

Quad City Rail Community Benefits Agreement Platform

Background – Beginning in December 2010, leaders from Quad Cities Interfaith (QCI) began meeting with and gathering information from public decision makers and stakeholders regarding the proposed Chicago to Iowa City “high speed” rail project with stops in the Quad Cities. QCI leaders have also listened and brought to light the concerns of the community as it relates to the jobs that will be created with this \$310 million dollar project. In 2011, Iowa Department of Transportation (IADOT) requested that the Federal Rail Administration split its portion of the grant for the rail line while it continues to study its passenger rail plan. This allowed Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) to continue to move forward with the Moline Multimodal Station and the Chicago to Moline rail project totaling \$143 million in grant money for the rail project and a \$10 million Tiger II grant for the Station.

QCI is a member of Gamaliel of Illinois, joining United Congregations of Metro East St. Louis, Faith Coalition for the Common Good in Springfield, and Gamaliel of Metro Chicago in statewide initiatives which ensure jobs for low income people and minorities, equitable distribution of resources and civil rights for all people who live and work in Illinois. QCI is an affiliate of the National Gamaliel Foundation and the Transportation Equity Network (TEN).

Over the last 20 years, Gamaliel and TEN have advocated for federal and state policy reforms. In August 2005, President Bush signed the Safe Accountable Flexible and Efficient Transportation Equity Act-A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), the \$286 billion federal appropriation bill for highways and public transit. With the support of Representative Richard Costello (D-IL), Senator Barack Obama (D-IL) and Senator Kit Bond (R-MO), Gamaliel and TEN were able to get an amendment into SAFETEA-LU. The Transportation and Local Workforce Investment Provision SAFETEA-LU, Section 1920 (b) states: “Sense of Congress – It is the sense of Congress that Federal transportation projects should facilitate and encourage the collaboration between interested persons, including Federal, State, and local governments, community colleges, apprentice programs, local high schools, and other community-based organizations that have an interest in improving the job skills of low-income individuals, to help leverage scarce training and community resources and to help ensure local participation in the building of transportation projects.”

In a letter to all state Governors, Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood urged states “to utilize existing equal opportunity programs and resources and to create innovative strategies to provide opportunities for the underprivileged.”

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Relocation Assistance – To ensure that owners of real property to be acquired for Federal and Federally-assisted projects and/or persons displaced as a direct result of Federal or Federally-assisted projects are treated fairly, consistently, and equitably, relocation assistance shall be provided as governed by the requirements of CFR 49 Part 24. In the event a final alignment requires the acquisition and relocation of more than five individual family residences, an ombudsman will be made available by IDOT to ensure that parties involved in this process are treated fairly and consistently throughout the relocation process.

Local Jobs – Aspirational goals will be made to collaborate with Burlington Northern Santa Fe, Iowa Interstate Railroad and the Federal Rail Administration to develop a plan to encourage local jobs for individuals who are defined as socially and economically disadvantaged consistent with the constraints of Federal and state law regulation.

Training money – ½ of 1% of the project budget may be directed into job training and support programs.

Small Business – the rail plan should include support and encouragement for the development of grassroots business owners.

Competitively Let Contracts – In keeping with the existing IDOT DBE program, the parties will aspire to 22.77% DBE participation on the competitively let construction projects with participation from socially and economically disadvantaged consulting and contracting firms.

Planning/Monitoring Committee – To ensure the full and fair participation of all potentially affected communities in the transportation decision-making process concerning the construction of the rail project, IDOT must seek out and consider the viewpoints of minority, low income and Limited English Proficiency (LEP) populations by having representation by each group on a monitoring committee that will hold public meetings to report back on the rail project and plan every six months. This committee will also be intimately involved in the formulation of all request for proposals that are formulated by IDOT and other entities for construction, training and other related plans for the project with the understanding that measures will be put in place that no procurement conflict scenarios will arise. In addition, QCI will continue to monitor legislation and continue to work in partnership with IDOT to maximize benefits to the community.