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HIGH SPEED RAIL: TRANSPORTATION SOLUTION FOR THE FUTURE

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High speed rail was first introduced by the Japanese in 1964. Since that time many countries including France, Germany, Spain, Italy, and Sweden have developed their own high speed rail systems. The United States has lagged behind in high speed train technology, but now the it is faced with serious transportation problems. Road and interstate construction and repair can not keep pace with traffic demand. Airports have become synonymous with congestion. America has reached a crossroads in the decision of how to break the gridlock that grips our country.

This study will examine the possibility of high speed rail transportation within a 300 mile radius of Chicago. Chicago has long been the hub of railroad transportation. The city could also serve as a center for profitable high speed rail. It has all the characteristics that make high speed rail attractive such as large population, large population of cities within said radius, congestion of other transportation modes, and good condition of existing rail lines.

This study emphasizes the routes that have the greatest potential for high speed rail implementation. Specifically, the corridors are Chicago to Milwaukee to Minneapolis-St. Paul, Chicago to St. Louis, and Chicago to Detroit. Finally, this study culminates in a comparison of high speed rail to air and highway travel.