

June 15, 2009

## RIDERSHIP AND THE INTERSTATE TRAVELER

As an advocate, I have introduced many people to the Interstate Traveler. Almost to a person, they always say – “This makes so much sense and answers so many objections, why aren’t we doing it?” This same question is what made me an advocate and it is why I am here today.

Let’s look at the current state of public transportation in the US. Why don’t more people use public transportation, particularly trains? It is because we are a society of convenience and expediency. So let’s compare train travel, the primary competition, to The Interstate Traveler:

1. Train stations are far apart and not necessarily in a convenient location for today’s population. After World War II, the US went into urban sprawl mode and now we have these massive exurban populations, spread over wide areas. This is very different from Europe, where cities still reign and train travel is conveniently located for a large part of the population. In the US, let’s take Detroit as an example. We have large populations in three counties and one train station in Detroit. This is very inconvenient for a large part of the urban population, especially with no other real public transportation. Some talk of bringing high speed trains here from Europe. And what will that do, besides provide some European jobs? It won’t make things any more convenient. I live in Livingston County. By the time I get to the train station, wait for their schedule, and so on, I can be well on my way to Chicago. I can’t get to Chicago any faster on an airplane, at 500 miles per hour, than I can just driving. What is a 120 mile per hour high speed train going to do?  
The Interstate Traveler, in it’s completed form, is accessible at every freeway interchange. Simply drive to the closest freeway entrance, like you would do anyway, and hop on a 200 mile per hour transit. Even in an initial Detroit to Ann Arbor or Detroit to Lansing/Grand Rapids scenario, it will still be far more convenient to go to the closest freeway entrance. Both the Detroit and Ann Arbor train stations are inconvenient to a lot of people in those cities. A Detroit to Lansing train would only be used by people close to both the train stations in Detroit and in Lansing. The Interstate Traveler will be used by everyone along the route.
2. Trains make stops in between our boarding and destination locations. This greatly increases the time to get where we are going. This applies whether the train is high speed or not. Is a proposed high speed train from Detroit to Chicago going to be an express with no stops? I don’t think so. And every stop greatly slows the overall average speed of the train. Enough stops, and the high speed train barely has any advantage over regular rail – it’s going to spend a lot of it’s time accelerating, decelerating and just sitting there.. Autos can be just as fast with their average speed and offer the ability to stop only where we want.

The Interstate Traveler gives us the opportunity to get on and off where we want, with no stops in between, and at speeds up to 200MPH – no inconvenience here! Using the same principle that cars use on the freeway, we would have the ability to program a car to only stop where we (individually or as a small group) want it to stop. Now we can actually take advantage of the high speed characteristics with an exceptional average speed.

3. Trains offer no access for further travel at the destination stop. This gets back to the convenience factor. Let's say we take a train to Chicago, but we really need to get to Naperville, or one of many other far flung locations in the Chicago Metro. There are trains to some places, but many others will require us to take a cab, rent a car, or find some other mode of transportation. Mirroring the interstate highway network, we can program the Interstate Traveler to get us close to almost anywhere in the Chicago Metro – just find the closest freeway exit! The Interstate Traveler also offers the option to take our car (near and dear to an American's heart!) with us. We can then continue traveling at our convenience. As the Interstate Traveler produces it's own power, it also easily lends itself to a scenario where charging stations with electric rental vehicles would be available for local Travel.
4. Trains move at their schedule and not always on time. So like airplanes, we have to wait for the next one. If we did the high speed rail from Detroit to Chicago, how many departures would there be daily? Maybe four at most? What if the schedule is inconvenient for my schedule? I will just take a car and maybe be there before the train, high speed or not, even leaves the station. And don't forget you will have to get there early to find parking, check in and so on. The Interstate Traveler moves at our schedule. This is a key element, along with the fact that it takes our route! We can make a reservation and have the appropriate unit available at the time we need it! We will be easily able to park close by at the freeway entrance and we won't be waiting for people to board a whole train, just the individual car we are using.

Think of all the times you didn't take public transportation for any of the above reasons. Now we have the opportunity to travel at high speed, on our own individual schedule and on our own route. What do you think that would do for ridership! Do you take the train now? Would you take the train if was high speed? Would you take the Interstate Traveler as proposed? I think you will find, that for the great majority, the answers are no, no and yes – it's about getting there the quickest and easiest!

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