In 2011, Amtrak and the Illinois Department of Transportation undertook a feasibility study of initiating inter-city passenger train service between Chicago and Peoria, Illinois. The proposed shuttle train route from East Peoria to Normal would require an infrastructure and capital investment of $134 million, and a $2.2 million annual operating subsidy.

In 2013, representatives of the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission, Normal and Peoria met with representatives of the US Department of Transportation, Federal Rail Administration, and Federal Transit Administration to discuss a proposed Commuter Rail initiative linking the two metropolitan areas. The rough order of magnitude cost estimate for this project was $178.8 million with $16 million of annual operating expenses. In 2013, staff of the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission submitted a TiGER Grant to the US Department of Transportation that was not funded.

Amtrak continued to analyze the feasibility of providing bus service between the two communities. In 2014, Amtrak met with officials of Peoria, Normal and the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission to review the feasibility study. Their conclusions are that a Thruway Bus Service connecting Peoria with Normal would generate 27,200 riders and would generate more revenue than expenses. Amtrak is prepared to begin a pilot of the service in late 2014 but in order to determine the times and routes they need to know the location of where Peoria would want the bus service to terminate.

City staff has reviewed the Amtrak study and have 2 proposed locations for the Bus Terminal:
• The City Link Transit Center, located at 407 SW Adams Street or
• Bradley University

A Thruway Bus service does not provide an actual rail connection between Peoria and Normal, or direct Peoria to Chicago rail service. However, in these uncertain economic times, it is significantly lower in cost than actual rail service.

City staff is seeking your input as to the best location for the Bus Terminal.

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