If no interest, process stops and the crossing isn’t closed.
- If an interest exists, crossing committee determines the initial offer based on impact to the community. Offer must not exceed the cost of installing necessary signals and other crossing improvements – maintenance costs aren’t considered in this evaluation.
- Local agency follows an established crossing closure process – including public hearing/comments and the adoption of a closure ordinance.
- Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC) approves public crossing closures if grade crossing protection funds are applied.
- After ICC closing order’s issued, local agency will install temporary and permanent barricades and remove roadway approaches to the tracks.
- UPRR removes crossing surfaces and warning devices.